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# A Critical Study of The Works of Sir James M. Barrie In Relation To His Life

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A Critical Study  
Of The Works Of Sir James M. Barrie  
In Relation To His Life

being

A Thesis presented to the Graduate Faculty  
of the Fort Hays Kansas State College in  
partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the Degree of Master of Science

by

Esther H. Brooke, E.S.

(Fort Hays Kansas State College)

Date May 13, 1938 Approved Myrtle M. Ginnie  
Major Professor

713 Street  
Acting Chr. Graduate Council

gift

TO MY SISTER

"Les"

who has made this year  
of graduate work possible

Cather N. Brooke

7-38

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## Introduction

Sir James Barrie, who was of Scottish birth but has become a world figure, has had the distinction of being a master in three arts, first as a novelist, then as a biographer, and lastly, as a dramatist. He is greatly loved by the English and Scottish people for his sympathetic handling of their problems through his writings.

The present study is offered as an impartial endeavor to interpret Barrie's works in relation to his life. His literary achievements have been taken up as to the three types of writing and as far as possible in a chronological order within the type being discussed.

Aside from Barrie's own works the four books that have been most valuable as sources of information are: J.A. Hammerton's Barrie: The Story of a Genius, for biographical material; Patrick Graybrooke's J.M. Barrie: A study in Fairies and Mortals, for an interpretation of the dual personality of Barrie; Manly and Rickert's Contemporary British Literature for bibliographical material; and Moults's Barrie for a scholarly interpretation of Barrie's works. An article published at the

time of his death in the New York Times for June 19, 1957, gave facts concerning the life of Sir James Barrie that I was unable to find elsewhere.

To Doctor McGinnis, my major professor, who has read and reread my thesis, showing infinite patience, I wish to express my sincere thanks. To Doctor Streeter, who has given me the information regarding the mechanics of writing and has arranged several "inter-library loans" for me, appreciation also is due.

## - CHAPTER I

### Boyhood and School Days 1860-82

#### Kirriemuir Or Early Years 1860-70

Northward from London four-hundred fifty miles and southward from Edinburgh ninety miles, lies the town of Kirriemuir, with its weatherbeaten houses standing high above a lovely glen, through which the Gairie flows. This village of not more than three thousand inhabitants has become famous as the birth-place of Sir James Matthew Barrie, who was born on the ninth of May, 1860. He was destined to lift people, through his literary pursuits, from their every-day hum-drum existence into the realm of the real, and to bring to their minds old truths, which, if applied, would be a never-ending source of comfort to them, when trials come which are hard to endure.

It would be impossible to write a biography of Sir James Matthew Barrie without putting into it much of his mother, for she was the most profound influence in his life. Their lives together will be dealt with at length in a later chapter; here the events of Barrie's



life will be told in chronological order and will include his mother when it seems fitting to do so.

On the day of his birth an important event occurred. The family became the proud owners of six hair-bottomed chairs. Barrie opens his inspiring book Margaret Ogilvy, which is a most charming pen picture of an unusual woman, his mother, with these words:

On the day I was born we bought six hair-bottomed chairs, and in our little home it was an event, the first great victory in a woman's long campaign; how they had been laboured for, the pound note and thirty-three penny bits they cost, the anxiety there was about the purchase, the show they made in possession of the west room, my father's unnatural coolness when he brought them in ( but his face was white). I so often heard the tale afterwards, and shared as a boy and man in so many similar triumphs, the coming of<sup>1</sup> the chairs seems to be something I remembered.

Nothing eventful is written concerning the first six years of his life, which were in all probability much the same as those of any Scottish youngster of that day. At this time, however, a very tragic event occurred; his mother, Margaret Ogilvy ( it was the custom for the Scots to call married women by their maiden names), lost a son who was 'far away' at school in Dumfries Academy. This death affected her so terribly that she was never well again. James, who was to bring his mother so much happiness later on, tried his best to make her forget her great sorrow, and in his pathetic childish<sup>v</sup> way must have helped her, as the follow-

ing lines from Margaret Ogilvy show.

I suppose I was an odd little figure; I have been told that my anxiety to brighten her gave my face a strained look and put a tremor into the joke. (I would stand on my head in the bed, my feet against the wall, and then cry excitedly 'Are you laughing, Mother?')--and perhaps what made her sometimes was something I was unconscious of, but she did laugh suddenly now and then.<sup>2</sup>

There were ten children in the Barrie family, James being the ninth one; there were other tragedies; but this death affected Barrie so strongly that when he became a man and the brother was "still a boy of thirteen,"<sup>3</sup> James wrote a little paper called, Dead This Twenty Years. Margaret Ogilvy never spoke to anyone about the paper, "not even to that daughter she loved best."<sup>4</sup>

#### Forfar 1870-1872

In 1870 when 'Jamie' was ten years of age, a change was taking place in the little town of Kirriemuir. It all happened so suddenly, it was as if a giant had entered in the night and had taken possession. Old buildings were torn down and factories put in their place. Another era had dawned; new customs and new fashions sprang into life, "all as lusty as if they had been born at twenty-one." Kirriemuir had at last come under the influence

of the Industrial Revolution. This all affected the life of the community, bringing about changes which Barrie did not resent as he described them in Margaret Ogilvy; but he does express regrets for the possible weakening of the closeness of the family life which he thinks is the chief source of Scotland's strength. This is very well expressed in the following lines from Margaret Ogilvy:

"So much of what is great in Scotland has sprung from the closeness of the family ties; it is there I sometimes fear my country is struck."#5

He does not feel, however, as some do

That we are all being reduced to one level, that character abounds no more, and life itself is less interesting, such things I do not believe."0

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\* CF--Barrie was not the only Scottish writer who held to this view. Burns in his "The Cotter's Saturday Night" describes the beauties of a home night in Scotland and in the following verses sums up Barrie's beliefs concerning the chief source of Scotland's strength.

"Then homeward all take off their sev'ral way;  
The youngling cottagers retire to rest:  
The parent-pair their secret homage pay,  
And proffer up to Heav'n the warm request,  
That He, who stills the raven's clam'rous nest,  
And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride;  
would, in the way His wisdom sees the best  
For them, and for their little ones provide;  
But chiefly, in their hearts with grace divine preside.

From scenes like these old scotia's grandeur springs  
That makes her lov'd at home, rever'd abroad:  
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings;  
"An honest man's the noblest work of God;"  
and certes, in fair virtue's heav'nly road,  
The cottage leaves the palace far behind;  
What is a lordling's pomp? a cumbrous load,  
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,  
Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refined!"

The last few lines quoted show his passionate faith in humanity. This is an outstanding quality that he expresses in all his books, and is one of the reasons for his greatness.

Because of the sudden change in this part of Scotland, James's father, David Barrie, exchanged his place at a handloom for a position as a bookkeeper in a factory office. This necessitated a move to the little town of Forfar. It was a great day for the Barrie family. Margaret Ogilvy was too ill to go with them at this time, but Scottish daughters learned early to take the responsibility of a household; so Barrie's sisters could have the home in order when their mother was well enough to be moved.

In Hammerton's Barrie: The Story of a Genius, a picturesque description of their departure is given:

"With the last of the pots and pans safely bestowed in the cart, little Jamie perches himself on top and sets off on this adventure by road--the eager-eyed boy, who entered Forfar, thrilling like some old conquistador advancing into a strange land, had actually started on his career of conquest."<sup>7</sup>

For Kirriemuir and Forfar were old-time rivals, as the two towns had met in combat many years before, on a piece of land that both of them had claimed. Drummond of Hawthornden wrote of it in the following stanza:

"The Kirriemorians and Forfarrians met at Muirmoss,  
The Kirriemorians beat the Forfarrians back to the cross.  
Sutors ye are, sutors ye'll be;  
Fie upon Forfar! Kirriemuir bears the gree."<sup>8</sup>

To 'bear the gree' means to win the prize. Of course this encounter left a heritage of hate and a boy of ten would have many battles over it.

The new home in Forfar had comforts that the Kirriemuir home could not boast and the "six hair-bottomed chairs" had a much more advantageous setting. The kitchen was several times larger than the one they had left; so it may be seen that the Barries had come up in the world.

#### Forfar Academy

"Jamie" entered the Forfar Academy a few weeks after the move to the new home. Wellwood Anderson, a school mate of Barrie's at this time, pictures "Jamie" as a very ordinary lad of eleven years with no look of special promise; just another "bairn" among nineteen other Scotch lads.

Wellwood Anderson, who had the distinction of being the editor of the school magazine, was the nephew of the Mr. Anderson who had commanded the "Great Eastern" fifteen years before, at the laying of the first Atlantic Cable. These people had a book shop and library in Forfar, which became a paradise to the boy from Kirriemuir. Mr. Ander-

son describes Barrie at this time as being a shy, sensitive lad who ' was not overfond of athletics, but a keen lover of the country. He says of Jamie's<sup>8</sup> parents that they were "self-possessed and religious and sociable."<sup>9</sup> Anderson paid them a very nice compliment by being a regular visitor in their home after Jamie<sup>1</sup> had gone out of his life.

In spite of the hatred the two towns held for each other the Forfar community was very friendly to the Barries, and they became fairly prosperous here; but the Gairie linen works called David Barrie back to the old home town in 1872, as a confidential clerk in their offices; so Jamie's Forfar Academy days were over.

#### Kirriemuir Again 1872-73

On their return to Kirriemuir, Barrie spent a profitable year with his understanding mother before going to Dumfries Academy. He and his mother were inseparable. They read everything from the classics to Polly Burns. They had subscribed to a magazine called Sunshine, a most delicious periodical. It had contained a continued story about a "dear little girl, who sold water cress."

"This romantic little creature took such a hold of my imagination that I cannot eat water-cress even now without emotion. I lay in bed wondering what she would be up to in the next number."<sup>10</sup>

But "Jamie" was doomed to disappointment as the 'next number' did not come. He was so impatient and unhappy about it that his clever mother suggested that he write the remaining chapters himself. How happy he must have been in this enthralling adventure. He rushed to the garret. (The new home the Barries had purchased on their return to Kirriemuir was big enough to boast a garret.) There the desire to write was born and it never left the lad even in the face of opposition later on from editors and his own devoted mother, who always wanted him to become a minister.

After "Jamie" had written the chapters he would rush down to read them to his mother, who was making a new clouty hearth rug. These original stories from the pencil of "Jamie" helped her to get on with her work.

Barrie describes the first story writing as follows:

"From the day on which I first tasted blood in the garret, my mind was made up; there could be no hum-dreadful-drum existence for me; literature was my game."<sup>11</sup>

Dumfries Academy

(1873-1878)

At the age of twelve, Barrie "put the literary calling to bed for a time," in favor of cricket and games. But the burning desire never left him and it was not very

many months after he had entered Dumfries Academy at the age of thirteen, until his work on the school magazine, The Clown, fanned this desire into a flame that continued to burn brightly for many years. Copies of this magazine have become very valuable; especially the one which contains an article called "Recollections of a Schoolmaster," written by him with the following signature: "James Barrie M.A., A.S.S., L.L.D. sic."<sup>12</sup> This same boy with the M.A., A.S.S., L.L.D. was made a baronet on the king's birthday in 1913, at the age of fifty-three. The same plan of having the 'dominie' tell the story, which was first used in this article "The Reckollections of a Schoolmaster" at this time gave charm to his later books A Window in Thrums, The Little Minister, and Auld Licht Idylls.

James met his first great man when he was a boy at Dumfries. Thomas Carlyle came there to visit his sister and James often saw him in his "great shovel hat and cloak and thunderous staff--Jove coming down for a stroll in his favorite country."<sup>13</sup> The worshipful school boy often met the great man and often doffed his cap but never got a response.

Barrie at this time was an incessant reader and a keen admirer of James Fenimore Cooper. His first friendship at Dumfries was made through a mutual admiration for Cooper's works.



" A boy came up to James and looking him over from head to foot asked,

Boy--'What's your high jump?'

Barrie--'Three and a half. What's yours?'

Boy--'Four. What's your long jump?'

Barrie--'Six. What's yours?'

Boy--'Seven. What's your hundred yards?'

Barrie said he didn't know, but what was the other boy's? The other boy said, 'Five secs less than yours.' Barrie became angry as he saw what the other boy was trying to do, but he heard the boy say the one word, 'Pathfinder,' and Barrie knew the boy was a reader of Cooper.

'I replied,' said Barrie, 'with the same brevity "Chingachgook." "Hawkeye," said he. "The Serpent," I replied. "I knew you had read about them," he said, "as soon as I saw you." I asked him how he knew and he said he knew it by my cut.

'I was uncertain what a "cut" was--I am not certain I know now--but when he said he liked my cut I had the sense to say that I liked his cut too--

"Do you remember," he asked, "how Pathfinder laughed?" and I said, "Yes, he laughed so softly that no one could hear it." "Listen then," said he; when I replied that I could hear nothing he said triumphantly, "Of course you can't, that was me laughing like Pathfinder. I always do it that way now." And so we swore friendship because we liked each other's cut and every time we fell out after that was if I laughed like Pathfinder."<sup>14</sup>

Near the close of his five years at Dumfries Academy, James wrote a three-volume novel or 'three decker' as they used to be called, entitled A Child of Nature. When he sent it to the publishers they returned it with a note pronouncing it the work of a 'clever young lady.' This was hard to live down. Barrie loved to make sport of himself and one wonders if this editor might have been created out of his own imagination.

It is at Dumfries that a glimpse is seen of the self that went into the making of the immortal Peter Pan along

with the first glimpse of the enchanted garden in the same play. This description is given in the following lines by Barrie himself before a gathering of his colleagues in London years afterwards:

"When the shades of night began to fall, certain young mathematicians changed their skins, crept up walls and down trees, and became pirates in a sort of Odyssey, that was long afterwards to become the play Peter Pan. For our escapades in a certain Dumfries garden which is enchanted land to me, were certainly the genesis of that nefarious work. We lived in the tree tops, on coconuts attached thereto, and that were in bad condition; we were buccaneers and kept the log book of our depredations, an eerie journal without a triangle in it to mar the beauty of its pages."<sup>15</sup>

The five years spent here were among the happiest in Barrie's life. His studies were pursued with such freedom that he could give vent to his talents as a writer, dramatist, and humorist. He speaks very frankly of these happy times in a speech given before a graduation class at Dumfries, years after his own departure from that institution, which is a delightful mixture of frankness and humor.

"My first play was very properly written for the Dumfries Academy Dramatic Society on whose boards I also made my only appearance as an actor."<sup>16</sup>

Barrie states that he was so good when impersonating the heroine that a young man in the audience asked for an introduction.

"I think I did greatest credit to our admired Webb the director and fast friend of Barrie's on one occasion when the curtain rose on my husband and me about to partake of breakfast, and in his stage fright my husband pulled the table cover and its contents to the floor. How would a superb actress have risen to that emergency? I have asked some of them--Sarah Bernhardt and others--and none of them conceived anything equal to what Adele did--Adele was my name-- I went behind him, and putting my arms around his neck--yet not forgetting even in that supreme moment to be wary about my hair and hat--I said, 'You clumsy darling!' The house rose--I don't mean they went out--several of them cheered, led on by Webb, who always led the applause. The next time I saw that play was in London with Miss Irene Vanbrugh in my part. You may guess I was critical and she was nervous. I told her I thought her good but she was lacking in some of my womanly touches."<sup>17</sup>

Barrie had a genuine skill in making sketches and caricatures. Since there are none of these left the reader will have to rely upon the words of his classmates; however, the following story as told by the writer himself in the address mentioned in the preceding paragraph shows that his sketches must have been out of the ordinary.

