J. M. Barrie's Literary Approach to Adolescent Psychology

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J. M. BARRIE'S LITERARY APPROACH
TO
ADOLESCENT PSYCHOLOGY

BY
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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
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VITA AUCTORIS

Richard Francis Burnham, son of Norbert and Mary Short Burnham, was born in Chicago, Illinois, April 3, 1920. He received his elementary school education at St. Ita's parochial school in Chicago and at the Scottville Public School in Scottville, Michigan. His first year high school was spent at the Scottville High School, and the latter three years at Nicholas Senn High School in Chicago, from which he graduated in June, 1937. In September, 1937, he entered Wright Junior College in Chicago and in June, 1939, finished his two year pre-legal course.

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In August, 1944, he began his three year course in Philosophy at West Baden College, West Baden Springs, Indiana, at which time he enrolled as a graduate student in the Department of English at Loyola University.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

It has been frequently commented upon by those who are ever praising him and by those who constantly call out, "sentimental rot", that the one man who is out of step with the dramatic tendencies of the early decades of the twentieth century, the one playwright who is interested in something else than the so-called social drama, is James Matthew Barrie. Exactly what this something else is, may seem, at first, difficult to say. Yet it is far from satisfying to let the subject pass without any attempt at explanation.

Perhaps it is, after all, his interest in sentimental things, if we must call the love of one's mother and a keen appreciation and understanding of the joys and sorrows of youth sentimental, that marks Barrie off from the rest, that gives to him the highest place of honor among Scots since Robert Louis Stevenson. It is certain that no other contemporary dramatist is so overwhelmingly interested in and concerned with child-play, mother-love, fairies, and a multitude of fanciful, miraculous, Deus ex machina happenings. For Oscar Wilde, Arthur Pinero, A. A. Milne, G. E. Shaw and their colleagues, the dramatic world represents their real world which is
stocked with mature, sophisticated people and their problems of
money, sex, politics, false ideas and ideals, and universal bore-
dom. If in their plays a genuine mother or a life-like child
should stray on to the stage, now and then, it is incidental, almost
accidental.

This fact, then, that he is not only capable of writing but
actually does write about women and youths, may be the explanation
why Barrie is outside the fold. It is hardly to be considered a
discredit to him either. That he recognized his ability - he
would hesitate, being a modest man, to call it genius - to portray
both youth and womanhood, is no doubt, along with all the inspira-
tion and influences involved, the raison d'etre of a number of his
better works, both books and plays. On this point of Barrie's
dissimilarity to other playwrights of his time Benjamin Brawley
has commented:

To his fine fantasy he has added a genuine
spiritual quality, best seen in his emphasis
on the child in literature, and he has also
excelled in handling the mind of woman.
Naturally with such emphasis he is somewhat
apart from his contemporaries.  

Along the same line Fred B. Millett has written:

Allied by his cultivation of sentiment to the
poetic rather than the social drama of our time
are the plays of Sir James Barrie. Barrie is

1 Benjamin Brawley, A Short History of the English Drama, Harcourt
the only major dramatist of the period who has devoted himself to the cult of sentiment, and he had had his reward. With Barrie, it has ever been the case of "women and children first". Like the true man of feeling, he idolizes woman as mother and manager, and children as playboys and playthings. 2

This thesis is to concern itself only with the adolescent. We shall see presently what is meant by adolescent as the word is used in the thesis, for an exact definition of terms is important.

In the famous biography of his mother, Margaret Ogilvy, Barrie wrote:

The horror of my boyhood was that I knew a time would come when I also must give up the games, and how it was to be done I saw not (this agony still returns to me in dreams, when I catch myself playing marbles, and look on with cold displeasure); I felt that I must continue playing in secret ... 3

There in a few words Barrie said much more than he must have suspected at the time. He felt that he "must continue playing in secret." The marvel is that he not only kept playing in secret, but that, although he grew to great intellectual maturity, he ever retained the power to think as a child and to see things as a child sees them.

3 James M. Barrie, Margaret Ogilvy by Her Son, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929, 30.
Two opposing forces are ever found in the adolescent, one drawing him toward maturity, the other tending to make him look back at the joys of childhood, making him hesitate before putting his hand to the plow. It is a time of great tension, this pulling in one direction, then in another. The unstableness of it all is of the very nature of adolescence. This period, this time of stress, with its joys and sorrows, its faults and virtues, Barrie has been able to capture and portray in an unique manner. We shall see in the next chapter certain definite influences which explain this ability. Barrie's first important biographer, in J. M. Barrie and His Books, tells us:

Mr. Barrie does not merely retain the memories of his boyhood clear and un-sullied; he displays an insight into the mind of the boy which to my thinking, is only excelled amongst contemporary writers by the late Professor Henry Drummond's knowledge of the "human boy." 4

Before turning to the selections from Barrie's plays which are to be considered in this thesis, let us see briefly what we mean by adolescence and just how we are to use the term.

There is general agreement among psychologists concerning the beginning of that period in life called adolescence:

Adolescence is ushered in by puberty. The

terms are not synonymous. Adolescence lasts a much longer time. Puberty marks the beginning of adolescence. It is that period of life at which a person of either sex becomes functionally capable of parenthood. Various factors influence the time of its onset. It appears earlier, and is much more accurately determined in girls than in boys. It comes on sooner in children of some nations than it does in those of others.5

The second extends from the birth of the procreative functions to the full maturing of all the powers. This is the period of youth or adolescence and it embraces, roughly speaking, about the second dozen years of life.6

By puberty is meant the initial stage of adolescence, the earliest age at which the individual is capable of begetting or bearing offspring.7

Although the definite initial stages of adolescence may be considered chiefly as physical, this is certainly not true of the years of change or of the indefinite conclusion of the period. Physical, mental, and emotional factors all combine to make up the unstable period, and it is only when a person may be said to have

completed the physical change from a child to a mature, potential parent, and at the same time has gained a degree of intellectual and emotional balance, that the period of adolescence closes and adulthood begins. It is by no means a static, easily defined period. As Frederick Tracy puts it:

Adolescence, then, is not a life by itself, but a stage in the total life. The attempt to study it by itself alone would inevitably end in misunderstanding. Striking and characteristic as its peculiar features are, they have their preparatory conditions in the preceding periods, and many of their effects persist unto the end of life. There is no characteristic of adolescence whose consequences may not be traced in maturity and old age. No adequate understanding of this period is possible unless one looks also beyond the period in both directions. They little know of adolescence who only adolescence know. Back of adolescence are boyhood and childhood, and back of childhood are the forces of heredity, and all about the individual are the diverse operations of the environment; while on the other hand youth develops into maturity and maturity is succeeded by senescence, decay and death.8

All this, this almost complete understanding of youth, this "looking beyond the period in both directions" characterizes Barrie's attitude toward a sympathetic understanding of the adolescent.

