

HISTORY 239
Victorian Ladies and Other Women

Fall Term 2006

Mrs. Loengard

Tuesday August 29. Meeting the Victorians. What do you expect them to be like? Based on what you know from books and movies, how would you describe them? We take a little while to talk about who they are and why we might care about them. Please begin reading George Gissing, *The Odd Women* – time yourself so that you’ve finished it by Thursday, October 19 when we will discuss it in class.

For August 31 through September 12 you should read:

- a. *800 Years of Women’s Letters* (hereafter called *800 Years*), pp. 85-86 (Kate Amberley Russell); 97-99 (An American Woman to her Fiance); 110-113 (Elizabeth Barrett Browning) (on reserve).
- b. Joan Perkin, *Victorian Women* (hereafter *Perkin*) ch.5 “Time of their Own: Women’s Interests and entertainment”.
- c. Marie Corelli, “The Modern Marriage Market” and Lady Jeune’s response (1898). This is available at the Victorian Women Writers Project at Indiana University, <http://www.indiana.edu/~lettrs.vwwp/corelli/modmarr.html> but I will hand out the relevant portions in class. Do Marie Corelli’s comments see realistic to you? To whom do you think she is speaking? Do you agree with Lady Jeune?
- d. *Regina v Jackson* (1891) (to be handed out in class).
- e. Excerpt from editorial in the [London] *Daily News*, March 25, 1853 (to be handed out in class).
- f. *800 Years*, pp. 22-24 (Caroline Norton to Queen Victoria, 1855).

Thursday August 31 and Tuesday September 5. Finding a suitable spouse, keeping a suitable house OR how to live your life if you are a woman. Actually, a middle-class or upper-middle-class woman. What if you fall into another socio-economic category?

Thursday September 7. What if it doesn’t work out? Ending marriage in 19th century England and America.

Tuesday September 12. Classroom discussion on marriage and the family, Victorian style.

For September 14 and 19 you should read:

- a. New York Married Women’s Property Acts, 1848-1862 (to be handed out in class).
- b. Sir William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, Book I, ch. 15 §§442-445, “Of Husband and Wife” (to be handed out in class). These are the pages Elizabeth Cady Stanton tore out of her father’s copy of the book when she was a little girl.
- c. *800 Years* pp. 168-169 (A wife writes to save her husband from bankruptcy, 1842).

Thursday September 14 and Tuesday September 19. The practical meaning of marriage for a woman: property and property rights (or lack thereof) for married women in England and various American states.

For September 21 you should read:

- a. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper*. Online – just go to Google and type in “The Yellow Wallpaper”; there are several sites. I will also put a copy on reserve.
- b. “The World as Sickroom” in Mabel Collins Donnelly, *The American Victorian Woman* (on reserve).
- c. “Scenes of an Indelicate Character: the Medical Treatment of Victorian Women” in Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: the Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (on reserve).

Thursday September 21. Sickness – mental and physical - as a female norm? Was Charlotte Perkins Gilman right?

Tuesday September 26 **FIRST EXAMINATION**

For September 28 you should read:

- a. Hellerstein, Erna Olafson; Leslie Parker Hume; and Karen M. Offen, *Victorian Women: A Documentary Account of Women's Lives in Nineteenth Century England, France, and the United States* (hereafter Hellerstein), No. 13 (Life at an English Boarding School) (on reserve).
- b. Emily Davies, *The Higher Education of Women* chs. 2,3, and if you have time, 4 (on reserve).
- c. *800 Years*, pp. 73-75 ("The Right to Education" and "Senior Wrangler") (on reserve).

For October 3 you should read:

- a. Nancy Woloch., ed., *Early American Women: A Documentary History* (hereafter Woloch), ch. 14 "College Women".
- b. "Smith College" and "May Day at Mount Holyoke", both from *Godey's Lady's Book* (to be handed out in class).
- c. *800 Years*, pp. 163-165 (Mary Lyons and her school) (on reserve).
- d. A Wellesley Student's Diary, 1890-1891, excerpt (to be handed out in class).
- e. *The Journal of Charlotte L. Forten*, ed. Ray Allen Billington, pp. 68-81 (on reserve).
- f. Spelman College: catalogue 1900 (to be handed out in class).

This is not at all as daunting as it looks. Many of these pieces are very short and most are easy reading. The point of all the reading is so that we can explore differences and similarities in women's education – England and America, black and white women, urban and rural.