"Once a learned professor came to the Academy to examine us, and after some days of it I decided to absent myself from the final proceedings. Other boys were sent in pursuit, and there was a hot chase until I discovered that if I went slowly they also went slowly; that, in short, they were as little desirous of returning to Lochaber as I was. Thus did they throw away those precious hours. I ought to have exposed them. I do so now. As it was, I remember going to the station and from a safe place watching the professor go off in his train,

before I returned to the school to find, alas! that the exams were over. But Dr. Cranston had wanted me back only to commend me for a confiscated book of sketches."<sup>18</sup>

Dr. Cranston was the head master at the Academy and was loved by all his students. When he died, among his treasured possessions was found a collection of caricatures by his famous pupil.

Another professor who had a profound influence on Barrie was his mathematics instructor, John Neilson. His famous pupil paid Mr. Neilson this fine tribute when they met after forty-six years of separation at a reunion dinner held in London in Neilson's honor.

"I have more pride in presence of my old mathematical master here today than if you had produced any other man in Scotland. Those of you here who have sat under him and many thousands outside, have reason as I have, to roll that name (John Neilson) affectionately on the tongue, not necessarily because he was so determined to make us mathematicians, whatever might be our views on the subject--I for one differed from him profoundly--but because in our most impressionable years he set us an example of conduct and character that kept a guiding hand on our shoulders when we went out into the world."<sup>19</sup>

Barrie always speaks of his five years at Dumfries with affection touched with humorous reminiscences, which leave the listener with a feeling that these years must have been among the happiest ones of his life.

## His Edinburgh Days

(1878-1882)

Stevenson once said that the happiest lot in life is to be born a Scotchman. Hammerton says in Barrie: The Story of a Genius that he does not know whether Stevenson's assumption is true or not but he does know that no happier lot can befall a young Scotsman than to be sent to Edinburgh University. There is, according to Hammerton, no other place in the British Isles that has such natural beauty and romantic atmosphere to stir the youthful imagination.

There were several people at this time who influenced Barrie's choice of a university. There was John Fyfe, the hero of Kirriemuir who had left the loom to become a journalist. Even the influence of Margaret Ogilvy, who had told her boy fascinating stories about ministers and lawyers to inspire him "to go and do likewise" was of little weight compared to this ideal who had gone from a hand loom to the staff of a big city newspaper. Fyfe had attended Edinburgh University. That was enough to turn Barrie's mind to it. Then his oldest brother, who was furnishing part of the money for Jamie's education, had a very close friend living in Edinburgh, Alexander Whyte, a minister at Free St.

George's who was very fond of the young college men. He had a splendid influence over their moral life. This strongly influenced the Barrie family in the choice of a university for James. Barrie himself agreed because of the noted English literature instructor, Masson, the world's greatest authority on Milton, who taught at Edinburgh.

Whyte made James' entrance into college life a very happy one, for it was he who guided Barrie into the "old Quad" and introduced him to men of authority, Masson being among these. Masson was greatly admired as well as loved by his students. To him literature was not an end in itself but a means of developing character and his profound influence on his students is talked of to this day. Masson's students always liked to see him when they were in his classes. A very humorous incident quoted in Hammerton's Barrie: The Story of a Genius from Barrie's Edinburgh Eleven shows the students' desire to see their instructor when he was lecturing to them:

"The students in that class liked to see their professor as well as hear him. I let my hair grow long because it only annoyed other people, and one day there was dropped into my hand a note containing sixpence and the words: 'The students sitting behind you present their compliments and beg that you will get your hair cut with the enclosure as it interferes with their view of the Professor.'"<sup>20</sup>

Hammerton makes the following comment on this passage:

"Literature and long hair went together in those days. Stevenson also cheated the barbers. There may be something to this story, but all through Barrie's books the reader finds him building up situations whereby he can have a good laugh at himself; so this could be one of those times."<sup>21</sup>

Professor Blackie, James's Greek teacher, who meant as much to him as Masson, was a very odd chap.

"When he noticed any physical peculiarity about a student, such as a lisp, or glass eye, or one leg longer than the other, or a broken nose, he was at once struck by it and asked him to breakfast. They were very lively breakfasts, the eggs served in tureens; but sometimes it was a collection of the maimed and crooked, and one person at the table--not the host himself--used to tremble lest, making mirrors of each other, the guests should see why they were invited."<sup>22</sup>

These charming memory sketches taken from the Edinburgh Eleven, written by Barrie, are valuable as autobiographical material and show a keen sense of humor although his teachers at this period are seen through the kindly eyes of an appreciative student.

Barrie took an active part in a debating society, which was small as only the students from Dumfries and Galloway were admitted. His name appears in the minutes of all the meetings from 1880-1882.

His desire for spiritual enlightenment which he had inherited from his Auld Licht and Free Kirk ancestors was hard to satisfy, for he says, in his Edinburgh

Eleven, that in his four winters' stay in Edinburgh, he attended all but the Free Churches.

It was in his student days at Edinburgh that Barrie met Robert Louis Stevenson for the first and only time. Barrie told of this chance meeting when he gave one of his famous after dinner speeches at the Printers' Pension Cooperation Annual dinner in 1936:

"The only time I met Stevenson was in Edinburgh and I had no idea who he was. It was in the winter of '79. I remember the wind was 'blawin' snell' when I set off that afternoon with my notebooks to the Humanities class of the University of Edinburgh. As I was crossing Princes Street--a blasty corner--I ran against another wayfarer. Looking up, I saw that he was a young man of an exceeding tenuity of body, his eyes, his hair, already beginning to go black, and that he was wearing a velvet jacket. He passed on, but he had bumped against me, and I stood in the middle of the street, regardless of the traffic, and glared contemptuously after him. He must have grown conscious of this. I continued to glare at him and he came back and said to me quite nicely: 'after all, God made me.' I said 'He is getting careless.' He lifted his cane, and then instead he said: 'Do I know you?' "

After this meeting they went to an inn to chat together and eat. Neither had any money; so Barrie came away minus his notebooks and Stevenson his velvet jacket.

Barrie lived very frugally during these years of college life, as he relates in the following lines taken from a booklet entitled Happy Student Days:

"During my first three years I lived on about nine shillings a week. In the first year I added to my income by coaching and it



was imperatively necessary that I should do so, as out of my revenue of twenty pounds I had to pay eleven pounds in fees. In the following years I did journalistic work. When I was saving up to buy a book I would content myself with a penny roll and a glass of milk. I did not work hard at my studies but read vastly, reading anything and everything."<sup>4</sup>

It is well here to note the development of Barrie from his fun-loving days of Dumfries to the serious days of Edinburgh in which he found his fun in his work. At the Academy he was a lad of many friends, entering heartily into their boyish interests with no particular shyness, while at the University he was drawing more into himself, along with the habit of study, the shyness was growing which has become proverbial, although the accounts of it in recent years have been exaggerated.

After he received his degree on April 21, 1881, he returned to his home at Kirriemuir. He had written much but there was no demand for his work; however, he was not discouraged, even when his friends reproved him for his foolish ambition. Hamerton in his Barrie: The Story of a Genius quotes, without an exact reference, the following lines from Barrie's pen:

"Literature was my game. It was not highly thought of by those who wished me well. I remember being asked by two maiden ladies about the time I left the University what I was to be, and when I brazenly replied, 'an author,' they flung up their hands and one exclaimed reproachfully, 'and you an A.A.'"<sup>5</sup>

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### Quotations

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25. Ibid., p. 120

## CHAPTER II

### Barrie's Adult Life

#### To London By Way Of Nottingham

Margaret Ogilvy's joy at having her son home again after so long an absence was short lived as "Jamie" felt that Edinburgh was a better place to be sending articles from than Kirriemuir. Early in the winter he took himself to Edinburgh and engaged the same room that he had lived in during his college days. Many an envelope was put into his letter box addressed to "Mr. Barrie, M.A." in his own handwriting and containing a rejected manuscript. The lucky ones that got into print were surely a delight to Margaret Ogilvy and her favorite daughter, Jane Ann. This sister was the first to see an advertisement, in a newspaper, asking for a leader-writer on the Nottingham Journal, at the salary of three pounds a week. She let her brother know about this position; he went at once to see about it and secured it, then went home to visit his mother before going to his new work. There was a domestic commotion caused by the great event

which is described in Barrie's Margaret Ogilvy in an effective manner:

"At that moment I was as uplifted as the others, for the chance had come at last, with what we all regarded as a prodigious salary, but I was wanted in the beginning of the week, and it suddenly struck me that leaders were the one thing I had always skipped. Leaders! How were they written? What were they about? My mother was already sitting triumphant among my socks and I durst not let her see me quaking--"1

Later in the day his mother wanted to know what were "leaders." Then a wild hunt began in order to find all the newspapers in the house. Some were taken from old boxes, others from under carpets, and in desperation a sooty bundle was dragged down from the chimney. "Surrounded by these I sat down and studied how to become a journalist."2

Barrie went to the Nottingham Journal in the spring of 1883 and it was well that he secured this position on a third-rate newspaper, as he had to write on any subject that came up. His position was comparable to that of the county attorney or the country doctor who must be a specialist in all lines in his chosen profession.

In his spare hours he was trying journalism of another sort and sending it to London. After he had been on the Nottingham Journal eighteen months he received an 'unlooked for' telegram from Fredrick Greenwood, a

well-known newspaper man of London, asking Barrie to write about his own community. "A boy who found that a knife had been put into his pocket in the night could not have been more surprised,"<sup>3</sup> says Barrie concerning his feelings when he received Greenwood's letter.

When he sent his mother a London evening paper with an article entitled "An Auld Licht Community," she laughed heartily because to her there was something droll in the sight of "Auld Licht" in print.

Barrie thought surely he had exhausted the subject, but when the editor called for more and more, he first wrote about a marriage, then a funeral, and other topics pertaining to his community and the editor took them all. It looked as if the Scot lad was on the road to success. Margaret Ogilvy was called upon to search her memory for any material that might be converted into articles. After many of these had been printed, under the name of Gavin Ogilvy, Barrie wired Frederick Greenwood, saying, "Shall I come to London." The editor's answer was, "No." "So," says Barrie, "I went."<sup>4</sup>

Margaret Ogilvy had many fears at this time. She felt that her/son would be completely destroyed in the

great city of London. She warned him

"To always walk in the middle of the street (they jump out on you as you are turning a corner), never venture forth after sunset, and always lock up everything (I who could never lock up anything, except my heart in company)--She was soon able to sleep at nights without the dread that I should be walking presently with the iron-work of certain park seats figured on my person."<sup>15</sup>

It must have been springtime madness that caused a young man with very little money and less than twenty-five years of living to rush off to London, on such a slim chance of success. If it had not been for the kindness and encouragement of Greenwood, the "Grand Old Man of Fleet Street," as he was called, the young writer would have suffered many hardships, and he might have gone down in defeat. As it was, he encountered ~~many~~ more defeats than victories in those first few trying years.

A friendship was formed at this time which was very fortunate for Barrie a little later on. While the writer of the "Auld Licht" was working on the St. James Gazette, Alexander Riach, another Scot, was reporter on the Daily Telegram. The two became great friends and when Riach was appointed editor of the Edinburgh Evening Dispatch, he did not forget his persevering fellow countryman back in London. He asked Barrie to contribute regularly to his newspaper. One of his articles entitled "The Reverend Doctor Whyte,"\* came to the notice of a

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\*Whyte was the minister who influenced Barrie during his university days and has been told of in the first chapter.

very influential churchman and editor, Robertson Nicoll, who became immediately enthusiastic about Gavin Ogilvy's (Barrie's nom de plume) writings. It was through Nicoll's influence that the writer's first serial story, When a Man's Single, was published. With this encouragement Barrie began to look around for more material that he might put on the market. His stories of the Auld Licht community which had been a success serially, were refused in book form by the publishers.

At this period of Barrie's career, one is impressed with the absence of seriousness in his writings. His outlook on life seemed to be the same as when he was a boy at Dumfries, playing pranks with his playmates. He looked on life as a joyous curiosity shop which should be investigated. His comic phraseology was new; his readers liked to be amused and he liked to amuse them. His philosophy of life did not trouble him. The following passage from J.A. Hammerton's book, Barrie: The Story of a Genius, gives an excellent characterization of Barrie and his work at this time of free lancing.

"Call it luck, design, or what you will, there seems to have been a happy turning of the wheels of chance in Barrie's continued attachment to the Comic Muse in his earlier (1886-88) work in London. He was a literary genius with a journalist at his elbow, he was also a frivolous young cynic with a man of sentiment under the same skin, and presently we shall see that it was his ability to be funny that gave the other side of him a chance. It was the seed time for

the New Humor, the formula for which might be expressed thus: Take eighty-five percent of any comic stuff and fifteen percent of Dickensian sentimentality, shake them lightly and let the sentimentalism precipitate itself at the bottom of the bottle. When the sediment is sufficiently treacly, deftly pour out the contents so that the sentimental sediment comes out last and brings moisture to the eyes of the consumer."<sup>6</sup>

Margaret Ogilvy was becoming very ambitious for her son at this time and was insistent that he produce a book with his own name on it as heretofore he had used Gavin Ogilvy in signing his articles and short stories. In Margaret Ogilvy, Barrie gives his mother's own words on the subject:

" 'Ay, but though we're doing well, it's no the same as if they were a book with your name on it.' And so the ambitious woman would turn with a sigh, and I did my best to turn the Auld Licht Sketches into a book with my name on it. Scottish and English publishers refused to accept the book as a gift. I was willing to present it to them, but they would have it in no guise; there seemed to be a blight on everything Scotch."<sup>7</sup>

When a Man's Single had been Barrie's first serial story and Auld Licht Idyls had been successful as articles, but Better Dead was his first book, published in 1888 with the name of J.M. Barrie on the fly leaf. It contained only sixteen thousand words and sold for a shilling. It had a paper cover, "which bore a colored drawing of a tall-hatted individual lurking at a street corner, knife in hand as two luckless pedestrians approached him."<sup>8</sup>



One critic, according to Moulton's Barrie, declared that Barrie was not the author but that Oscar Wilde and George Bernard Shaw had written it in collaboration. It contained enough witticisms to make a fortune for any humorist of today and was so well received that it went into a second edition during the year of its publication.

A few months after Better Dead was printed an offer came from the publishers for the "poor little critters shut away in a drawer," and Auld Licht Idylls, which the publishers had refused a few months before, was put on the market in book form and was a great success. It was dedicated to his dear friend, adviser, and former employer, Frederick Greenwood. The critics did not seem to share the misgivings of editors and publishers about its contents. In almost every instance their enthusiasm was beyond question. The reviews sounded like Thanksgiving hymns for a writer of such freshness and charm.

A Window in Thrums, published late in the same year, gave Barrie three books to his credit in twelve months, and their author became the "talk of the town." The year 1888, for James Matthew Barrie, was a momentous one.

## The Successful Writer

In 1889 Barrie was asked to join the Garrick Club. According to his mother it would take a feeble-minded person to even want to join this club. Her reaction to Barrie's entrance is given in Chapter IV. However, this was a very definite sign that the young literary genius had arrived as it was a mark of great literary distinction to be asked into this club.

Three of his books, Auld Licht Idyls, When a Man's Single, and A Window in Thrums, gave the writer the name of being the founder of the "Kailyard School" of the Nineties, which was characterized by its realistic handling of the lives of the Scottish poor.