Therefore, the characters to be treated in this thesis are adolescents whose traits reach back into childhood, and beyond

8 Tracy, 5.
adolescence to maturity. If the interests and problems involved in Barrie's characterization are definitely the interests and problems of childhood alone, that characterization will not fall under consideration here; nor will we consider the characterization of a child whose mental and emotional qualities are chiefly those of an adult.

But two important matters remain. The first will be the enumeration of the plays chosen and rejected as pertinent or not to the discussion. The second will be an exact statement of the purpose of this study of the adolescents in the plays of J. M. Barrie.

The plays which must be put aside, regretfully but necessarily, may be divided into three groups or types. The first type is the play in which no adolescent appears. Thus, for example, among the longer plays this type includes such excellent dramas as The Admirable Crichton, Quality Street, and What Every Woman Knows and among the one act plays, Seven Women, The Twelve Pound Look, The Old Lady Shows Her Medals, and The Will. The second type includes those plays in which the adolescent character, boy or girl, is of very minor importance and thus adds but little to the information and knowledge we seek. Among others in this group are two of Barrie's plays which are not too well known, Walker, London...
and *The Wedding Guest*. Finally, there are three plays which include youths who are important characters, but who, because they are too near the borderline of either childhood or adulthood, must be omitted. These characters are not looking in both directions. The three plays are *Peter Pan*, *Mary Rose*, and *Old Friends*, the last a one act play. Prescinding from the fact that adults might enjoy *Peter Pan* as dramatic literature just as much as children the actual presentation of this great child classic, it must be emphasized that the actual characters are too far removed from that period of adolescence with which we deal. Michael and John Darling and all 'The Lost Boys' in the 'Never Land' are, of course, out of the question. Peter, himself, part boy and part fairy, was, as the sub-title of the play tells us, "The Boy Who Would Not Grow Up". This is the Barrie who refused to stop playing but it is not the adolescent. Wendy, a girl whom we may imagine to be only about ten or eleven, at the most, although she already possesses a few of the predominant characteristics of the adolescent young lady, such as the desire to be a mother, is also too much of the child for our purpose.

*Old Friends*, a one act play, which hardly seems recognizable

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9 There are many other plays which could be listed but those mentioned are sufficient to show the purpose of the division made. Actually all of Barrie's plays, except *Peter Pan*, *Old Friends*, and *Mary Rose* (type three) along with the four plays used in this thesis, would fall under either type one or two.
as the work of Barrie, is almost the opposite of *Peter Pan.*
Here, the chief character, Carry Brand, is a girl of twenty, just
engaged to be married before the curtain goes up. It almost seems
an ideal case, a young girl entering the married state, looking
ahead to all the problems of life which a wife and mother must
face, yet at the same time glancing back at the joys, many of them
no longer possible, which she has known and loved so well. How-
ever, ideal though it may seem, Barrie, using an author's privi-
lege, has departed from his usual mode, and treats only of one big
problem, the fact that Carry has inherited the one-time vice of
her father - drink. Dipsomania is not ordinarily a normal char-
acteristic of adolescence, and as the play deals completely with
this problem and no other, it, too, must be pronounced outside the
scope of the work at hand.

*Mary Rose*, one of Barrie's most unusual plays, fantastical
and weird, is the last play which must be rejected. Although for
a brief time *Mary Rose* is depicted as a very young lady, it is
really more the circumstances and plot of the play, than the char-
acters, which most interest the reader. The very abnormality of
the mysterious happenings in the play did not provide Barrie, this
time, as in *Dear Brutus*, with the opportunity to create a genuine,

10 "These, not the full-length play on which Frohman had counted,
were to be his contribution to the Repertory season. One,
gloomy, harking back to Ibsen and to secret scars, was called
*Old Friends.*" Denis Mackail, *Barrie The Story of J. M. B.*,
396 & 422.
typical, adolescent character.

The four plays which are to form the source material for the deductions and final conclusions of this thesis are *Alice Sit-By-The-Fire*, *A Kiss For Cinderella*, *Dear Brutus*, and *The Boy David*. These four plays provide us with *dramatis personae* who are youths looking in both directions. In *Alice Sit-By-The-Fire* we shall study Alice's two children, Amy, seventeen, and Cosmo, thirteen. Of lesser importance will be Amy's friend, Ginerva. *A Kiss For Cinderella* and *Dear Brutus* each gives us one character, Cinderella, and the delightful "might-have-been", Margaret Dearth. The last play Barrie wrote, shortly before his death and more than fifteen years after his other plays had been penned, was *The Boy David*. The characters, David and Jonathan, are not, of course, original with Barrie, yet this does not interfere with our purpose because it is from his presentation of the two boys, famous in biblical history, that we draw our knowledge of Barrie's understanding of youth.