Thursday September 28 and Tuesday October 3. Why educate a girl? Or in what? English and American experiences.

For October 5 and October 12 you should read:

- a. Louisa May Alcott, "An Ivy Spray and Ladies' Slippers" in *A Garland for Girls* (to be handed out in class).
- b. *800 Years*, pp. 138-139 (excerpt from the diary of Hannah Cullwick) (on reserve).
- c. Woloch, pp. 324-327 ("Shopgirls and Pieceworkers") and 408-413 ("A Sweatshop Girl's Story").
- d. *800 years*, pp. 154-155 (Nineteenth century factory life); 159-161 (letters of Nellie Weeton); 265 (letter of Philadelphia seamstresses during the Civil War) (on reserve).
- e. Pamela Horn, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Servant*, Appendices B,C,and E (Duties of Servants, Ladies' Maids, and the Servants' Hall) (on reserve).
- f. *Perkin*, chs 7 and. 8 "Widowhood and Old Age" and "Making their own way: the Lives of Unmarried Middle-Class Women"
- g. Josephine Butler, *The Education and Employment of Women* (1868) . This is available at the Victorian Women Writers Project at Indiana University (see below) but I am asking you to read only two pages, so I am handing them out in class.

Again, this isn't as long an assignment as it looks and most of it is very easy reading.

Thursday October 5 How do you know it's "women's work"? Or that it isn't?

Tuesday October 10 **FALL BREAK**

Thursday October 12 "Women's work" Continued

For October 17 you should read:

- a. Woloch, ch. 12 ("Women's Civil War").
- b. One of several entries in Duke University's website, Civil War Women. Choose from among the letters of Rose Greenhow, a Confederate spy; the diary of Rachel Cormany of Chambersburg, Pa., whose husband was in the Union army at the time the Confederates invaded Chambersburg; or a series of love letters between husbands and wives during the War. The first two are at http://library.duke.edu/special_collections/bingham/guides/cwdocs.html#diaries The love letters are at <http://spec.lib.vt.edu/cwlove> Don't expect passion.
- c. Mary Ann Webster Loughborough, *My Cave Life in Vicksburg*, pp. 58-62, 78-83, 94-98, 105-108, 130-134, 136 (bottom)-139. *Here we benefit from Google Books. Go to Google Books, type in "My Cave Life in Vicksburg" and this book will be at the top of the list!*

Tuesday October 17 American women at war, 1860-1865. Wars are always instruments of social change. American women were active supporters of the Civil War at home and sometimes on the battlefield. Things were different when Johnny came marching home than when he left. (It was a popular song of the time).

For October 19: prepare for our discussion of *The Odd Women*. Why do I spend so much time on this book? Because it considers at least three important topics which we discuss in this course.

Thursday October 19 We discuss George Gissing's novel, *The Odd Women*. I assign it regularly – well, let's see what you think of it. What do you think George Gissing's attitudes were to marriage? To work? How would you have changed *The Odd Women* if you were writing it? Could it be written about the later 20th century instead of the later 19th?

For October 24 you should read:

- a. Woloch, pp. 375-380, ("The Woman's Club: Sorosis, 1893" and "The Black Club Movement").
- b. An article about women's organizations of any kind – intellectual, social, religious etc. – published in one of the popular magazines of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. There was a time when you would have had to look in several libraries. You don't now; a lot of magazines of the period have been put on line. You're on your own on this one; you find the magazine, you choose the article, you copy it and bring it to class prepared to talk about it. Hint: Some 19th century magazines include *Harper's Bazaar*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Cosmopolitan* (seriously!), *Colliers*, and *Good Housekeeping*, as well, of course, as *Godey's Lady's Book*.

Tuesday October 24 Women's organizations; social groups and the seedbed of change.

For October 26 you should read:

- a. Louisa May Alcott, "May Flowers", in *A Garland for Girls* (to be handed out in class).
- b. Woloch pp. 372-374 ("A Temperance Tale") and 383-385 ("A Pioneer Settlement House").
- c. "Social and Philanthropic Work" in *The Woman's Book: Contains Everything a Woman Ought to Know* (to be handed out in class).
- d. Perkin, ch. 11 "Ladies Bountiful".

Thursday October 26 Benevolent women. Who needed help and who got it.