My Lady Nicotine, which was published in 1890, was full of witticisms and caused much talk but was not as popular as the other four. The Little Minister, published in 1891, the "big thing" Barrie's readers had been waiting for, came out in the "old three-decker" form and was the "hit of the year."

Sir George Duglass gave a personal impression of Barrie at this time (1890) published in a current magazine and reprinted by Hammerton. He does not give the

exact reference, but the quotation is worth repeating here.

"To the bodily eye Mr. Barrie has little, nothing of the typical Scot. The high, pale brow, the dark hair and eyes, the chiselled refinement of the profile suggest Italy rather than the North. To me the face bears a certain resemblance to the portraits of Edgar Allen Poe. The expression is shy, absorbed. There is little trace of affectation in the manner as in writing. It is only a touch of 'brusquerie' in the address by which the northerner is revealed."<sup>9</sup>

Barrie's success being established as a novelist, he turned his attention to the theater and in 1891 his Walker, London was produced in London. It was not the success that the writer had hoped for, but out of it there grew a love affair between Barrie and his leading lady, a charming actress by the name of Miss Mary Ansell. They were married at Kirriemuir in 1894 and went to Switzerland for their honeymoon. On their return they lived in very modest quarters in London.

Barrie's chance meeting with Robert Louis Stevenson, in Edinburgh, which was described in a previous chapter, had through the medium of correspondence grown into a very fine friendship. When Barrie became quite ill in 1893 Robert Louis Stevenson wanted him to come to Samoa to recuperate. The following quotations from Stevenson's letters over a period of two years will give the reader an idea of the warm friendship between

these two Scottish writers:

"They tell me your health is not strong. Man, come out here and try the prophet's chamber. Come, it will broaden your mind, and be the making of you, and be the making of me."  
(December, 1892)

"We all join in the cry, 'Come to Vailima!'  
My dear Sir, your soul's health is in it. You will never do the great book 'till you come to Vailima." (December 1893)

"No, Barrie, 'tis in vain they try to alarm me with their bulletins. No doubt you are ill, and unco ill, I believe, but I have been so often in the same case that I know pleurisy and pneumonia are in vain against Scotsmen who can write. (I could once.) You cannot imagine how near me this common calamity brings you." (July, 1894)<sup>10</sup>

In a few weeks after this last letter Robert Louis Stevenson was dead. Barrie's sorrow at the sudden passing of one whom he had learned to respect and admire was expressed in an elegiac poem in the Bookman for January, 1895:

"Now out the lights went stime by stime  
The towns crept closer round the kirk,  
Now all the firths were smore'd in rime,  
Lost winds went wailing through the mirk.

'A star that shot across the night  
Struck fire on Pala's mourning head,  
And left for aye a steadfast light  
By which the mother guards the dead.'

Scotland is represented as a mother grieving for the loss of her brilliant son:

"Her Breast is old, it will not rise  
Her tearless sobs in anguish choke.  
God put His finger in her eyes,  
And then it was her tears that spoke.

"The lad was mine! Erect she stands,  
No more by vain regrets oppress't  
Once more her eyes are clear, her hands  
Are proudly crossed upon her breast."<sup>11</sup>

He produced nothing in 1894, which might have been because of his marriage or the need of a vacation after his severe illness the year before.

His play, The Professor's Love Story, produced in 1895, was much better received than his Walker, London, but even this success could not soften the blow caused by the death of his wonderful mother and his favorite sister, Jane. They died only a few days apart.

Barrie was called to America in 1896 to interview Frohman. Hammerton says of this meeting between Frohman and Barrie:

"It was the beginning of a friendship which speedily developed between these two so different in every characteristic except one: a yearning desire to retain throughout life the illusion of youth. Each had the same strong attachment to his mother, a fact which is probably associated with this attitude of mind."<sup>12</sup>

Frohman had successfully staged The Professor's Love Story in this country and through much urging he got Barrie to write The Little Minister in the form of a play, which was staged in 1897. This great producer also

gave to America in 1901, Quality Street, and in 1904 the immortal Peter Pan with Miss Maude Adams. Mr. Frohman signed a contract which stated he would produce as many plays as Barrie would write.

While in America Barrie was besieged on every hand by organizations of all sorts for address dates; but because he had not been a robust man since his recent illness and because of his timid nature, he refused many invitations. He was asked by reporters the old, old question, "What do you think of the American girls?" Barrie's reply was:

"I did not tell them," he said, "and I am not going to tell you. I shall tell it to no one except the American girl herself. I think I have already told it to one or two. The only speech I ever made in my life I made at Smith College a few weeks ago. I don't know how I got on the platform, but there I was with nine hundred girls in front of me. By and by I became conscious of someone talking in an eloquent voice and when I recognized it as my own I was dumfounded. I visited other colleges after that, but I made no more speeches. Those Smith girls made me promise not to address any other colleges for girls."<sup>13</sup>

On his return to England, which was late in the same year, Barrie published two books which are among his best-known works: Sentimental Tommy, a charming boy-book for grown-ups, and his only biography, Margaret Ogilvy, a story of his mother. His Sentimental Tommy was so well received that in 1900 he gave his

readers a sequel, Tommy and Grizel.

Barrie at this time (1902) felt the need of bigger quarters, especially for Porthos, his favorite St. Bernard dog; so he moved to a new brick house, called Leinster Corner, Lancaster Gate, on the south side of the north part of Kensington Gardens, which he was soon to make enchanted ground through his immortal Peter Pan. Porthos had been acquired as a fluffy little pup when Barrie and his bride had been on a trip to Switzerland early in 1894. Mary Ansell, Barrie's charming wife, has given many fascinating anecdotes about Porthos and his master in her book Dogs and Men. This is the Porthos spoken of in The Little White Bird. He and his master were very close and credit is given by Hammerton to Porthos for "tagging his master back into boyhood at a time when he might have been in danger of settling down."

The Wedding Guest, a three-act play published in 1900, was not so successful, but was followed by some of the writer's finest dramas. These were Quality Street in 1901, The Admirable Crichton in 1903, said by many of the critics to be his best, and Little Mary in the same year; then came Peter Pan, staged in 1904 and taken from his book The Little White Bird, which had been pub-

lished in 1902, followed by Alice-Sit-by-the-Fire the next year. (1905)

From 1905 to 1908 there is apparently no record of anything coming from the pen of Barrie, but What Every Woman Knows, a three-act play produced in 1908, was worth waiting for.

In 1913 there were ten one-act plays printed in two volumes. Among them were The Legion Of Leonora, and The Will. Half-Hours in the same year contained Pantaloon, The Twelve Pound Look, Rosalind, and The Will. Der Tag, a war play, was staged in 1914. The three plays, Rosy Capture, 1915, A Kiss for Cinderella, 1916, and Seven Women, 1917, are seldom mentioned while Dear Brutus, 1917, and Mary Rose, 1920, are among his better known plays. Barrie's Echoes of the War, a book including the following plays, The Old Lady Shows Her Medals, The New Word, Barbara's Wedding, A Well Remembered Voice, was enthusiastically received during the war, and helped to keep national spirit alive.

Barrie also took a fling at writing books for children; his Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens, 1906, based on the stage play Peter Pan, and Peter and Wendy, a sequel to Peter Pan, are delightful books for children to read.



Interesting Events Not Directly Connected  
With Literary Pursuits

It was the custom of men of letters in the early twentieth century to become interested in politics and many of Barrie's friends wanted him to be a parliamentary candidate for the Universities of Edinburgh and St. Andrews in 1904, but he declined, thanking them for this honor. He wrote:

"I am convinced it is wiser that I should not accept. Public life would be too much out of my line. I have grown into a hermit. Politics is a great and fine calling, but it is not for me--Thank you very heartily--I am with you heart and spirit in the Liberal cause."14

Barrie was a sensitive and conscientious man who would have been unhappy in the turmoil of political life, and he was wise in turning down even so charming an offer to get into public affairs.

He had many requests at the time to make speeches for every occasion but he was reluctant in accepting them. However, in 1908 when he was asked to unveil a memorial to Mrs. Oliphant, the famous authoress, whom he admired greatly, he did it in a manner that was worthy of his talented friend.

The year 1909 was a trying one for James Barrie.

marriage went on the rocks. He and Mary Ansell after fourteen years together were divorced. To one of Barrie's sensitive nature this was a terrible ordeal and he had the sympathy of the entire country. Very little can be found as to their domestic trouble. The publicity resulting from the divorce caused Barrie to become more of a "hermit" than ever and he clung to the romantic friendship of the Davies family, the five who gave the writer his inspiration for the writing of Peter Pan.

Many honors were given Barrie in the early twentieth century, but there were very few of the Barries left to enjoy the one conferred upon the family by King Edward VII when in 1913 he made their noted brother a baronet and gave him the title of Sir James Matthew Barrie.

The author said at an informal dinner given him in honor of the King's recognition:

"When I began writing novels people said they were not novels. When I began writing plays they said they were not real plays. I expect folks are going about saying I am not a real baronet."<sup>15</sup>

Through the long war Barrie was willing always to do his bit for any enterprise to help men in the trenches. His manuscripts brought considerable sums at auctions and his war plays helped to keep up national spirit.

The war had taken away his beloved friend Frohman, who was drowned on the Lusitania in April, 1915. In Marcossou's Memoirs of Frohman, a sentence is given which shows the devotion between Barrie and Frohman:

"When friends come to mean so much to each other as Frohman and Barrie did there is hardly any relationship of blood that can mean more, and with Frohman there went down into the depths something of Barrie's own heart that had been shared by them alone."<sup>10</sup>

The death of Dr. Whyte, his moral adviser of Edinburgh days, in 1922 severed one more tie and affected Barrie deeply. The next year Robertson Nicoll, a man who had meant much in the author's life, died, causing as poignant a sorrow as any Barrie had to bear.

#### Years of Retirement and Death

The retired author, at this time in his late sixties, was noted for his walking. It was his chief form of exercise. A writer in the Daily Mail of October, 1928, says:

"Sir James Barrie is probably the most contemplative pedestrian in London; whenever one sees him out walking he always appears to be so deep in thought that one positively fears for his safety. Yesterday when I saw him strolling in the Strand puffing at a big pipe and swinging a walking stick with both hands behind his back, there to be a vision he was looking at instead of where he

was going. I fully believe he was unaware that half a dozen persons stepped aside just in time to avoid colliding with him and that a taxicab providentially pulled up within an inch or two of him when he stepped off the kerb."<sup>17</sup>

Hammerton in his Barrie: The Story of a Genius describes Barrie in the following manner:

"It would be wrong and misleading to leave the impression that however ordinary in height and mien our genius may appear to a casual observer, he is not so when one has the opportunity to see him at leisure. The face is one of real and rare distinction: The eyes especially reveal an intensity of feeling, alive with intelligence and comprehension. The brow is high and pale, the still abundant hair shows little signs of silvering and remains almost black."<sup>18</sup>

Many of Barrie's friends seemed to think he had a strong resemblance to Edgar Allen Poe, and others say he is not the Scottish type but Latin.

After 1928 Sir James Barrie became more of a hermit than ever with so many of his friends gone and drew more and more within himself. Little was known about his daily life. In April, 1929, he was made a corresponding member of the American Academy of Fine Arts and Letters. The following year he was chosen chancellor of Edinburgh University. As he started to make his speech he laid aside his black and gold braided robes of office, because he said he couldn't make a speech without his hands in his pockets.

Literary circles in 1931 were surprised when Barrie wrote an autobiography of thirty thousand words. He called it "The Greenwood Hat." Recipients of this little book were not to talk about it or let anyone see it. There were twenty copies printed. Ramsey MacDonald received one copy. Another copy was stolen from Peter Davies, the publisher, a godson of Barrie. The same year, 1931, he unveiled a statue of Hardy at Dorchester.

At this time Fabril Wells brought to America the original manuscript of The Little Minister. The collector who bought it found eighty pages missing. Barrie re-wrote them, taking six weeks for the task. When the missing pages came to America Barrie's writing was found to be the small almost print-like handwriting of thirty-four years earlier. The paper and ink also were the same. When asked about it Barrie said he still had his stationer supply him with the same type of paper and ink.

He attended Peter Davies' marriage in 1932. The crowd was so great that he had to resort to a furnace window in the basement to make his escape.

In 1932 he wrote a charming little story, Farewell, Miss Julie Logan. It was printed serially in the London Times. This was his first story in thirty years, but it had much of the earlier Barrie's humor and gentle satire.

To the astonishment of the Authors' Club he bequeathed to them only his most prized possessions" early in 1934.

The next two years were spent more or less in retirement. Living in the same apartment house as Barrie, at least a part of these last years, were Galworthy and Shaw. One can imagine the wonderful times these literary lights must have had together.

Early in June of 1937 Sir James fell a victim to a severe cold but was well enough to dine at the West End Club with Lord Horden, Physician in Ordinary to the king. Three days later Lord Horden was called and diagnosed the case as bronchial pneumonia. The patient was rushed to a nursing home but rallied only a few times. Mrs. Stanley, Barrie's housekeeper for twenty years in his modest flat overlooking the Thames, was overcome with grief and could see no one.

Barrie's two adopted sons, Peter Davies, who had been the inspiration for Peter Pan many years before, and Nicholas Davies, were at his bedside when he died June 19, 1937. The author's niece and Lady Cynthia Asquith were also with him.

Ramsay MacDonald, along with many other people of note, was in the procession that went to kirriemuir.

Barrie's own people met him at Forfar, six miles away, and took him to his native soil. There were many children in the procession, which would have pleased Barrie, but not many of his old friends were there to call him "Jamie" or "Jimmie." He had become "Sir James" to many.

The procession passed the white-washed cottage where he was born and the window at which 'Jess' (of a Window In Thrums), who was in real life his mother, kept vigil over the neighborhood so that later she was able to picture its scenes in such glowing language for her son that he became famous by the writing of it. This same window looks down on Barrie and his mother now as they rest side by side in the little churchyard where Baboie and the Little Minister first met.

Floral tributes came from every part of the world and were magnificent; but some child sent a little bunch of wild flowers tied with a string, with the message "Love from Mary Rose," which would have pleased Sir James very much.

The following quotation from the New York Times, Friday, June 28, 1937, is very fitting at this time:

"The funeral service was so simple that the strictest Calvinist could not find fault with it. And Barrie's grave is on a slope that looks down along the road that led him northward to

fame and fortune. Behind it is 'the hill and  
Caddam wood,' peopled with ghosts of his  
creation, Babbie and the Little Minister and  
the Auld Licht Weavers and Sentimental  
Tommy and his Grizel."<sup>20</sup>



## Bibliographical Notes

### Quotations

1. Barrie, J.M., Margaret Ogilvy, p. 61
2. Ibid., p. 62
3. Ibid., p. 64
4. Ibid., p. 65
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6. Hammerton, J.A., Barrie: The Story of a Genius, p. 168
7. Moulton, Thomas, Barrie, p. 89
8. Barrie, J.M., Margaret Ogilvy, p. 75
9. Hammerton, J.A., Barrie: The Story of a Genius, p. 427
10. Ibid., p. 436
11. Ibid., p. 448
12. Ibid., p. 490
13. Ibid., p. 491
14. Ibid., p. 473
15. Ibid., p. 478
16. Ibid., p. 480
17. Ibid., p. 491
18. Ibid., p. 492
20. \_\_\_\_\_ New York Times, Friday, June 25, 1937

## CHAPTER III

### Fiction

#### Early Books 1888-1890

Auld Licht Idylls, 1888, is considered the best and most representative of Barrie's earliest works. It, however, shows the period of unrest that its author was experiencing at this time. He was still a journalist with a charming gift of humor and the fact that he had contemplated writing a biography of 'Russell' hints that he had not settled with himself as to where his talents would lead him.