By analyzing these given adolescents, by considering their traits, habits, virtues, and faults, it is intended that the purpose of this thesis will be accomplished. That purpose is to arrive at a knowledge of the importance which Barrie's unique understanding of adolescent psychology has in his plays. By treating only those characteristics, good, bad, and indifferent, which he gives us in the youths chosen for analysis, we should be able to conclude why he has been so successful in presenting, realistically and ideally, the adolescent he knew so well.
CHAPTER II
FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCED
BARRIE'S UNDERSTANDING OF YOUTH

The number of influences which work upon a great author, helping him to produce the literary pieces he does, is, quite often legion. To this, Barrie is no exception. Relatives, friends, authors, publishers, producers, actors and actresses, and the multitude of other important people he knew, must necessarily have left an imprint upon his soul. Fortunately, we need indicate only those influences which have given him his knowledge of youth, a knowledge accompanied with real sympathy and true interest.

Therefore, no apology need be made if such names as Thomas Hardy, Thomas Carlyle, Professor David Masson, John Stuart Blackie, William Robertson Nicoll, Frederick Greenwood, Charles Frohman, Maude Adams, Asquith, and Lady Cynthia Asquith, and many others, are not spoken of in this chapter. Great names, all these, and yet, none of them directly effected his knowledge of youth. Encouragement from the publisher Frederick Greenwood, certainly;  

pleasure and satisfaction at seeing Maude Adams play the immortal Peter Pan, of course; renewed enthusiasm caused by Charles Frohman's eager guidance and cooperation, yes, by all means; but, we are looking for something more definite; we are looking specifically for those influences which touch the very source of Barrie's literary genius and in particular the expression his genius gives to his understanding of the adolescent.

There are three major influences to be considered, his mother, the Davies family, and his own boyhood. It will not be difficult to see the importance of these three factors, once the data has been supplied. Afterwards, a brief consideration may be given to two other highly probable influences. There will be some fact and some legitimate conjecture concerning his wife, Mary Ansell, and, too, that villain of Margaret Ogilvy, R. L. S.

So potent is the influence which J. M. Barrie's mother has exercised on him, so intimately is she revealed to us in all his work, we can scarcely think of him without thinking of her. Her childlike faith in God, the youthful humour which she never lost, and which remained strong even in her days of sickness and trial, her ever evident sympathy with and absorbing interest in all forms of lowly life, all these good and precious things we recognize in her gifted son and in his books. She was and is his inspiration, of her he wrote and for her; so that we are tempted, when reading some of
his finest things to ask ourselves, "How much of this do we owe to Margaret Ogilvy?"2

The more one reads Barrie and his biographers or critics, the more one appreciates that a great deal indeed is owed to his mother, Margaret Ogilvy. As his mother, she was, of course, the first to teach him. She taught him to speak and to listen, to love God, to revere books, to obey, and, of especial interest to him as a boy and as a grown man, she related story after story of her childhood. So much so, that he always thought and wrote more in terms of her childhood than of his own. "The horror of my boyhood was that I knew a time would come when I also must give up the games... ."3 The word 'also' is important, for it refers to her. It draws them together in sympathetic understanding, for just as the mother was reluctant to put her childhood behind her, so 'also' was the son.

In his books and plays, all of Barrie's little girls, before they reach the threshold of adolescence are drawn in the image and likeness of Margaret Ogilvy:

The reason my books deal with the past instead of with the life I myself have known is simply this, that I soon grow tired of writing 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 girlhood had upon me since I was a boy of six.4

3 James M. Barrie, Margaret Ogilvy by Her Son, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929, 30.
Too, all of Barrie's fictional women, after they have passed from adolescence into maturity, even into old age, partake in some degree of his mother's character and habits or manner:

She Was Margaret in The Little Minister, Jess in A Window in Thrums, Grizel in Sentimental Tommy, and Maggie in What Every Woman Knows.5

To mention a few others, we may add that we see resemblances, also, in Phoebe in Quality Street, Rosalind in Rosalind, Alice in Alice Sit-By-The-Fire, and good Mrs. Downey in The Old Lady Shows Her Medals.

But now, what of that "looking in both directions"? When later we study the characters of Margaret Dearth and Cinderella we shall see Barrie's mother at that very period of life which we have called adolescence "looking in both directions". For like Margaret Dearth, Margaret Ogilvy was a happy, carefree child, deeply in love with play; yet, she was one who realized that the greater glories of adulthood and especially of motherhood were awaiting her. At a very early age, too, like Cinderella, she had to care for the needs of others and unstintingly she gave her charges all her love. It is real pathos, at least for Barrie, that Margaret Ogilvy had to start growing up so soon. In a charming passage in his mother's biography he tells us of how she put her hand to the plow with

adult determination, but now and then turned back to toys and the games. She was only eight then, but there is no doubt that the struggle between being a little mother and manager and being a small girl went on into adolescence. Indeed, we might say, so young in spirit did she ever remain, that the struggle went on until death:

She was eight when her mother's death made her mistress of the house and mother to her little brother, and from that time she scrubbed and mended and baked and sewed, and argued with the flesher about the quarter pound of beef and penny bone which provided dinner for two days (but if you think that this was poverty you don't know the meaning of the word), and had her washing days and her ironings and a stocking always on the wire for odd moments, and gossiped like a matron with the other women, and humoured the men with a tolerant smile—all these things she did as a matter of course, leaping joyful from the bed in the morning because there was so much to do, doing it as thoroughly and sedately as if the brides were already due for a lesson, and then rushing out in a fit of childishness to play dumps or pahaulays with others of her age.6

So it was that Barrie, when he listened to his mother's stories and saw in her eyes that twinkle which said better than any words how much she loved her youthful days, learned much, which later he so faithfully put down on paper. It is, indeed, no exaggeration to say that the stories about one little girl whose early life was so sear to both mother and son were in great part

6 Barrie, Margaret Ogilvy, 28, 29.
responsible for the son's success and fame as an author. In conclusion, then, we may see that clearly the chief influence in his life, in almost all his works, and especially the prime source of his knowledge of the youthful girl, was his mother, Margaret Ogilvy.