For October 31 you should read:

- a. Woloch, pp. 257 ("Seduced and Abandoned") and 317-322 ("New York Prostitutes").
- b. *800 Years* pp. 195-197 (Josephine Butler and Florence Nightingale), 197-199 (Millicent Fawcett's letters) (on reserve).
- c. Valerie Bonham, *A Place in Life: The Clewer House of Mercy, 1849-83*, pp. 190-200 (on reserve).
- d. Perkin, ch. 12
- e. Charles Dickens, *An Appeal to Fallen Women* (to be handed out in class)

Tuesday, October 31. The "other" women.

Thursday November 2 **SECOND EXAMINATION**

Tuesday November 7 An interim report: you tell us about your term paper – the topic, the sources you propose to use, the conclusions you have so far arrived at, any problems you are having. The rest of us make helpful comments and suggestions – and the emphasis is on "helpful".

For November 9 you should read:

- a. Antoinette M. Burton, "The White Woman's Burden: British Feminists and the Indian Woman, 1865-1915" in *Women's Studies International Forum* vol. 13 (1990) (on reserve)
- b. Jane Robinson, ed., *Unsuitable for Ladies*, pp. 57-59 (Fanny Stenhouse) (on reserve).
- c. either Patricia Hill, *The World Their Household: the American Woman's Foreign Mission Movement*

and Cultural Transformation, 1870-1920 ch. 2 (the earliest years covered) (on reserve) or Clare Midgley, "Can Women Be Missionaries? Envisioning Female Agency in the Early Nineteenth Century British Empire" in *Journal of British Studies* vol. 45 no. 2 (April, 2006).
d. "Annie Taylor" in Dorothy Middleton, *Victorian Lady Travellers*.

Thursday November 9 Women in new places: I. The church as an opportunity for women to serve outside the home: women as missionaries.

For November 14 you should read:

- a. *800 Years*, pp. 212-219 (Lucy Duff Gordon, Isabel Burton, Isabella Bird, Mary Kingsley).
- b. *Unsuitable for Ladies*, pp. 296-299, 391-394 (Isabella Bird), 213-216 (Mary Kingsley) (on reserve).

Tuesday November 14 II. And women as adventurers.

Thursday November 16 There will be no class today; you should be preparing for the classroom discussion on November 21, which will focus on the readings for 9/9, 9/14, and 9/21.

For November 21 you should read:

- a. *Unsuitable for Ladies* pp. 240-241 (A Lady Resident), 247-250 (Emily Eden).
- b. *800 Years* pp. 193-194, 208-210, 238-239 (Emily Eden); 135-136 (Mary Abell).
- c. Rudyard Kipling, "Wee Willie Winkie" (to be handed out in class).
- d. Woloch, pp. 207-214, ("A Norwegian Immigrant in Wisconsin" and "A Woman's View of the Gold Rush").
- e. Hellerstein, No. 4, "An American Girl Goes West with her Family: Nettie Abell" (on reserve).
- f. Laura Ingalls Wilder and Rose Wilder Lane, *On the Way Home* and Laura Ingalls Wilder, *The Little House in the Big Woods*. Don't read them carefully or in their entirety – although for some of you Laura will be very familiar (on reserve). The important thing here is the difference in mood. *On the Way Home* is Laura's diary, not written for publication.
- g. "Arvazine Angelina Cooper" in Eve Merriam, *Growing up Female in America*.

Tuesday November 21 III. And on various frontiers, willingly or otherwise. This is a classroom discussion based on your reading.

TERM PAPERS DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS TODAY, NOVEMBER 21.

For November 28 through December 7 you should read:

- a. Susan B. Anthony, "Is it a crime for a U.S. citizen to vote?" (online at several sites, but I will hand copies out in class).
- b. Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement*, pp. 483-454 on the "Cat and Mouse Act" and forcible feeding (on reserve).
- c. Woloch, ch. 16 "The Suffrage Movement".
- e. Hellerstein, No. 95, Millicent Garrett Fawcett, "Justice for Women" (on reserve).

Thursday November 23 **THANKSGIVING**

Tuesday November 28 and Thursday November 30. The ultimate question: should women vote? We will consider first England, then America.