The chief fault of the book is the haphazard nature of the contents with little relation to 'Idylls.' It reveals the hand of an amateur and an inexperienced observer with an awkward way of writing.

Its lasting value in Barrie's literary life is that it rehearsed for him, imperfectly, characters that appeared later in A Window in Thrums, The Little Minister, and the Rommy books, but with such fine dressings that the reader can easily detect the rapid development of the author's style.

One of the enjoyable qualities of all these early books is that the middle-aged chronicler, the dominie, who tells the stories, never gets out of character. This narrative method, as has been stated before, had been employed by Barrie in his Dumfries Academy days when he wrote the Reckollections of a Schoolmaster, and it proved very helpful to him now, for he not only used it in these early books but also employed it attractively in The Little Minister.

Auld Licht Idylls is a small volume of one hundred seventy-nine pages, in twelve chapters. The first two Idylls, entitled "The School-House" and "Thrums; give the setting as seen by the dominie and are good examples of Barrie's descriptive and narrative style. "The Courting of T'nowhead's B. ll," which will be quoted from at length, because it is among his best Idylls, is a complete short story and has much dialogue. "The Auld Licht Kirk" and "David Lunan's Political Reminiscences are valuable as historical data for any person studying political and religious customs for the nineteenth century in Scotland. The chapter entitled "The Old Dominie" is a character sketch. It should be studied if one wishes to read Barrie's books on the Thrums country, as the dominie is the delightful story-teller in all of them.

All experiences in the life of a small community are dealt with by Barrie: births, deaths, fightings, courtships, marriages, christenings--all are given a place in this little book. Barrie's point of view in these Idylls is one of humor. It is of a gentle sort; nevertheless he is quietly laughing at the foibles of his folk and exposing their weaknesses vividly and kindly but with such variation of style that the reader's interest never lags.

To get the most out of these Idylls, however, one should study the Scottish dialect Barrie employs. Take for example the two words "but" and "ben," which are used frequently in Auld Licht Idylls. Their meaning is odd and unless the reader understands them he will get very little from the passage in which they occur. "But" is used to mean "toward the kitchen" and "ben" is toward the parlor.

"Ye canna bring but what's no ben."

The descriptive passages in the first sketch, which was written later than some of the others, show the reader the school-house and surrounding country, snow-laden, with the sharp perfection of an etching. His mother did not care for descriptive passages and there are not so many

in his books as one feels there should be, for the following lines from the first chapter of Auld Licht Idylls give the reader an idea of Barrie's ability to write description even at this early date. The scene is described as the story teller, the dominie, sees it:

"Early this morning I opened a window in my school-house in the glen of Quharity, awakened by the shivering of a starving sparrow against the frosted glass--Another white blanket had been spread upon the glen since I looked out last night, for over the same wilderness of snow that had met my gaze for a week, I see the steading of Waster Lunny deep in the waste. The ghost-like hills that pen in the glen have ceased to echo to the sharp crack of the sportsman's gun."<sup>1</sup>

One feels, in reading the eighth chapter, that Barrie is not likely to remain an "expert notetaker, or a puppet master;"<sup>2</sup> he is already a creative artist, a short story writer in every sense of the word. In this chapter, "The Courting of T'nowhead's Bell," a whole new group of characters is introduced. The beginning shows the story-teller's cunning:

"For two years it had been notorious in the square that Sam'l Dickie was thinking of courting T'nowhead's Bell, and that if little Sanders Elshioner went in for her he might prove a formidable one."<sup>3</sup>

The story is concerned with one farm maid and her two lovers, as the opening lines indicate. After much courting it becomes apparent that the girl will take the first who proposes to her. One Sunday morning Sanders

leaves the kirk and makes off for T'nowhead's farm, for he knows that Bell must be alone as all the other members of the family are in the T'nowhead pew. "With the true lover's instinct," Samuel understands what is up. He becomes panicky and in desperation leaves his pew in spite of his mother's pulling at his coat tails. The people in the "loft" have a splendid view from the windows of what is taking place. Sam'l took the common, which is a short cut through a steep ascent to T'nowhead; he is never out of their line of vision. Sanders, thinking he has plenty of time, takes the long way around to save his shoes.

"It was a race for a wife, and several on-lookers in the gallery braved the minister's displeasure to see who won."<sup>4</sup>

When Sanders becomes aware of Samuel, a hot foot race begins, and there is much shocked excitement in the gallery as both lads have many friends there. Sanders realizes, however, he cannot make it as Sam'l has a hundred yards the best of him; so he goes dejectedly to the pig sty to get consolation from the farmer's pigs.

The following dialogue between Bell and Sam'l is a delightful bit of Barrie humor:

" 'Lord preserve's! Are ye no at the kirk?' cried Bell, nearly dropping the baby as Sam'l broke into the room. 'Bell!' cried Sam'l. Then T'nowhead's Bell knew her hour had come. 'Sam'l,' she faltered. 'Will you hae's, Bell?' demanded

Sam'l, glaring at her sheepishly. 'Ay,' answered Bell. Sam'l fell into a chair. 'Bring's a drink o' water, Bell,' he said. But Bell thought the occasion required milk."<sup>5</sup>

The author's ability to picture scenes of action is clearly shown by the following quotation from another of the Idylls.

"One afternoon the kirk smelt of peppermints, and Mr. Deshart could rebuke no one, for the defaulter was not in sight. Whinny's cheed was working up and down in quiet enjoyment of its lozenge, when he started, noticing that the preacher had stopped. Then he heard a sepulchral voice say, 'Charles Webster!' Whinny's eyes turned to the pulpit, only part of which was visible to him, and to his horror they encountered the minister's head coming down the stairs. This took place after I had ceased to attend the Auld Licht kirk regularly; but I am told that as Whinny gave one wild scream the peppermint dropped from his mouth. The minister had got him by leaning over the pulpit door until, had he given himself only another inch, his feet would have gone into the air. As for Whinny he became a God-fearing man."<sup>6</sup>

There are too many details given here, however, and this makes the scene less effective than the following taken from "The Courting of T'nowhead's Bell."

"The suspense was terrible. Sam'l and Sanders had both known all along that Bell would take the first of the two who asked her. Even those who thought her proud admitted that she was modest. Bitterly the weaver (Sam'l) repented having waited so long. Now it was too late. In ten minutes Sanders would be at T'nowhead; in an hour all would be over. Sam'l rose to his feet in a daze. His mother pulled him down by the coat-tails and his father shook him, thinking he was walking in his sleep. He tottered past them, however, hurried up the aisle, and was gone before the minister could do more than stop in the middle of a whirl and gasp in horror after him."<sup>7</sup>

Even if this book had a plodding detailed chronicled account of the doings of the Auld Kirk folk, it is a rich book in comedy and human interest, and has a charm in its disjointed chapters which many a flawlessly constructed novel might envy.

The author himself has apologized for another of his earlier books, When A Man's Single (1888), in the following manner:

"I expect when I started Rob Angus I meant him to have a less strenuous time, but he fell in love and once they fall in love there is no more saying what your heroes will do. Soon I was only a chapter ahead. (It was published serially.) It is a method of publication I hope never to adopt again."<sup>8</sup>

This book, Barrie's first attempt at sustaining a connected story throughout an entire book, deteriorates to such a degree that it is melodramatic and one has the feeling of a very amateurish piece of writing which could have been composed during his days at Dumfries Academy. Barrie seems to be struggling all through it to express the beauty of life, yet the futility of it won and the author tries to cover up his failure, as Robert Louis Stevenson says, by "a jaunty bearing."

The Edinburgh Eleven (1889) was made up of eleven journalistic studies mostly of men who influenced Barrie during his University days, and was autobiographical in its nature. Professors Masson and John Stuart Blackie



were men after his own heart and the character sketches of them are well done in this little volume.

In The Student, the University of Edinburgh magazine in 1891, there is a reference to The Edinburgh Eleven which may not have represented the opinion of very many students:

"Mr. Barrie's Edinburgh Eleven is bright and clever, charmingly inaccurate and romantically overdrawn, but it is scarcely what we expect from so powerful a pen, nor if the truth must be told, does it do much justice to this old University and its students. We scarcely think that the already too grotesque humanity we northern students really are, will be greatly improved or corrected by Barrie's witty descriptions. His style in this sort of book becomes forced and stiff, the humor at times grows stale or smacks of resurrection."<sup>9</sup>

This is the voice of a student who was prejudiced and probably was not capable of criticising. With all the faults of style and structure to be found in the Edinburgh Eleven, Barrie presents his alma mater in a very attractive light and with much sympathy and admiration. This book is valuable for its autobiographical material as it tells much of his own life during his college days.

The critics hailed A Window in Thrums (1889) with joy. Mr. Augustine Birrell wrote in The Speaker that:

"What has happened so often has happened now. Everybody is reading A Window in Thrums and Auld Licht Idylls. The instantaneous popularity of these two books is a beautiful thing. The author

has conceded nothing to the public taste. May he never do so."<sup>10</sup>

Mrs. Oliphant praised the book very highly in Blackwood's Magazine, saying that

"No book could be more deeply instinct with the poetry of real feeling in which no fiction is, though it requires something which can only be called genius to reveal it to the world."<sup>11</sup>

One Scottish newspaper, however, said of the author of A Window in Thrums that "a man could make 'copy' out of the bones of his grandmother," which shows how true is the old saying that "a prophet is not without honor save in his own country."<sup>12</sup>

This book shows very little improvement over Auld Licht Idylls. It has much the same plan, the chapters being episodic and each containing a complete story, but not as seen from the school-house. He has moved to the cottage of Hendly and Jess McQuimpe and it is from their cottage that the old school-master tells his story. One feels that this story is comparable to Marrie's own life with Jess as his Margaret O'Ilvy.

Hammerton in Marrie: The Story of a Genius says of A Window in Thrums that it

"is marked by a fine serenity of style, a largeness of sympathy, a truthfulness that compels our acceptance. It is a curious mixture of realism and romanticism, of humor and sentiment. For the first time its young author has rid himself of his cynicism. He is at last in earnest."<sup>13</sup>

This seems high praise and one wonders if Hammerton is not a little prejudiced, as it comes hard for him to give Barrie any adverse criticism.

My Lady Nicotine, published in October, 1890, was a disappointment to its readers: but there was a good reason, for the author was working hard on his first novel, The Little Minister. My Lady Nicotine was a sort of farewell to literary journalism and also to a purely comic manner of writing.

#### Later Books 1890-1901

Barrie felt that the material offered by his native village was becoming stale, but even in writing his three-volume novel he had to locate it in Thrums; just a farewell to Kirriemuir, for which he still had a hankering. This novel The Little Minister (1891), the 'big thing' that his many admirers were so eagerly awaiting, was being published serially in the Good Lord magazine, and the journalist was definitely giving place to the novelist. The Little Minister did not conclude the magazine run until the end of the year, but it was published at once in the three-decker form which was well nigh overdone. Most of the old three-deckers were very wordy but Barrie's The Little Minister was not

of this type and because of its freshness had immediate success.

It is done in a grand manner. The introductory pages catch the interest at once and give the situation at a glance, which is concerned with the 'barebasket' kills of Kirriemuir. The first important theme has to do with Margaret Dishart, the old woman who was only forty-three, who accompanies her son, Gavin, on his entering the Presbyterian ministry at Thrums. This Margaret most definitely reminds the reader of another Margaret (Margaret Ogilvy) and the son Gavin of another son ( Jamie) who wrote for a time under the name of Gavin Ogilvy.

The religious life of the community is told much more interestingly than in Auld Licht Idylls and A Window in Thrums. Barrie saw this danger and introduced several interesting characters from outside his home community. His gift of being able to portray both humorous and pathetic characters stood him in good stead now. The delightful introduction of the 'haggarty-taggart Egyptian' or gypsy as she is sometimes called, who is to play havoc with Gavin's heart, is charming. Gavin's trouble with this gypsy, who is really a lady of quality, and with the scandalous situations she gets him into because of his growing love for her is the theme of the whole story. Even if the plot is

thin, through the genius of the writer to bring in clever incidents, the reader's interest holds to the end of the story. One of these incidents is as follows: The weavers of the community have been having a strike and the Egyptian had blown the horn to warn them of the coming of the soldiers. She then deliberately got into the thick of things in such a mysterious manner that the people of the town felt she must have supernatural powers.

Jean, the only servant in the Deshart home, informs Mrs. Deshart as to the doings in the community. She describes the part the Egyptian had in this strike in the following words:

" 'Ay, an Egyptian. That's what auld folk call a gypsy. Well, Mrs. Dishart, she led police and sojers sic a dance through Thrums as would baffle description, though I dent the fits and fors o't as I dinna. Ay, but they gripped her in the end and the queer thing is<sup>1</sup>-Gavin listened to no more. He suddenly sat down. The queer thing, of course, was that she had been caught in his garden."<sup>14</sup>

The book is full of witty phrases and episodes. The old horn that the Egyptian blew upon to warn the weavers of the coming of the soldiers, was placed on a hill where a watchman could see the country for miles. It was his business to let the country-side know when strangers were about. This had happened during one of the strikes and an officer was trying to find the guilty party who had warned the people of their coming. He was receiving testimony and cross-examin-

ing one of the weavers as follows:

"'Strange women,' corrected Dave. 'Well we was there, and it would maybe be twa o'clock, and we was speaking (but about lawful things) when we heard some one running yont the road. I keeded through a hole in the door, and I saw it was an Egyptian lassie at I had never clapped een on before. She saw the licht in the window, and she cried, 'Hie, you billies in the wind-mill, the sojers is coming!' I fell in a fricht, but the other man opened the door, and again she cries, 'The sojers is coming; quick or you'll be ta'en. At that the other man up wi' his bonnet and ran, but I dinna make off so smart.' 'You had to pick yourself up first,' suggested the officer. 'Sal, it was the lassie picked me up; ay, and she picked up a horn at the same time. "Blaw on that," she cried, "and alarm the town." But sheriff, I dinna do't. Na, I had ower muckle respect for the law.' 'In other words,' said Halliwell, 'you also bolted and left the gypsy to blow the horn herself!' 'I dinna deny but what I made my feet my friend,' replied Dave."<sup>15</sup>

The method of telling the story is the one Barrie has used in all his books up to this time. It gives the story an air of unreality, for at one moment the narrator, in his character of Dominie, may be up the glen with Babbie watching her flit over the ground in fairy-like fashion and then in a flash he is relating a conversation that is taking place in the manse in Thrums.

Lady Babbie, the gypsy, is a lovable heroine from some foreign land of all fairies and elves. Her dancing among the pages of The Little Minister is a never-ending source of delight to the reader. The description given by the Dominie in The Little Minister is so characteristic that it is well worth quoting here:

"Shall we not laugh at the student who chafes when between him and his book comes the song of the thrashes with whom on the mad night you danced into Gavin's life--The gladness of living was in your step, your voice was melody--You were the daughter of the summer night born where all birds were free, and the moon christened you with her soft light, to dazzle the eye of man--To look upon you was to rejoice that so fair a thing could be; to think of you is still to be young."<sup>16</sup>

The people of the community found out, at last, about the love affair between Babbie and the little minister. Being dogmatic, narrow-minded individuals, they put the very worst interpretation upon it. They knew this man, whom they had all trusted, had betrayed them and their God in allowing himself to become enamored with such a witch. There was only one thing to do: drive the little minister from their sacred kirk. He must not stay another Sunday. But the floods took a hand in the game.