Secondly, we must consider the Davies. Barrie's intimate friendship with this family began before the turn of the century and ended only with his own death in nineteen hundred and thirty-seven. He outlived the father and mother, Arthur Davies and Sylvia Du Maurier Davies, and two of the boys, George, the eldest, who was killed in the first world war, and Michael, his favorite, who was drowned at Oxford in nineteen hundred and twenty-one.7

The story of the five small boys, George, Jack, Peter, Michael, and Nicholas Davies and the fact that they and the games they played with Barrie were the direct inspiration for Peter Pan is well known to all who have read his most clever preface, the dedication to Peter Pan. As he says, addressing them:

The play of Peter is streaky with you still, though none may see this save ourselves... As for myself, I suppose that I always knew that I made Peter by rubbing the five of you violently together,

7 Although Hammerton's life of Barrie is worthwhile as far as it goes, Mackail's must be considered the best in all this matter concerning the Davies.
as savages with two sticks produce a flame. That is all he is, the spark I got from you.8

But the childhood of each of these boys is but a part of the story. Actually he saw them all grow up; he saw them put behind the toys and games; he saw them on the bridge of adolescence as they crossed from boyhood to manhood. Circumstances were such that, in the very period of adolescence we are concerned with, Barrie was able to watch and study and care for his beloved boys. In April, 1907, when George Davies, the oldest boy, was fourteen and Nicholas, the youngest, only four, their father, Arthur Llewelyn Davies died and in three years he was followed by his wife Sylvia, who died in August, 1910, at the age of forty-three.9

Barrie, a bachelor again, for Mary Ansell had divorced him earlier in the year, legally adopted the five boys. For many a year he was to be for them all a father, and although the cost was to be great in tears and almost unbelievable in thousands of $5, there is a plethora of evidence to show that they were his most highly valued possessions. George, whom Barrie sent to Eton and Cambridge, was killed in the war in nineteen hundred and fifteen. Jack, the second, joined the navy at an early age and was the first to marry.10 Peter went to Eton and was in the war toward its conclu-

9 Mackail, Cf. pp. 390 - 393; 462.
10 For Barrie's charming narration of the first meeting with Jack's fiancee, Miss Geraldine Gibb, see Mackail, 506 - 511.
sion. He became a publisher, backed somewhat by Barrie. As we have seen, Michael, who was sent to Oxford, was drowned at the age of twenty-one. Barrie's highest hopes were with him and the empty spot in the author's heart was never really filled by anyone else. The youngest, Nicholas, sent also to Eton and Oxford, left the latter, went into business and finally in nineteen hundred and thirty-five joined forces in the publishing business with Peter.

This is only a brief listing of the chief facts. It is sufficient to say, when we realize that for years he lived with them as their protector and loving guardian, that their lives were closely connected, and that they shared as many of the human sorrows and joys as exist between a father and his boys.

It is of importance to note that the relationship between Barrie and the Davies boys meant a great deal to him, not only in his private life, but also as a playwright. His most famous play, Peter Pan, is their play, too. His short war plays certainly drew much from the fact that three of the boys were involved in the
conflict. The plays we are considering were all written after he had met them.11 Alice Sit-By-The-Fire came out with Peter Pan in

11 Broadly speaking it may be said that Barrie before the twentieth century was a journalist, essayist, and novelist and that it was not until the nineteen hundreds that he achieved his great fame as a playwright. So clearcut was the division between the fields of literature, in both of which he was so eminently successful, that some could not see that the novelist, because of some of his early sad attempts at drama, would ever write a successful play. In his J. M. Barrie and His Books, published in nineteen hundred, John Alexander Hammerton, an admirer, critic, and biographer, writes on pages five and six of his introduction:

It will be noticed that I do not deal in any place with Mr. Barrie as a playwright. As an old student of the acted drama I have no compunction in expressing the opinion that, despite the wonderful success of "The Little Minister" on the stage, Mr. Barrie is not, and is not likely to be a serious factor in the contemporary drama. Indeed, "The Little Minister", as is known to playgoers, is a very sorry production compared with anything the author has written, and therefore one would not honestly write in praise of it. Though he may have received from the stage 1000 for every 100 which his books have produced, that does not prove him a dramatist, and indeed both "The Little Minister" and "Walker, London", were popular for reasons which lay quite outside of the playwright's art. His more serious effort at playwriting, "Richard Savage" (in collaboration with Mr. H. E. Marriot Watson), produced on the 16th April, 1891, was a failure. It is as the author of "Auld Licht Idylls" and "A Window in Thrums" that he is loved by the English-reading public throughout the world; his genius can best be shaped in books and not in plays. Hence my reason for ignoring his stage-work. I may be blamed for this, but I fancy that the weight of opinion will be with me, though I have a shrewd suspicion that Mr. Barrie himself is as "sinfully puffed up" about his plays as T'nowhead was about his pig; for his early newspaper writings show a strong taste for things theatrical.
nineteen hundred and five; A Kiss For Cinderella was produced in nineteen hundred and sixteen; Dear Brutus in nineteen hundred and seventeen; and The Boy David in nineteen hundred and thirty-six. 

De facto Barrie's success as a playwright was almost nil before knowing the Davies. How much of his success must be attributed to them? That is hard to say, but it cannot be denied that as youths, as eager listeners, and as enthusiastic actors they gave him part of the impetus actually to carry out his deep desire to write worthwhile dramas. Much of the joy, the sympathy, the subtle and sly humor, and the pathos, too, which appear in his plays is founded upon his close observance of these boys as they were growing up. Characteristically enough he writes most cleverly and knowingly of that time of struggle during which the adolescent overthrows blind credulity in favor of reason. It is the adolescent coming into his own:

Alas, I knew what it was, I was losing my grip. One by one as you swung monkey-wise from branch to branch in the wood of make-believe you reached the tree of knowledge. Sometimes you swung back into the wood, as the unthinking may at a cross-road take a familiar path that no longer leads to home; or you perched ostentatiously on its boughs to please me, pretending that you still belonged; soon you knew it only as the vanished wood, for it vanishes if one needs to look for it. A time came when I saw that No. 1, the most gallant of you all, ceased to believe that he was plowing woods incarnadine, and with an apologetic eye for me derided the lingering faith of No. 2; when
even No. 3 questioned gloomily whether he did not really spend his nights in bed.\textsuperscript{12}