Tuesday December 5 To be announced. I hope to have a speaker with us, but plans are not finalized. If this turns out to be impossible, we will discuss one or more of three short essays of Virginia Woolf, which illustrate attitudes of the earlier twentieth century to the Victorians: "Killing the Angel in the House"; "A Room of One's Own and Five Hundred Pounds a Year" and/or "Memoirs of a Working Womans Guild". The first is online at etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/w/woolf/virginia I will hand out the other two at the beginning of the class.

Thursday December 7 We wrap it up: what really happened in the second half of the 19th century and how? What was the period really like? What were the Victorians really like? How have they

influenced our own lives? And – looking back to the beginning of this course – how do we perceive them?

TEXTS

Gissing, George, *The Odd Women* (any edition)
Perkin, Joan, *Victorian Women* (NYU Press, 1985)
Woloch, Nancy, ed. *Early American Women* (2nd ed. McGraw Hill, 1997)

RESERVE TEXTS

(I am really sorry to ask you to do so much reserve reading, but I would be sorrier to ask you to buy even half of these books! I will put more than one copy of each on reserve wherever possible.)

Billington, Ray Allen, ed., *The Journal of Charlotte L. Forten* (Norton, 1953, 1981)
Bonham, Valerie, *A Place in Life: The Clewer House of Mercy, 1849-83* (Valerie Bonham, 1992)
Burton, Antoinette M., “The White Woman’s Burden: British Feminism and the Indian Woman 1863-1915” in *Women’s Studies International Forum* vol. 13., no. 4 (1990)
Davies, Emily, *The Higher Education of Women* (1866) (Hambledon Press, 1988)
Donnelly, Mabel Collins, *The American Victorian Woman: the Myth and the Reality* (Greenwood Press, 1986)
Hellerstein, Erna Olafson, Leslie Parker Hume, and Karen M. Offen, eds., *Victorian Women: A Documentary Account of Women’s Lives in Nineteenth Century England, France, and America* (Stanford, 1981)
Hill, Patricia R., *The World their Household: the American Woman’s Foreign Mission Movement and Cultural Transformation 1870-1920* (University of Michigan Press, 1985)
Kenyon, Olga, ed., *800 Years of Women’s Letters* (5th ed. Sutton, 2001)
Horn, Pamela, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Servant* (Alan Sutton, 1997)
Lane, Rose Wilder and Laura Ingalls Wilder, *On the Way Home* (Harper and Row, 1962)
Merriam, Eve, *Growing up Female in America* (Dell, 1973)
Middleton, Dorothy, *Victorian Lady Travellers* (Routledge, 1965)
Midgley, Clare, “Can Women Be Missionaries? Envisioning Female Agency in the Early Nineteenth Century British Empire” in *Journal of British Studies* vol. 45 no. 2 (April, 2006)
Pankhurst, Sylvia, *The Suffragette Movement* (Virago Press, 1984)
Poovey, Mary, *Uneven Developments: the Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (Chicago, 1988)
Robinson, Jane, ed., *Unsuitable for Ladies* (rev. ed. Oxford U.P., 2001)
Wilder, Laura Ingalls, *The Little House in the Big Woods* (Harper, 1971)

Other materials are online or will be handed out from time to time, as indicated. Please note that many of the online materials are available at the Victorian Women Writers Project at Indiana University and you can access them by typing “Victorian Women Writers Project” on a search engine such as Google. It’s a good site to know in general.

About the term paper, due on November 21. It should be at least ten pages long, including footnotes but not including bibliography. It is a research paper, so you must use either numbered footnotes (at the bottom of each page) or numbered endnotes (on a separate page following the text of the paper itself). If you are not familiar with footnoting, you should look at either Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (Chicago Style) or the *Bedford Handbook*, which also sets out Chicago Style (along with various others). You must use this style, rather than those employed in psychology or sociology or some other discipline. You should include a bibliography (both Turabian and *Bedford* have forms for that, too) in which you list every source you consulted, primary and secondary, whether or not you cited it in a footnote. I am embarrassed to talk about plagiarism, because so few students are guilty of it, but for the sake of completeness I must tell you that plagiarism will automatically result in a student’s failing the course.

I expect you to attend class regularly, barring illness or an emergency or some other good reason for non-attendance (which does not include having an exam that day). If you know you will be absent on a certain date, tell me about it in advance so that I can help you get notes and keep up to date. And if you are having difficulty with any of the topics, or my lectures, or the readings on them, please come talk to me as soon as possible so I can help. My office hours are Tuesday and Thursday from 11:30 to noon and 1:15 to 2.