The little minister had been dejectedly wandering in the woods all night through the rain when he saw from the cliff on which he was standing, his rival, Lord Rintoul, slowly sinking in the mire of the river below. There follows the most exciting and dramatic situation in the book. The little minister was so brave and noble at this time that his congregation was willing to do anything for everything they could. This made possible a very happy ending for everybody, which to Stevenson's way of thinking was an un-

natural situation:

"The Little Minister ought to have ended badly,' Steven on wrote. 'We all know it did; and we are infinitely grateful to you for the grace and good feeling with which you lied about it.' The excellently described tragedy of the flood, one feels, had its natural culmination in Peter Tosh's prayer, 'Oh, Lord, lift this mist for it's mair than we can bear!' It is at these words that the artist's conclusions should have come. 17

Even with all its faults of thin plot, unreal situations, sentimentalities, and fantastic personalities, the book has had literary success which can be attributed to the charm and delight of the writing, and to Barrie's ability to create winsome and winning characters and to fill every chapter with heart-throbs.

Sentimental Tommy, said by many to be his greatest prose work, was first published serially in Scribner's Magazine from January to November, 1896. Again the writer goes back to Thrums for his characters. Hamerton says in Barrie: The Story of a Genius:

'Once again his admirers had to recognize certain structural defects in his story and in his preface to the American edition he himself admits, 'This is not in the smallest degree the book I meant it to be. Tommy ran away with the author. It was the old case of Barrie, pen in hand, playing his imaginative role of the everlasting boy.' 18

The story opens with Tommy and his mother living in a tenement district of London. Jean Myles, the mother, had married a fascinating villain, who died in London, leaving



her penniless with the lovable Tommy and a little baby girl. Her life was terribly hard:

"She would look straight before her and sometimes her lips twitched and then she drew them in to keep them still. It is a kind of dry weeping that sometimes comes to miserable ones when their minds stray into the happy past."<sup>19</sup>

Even if Jean was very sick and in poverty her Scottish pride would not allow her to write home and tell the truth about her circumstances. Only her glowing accounts of her husband's success reached Thrums, as the people there had said that she would have a miserable time with this villain whom no one liked.

Jean Myles had to give up in the end, however, and send for Aaron Lotta, a former lover, when she knew she had not much longer to live. After her death he took her 'bairns' back with him to Thrums. He became very fond of Elspeth, the little daughter, but he never learned even to like Tommy. Tommy was sent to school, where he learned only one thing: that he could write. At this point many people think the story of Sentimental Tommy is a sort of psychological narrative of Barrie's own life.

Sentimental Tommy became so apt at writing that Betty, a weaver's daughter, who had given up an old lover, asked Tommy to write her former lover and tell him of her coming marriage:

"Betsy listened to it the letter with heaving breast and felt so sorry for her old swain that forgetting she had never loved him she all but gave

Andrew the go-by and returned to Peter. As for Peter, who had been getting over his trouble, he saw now for the first time what he had lost and carried Betsy's dear letter in his outer pocket and was unconsolable."<sup>20</sup>

Tommy, on being asked how he wrote such a good letter, answered with proper awe:

"I think I thought--I thought I was Betsy at the time."<sup>21</sup>

This reminds one of the place in Margaret Ogilvy where Barrie says:

"It is my contemptible weakness that if I say a character smiled vacuously, I must smile vacuously, if he frowns or leers, I frown or leer; if he is a coward or given to contortions, I cringe or twist my legs until I have to stop writing to undo the knots."<sup>22</sup>

The Dominie was jealous of Tommy for giving such service to the poor people who could not read or write as this had been his work before Tommy came.

In the village of Thrums during Tommy's boyhood dwelt one who was known as "The Painted Lady." She would become insane at times over an illicit love affair, whose fruit was an illegitimate child named Grizel. Tommy defended her against the other children of the neighborhood. Thus he became acquainted with this beautiful truth-loving girl who was to figure in his life always.

The whole book is taken up with Tommy's escapades and shows a remarkable understanding of the boy mind. It

is told in such a manner that the reader has a chuckle in his throat or a tear in his eye most of the time. There is much for both old and young to enjoy.

The sequel to Sentimental Tommy, Tommy and Grizel (1900), is really no more than a continuation of the first book. Tommy goes to London and becomes famous in the literary world. He returns to Thrums and makes love to the beautiful and keen-sighted Grizel, who sees Tommy grow from a sentimental excitement-loving boy into a philandering man.

Tommy goes to Switzerland and Grizel learns he is very ill. She goes to him and finds him in a garden making love to a married woman. This completely unnerves Grizel as she really loves Tommy. Because of this experience she becomes temporarily deranged mentally with symptoms similar to those of her unfortunate mother. Tommy is so remorseful that he returns to Thrums, marries Grizel, and nurses her back to health.

Meanwhile the lady to whom he had made love in Switzerland has arrived in Thrums. While making a visit to her Tommy climbs over a high gate, misses his footing, and is caught by his collar and hanged.

Moulton in his book, Barrie says of this ending that

"Tommy's death is the most masterly contriv-

ance of the story. It was apparently intended at first that he should die of consumption-- 'for Tommy had inherited his mother's cough,' we are informed earlier in Tommy and Grizel. But the idea of the boy who wouldn't grow up is sufficiently fixed in the author's mind to persuade him that just as Tommy had lived boyishly so must he die boyishly." 3

Grizel, loving Tommy dearly, yet saw him as Barrie did:

"Poor Tommy! He was still a boy, he was ever a boy, trying sometimes, as now, to be a man, and always when he looked round he ran back to his boyhood as if he saw it holding out its arms to him and inviting him to come back and play. He was so fond of being a boy that he could not grow up. In a younger world, where there were only boys and girls, he might have been a gallant figure." 24

The Tommy books are written with a troll whimsical manner. Barrie's strength lies in his ability to portray swift-moving incidents and dialogue and at the same time move his readers with his humor and his pathos. Barrie seems to have trouble with the descriptive parts of a novel and one wonders if this is because his mother never liked to have him write much description.

Moult says of these books in Barrie that they have

"Pack-like, romantic humanity, sweet with the strength of those who come through the fires of experience stronger and unembittered a human deeper than all else, because it holds all." 25

The first of the fairy tale books, The Little White Bird (1902), a forerunner of the play Peter Pan, had begun as a nursery tale to the four Davies boys, whom

Barrie had first met in Kensington Gardens. In these stories there were wonderful pictures and thrilling climaxes; there were fairies, pirates, and flying boys and girls; also there was a crocodile that had swallowed a watch. When one pirate was killed, the smallest of the brothers, Peter by name, said "Let's kill a lot of them."<sup>18</sup>

From The Little White Bird came two other books, Peter Pan in Kensington Garden (1906) and its sequel Peter and Wendy (1911), which were written exclusively for children and always would be of interest to them.

Barrie's fiction falls naturally under two headings: that which deals with the Thrums country, and that which has to do with his life in London. The Thrums books, as has been pointed out, were mainly influenced by his mother, while the London books are the outgrowth of his association with the four Davies boys and their parents.

As a fiction writer Barrie's contribution to the literary world is unique, for he was the founder of the famous "Kailyard School" of the Nineties, its outstanding characteristic being its realistic handling of the lives of the Scottish poor. No other writer of the British Isles has ever done such a clever piece of work as Barrie has done in his descriptive portrayal of the Thrums country. These books will long be remembered for

their humor, pathos, frankness, fantastic drolleries, and Scottish dialect, and the vividness of his description.

The Larrie of fantasy, whom the reader has only a glimpse of in the books written in London dealing with fairies, elves, and flying boys and girls of Kensington Gardens, was to be revealed more fully later in his plays. This quality of grave elvishness, which is beginning here to outweigh all his other characteristics and which puts him into a fairy land of his own imagination, will always be a delight to boys and girls everywhere and for that matter, to many grown-ups---if for nothing else than its universal appeal.

## Bibliographical Notes

### Quotations

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## CHAPTER IV

### A Biography

#### Margaret Ogilvy 1896

It is surely a rare distinction for a man of letters to be successful in three entirely different fields of literature, but Sir James Matthew Barrie attained that goal. In chapters two and three the growth of Barrie from a journalist to a successful writer of fiction has been discussed. In chapter five his remarkable success as a playwright will be discussed at length, for it concerns his Margaret Ogilvy, and the mother of a great man who attained fame should be studied next to the man himself because a mother gets nearest to the heart of a child and endows him with qualities which make for success. Such indeed was the influence that Margaret Ogilvy had upon her son James Matthew Barrie. There is no better way of learning about the one great influence in the life of Barrie than to study his book Margaret Ogilvy, for as the writer J.P.G. in the Kansas City Star for



Saturday, June 19, 1937, has said:

" His Barrie's own life, from his first remembrance at six, was so closely linked with that of the little mother--his Margaret Ogilvy--who influenced him in so many of his writings that the psychical association really developed in him a dual personality."<sup>1</sup>

It is only through knowing Margaret Ogilvy that we can know her son.

Hammerton estimates for his readers the value of Margaret Ogilvy in the following lines taken from his book, Barrie: The Story of a Genius:

"Isaac Marcossou says in his life of Charles Frohman that Barrie is the only man in the world who has ever written a book about his mother. This is too sweeping a statement, but it is true that no such book as Margaret Ogilvy was ever written by any man of letters. To read this book is to come in contact with a human being. It is the work of deep sympathy and contains much pathos and humor and at times the reader doesn't know whether to laugh or cry."<sup>2</sup>

If the author had never written anything but this sincere tribute to motherhood, he should long be remembered; for the appeal is universal. It is universal because an intimate feeling is created between the reader and the author, and because of this the reader not only gets a clear pen picture of Barrie's humorous, tender-hearted, precious mother, but also feels that the author is writing an excellent biography of every true mother. One writer has said that every mother should

have this little volume on her kitchen shelf, and when trying problems seem beyond endurance, it would smooth out her trials just to read a few lines from Margaret Ogilvy. The real worth of the book is in the desire it creates in every sincere woman to be as inspiring and understanding a mother as Margaret Ogilvy.

It is characteristic of Barrie to crowd much into a few pages and he follows this rule in writing the ten short chapters of his Margaret Ogilvy. His first chapter he calls, "How My Mother Got Her Soft Face." The story is told by Barrie himself and begins with his birth and the purchasing of six hair-bottomed chairs--two great events in the life of the Barrie family.

"I so often heard the tale afterwards and shared in so many similar triumphs that the coming of the chairs seems to be something I remember as if I had jumped out of bed on that first day, and run ben to see how they looked. I am sure my mother's feet were ettling be ben lang before they could be trusted, and that the moment after she was left alone with me she was discovered barefooted in the west room, doctoring a scar (which she had been the first to detect) on one of the chairs."<sup>3</sup>

The neighbors, who had come crowding in to see the new chairs, incidentally talked of the new baby's future, saying that it would surely be impossible to give him a college education. (The Barries were noted for trying to give their boys university training.) Barrie says of

all this conversation in Margaret Ogilvy:

"When she seemed to agree with them that it would be impossible to give me a college education, was I so easily taken in, or did I know already what ambition burned behind that dear face? And when we were left together, did I laugh at the great things that were in her mind or had she to whisper them to me first and then did I put my arm around her and tell her that I would help?"<sup>4</sup>

What a beautiful picture is given the reader, in the last few lines, of the intimacy of Barrie and his mother.

Barrie seems to remember little of his childhood except through his mother's eyes, until he was six, when the sudden death of his brother away at Dumfries Academy made a lasting impression on his memory. He writes in Margaret Ogilvy:

"It is all guess work for six years; she whom I see in them is the woman who came suddenly into view when they were at an end. The soft face--they say was not so soft then. The shawl that was flung over her--we had not begun to hunt her with a shawl nor to make our bodies a screen between her and the draughts."<sup>5</sup>

After the death of this son Margaret Ogilvy was never well again, although she had seventy-six glorious years in all and was always active to the last. She was sick for many months after this death and Barrie was her one source of comfort.

The christening robe of the dead son was very dear to

her. She lent it far and wide to other mothers and

"when it was brought back to her she took it in her arms as softly as if it might be asleep and unconsciously pressed it to her breast: there was never anything in the house that spoke to her quite so eloquently as that little robe; it was the one of her children that always remained a baby."<sup>6</sup>

Barrie was very proud of his mother's ability as a seamstress:

"All the clothes in the house were of her making, and you don't know her in the least if you think they were out of fashion; she turned them and made them new again, she beat them and made them new again; in the fashion! I must come back to this. Never was a woman with such an eye for it--The minister's wife (a cloak), the banker's daughter (the new sleeves)--they had but to pass our window once, and the scalp, so to speak, was in my mother's hands."

Barrie says in Margaret Ogilvy that his mother lived many active years, until the end, and that "you never knew where she was unless you took hold of her;" but that her housekeeping became so famous that brides would come for watching her "canning and sanding and stitching."<sup>9</sup> Old people still like to tell of her baking, and how much she gave away, "how much she gave away of all she had and what pretty ways she had of giving it." "Her face beamed and ribbed with mirth--I have heard no such laugh as hers save from merry children; the laughter of most of us ages, and wears out with the body, but hers remained gleeful to the last as if it were born afresh

every morning. There was always something of the child in her.

Barrie's second chapter is entitled "What She Had Been" and he begins it by saying:

"What she had been, and what I shall be, these were the two great subjects between us in my boyhood, and while we discussed the one we were deciding the other, though neither of us knew it."<sup>11</sup>

Up to this time (1896) Barrie had dealt with the past in writing his books; his reason is given in the following lines from Margaret Ogilvy:

"The reason my books deal with the past instead of with the life is myself have known is simply this, that I soon grow tired of writing tales unless I can see a little girl of whom my mother has told me, wandering confidently through the pages. Such a grip has her memory of her childhood had upon me since I was a boy of six."<sup>12</sup>

Margaret's father, a stone mason, had much talent as a writer, and if he had had the advantages of his noted grandson, David Ogilvy might have left his mark on the world too. His wife died while their two children, a son and a daughter, were quite young. David had the satisfaction of seeing his son pass from a parish school to Aberdeen University, then to a divinity school at Edinburgh, and then to his life work at the Dalziel Free Church, Motherwell, where he stayed until after the death of his sister, Margaret Ogilvy, in 1895.

He then came to live with James Matthew Barrie's father and sister at Strathview. David Ogilvy's character and successful training of his son and daughter (Margaret) are important elements in the heritage of James Matthew Barrie.

Barrie's description of his grandfather, gotten through his mother's eyes, is well worth giving here:

"On the surface he is as hard as the stone on which he chiselled, and his face is dyed red by its dust; he is rounded in the shoulders and a 'hoast' nunts him ever; sooner or later that cough must carry him off, but until then it shall not keep him from the quarry, nor shall his chapped hands, as long as they can grasp the mull. It is a night of rain or snow and my mother, the little girl in a pinafore who is already his housekeeper, has been many times to the door to look for him. At last he draws nigh, hoasting. Or I see him setting off to church, for he was a great 'stoop' of the Auld Licht Kirk, and his mouth was very firm now as if there were a case of discipline to face, but on his way home he is bowed with pity. 13

Margaret Ogilvy was only eight when her mother died, but she became mistress of her father's house and a mother to her little brother, mending, scrubbing, baking, sewing for her household, leaving joyfully from her bed in the morning because there was so much to be done. Through these colorful stories of her youth she made her son Jamie feel that 'work is the best fun of all.'