I have said little here of Nos. 4 and 5, and it is high time I had finished. They had a long summer day, and I turn round twice and now they are off to school. On Monday, as it seems, I was escorting No. 5 to a children's party and brushing his hair in the ante-room; and by Thursday he is placing me against the wall of an underground station and saying, 'Now I am going to get the tickets; don't move till I come back for you or you'll lose yourself.' No. 4 jumps from being astride my shoulders fishing, I knee-deep in the stream, to becoming, while still a schoolboy, the sternest of my literary critics. Anything he shook his head over I abandoned, and conceivably the world has thus been deprived of masterpieces.\textsuperscript{13}

The rebuffs I have got from all of you! They were especially crushing in those early days when one by one you came out of your belief in fairies and lowered on me as the deceiver.\textsuperscript{14}

It would seem, from externals at least, that Barrie's own boyhood did not effect him as much as that of the Davies or of his mother's youth. The truth is that it is a problem of observing others and of looking at oneself, perhaps a problem of observing others versus self-introspection. As a small boy and as an adolescent, Barrie, as is natural, watched others and learned from them. As a grown man, too, being in a better position to understand and weigh the evidence of the habits, faults, and virtues

\textsuperscript{12} Barrie, "Peter Pan", in \textit{The Plays of J. M. Barrie}, 4.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid, 14.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid, 15.
of youth, he drew a great deal from watching others, the Davies in particular, and from mulling over those early impressions received from Margaret Ogilvy.

It would be false, however, to minimize the importance of his own childhood. Many of the games he played with them and the stories he told George, Jack, Peter, Michael, and Nicholas were but the echoes of his own boyhood in Kirriemuir, Glasgow, and Forfar. We must recall, also, that it is he who feels so intensely about leaving childhood, and how he hates to do it, and yet on the other hand, yearns to grow up to write great books, especially for his mother's sake. That this is but a part of Barrie's unusual personality, that personality which is so complicated and at times almost impossible fully to understand, cannot be doubted. It is an important part of his genius, a part of his writer's power. As Edward Wagenknecht says:

His is a power which, for those capable of feeling it all, partakes of the quality of magic, but it is too closely connected with his curious and enigmatical personality to yield itself readily to analysis.15

Barrie's determined refusal to give up his own youth is not the least among his personal, or if you will, literary idiosyncracies.

"It was no accident that the definitive edition of Barrie should be called the "Peter Pan Edition"; he did not want to grow up, and he made no secret of his disinclination."¹⁶

Such, then, were the three chief factors, Margaret Ogilvy, the Davies, and his own youth, by means of which he observed and studied, understood and sympathized with and loved youth. So definite was the result of this influencing process that an indelible mark has been left on almost all his work and that mark is - the spirit of youth.

The story of Barrie's marriage is a peculiar one. Here only a few details need be given in order that we may present what seems to be a negative influence concerning his understanding of youth.¹⁷ To be sure, there is but one definite example to give. However, it is not unimportant, for the character is none other than Margaret Dearth, Barrie's most appealing adolescent. Barrie was married to Mary Ansell in July, 1894. In April, 1910, after some months of legal delay, their divorce was made absolute.¹⁸ The theatre had brought them together, playwright and beautiful actress. She was only a year or two younger than he and they were happily matched or so it certainly seemed. That

¹⁶ Ibid, 399.
¹⁷ Mackail, Cf. Index for information concerning Mary Ansell.
¹⁸ Ibid, 424.
their married years were happy ones cannot be denied for there is abundant evidence. We may conjecture as plausible that Barrie, the quiet, deep-thinking author, subject to so many varying moods, although completely kind and generous to his wife, was not the perfect mate for a woman who was so attractive, an artist in her own right, and probably not too happy about playing second fiddle to her husband's work. Perhaps, for Barrie, who idolized his mother as the epitome of everything good, holy, and motherly in a woman and wife, there could be no perfect mate. Whatever else was involved, and much of it was never known even to the most intimate friends, the cold fact is that Mrs. James Matthew Barrie fell in love with one Gilbert Cannan, a young novelist twenty years her junior. So in nineteen hundred and ten, after the divorce from Barrie, the two were married. In a few years that marriage, too, came to an unhappy conclusion. In later years Barrie provided an allowance for Mary Ansell; for at the time of the divorce she had refused to accept any money.19 Now and then they saw one another and at the end

... another visitor arrived, brought here all the way from her home in Biarritz by the newspaper reports; the one who for fifteen far-off years had been his wife. She was in time to see him, but it was too late now for her presence to be known. He was sinking. The end was drawing nearer and

19 Ibid, 504.
nearer. In the early afternoon of Saturday, June 19th, his heart stopped beating and the story was finished at last.20

By all this Barrie had been deeply hurt, the divorce, the necessary, unavoidable scandal. His friends, knowing him so well, realized it without having to discuss it with him.

The important thing is that this is such a perfect background for the general theme of Dear Brutus. That Barrie had been toying with the idea of a 'second chance' in life is true, but that does not lessen the importance that his childless, marital disappointment must have played in his own mind when he created his might-have-been, Margaret Dearth. To a man who loves children a marriage without them is something of a lost cause. James Barrie and Mary Ansell; Will Dearth and his wife, Alice - consider them both. The difference a child would have made in the lives of Will and Alice is put down in black and white. It is not hard to believe that he who put it down in black and white was drawing from bitter experience. No matter how deeply loved were George, Michael and all the Davies there is, after all, a real difference between being a guardian and being a father to one who bears the father's name.

This much influence, then, we must concede to Mary Ansell, that she was, in the course of events, a partial cause for

20 Ibid, 718.
Margaret Dearth. She never gave Barrie an heir and we might almost say that in revenge of that very fact he turned around and made for himself his charming migh-have-been, who embodies so well his knowledge of what it means to be "looking in both directions".

Because it is of lesser importance a brief consideration of Stevenson has been left until now. Chapter Seven of Margaret Ogilvy is entitled "R. L. S." and Chapter Ten in An Edinburgh Eleven, "Robert Louis Stevenson". If the two chapters were not contained in books under Barrie's name it would be nigh impossible to attribute them to the same man. They are as different in style, tone, mood, and opinion as conceivable. The explanation is difficult. In 1896 Barrie, not a shuttle-cock type in regard to his opinion, wrote:

These familiar initials are, I suppose, the best beloved in recent literature, certainly they are the sweetest to me, but there was a time when my mother could not abide them. She said 'That Stevenson man' with a sneer, and it was never easy to her to sneer. At thought of him her face would become almost hard, which seems incredible, and she would knit her lips and fold her arms, and reply with a stiff 'oh' if you mentioned his aggravating name. In the novels we have a way of writing of our heroine, 'she drew herself up haughtily,' and when mine draw themselves up haughtily I see my mother thinking of Robert Louis Stevenson. He knew her opinion of him, and would write, 'My ears tingled yesterday, I sair doubt she has been miscalling me again.' But the more she miscalled him the more he delighted in her, and she was informed of this, and at once said 'The
scoundrel! If you would know what was his unpardonable crime, it was this, he wrote better books than mine.21

Seven years before Barrie had written the following comments about Stevenson:

He experiments too long; he is still a boy wondering what he is going to do.22

We want that big book; we think he is capable of it, and so we cannot afford to let him drift into the seaweed.23

The result is that he is chiefly picturesque, and, to those who want more than art for art's sake, never satisfying. Fascinating as his verses are, they take no reader a step forward. The children of whom he sings so sweetly are cherubs without souls.24

The great thing is that he should now give to one ambitious book the time in which he has hitherto written half a dozen small ones. He will have to take existence a little more seriously - to weave broadcloth instead of lace.25

Queer indeed that Barrie could write such scathing criticism, and there is more of it, and then a few years later in the most enjoyable chapter of Margaret Ogilvy praise Stevenson so highly. This chapter will ever live to Stevenson's glory, while

21 Barrie, Margaret Ogilvy, 131 - 132.
23 Ibid, 252.
24 Ibid, 254.
25 Ibid, 257.
the other, especially for the admirers of both Scotchmen, will be willingly forgotten. The whole explanation, as far as evidence goes, is supposed to lie in the fact that in eighteen hundred and ninety-two Stevenson in Samoa, only three years before his death, began a correspondence with Barrie, which so endeared them to one another that the latter was truly a sincere mourner when the great, always sickly author died.26 They never met but they knew one another well.

Stevenson was born ten years before Barrie and while the latter was still at the University of Edinburgh, the author of The Master of Ballantrae and A Child's Garden of Verses, only in his early thirties, was already famous. Despite all that Barrie says in An Edinburgh Eleven, he thought much of Stevenson even before they began their letter writing. The real point is that he was disappointed that Stevenson was not doing the great work he could and therefore should do.

It has been necessary to say all this that we may see if Barrie owes anything to Stevenson in regard to youth. It is hard to put one's finger on the point. Certainly Barrie never imitated Stevenson. R. L. S. never wrote Peter Pan and it is very doubtful that J. M. B. could have ever given the world the like of Treasure Island, even though he loved islands and there are many of them in his plays. Yet the two of them have something in

26 Mackail, 199 - 201.
common, besides their nationality, which makes one wonder. Both of them have contributed to child literature - literature enjoyed by children whether read or acted and at the same time appreciated and enjoyed by adults - to a degree equalled by very few in the whole history of English literature.

Let us say that Barrie received encouragement from Stevenson. Stevenson had made the youth in literature amount to something and people liked it and they bought the books. Barrie, who had the genius for the same thing, could do it too, now that it was certain that he would be accepted. Sentimental Tommy, Tommy and Grizel, Peter Pan, Peter and Wendy, The Little White Bird, A Kiss For Cinderella, Dear Brutus, they all came out after Stevenson died. To say that even one of them would not have been written if the two had never been acquainted through their letters is saying too much. Yet there is something, encouragement at another's success, which is, after all, a mild form of influence.

Without denying that there certainly must be other smaller influences here and there, we may say that these are the important ones: the three chief influences, Margaret Ogilvy, the Davies, and Barrie's own boyhood; and then Mary Ansell, and finally, Robert Louis Stevenson who gave encouragement by his own example.

Now let us turn to Barrie's adolescents and study their traits and habits so that we may see how well he actually did know youth.
CHAPTER III
FUNDAMENTAL NATURAL VIRTUES
OF THE ADOLESCENT

By analyzing the adolescents in *Dear Brutus*, *Alice Sit-By-The-Fire*, *A Kiss For Cinderella*, and *The Boy David* we shall see certain virtues, faults, and attitudes which Barrie considered natural and fundamental to the adolescent. These three major points - virtues, faults, and attitudes - will be treated in Chapters Three, Four, and Five respectively. Since we are working from the plays themselves this division seems more basic than a consideration of youth in various environments. This is true because Barrie is more interested in the adolescent character itself, the way he or she thinks and acts, than he is in the motives for such thoughts or actions. It would be ridiculous, of course, to say that he had no ideas on such topics as environment or motive, but we must stay close to the objective evidence given in the plays, and not deal in speculations.

It is common knowledge that a youth going through great physical and mental changes is bound to be emotionally unstable. The problem of emotion and its different components is a difficult one and in the case of the adolescent especially so. Raphael
McCarthy, S. J., very correctly says:

With the adolescent the cause of the changes is not always evident. Sometimes there seems to be no cause at all, and yet he may gravitate suddenly from one extreme of emotion to another. This instability is a rather general characteristic, although, of course, it does not affect all emotions equally and is more pronounced in the case of some adolescents than it is in others.  

In the midst of this seething turmoil there are, however, certain constant characteristics which may be found almost universally in adolescents. Exceptions to the rule may be had, but if too many of the ordinary traits are lacking it would seem that the problem is one of abnormality.