One of her favorite stories dealt with her marriage

of the child in her; for these stories were dramatized by both of them many times. It was in these close, understanding times with his mother that he accidentally discovered that literature was his "game"--but not through the intention of his mother, for she had always wanted him to be a minister. When he became famous as an author (and before), however, she was always ready with her counsel to help him.

Chapter IV deals with an "Editor." Margaret Ogilvy seemed to be very anxious when her son went to London to interview the editor, Greenwood. She felt she could have handled this strange gentleman much better than her son; for she is quoted as saying that

"Gentle or simple, stupid or clever, the men are all alike in the hands of woman that flatters them."<sup>16</sup>

After the successful meeting with Greenwood, Barrie says:

"I was now able to see my mother again, and the park seats no longer loomed so prominent in our map of London. Those park seats were the monster's glaring eyes to her." All Margaret Ogilvy could see was mothers running "wild-eyed from seat to seat looking for their sons."<sup>17</sup>

After the author had definitely arrived, he became a candidate for membership in the Garrick Club, London. Meredith, an old member, and a man who was said to have the largest vocabulary among living men, said of Barrie's candidacy:

"If there seems to be doubt of Barrie's election, I will journey. Frederick Greenwood had asked Meredith to support Barrie. But oh, my work has hold of me, and a day lost is a dropping of blood. Would it be out of rule and blushless for me to write to the Committee? The election of Barrie honors the club."19

One of the amusing incidents given in Margaret Ogilvy occurred at this time. When she learned of her "Jamie's" desire to join this club she said:

"But I may tell you if you bide in London and canna become member of a club, the best you can do is to tie a rope round your neck and slip out of the world. You see it doesna do for a man in London to eat his dinner in his lodgings. Does he get good dinners at the club? Oh, they cow! You get no common beef at clubs; there is a manzy of different things all sauced up to be unlike themselves. Even the potatoes dauna look like potatoes."20

In such biting sarcasm as she had never before used in speaking to her son, she tried to keep him from joining this useless club, "cheap at thirty pounds, is it no?"

Her Scottish traits showed up, when her son was earning more money than she had ever dreamed possible.

"Money you see meant so much to her. In the old days when the articles arrived she did not read them at once; she first counted the lines to discover what we should get for it. She and the daughter who was so dear to her had calculated the payment per line."21

The fifth and sixth chapters have to do with "A Day of Her Life" and "Her Maid of all Work." They tell of the infinite care and tender love the whole family,



husband, daughter, and son shower upon their delicate Margaret Ogilvy. Her rebellion at having to be waited upon has its humorous side and the reader hardly knows whether to laugh or cry at her witty sayings and doings, for an invalid is always pathetic even if she never complains.

R.L.S. were the initials that the literary world loved at this time; so it was very fitting for Barrie to entitle his seventh chapter "R.L.S." There was, however, one wee Scottish woman, who lived in Kirriemuir, who said:

"He takes no hold of me; she insisted. 'I would a hantler read your books!'"<sup>22</sup>

When Barrie would place Stevenson's books in his mother's hands she would have none of them, always reaching for her son's work. The family would leave her alone for a while and on their return she would be guiltily but eagerly reading from Stevenson. This procedure continued until she had to admit that if R.L.S. had been her son

"I dinna deny but what I could have found room for him."<sup>23</sup>

"A Panic in the House" is the title of the eighth chapter, which tells of the last sickness of Barrie's mother and their need of a nurse. But "to have a strange woman in my mother's room--you who are used to them can-

not conceive what it means to us."<sup>24</sup> So that daughter whom she loved best stayed by her mother's side even until death claimed her.

The ninth chapter deals with his mother as the heroine of all his books. Always when Barrie would begin a new story, his mother would ask what it was about this time.

"'True we can guess who it is about,' my sister would say pointedly; 'Maybe you can guess, but it is beyond me...!' My sister scorned her at such times. 'What woman is in all his books?' she would demand."<sup>25</sup>

The conversation continued in this manner until the daughter said it was high time Barrie was getting a new heroine, and the mother would say,

"'That is what I tell him,' she says chuckling, 'And he tries to keep me out, but he canna; it's more than he can do!'"<sup>26</sup>

In the evenings after the mother had gone to bed the family would gather in her room and the new story would be read. Barrie always felt foolish when he would describe his heroine and try in a big bullying voice to say, "Along this path came a woman," then his mother would laugh until father, sister, and Barrie himself would demand that she stop. Even if the woman coming along the path was a tall majestic figure, the little mother would say, "It's the first time I ever heard it said of her."<sup>27</sup>

So Barrie could not ever fool his mother, and it is true of both his plays and his novels that the readers discover Margaret Ogilvy in all of them. Margaret Dishart in The Little Minister (1891) is a splendid example of the place Barrie gives his mother in his books. This is shown in the second chapter, when Margaret, the mother of Gavin, says that she saw his genius while he was still a child.

"It was a minister's brow--and she decided when his age was still counted by months, that the ministry had need of him. An enthusiastic mother may bend her son's mind as she chooses if she begins at once. In those days the first question asked of a child was not, 'Tell me your name,' but 'what are you to be?' And one child in every family replied, 'A minister.'"<sup>28</sup>

Coming down to one of his latest plays Dear Brutus, published in 1917, the reader finds that Barrie still thinks of his mother although she has been dead twenty-two years. Mrs. Coade is Margaret Ogilvy done to a turn. She is "a rounded old lady with a beaming smile that has accompanied her from childhood."<sup>29</sup> Again the reader sees Barrie's mother through the conversation of Coade when he is making love to his wife after his return from the enchanted woods.

"Mr. Coade: 'Old? I didn't think of you as old. No, no, young--with the moving dew on your face--coming across a lawn in a black and green green dress--and carrying such a pretty parasol.

Old? Yes, I suppose so. But it is still the same soft, lovable face and the same kind, beaming smile that children could warm their hands at."<sup>30</sup>

Many, many such examples as these could be given from every one of Barrie's works; but this is enough for the purpose of giving the reader an idea of the profound influence the frail little Scottish woman, Margaret Ogilvy, had upon her illustrious son.

The last chapter, "Art Thou Afraid?" is filled with much sadness, for James had to give up his dear mother. When the word came to London that she was again dangerously ill, he left for Scotland at once. His father was waiting for him, but it was not of his mother's death he heard first; it was of the death of his sister, Jane, worn out from the long vigil. She had promised her mother "I'll never leave you, mother." "Fine, I know you'll never leave me."<sup>31</sup> But it was this daughter that waited for the mother, seeming to cry, "Mother, you are lingering so long at the end, I have ill waiting for you."

When they told Margaret Ogilvy that James would come at once, she said with a confidential smile: "He will come as quick as trains can bring him." "This is my reward [wrote Barrie] that is what I have got for my books."<sup>32</sup>

These lines taken from Margaret Ogilvy sum up in a

few words the deep and tender love Barrie had for his mother and are fitting as a closing for this summary:

"For when you looked into my mother's eyes you knew, as if He had told you, why God sent her into the world--it was to open the minds of all who looked to beautiful thoughts. And that is the beginning and end of literature. Those eyes that I cannot see until I was six years old have guided me through life, and I pray God they may remain my earthly judge to the last. They were never more my guide than when I helped to put her to earth, not whimpering because my mother had been taken away after seventy-six glorious years of life, but exulting in her even at the grave."<sup>23</sup>

This biography of Margaret Ogilvy is definitely an outgrowth of the life of Sir James M. Barrie, for it pictures in vivid manner the life of mother and son. It will be of lasting value in the field of literature because of Barrie's whimsical style of writing, which is entertaining and readable, because of its universal appeal which includes immature as well as mature readers, because of its delightful use of Scottish dialect, and most of all, because of the remarkable reality of the character it portrays. Students can go to it for biographical data on Barrie and will gain not only knowledge of the writer's life but also a wealth of material on Scottish characteristics and family life. If Barrie had done nothing else but this one flawless miniature of his Margaret Ogilvy he would have a place in the literary world.

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## CHAPTER V

### Drama

#### Early Plays, 1892-1905

At the close of 1891, the novel The Little Minister was Barrie's outstanding achievement. His readers did not think of him in any sense of the word as a dramatist; but he became fascinated with the idea of writing plays and felt it was his "game" just as he had been firmly convinced that he should write books.

His Walker, London, a farcical comedy in three acts, was produced at Toole's Theater, on February 25, 1892. The scene was on the Thames, near Maidenhead, and the chief character was a London hairdresser, named Jasper Phipps, who ran away on his wedding morning taking the honeymoon money with him. He was not dishonest in this but wanted his honeymoon by himself.

Jasper saw a beautiful girl rescued from drowning by a boatman, who wished Jasper to act as if he had rescued the girl. When she regained consciousness, she was very profuse in her thanks and took Jasper to the house-

boat of her parents where he was acclaimed a hero. To carry out this role he told them he was an African explorer. Though ignorant and delightfully illiterate, he managed to avoid being found out. He was continually finding himself in ticklish situations which made the play uproariously funny.

The play was warmly received and ran for three hundred performances. Hammerton says the reason for this success was that

"It offered a freshness of humor, an oddness of fancy and a charmingly unconventional setting. The stage craft of the author was shown in the ease with which he carried his story through three acts of continuous movement without change of setting."<sup>1</sup>

Although this play had some measure of success, it is seldom listed among Barrie's plays even by such well-known compilers of bibliographies as Manly and Rickert. The most exciting event coming out of the play was Barrie's "marriage at Kirriemuir, July, 1894, to Miss Mary Ansell,"<sup>2</sup> a charming actress who had made her mark in his own walker, London. "The match was quite a little romance."<sup>2</sup>

Becky Sharp, a rather juvenile paraphrase of Thackeray's novel, Vanity Fair, was played in London in 1893. It was a satire in one act, and made a genial though serious attempt to pour contempt on the vogue of Ibsenism



then at its height.

The next play of Barrie's goes back to his native country. In The Professor's Love Story, produced June 25, 1894, in London, the reader is delighted with a comedy of Scottish life. Professor Goodwillie (the Reverend Gavin Dishart of the Little Minister, grown older and more stupid), who has fallen in love with Lucy, his pretty secretary, is so ignorant of everything except his teaching that he has not the least idea of what has happened to him. He finds out that he is in love and there follows a teen-age courtship with a tree trunk as postoffice. Although there are three acts of sentiment, the public received it enthusiastically. It was not only a success in England but was staged by Frohman in America in 1896 and had a more profitable run in New York than in London.

It was necessary at this time (1896) for Barrie to come to America, to meet Charles Frohman, who was just coming into his own as America's leading theatrical manager. He was very enthusiastic about the success of The Professor's Love Story, and wanted Barrie to make a play of The Little Minister and let him (Frohman) have the honor of producing it, saying that he could provide an actress for the part of Lady Babbie who would make its fortune.

The following is a quotation given by Hammerton in his book Barrie: The Story of a Genius. He does not tell where he got the quotation but it is worth repeating here since it tells in Barrie's own words his impressions of Frohman.

"He was very dogged. I had only one quarrel with him, but it lasted all the sixteen years I knew him. He wanted me to be a playwright and I wanted to be a novelist. All those years I fought him on that. He always won, but not because of his doggedness; only because one had to do as he wanted. He also threatened, if I had stopped, to reproduce the old plays and print my name in large electric letters on the entrance of the theater."<sup>3</sup>

Through clever manipulation, Frohman caused Barrie to turn his attention definitely towards the theater.

"The story of how that brilliant American actress Maude Adams at once became a star and an inspiration to the dramatist who was to provide her with the greatest success of her wonderful career is told by Marcossion in his life of Frohman as follows: 'Under Frohman's influence he (Barrie) had begun to consider a dramatization of The Little Minister, but the real stimulus was lacking because who could play the part of Babbie? Now came one of those unexpected moments that shape lives. On a certain day Barrie dropped into the Empire Theater (New York) to see Frohman who was out.

"'Why don't you step downstairs and see Rosemary?' said Frohman's secretary. "All right," said Barrie. So he went down into the Empire and took a seat in the last row. An hour afterwards he came rushing back to Frohman's office, found his friend in, and said to him as excitedly as his Scotch nature would permit: "Frohman, I

have found the woman to play Babbie in The Little minister! I am going to dramatize it myself." "Who is it?" asked Frohman with a twinkle in his eye, for he knew it without asking. "It is that little Miss Adams who plays Dorothy."

Barrie and his devoted friend Robert Nicoll, who had accompanied Barrie to America, set sail for England on November 7, 1896, after spending a very happy and profitable time in America. The staging of The Little Minister (1897) was the foundation of Barrie's fortunes in the theater. From the night when he first saw Maude Adams play, the three names, Maude Adams, Barrie, and Frohman were thought of as one, in connection with the theater, and as Maude Adams played the lead in The Little Minister as Lady Babbie, Barrie derived great satisfaction from the boxoffice returns. The play ran on its first production for three hundred nights and netted gross receipts amounting to three hundred seventy-five thousand dollars. If Barrie had never done any more writing this one play would have made him very comfortable financially, but there were many more successes to follow.

The novel is hardly recognizable in the play and much more imposing are the elders who were almost lost in the novel because of the conversation of the lovers. Barrie uses his art here in revealing a character to his

audience in a single sentence, as when Jean, walking to church, "retorts grimly to someone who speaks to her: 'I can neither hear nor see. I am wearing my best alpaca!'"<sup>5</sup>

This play has never been printed in book form; so it was impossible for the writer to read it. The information about it came from Moulton's book, Barrie.

Taken from the Glasgow News is a report of an interesting interview gotten from an Auld Licht Elder who had been prevailed upon to go see The Little Minister since it was given not in a theater but in the town hall. When asked what he thought of the play he said:

"Oh, very guid, but the releigious aspects--weel, ye've heard ma views. Fawke tell me Mr. Barrie's din a lot o' good for Thrums but in view o' this thing, man, A'm dootin' it, A'm dootin' it, A'm sairly dootin' it. In ain o' his he maks Auld Licht elders sweir. A'm thinkin' if the real Auld Licht elders cud rise frae their graves an' see The Little Minister that wad mak them swear."<sup>6</sup>

Even if some of the Auld Licht Elders disapproved Barrie's methods of writing about them, many Scottish critics have lamented the fact that Barrie belonged to the world now and that the period following the production of the play The Little Minister found the writer leaving his native land and going afar for material to put into his plays. One critic says:

"If only Barrie had remained a Scottish dramatist, what a masterpiece might he not have hewn from his native granite!" He says further on, speaking of 'the real and great Barrie on whom the English and the fairies have made such fatal incursion...' 'Barrie is that oddity, a Scot beaten by the English who have destroyed his chance to be the great comic dramatist of his country.'"6

But with all this criticism coming from his own Scotland, Barrie had become a world figure. His books began to be translated into many languages and his plays appeared in many languages and his plays appeared in many countries.

The years 1897 to 1900 were unproductive ones for J.M. Barrie. This might have been due to the outbreak of strife in South Africa since war does affect art in all its forms. In September, 1900, however, a three-act play, The Wedding Guest, was produced in London. The Wedding Guest is a young man's past that comes to his marriage in the form of his mistress, who is the mother of his child. The husband does an unusual thing and confesses all to his bride, thereby ruining his marriage and breaking his wife's heart. This realistic work pleased many of the critics and they felt that Barrie was really getting down to business.

Miss Maude Adams was the first to interpret the charming part of Phoebe Throssel in Quality Street which

opened at Toledo, Ohio, in 1901. When it came to New York Miss Adams and Barrie became the "talk of the town."