Among the pleasing traits of youth there are three which have chiefly impressed Barrie. Again and again he portrays his characters as possessing these happy virtues - enthusiasm, loyalty, and generosity. As he sees it, the adolescent is unusually enthusiastic in all his mental and physical modes of expressing self. There is a joie d'vivre, an eagerness, a happy restlessness, that comes with no other age. A boy fifteen, or a girl seventeen, is more intelligently inquisitive than he or she was as a small child. Childish curiosity coupled with the never failing 'Why?' gives way to a genuine, lively desire to know what life is all

about. This trait of enthusiasm we may find in all the youthful characters of the four plays we are considering. A brief study of two of them should be sufficient to demonstrate the point.

In Dear Brutus Barrie gives us his most genuine adolescent girl, Margaret Dearth. The portrait of this lovely literary creature is a true picture of physical and mental enthusiasm. From the very first glimpse we get of her this is overwhelmingly evident:

They are racing, the prize to be for the one who first finds the spot where the easel was put up last night. The hobbledehoy is sure to be the winner, for she is less laden, and the father loses time by singing as he comes. Also she is all legs and she started ahead. Brambles adhere to her, one boot has been in the water, and she has as many freckles as there are stars in heaven. She is as lovely as you think she is, and she is aged the moment when you like your daughter best. A hoot of triumph from her brings her father to the spot.

"She is as lovely as you think she is". Truly that line is an inspired one. It is almost as though the playwright has told us, "Now, when I get done with this little girl - and I am going to

2 Dear Brutus is a play in which a number of men and women are brought together in the house of the queer Lob in order that they may each get a 'second chance' by going into the magic wood on Midsummer Eve. Will Dearth, a drunken artist, unhappily, childlessly married to Alice, gets his 'second chance'. This makes him still an artist but he is now "ablaze in happiness and health and a daughter" - Margaret. Once the adventure in the woods is over Margaret becomes a might-have-been.

try to do my best - you may find that there is something missing. Ah, then, you with your imagination may add whatever is necessary to make her perfect for yourself, for 'She is as lovely as you think she is, and she is aged the moment when you like your daughter best'.

From this full-of-life beginning until the end of the act, breath-taking activity on the part of this twelve or thirteen-year old girl is the keynote. It is interesting to read the thirteen or fourteen pages just glancing at the parenthetical remarks made by the author before Margaret acts or speaks. What life! What bubbling over with youth! What constant, vivacious activity! Just take a few of them - "pursuing a squirrel that isn't there", "covering herself with leaves and kicking them off again", "bumping into him and around him and over him", "she waggles her head and down comes her hair", "putting a biscuit on her nose", "hugging his arm", "she tries hard not to smile, but she smiles and he smiles and they make comic faces at each other, as they have done in similar circumstances since she first opened her eyes". These are only a few. One almost feels fatigued as though one had over-exercised after absorbing so much activity. All this action, however, is very important. It is one of the main factors which makes us remember this specific adolescent so well. Barrie, the understanding one, knew this. He knew very well that, no matter how many mothers might ask Johnny to sit still, really one
of the things we all envy in youth is vital activity. The freshness of a child who seems never to tire is something that an adult has lost. The curious carefree ness of every movement and the almost complete inconsideration of what is to occur next are things that most adults don't possess. Any parents who have at times wished their offspring were models of quietness and passivity, would willingly admit, after having seen their children become such models because of serious sickness, that the constant alertness, the eagerness to be always doing, the happy activity is a real treasure to be valued and loved.

Most of what has been referred to pertains to physical activity, but the same may be said of the mental or psychic aspect of Margaret's character; although it is to be realized that the psychic and physical are never actually separated. This time we see a usage of adjectives which completes the picture of constant activity. For the most part they designate her frame of mind or emotional mood before she speaks - "critical, as an artist's daughter should be", "awestruck", "coaxingly", "bewildered", "defiantly", "stung", "interested", "sparkling", "gleefully", "tingling", "in a frenzy", etc. We have mood after mood, emotion after emotion, the instability of mind which belongs to the early adolescent. Enough for Margaret's enthusiasm; we shall come back to her a number of times later.

In The Boy David we have an enthusiasm which is somewhat
different. Barrie does not create a character but rather takes the great biblical David, son of Jesse, and writes his play around him. The story is old and well known but Barrie's telling of it is new, for it is his own. Keeping the dignity and greatness of the language of the Bible as much as possible, he adds his own charm and his own views of what the shepherd boy David was like. Enthusiasm is on almost every page on which we find David, but is usually more reserved, not quite as boisterous as that of Margaret.

Passing over all the excitement of the first act in which David announces to his mother and brothers that he has killed a lion, and in which Samuel, the prophet, anoints David as the chosen one, let us look at the treatment of the famous scene of the meeting of Saul and David. In the Bible we read:

And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him exceedingly, and made him his armourbearer. And Saul sent to Isai, saying: Let David stand before me: for he hath found favor in my sight.4

In his play Barrie makes the scene a very tender, ever-to-be-remembered one. The keen, delightful, affection these two, king and shepherd boy, feel for each other is handled very skilfully. One of the main reasons why the scene is so successful is the exuberant tone which is inspired by the enthusiasm of David upon learning that Saul, too, was once a shepherd. The dialogue is

4 The Holy Bible, First Book of Kings, Ch. 16, v. 21 & 22.
excellent. There is youthful boasting, astonishment, and enthusiastic pride on the part of David. He has walked in upon Saul who is sitting alone in a spot of his camp, having just dismissed his son, Jonathan, and one of his captains, Ophir. At first, for he is deep in thought, he mistakes David for Jonathan, then:

SAUL (introducing them, with a touch of humour). Son of Jesse, I am - the son of Kish. (David bows.)

DAVID Was your land fat or lean?

SAUL Here and there were fat parcels of ground - but the barren places, David! (He begins to be amused by David.)

DAVID (sympathetically). I know! How I know! And the goats in the barren places - waiting to pounce if one blade springs up. How many sheep had you?