In Quality Street Barrie takes his audience away from the complicated modern life back a hundred years to an atmosphere so remote from that of today that it can scarcely be conceived of as existing. The scene of the play is located in a very beautiful English village and on the Quality Street of the town. In a dainty tidy cottage live two delightful ladies whom the audience love at once. Barrie describes this scene as follows:

"The scene is the blue and white room in the house of the Misses Susan and Phoebe Throssel in Quality Street. Through the bowed window at the back we have a glimpse of the street. It is pleasantly broad and grass grown and is linked to the outer world by one demure shop whose door rings a bell every time it opens and shuts. The bell is the most familiar sound of Quality Street. It is in the time of the Napoleonic Wars and though the good ladies of Quality Street are no doubt busy knitting, the street is not without animation--Gentlemen in the street are an event; but see, just as we raise the curtain, there goes the recruiting sergeant. If he were to look in at the window of the blue and white room all the ladies there assembled would draw themselves up; they know him for a rude fellow who smiles at the approach of maiden ladies, and continues to smile after they have passed."<sup>7</sup>

Even if these two women are such prim ladies, Barrie has painted them, as only Barrie can, whimsical and kind-hearted. Phoebe "of the ringlets"<sup>8</sup> is the younger of the two and is in love with Captain Brown, who says he has something important to tell her. She is all aflutter as

she feels her time has come--but alas! he informs her he has enlisted.

The two ladies have a pathetic struggle because of Captain Brown's mismanagement of their small income, but they manage to live by holding school in their home. At the end of ten years Captain Brown returns and is unhappy over the change in Phoebe. A very clever and funny situation develops when Captain Brown mistakes Phoebe for a fictitious niece, Miss Livvy, when he comes upon her dressed in her sister's lovely wedding gown, which was never used. She keeps up the deception until the situation becomes intolerable and through Captain Brown's cleverness Phoebe's reputation is saved.

Katherine Hepburn plays Phoebe superbly in the play Quality Street. There is nothing heavy or dramatic in the play but Barrie must have been in a delightful mood when he wrote it.

The whole play is symbolic. Phoebe is nothing more than a symbol of a woman who cannot bear to grow old and lose the attention of the other sex. Miss Livvy is elusive; she is the spirit of a desire that possesses many people to try to retain lost youth. Barrie tells how futile this is, when he shows that Miss Livvy is a failure when she tries to fascinate Captain Brown.

The Admirable Crichton, produced in 1903, is considered one of Barrie's most important contributions to the stage. It is a problem play on a question which confronts the social reformer, that of class distinction.

The play is concerned with a very proper butler who is characterized thus:

"To be an indoor servant at all is to Crichton a badge of honor; to be a butler at thirty is the realization of his proudest ambitions. He is devotedly attached to his master, who, in his opinion, has but one fault, he is not sufficiently contemptuous of his inferiors."<sup>9</sup>

Lord Loam believes in social equality and by making everyone miserable has a party once a month where servants and the daughters of Lord Loam have to appear as equals. Later the situation is changed when lord and ladies and servants are shipwrecked on a desert island, and the butler Crichton becomes the lord of the island. He makes love to Lord Loam's eldest daughter, who loves him in return. On their being saved from this situation they go back to England, where they again return to their former stations.

Barrie shows that equality which demands that all men shall be equal is doomed to failure; however, if equality means that man can rise above his environment, then equality is a valuable and practical thing.



Barrie has many islands in his plays, both mental and physical, which he interprets as places one may go to get away from the false standards of the world. Lord Loam's own level is found (this applies to Crichton as well) when birth, inheritance, and position are taken away by the complete isolation of the company on a deserted island.

William Lyon Phelps says in the North American Review (volume 21, p. 829):

The Admirable Crichton is the greatest English drama of modern times. I doubt if we shall ever penetrate to the last significance, to the final essence of this play. Every time I read it there is a new revelation with a hint of something vastly important that is not shown. Its philosophy contains a disturbing challenge to the audience as every good drama should do.<sup>10</sup>

The Admirable Crichton had run only a week when the curtain rose on Little Mary (1905), which was uproariously funny. It was stuffed with such a liberal supply of barriesisms that the thinness of the plot did not interfere with its enjoyment.<sup>11</sup> Moira, the chief character in Little Mary, refers to the stomach as "little Mary." This was taken up as a slang phrase by the British public, who at this time were rather prudish so that "stomach" was not spoken of in polite company. The play deals with an Irish chemist who realizes that the English people suffer from too much eating. He invents a new Golden Rule

which he calls Home Rule of England: "One Day, One Dinner." In this sort of plot there would be opportunity enough for humor and light satire to make even a Barrie happy.

Barrie wrote to Frohman of his next play, Peter Pan, that he was afraid it would not be a success:

"But it is a dream child of mine and I am anxious to see it on the stage!"<sup>11</sup>

It was so successful in London (1904) that Barrie created a world's record through it, "a record that Shakespeare himself has not challenged."<sup>12</sup> It was produced in New York with Miss Maude Adams as the lead in 1904 and has been played in London every winter since. "It isn't Christmas there without it," William Lyon Phelps wrote in the North American Review (vol. 212, p. 834) of Peter Pan:

"This is no spring flower, or hot house plant; it is a hardy perennial, and will delight thousands of spectators after we shall have all made our exit from the planet. It is one of the most profound, original, and universal plays of our epoch. No London Christmas would be complete without it. It is just as appealing in 1920 as it was in 1904, and there is no reason why it should not produce the same effect in 2020. It is the rapture of children, the joy of old age; and it ought to take its place with Robinson Crusoe, Gulliver's Travels, The Pied Piper story, Alice in Wonderland."<sup>13</sup>

Peter Pan has been translated into nearly every civilized language and produced in the theaters of many

countries. It was dedicated to the five Davies boys, who used to go strolling with Barrie in Kensington Gardens (the scene of the story) and two of whom Barrie later adopted. There was much make-believe and children's play going on between Barrie, the little man with the black moustache who never grew up, and the Davies boys. Barrie says that to create Peter he

"rubbed the five of them together after the manner of savages producing fire with two sticks, (an operation that has never ceased to fascinate the boyish mind of Barrie himself)--'that is all he (Peter) is, the spark I got from you!'"<sup>14</sup>

The play opens with Mr. and Mrs. Darling saying "goodnight" to their three children in the nursery--Peter Pan, the boy who would not grow up, comes in after the parents leave and Wendy meets for the first time a real fairy. Peter tells her the fairies are fast dying for

"Every time a child says she does not believe in fairies a fairy drops dead."<sup>15</sup>

The children are anxious to go to the Never Never Land; so Peter takes them and they have a wonderful time.

Before they go home Wendy makes Peter promise to take his medicine regularly. It is poisoned by the wicked pirates and Tinker Bell, the faithful fairy, drinks it to save Peter. She is slowly fading from view as fairies do when they die. Peter is desperate. He goes to the footlights and throwing out both hands, makes this appeal:

"Oh, you children who say you don't believe in fairies, show now that you do and save Tinker Bell's life; clap your hands that she may live, Tinker Bell appeals to you."<sup>16</sup>

One critic says at this point when Peter Pan was first played in New York, the whole house responded with an applause that lasted several minutes.

In the Harper's Weekly for April 6, 1906, it is interesting to note what Frohman, the producer, has to say concerning the reason for the success of Peter Pan. Frohman knew that this play would not correct the situation he speaks of in the following lines, but he believed it would be food to the imagination.

"Life in the big cities where huge buildings shut off from the child all contemplation of the open sky and where dull grey streets have replaced green fields, where the lesson of the day is getting on in the world, rather than being a child and enjoying the dream of pirates, fairies, and Indians--all these are taken as tendencies toward early self-consciousness and stagnation.

"As against these facts we know that men, women and children have sincerely appreciated Peter Pan because of their healthy imaginations. At every performance old hearts and old brains live over again the thrills and sensations of romantic youth. Its appeal is universal."<sup>17</sup>

Peter Pan is a charming picture of the child's mind, for surely all children in their imaginations go through the strange adventures of Wendy. Michael Braybrooke in his book J.M. Barris says:

"What child does not long to sail on a fairy lagoon, what child does not believe that there are pirates far away over the blue sea, what child has not some idea of the Never Never Land where are all the world's lost boys? Peter Pan is not only a play; it is a religion, it is, in a pictorial way, the portrait of childish faith, that faith which sees in fairies something that is eternally beautiful and eternally just out of sight."<sup>18</sup>

This paragraph reminds one of the saying of Jesus:

"Except ye become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Barrie surely has struck the keynote to heaven, harmony, happiness, whatever one wishes to think of as heaven. Both adult and child can be there for one night through the seeing of the immortal Peter Pan.

Sir George Frampton visualized Peter Pan in the form of a dainty statue set up in the center of Kensington Garden in May, 1912. It is as familiar to the British people as is the Albert Memorial.

#### Plays from 1905-1920

#### Barrie's Last Play, 1936-37

Barrie's record for the next sixteen years after Peter Pan shows thirty plays produced. He wrote Alice-Sit-By-The-Fire about the same time as Peter Pan with Ellen

Terry in mind for the lead. Her declining years made it hard for her to do the Shakesperean parts she had always played; so this easier drama of Barrie's enabled her to appear again before the immense public that liked to see her act.

It is a three-act play in which satire, fantasy, drama, and much comedy are blended. Barrie is at his best here, making fun of everyone, including the actors, audience, the dramatist himself, and all ages of man. The plot is modern and based on various misunderstandings among the characters. Alice, the mother, tries to save her daughter, Amy, from herself. Amy, the daughter who has become melodramatic because she has attended too many plays in her mother's absence, tries to save her mother from the dark villain. Neither is guilty of any indiscretion but each thinks that the other is entangled in improper love affairs. As the curtain falls, Alice, the middle-aged, attractive mother, has to step aside for her charming daughter, and is left sitting by the fire-side, meditating on the passing of her days as the queen of man's heart:

"It's summer, done autumn begun, farewell summer; we don't know you any more. My girl and I are like the little figures in the weather house; when Amy comes out, Alice goes in. Alice-Sit-By-The-Fire henceforth--farewell Alice that was! It's all over, my dear.....  
Make way there for the old lady."<sup>19</sup>

A play entitled Jane Ann was produced soon after Alice-Sit-By-The-Fire but there seems to be no record of it; just a mention of the day and name of it by Braybrooke. Again Barrie seems to have had several lean years as he produced no new play of importance until 1908. What Every Woman Knows, a four-act comedy first presented in that year, is one of his best. Barrie wrote this according to his own statement because

"There was a Maude Adams in the world. I could see her dancing through every page of my manuscript."

Austin Latchaw writes in the Kansas City Star Monday, June 28, 1937:

"For those who interpreted Barrie in the theater Miss Adams must have understood him best of all. The writer and the actress complemented each other spiritually and productively; the one created and recorded in his distinctive fashion, the other embodied and vocalized this extraordinary fidelity. Each owed much to the other, and each must have valued the other's contribution to their combined success."<sup>20</sup>

The central character in What Every Woman Knows is supposed to be a woman with no charm, according to her story, but of course, actually possessing all charm. She tells her brother about it in the following speech:

"Charm is the bloom upon a woman. If you have it you don't have to have anything else. If you don't have it, all else won't do you any good."<sup>21</sup>

In this play Barrie goes back to his native soil for his material. Some people in Kirriemuir say that he got his

idea from a family, three brothers and a sister of Thrums. They were well-to-do for their time. The rather dull brothers loved their sister very much and wanted her to be happily married but she had no lovers. Through trickery the brothers got her a poor but brilliant husband and she, because of her cleverness and charm, made a successful man of him in politics. The theme of the play is that man owes all that he is or ever hopes to be to some woman. What Every Woman Knows was not only one of Barrie's most successful plays but also gave him a chance to fly back to his native soil again.

The Legend of Leonora, produced in 1913

"is remarkable for one reason only. It provided the author with his solitary experience of having his work hissed at the final curtain. The piece was first played on September 4, 1913, and after a fortnight's performances Barrie rapidly rewrote it, the new edition being staged three weeks later. Even then Barrie was not satisfied with it (nor was the public)."<sup>22</sup>

Barrie revised this in 1917 under the title of Seven Women, which shows Leonora as possessing seven different personalities. The revised form was never a success either.

A Kiss for Cinderella (1916) is a three-act play in which the chief character is a charwoman, who shows that humanity's enduring qualities may be found in the lowly. This long play came at the end of one of the unproductive periods, excepting for the short plays.



The next year Dear Brutus, one of Barrie's most outstanding plays, was produced. Braybrooke says in J.M Barrie:

"Dear Brutus is without any doubt the most perfect expression of the Barrie genius, that genius which makes us sob when we feel we ought to laugh, to laugh when we feel we ought to cry, the genius that sends us miles back to the days when we played horse down the lanes; the days we were stupid enough to wish we might grow up. For it is in the melancholy wistfulness, the soft glow of mournfulness, that we come upon the essence of Barrie."<sup>23</sup>

The curtain rises on a scene which Barrie describes thus:

"The scene is a darkened room, which the curtain reveals so stealthily that if there was a mouse on the stage it is there still. Our object is to catch our two chief characters unaware; they are Darkness and Light."<sup>24</sup>

The audience gets the feeling that the people they are to know are in a state of indecision.

There are five ladies on the stage. They have scented a mystery and mean to make the butler Matey tell them about their terrifying host, Lob. Matey says only one thing that helps a little to solve the mystery: "Above all, ladies, I wouldn't go into the woods."

It is soon learned that these people whom Lob has invited for his Midsummer Night experiment, are a restless, unhappy lot, who wish they could live their lives

over again. Through much prodding the guests get Lob to tell them that if they go into the mysterious wood, which has come up to the windows, they will all be given a second chance. In the last part of the first act they all rush out except the dear little old lady, Mrs. Coody, who loves her rather worthless and is satisfied as his wife.

The second act shows the mysterious woods and the complete mess these people are making of their lives. They have made far different choices but their characters are the same. The philanderer is still a philanderer. He merely has a different wife and a different mistress. The crook has gained wealth but is still dishonest. Lady Caroline and Matey, the butler, give the play its humor by being married while in the forest. The pathos is in the relation of the once drunken Dearth and his "might-have-been" daughter, Margaret. Dearth is no more successful as an artist than he is in real life, where he thinks he has talent but has been thwarted by his wife's ambition for wealth. However, he is happier in the wood in his human relations with his "might-have-been" daughter. The conversation of Margaret and Dearth takes up the greater part of the second act and contains

some very charming and pathetic lines. An old lady passes by who proves to be Alice, Dearth's wife of the first act. The attraction of the wife is greater than that of the daughter and the moaning cry of Margaret, "Daddy, come back; I don't want to be a might-have-been," leaves the audience in tears.

The third act is a return to the living room of Lob's home. The men have turned out to be cads and they know it and the women are somewhat disillusioned. The audience feels that Dearth could have been steadier if his wife had given him a daughter. One of the most pathetic moments in this last act is when Dearth realizes that he really did have a daughter in the woods, who was only a might-have-been. His heart-breaking cry "My God!" gives the audience a pathetic picture of his feeling at not having a child. One has a feeling that Mrs. Dearth is changed just a little and that maybe these two will solve their problems with less friction.

One of the happy moments of the play is the reuniting of the Coadys and their abiding love for each other. This gives the audience a feeling that life is not entirely futile.

Marrie leaves his audience in no doubt as to the

way he feels about a second chance for people either in life or in a change of partners. He has no time for the wishy-washy who are always wanting something they cannot have and he evidently believes that people would be no better if they did have the chance to relive their lives.

Mary Rose was Barrie's next triumph, being produced in 1920. It is a story of a young girl who is lost to the world on an island in Scotland and comes back after her husband is an old man. It is too fantastic to be enjoyable. It is the hardest of Barrie's plays to interpret; there are so many guesses that one could make and none of them in all probability would be right. It might be interpreted in this way, that although Mary Rose comes to womanhood and motherhood, at heart she is but a child. This is seldom the case, however, in real life. Braybrooke says of Mary Rose in his J.M. Barrie:

"Mary Rose is then, when all is said and done, a tragedy. It is a tragedy because it demonstrated all too clearly that contact with the world necessarily makes us old, in years it matters not, but old in outlook, when the word 'old' does not denote sympathy, understanding, and charm, but bitterness or unsatisfied resignation. Thus Barrie does make us realize that the reason that Mary Rose retains so much of her childish innocence is that she is lost on an island, in other words, she is

kept from harsh contact with the world. The thought is really tragic, but it is not hopeless, due to the fact that there are in the world Mary Roses who do manage to keep a fair portion of their childlike purity. But they are so few and far between that their presence makes too little mark on the cold cynical world."<sup>25</sup>

Mary Rose and Margaret Dearth (in Dear Brutus) are those people who leave us with a longing for the "might-have-been." They are both symbolic of vain longings.

In looking back over these sixteen years in the life of Sir James Matthew Barrie one sees the immense amount of work the dramatist has done. If he had not failed at times one would have felt that he must be super-human; but because of these failures there is a closer tie between him and his admiring public.

### Short Plays

The one-act plays that Barrie wrote between 1905-1920 are all to be ranked among his lesser works. The Twelve Pound Look, produced in London in 1913, is among the best of these. It is one of the author's clever and biting satires on the life of the rich domineering husband and his meek wife. Kate, the first wife of Sir

Harry Simms, has found that she can earn her living. She buys a typewriter for twelve pounds and becomes a public stenographer. Several years later she is called to the house and discovers it is the home of her former husband and his submissive second wife. In the course of the conversation Kate, who is quite happy, although Sir Harry can't understand it, tells Sir Harry,

"If I was a husband--it is my advice to all of them--I would often watch my wife quietly to see whether the twelve-pound look was coming to her eyes."<sup>26</sup>

As the curtain comes down Lady Simms, the second wife, who has admired Kate's dexterity in handling the typewriter, to her husband's consternation asks,

"Lady Simms: Are they very expensive?  
Sir Harry: What?  
Lady Simms: Those machines?"

"When she has gone the possible meaning of her question startles him. The curtain hides him from us, but we may be sure that he will soon be bland again. We have a comfortable feeling, you and I, that there is nothing of Harry Simms in us."<sup>27</sup>

The Will also belonged to 1913, and is much more serious though it is characteristic of Barrie. Its opening scene is in a law office in which a humble will is being made by a hopeful, shy young man and his bride.

The next scene is in the same old-established law office twenty years later, after the wife's death; the husband doesn't know what to do with his money which has brought him only estrangement and grief. Here are much pathos and irony and Barrie handles them in a masterly fashion.

Pantaloon, Rosalind, Der Tag, The Will, and The Twelve Pound Look, all one-act plays, were printed in one volume which from a financial standpoint was very successful as people were beginning to read plays more.

Many of these short dramas were produced as the occasion demanded. Such were those pertaining to the war, which included The Old Lady Shows Her Medals, The New World, Barbara's Wedding, and A Well-remembered Voice, which were staged in 1918. Der Tag was a war play but was produced in 1914 and had for its theme the Kaiser's entrance into the war and his desire for power.

There are other short plays, such as Half-an-Hour, Old Friends (1918), and Shall We Join the Ladies (1920). This last one mentioned represents Barrie's one and only contribution to the Bacon-Shakespeare controversy. The controversy was raised over a signed document (supposedly by Shakespeare) in these words: "Received of Lady

Bacon for fathering her play of Hamlet, five pounds,"<sup>26</sup>  
This was the last play Barrie ever wrote.

These short plays are interesting and deal in a humorous and sarcastic way (but sometimes tragic) with the social themes of the day, but they are a minor part of his works.

Barrie's plays, at least the best of them, may be divided into three groups, all of which have been influenced by his life. The first group, which made use of materials from native Scotland, is best represented by The Little Minister and What Every Woman Knows. The Professor's Love Story and some of the shorter plays also belong to this group.

These plays show a greater reality, more assurance and polish, than his novels using the same materials. For example the dramatic version of The Little Minister is a great improvement over the novel of the same title, particularly in his closer approximation to real life. Realities were always a great discomfort to Barrie, but he seems to have overcome this difficulty to some extent at this time. This could be accounted for by his greater contact with the outside world. What Every Woman Knows combines effective realism in character and action



with clever social satire and polished style. Some of Barrie's best dialogue is to be found in the plays of this group because he is familiar with his own Scottish people to a greater degree than with any other. Some of the critics, as has been shown above, regret that Barrie did not return oftener to this native Scottish material which he handled so effectively in dramatic form.

A second group of Barrie's best plays draws their material from the greater world which he came to know outside of Scotland; the majority of them have English settings. These plays usually emphasize social problems and genial social satire, occasionally with a touch of fantasy or a brief excursion into serious realism. In this group may be included several short plays dealing with the world war such as Der Tag and The Old Lady Shows Her Medals.

Here it seems Barrie is at his best because of this touch of fantasy and the adding of social satire. It is a perfect combination for him; without satire his tenderness and sympathy would degenerate into unbalanced sentiment and without fantasy there would be cynicism.

Barrie is not Barrie without these; but where these are in evidence, as in Quality Street, there is Barrie at his best.

The Wedding Guest is an outstanding example of Barrie's failure when he did not follow his usual method combining these two. Here he tried to imitate Ibsen in his cynical handling of drama, and the play was a miserable failure.

Quality Street (1901), although belonging to the group of social satire, gives an intimation of the fairy immortality that later on is developed further through Peter Pan and Mary Rose. This theme, in Quality Street, has given the psychologists much to conjecture over in trying to procure a remedy for those immature individuals who refuse to grow up.

The Admirable Crichton (1903) is presumably the most outstanding of this group. Here sham democracy and sham aristocracy are mercilessly satirized. Pathos and tragedy underlie this democracy and again Barrie is at his best in dealing with them.

Alice-Sit-By-The-Fire (1905) is a combination of satire, fantasy, comedy, and drama, but again the satirizing of the woman who cannot bear to give up her youth is the main theme.

Among the short plays of social satire The Twelve-Pound Look (1914) is outstanding. The satirical handling of the husband who wants a wife to display his gains, is superb.

A third group of Barrie's outstanding plays, including fantasies and fairy plays, draw their inspiration from English folk lore, though their details are largely the product of Barrie's own imagination. Peter Pan owes something to the Davies boys, but he is also a not-too-distant relative of Puck and Robin Goodfellow and Ariel and other small personages of English fairy lore. Dear Brutus makes use of those folk superstitions about Midsummer Night and May Eve which have furnished materials also to other dramatists, notably to Shakespeare for A Midsummer Night's Dream and to William Butler Yeats for The Land of Heart's Desire. At least a suggestion for Mary Rose may have come from the ballad of Thomas Rymer and many another medieval ballad or romance in which a mortal remains young during a prolonged stay in fairy land.

Dear Brutus and Peter Pan are the outstanding plays of this group. Dear Brutus, as has been shown above, is fantasy primarily, but it is also social satire. The two elements are fused into an excellent stage play with, for

most audiences, a strong emotional appeal. Peter Pan is a direct outgrowth of Barrie's association with the Davies family of London, as has been stated before. These plays will live because of their universal appeal. They are as good at one season as another and will be as good in a hundred years as today. The theme of Peter Pan appeals to adults as well as children, for everyone has a desire to go back to the simplicity of childhood. Then again young and old never seem to tire of a desire to return to the land of fairies and elves, in this way letting their imaginations have free play. The message of this play is comparable to that of flowers: that life would not have been quite so sweet if Barrie had not written his immortal Peter Pan.

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## CHAPTER VI

### Barrie's Attitude Toward Life

#### As Shown By His Writings

One of the ways that the reader can analyze Barrie's attitude toward life is by studying the characters that he uses. They may easily be classified into three types. The first type deals with the real or "true-to life" characters, contained in his Auld Licht Idylls--his "aine-folk." The second type in this grouping will be those individuals who are on the border line between fantasy and realism such as Mary Rose in the play of that name. The third and last type has to do with the purely fantastic or fairy characters such as Peter Pan of the play Peter Pan and Lob, the Puck-like character in Dear Brutus.

The criticism that his characters are not real has been brought against Barrie many times. Probably there is a confusion of his mortals and fairies. The characters which he deals with in his books about Thrums are indeed very mortal, human, and true-to-life. These surely pass the popular test of being portraits of queer but real per-

sons. Look, for instance, at the chapter in Auld Licht Idylls entitled "Cree Queery and Mysy Drolly" in which

"The children used to fling stones at Grinder Queery because he loved his mother. He and his mother were Queery and Drolly, contemptuously so-called and they answered to these names."<sup>1</sup>

Could there be any more real characters than these cruel children who flung stones at a broken old scissors grinder and his mother Drolly? Queery, who was always afraid, because of the taunts of these same children thought his beloved mother would have to go to the poor house. He also was a decidedly real if pathetic figure. Barrie's attitude toward life is found in the truthful way he handles his characters. The reader knows he is not a complete cynic or a pure idealist. The Scottish children spoken of are not the desirable kind but Barrie gives a pleasing side of the child nature in Sentimental Tommy when Tommy protects Grizel from the taunts of the village boys, because her mother is "a painted lady." Then Barrie sees life at its worst and best, but the reader feels that he always sees more goodness than badness in humanity.

The second class of characters are those that are on the border line between reality and fantasy. In his plays one will have to define the meaning of "real." Which is the real, the part of humanity one can see or the part that is invisible? Barrie seems to be able to look deep

down into the soul of a man, woman, or child and find the immortality in humanity, that part which is seldom discerned by the ordinary individual on the street. The essence of Mary Rose is that she is always a child at heart. But could she have retained the childishness if the island in Scotland had not hidden her away from harsh contact with the world? It would be a hard thing to do, but once in a great while one does find women who do manage to keep a fair portion of their child-like faith and purity. The value of such characters is the desire they give the audience to try to revive this lost something of childhood.

Barrie's attitude is again clearly stated in these border line characters. He felt that people must get off by themselves on islands, as it were, away from all worldly contacts, to find themselves. He has said in some of his magazine articles that he had many more islands for himself outside of his plays than those within them and that they were more real than the one on which the Admirable Crichton and his companions were stranded.

The third class of characterization in the fairy folks. It seems as though these fairies are the ideals and wishes of all people. In Peter Pan there is the charming picture of the child's mind in his love of adventure,



which never leaves an individual. Then there is always a striving against the inevitable, a striving not to grow up. Peter never wanted to grow up, for he knew he would lose his faith; then he would not be able to fly. He lived in the beautiful child's world of fairies to which everyone likes to go and escape the cold, bitter commercial world of facts.

There is much more for older people in this philosophy of the fairy than for children. It is that melancholy, wistful longing people have for the days when they really believed in fairies, a desire to have that trusting sweet faith of childhood again. Barrie seemed to retain this attitude toward life better than most grown-ups. One wonders if it could have been a result of the early training of his mother with her child-like trust and understanding of higher things.

Barrie's attitude toward marriage is hard to define. In Dear Brutus, when the couples get tired of each other, he permits them in the enchanted wood to try someone else, and each finds that the original partner is best. Also in What Every Woman Knows, he has Maggie, the clever wife, force her John to be in the company of Sybil, whom he thinks he loves. In a short while they are both so tired of each other that they are ready to go back, he to his Maggie, and she to her lover. Barrie allowed

his own wife to get a divorce at the time when divorce was not the rule.

The question of equality in The Admirable Crichton is handled very cleverly through gentle and pleasant satire. Barrie shows that men are unequal and goes farther and says they like being so. He shows that the people who least want homage are those to whom homage is due. The lord can be on an equal basis with his butler but the butler is and wants to be superior to those beneath him, such as the page boy and the house maid.

In nearly every book or play Barrie has written there seems to be an idealization of womanhood, a portrayal of womanhood at its very best. Even if he must show such a character as the Painted Lady in Sentimental Tommy he does it so kindly and sympathetically that the reader wants to find only the good in her. After the reading of Margaret Ogilvy, one can readily understand why Barrie wanted always to idealize the women, as it shows how completely his mother's influence was felt in everything he did.

Barrie's attitude toward death was a beautiful one, and now since he has been gone only a few days, one likes to think of his sane and wholesome view of the "great adventure." When his mother died, his words taken from

Margaret Ogilvy tell so much:

"Those eyes that I cannot see until I was six years old have guided me through life, and I pray God they may remain my only earthly judge to the last. They were never more my guide than when I helped to put her to earth, not whimpering because my mother had been taken away after seventy-six glorious years of life, but exulting in her even at the grave."<sup>2</sup>

One of the beautiful lessons that the observer could get from the play Mary Rose is that one must not mourn the death of loved ones too much; they are as birds that have flown so high that they are lost to view.

In the following letter is given a clear picture of Barrie's attitude toward love and death, his religious views and his belief in the mystical world. It was written to the session and congregation of the Free Church of Bower, May 11, 1892, after the death of their young minister who had been the betrothed lover of Jane Barrie.

"To you, at the grave of him who was in three weeks' time to become her husband, my sister sends her love. She has not physical strength to be with you just now in body, but she is with you in spirit and God is near her, and she is not afraid. You are her loved ones, for it was you who, under God, called him to Bower and gave him the manse to which he was about to bring her, and, as he loved you, she loves you.

"God, who gave his Son for the redemption of the world, has told her that He had been of the disciples' life also, and that he died to bring his people of Bower to God's house. So God

chose his own way and took her Jim, her dear young minister, and she says, God's will be done; and she thanks Him for taking away so suddenly only one who was ready to face His maker without a moment's warning. His great goodness, she says to you, in not taking someone who was unprepared is her comfort and should be yours. And she prays that Mr. Winter's six months' ministry among you, and his death among you while doing his duty has borne and will continue to bear good fruit. And always she will so pray, and she asks you to pray for her. And she says you are not to grieve for her over-much for she is in God's keeping.

"This is a word from her brother, who cannot leave her to come to the funeral of his dearest friend, the purest soul I have ever known. It is a word about her. You have never seen her, but you knew him, and they have always been so alike in the depths of their religious feelings, in their humility, and in many other things you knew about him, and loved him for that you may always think of them as one. There were four years and a half of their love story, and it began the hour they first met. It never had a moment's break; there was always something pathetic about it, for they never parted, and they never wrote but solemnly and tenderly, as if it might be for the last time. The wistfulness of his face, which you must all have noticed, meant early death. They both felt that the one would be taken from the other, though he thought that he would be the survivor. Theirs was so pure a love that God was ever part of it. Let all the youth of Bower remember that there is no other love between man and woman save that.

J.M. Barrie."3

Barrie's greatness lies in the fact that he always appeals to the best in man. He can make his audience laugh or cry; he never makes them angry and never offends or causes them to be too cynical. His irony is so

gentle that it could give one only the feeling of humor. His works have a universal appeal and always are for any period, which will be their reason for immortality. Barrie not only feeds the body, but also nourishes the soul. One feels that he looks on life with kindness and sympathy. It is a noble something worth living. He touches it lightly as a holy thing, realizing that the material is only temporary and that the mystical, the ideal, the true values are permanent.

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