SAUL Five hundred, it may be, when I returned from a fray.

DAVID (astounded) Five hundred! And kine?

SAUL I forget how many.

DAVID (scandalized) Forget how many!

SAUL (seating himself and speaking with apparent gravity). Listen and direct your ways. I had two camels and an olive press, and my well was bricked.

DAVID (gaspings). Bricked! (Boasting) Nevertheless there is no water like to the well of Bethlehem which is by the gate.

SAUL That may be so, but I had a fig-tree that bore twice in the year.

DAVID (who stands near him with legs wide apart and head thrust forward - impressed). Truly you were in a big way! We have a hundred sheep and twenty goats, he's and she's. (Making the best of his case) My mother has a flagon shaped like a camel and two painted glasses.

SAUL (handsomely). I never had that. But, David, I had - (SAUL is falling under the spell of DAVID, who takes it all seriously.)

DAVID Do not tell me that you had a he-goat that danced.
SAUL Ah me, none of my goats danced.
DAVID (proudly). Two of my father's
  goats dance, as thus. (He shows). 5

This all is certainly different from what we saw in Dear
Brutus. The charm of the boy's character is brought out by his
naivete and his enthusiasm of spirit, a certain wonderment and
amazement at the great things of the shepherd, Saul. All along
there is a genuine feeling of reserved enthusiasm for what he or
his has seen or has known or has owned.

In the last scene of the play, after David has slain Goliath
and has experienced at home his seven visions of the future, we
have David and Jonathan, the son of Saul, playing and talking to-
together. Their friendship, which in later years will infuriate
Saul, is a wonderful thing to gaze upon. Neither one appreciates
how much it means to him. Like the close friendship between all
young boys there is a thorough mutual understanding and a quiet
enthusiasm about being together. Their meeting is typical of young
boys of any century in any country:

A whistle is heard offstage. DAVID whistles
back and hides in cave. The voice of Jonathan
calls:)
JONATHAN Son of Jesse!
(DAVID thinks it all exceedingly funny.
JONATHAN enters, not in armour, but well
attired. He sees DAVID but politely pretends

5 James Matthew Barrie, "The Boy David", in The Works of J. M.
Barrie, Peter Pan Edition, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York,
not to.) David! Whither have you got?
I saw you on the rock like a he-goat.
DAVID (like sentry). Say the password.
JONATHAN Goliath
DAVID Enter!6

The conversation that follows brings out more fully what friendship between two boys is at its best. Examples of enthusiasm could be multiplied but we must go on to the second characteristic virtue in which Barrie showed so much interest; namely, loyalty. Of this and the following virtue of generosity only a brief treatment will be given. Rather than quoting too copiously from the plays I shall indicate how and to whom the different characters are loyal and toward whom their generosity tends.

The loyalty of Margaret Dearth is based on the deep love which a young girl has for a doting father. She tells him, reassuringly, that she will love him always, even when she has grown up and someone else has fallen in love with her. The whole scene is full of tenderness. Barrie, the childless man, is at his best here. He understands so well what the beautiful relationship between a father and daughter can amount to and this but adds pathos to the fact that Margaret is only a might-have-been, and the fact that in real life Barrie, himself was never a father. As mentioned in the second chapter, the fact that Barrie was married for fourteen years and never had any children, is a very plausible source of the creature, Margaret Dearth, who made, as she was, 

6 Ibid, 150.
out of his mind, represents his perfect adolescent. It is permissible, and the comparisons to be made are only too obvious, to believe that there is a true connection.

In *Alice Sit-By-The-Fire* the loyalties are flying at us from every direction. We are interested primarily in the youthful loyalties. In the beginning of the play we have the 'painful' loyalty between Amy and her friend, Ginerva. It is painful because it is difficult for others to watch. It is hard to believe that this affected school-girl love is anything more than a passing phase. They truly share each other's lives and no secret makes a barrier between them:

The maid announces MISS DUNBAR. Then AMY rises, brings her head to the position in which they are usually carried; and she and GINERVA look into each other's eyes. They always do this when they meet, though they meet several times a day, and it is worth doing, for what they see in those pellucid pools is love eternal. Thus they loved at school (in their last two terms), and thus they will love until the grave encloses them. These thoughts, and others even more beautiful, are in their minds as they gaze at each other now. No man will ever be able to say 'Amy' or to say 'Ginerva', with such a trill as they are saying it.)

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7 *Alice Sit-By-The-Fire* is the amusing story of one Colonel Grey and his lively wife, Alice, who return home to England from India to rejoin their family. Their two oldest children, Amy, seventeen, and Cosmo, thirteen, have been separated from them for some years, while their baby was sent back to England with a nurse almost a year before their return. The mix-ups which follow when Alice is thought by Amy to be in love with another man than the Colonel provide the main plot.

8 Barrie, "*Alice Sit-By-The-Fire*", in *The Plays of J. M. Barrie*, 251.
These two intrigue together during the whole play and though, of course, reality is stretched to the extent of giving the reader many a hearty laugh, nevertheless, there is a fundament for such actions in the consideration of what love between two school-girls may be like.

Another loyalty is that of Cosmo to his father and mother, although he fears that they will not realize that he is no longer a child. He is willing to receive motherly affection from Alice, but his relationship with his father must be man to man. Once that is settled Cosmo is an out and out parent booster.

The most important loyalty of course is the one on which the play is to a great extent based. This is Amy's love for her mother and her desire to save her from the 'wicked' Steve. Amy and Ginerva have seen a number of plays, so they know life—oh, so well—and though Alice has fallen, Amy, true-blue, will be loyal and salvage her parent's married happiness:

ALICE Because she thinks that she has saved me, and it makes her so happy. Amy has a passionate desire to be of some use in this world she knows so well, and she already sees her sphere, Steve: it is to look after me. I am not to be her chaperone, it is she who is to be mine. I have submitted, you see. 9

9 Ibid, 312.

We have seen in The Boy David two scenes in which are por-
trayed the relationship between Saul and David, and between Jonathan and David. The loyalty existing between Jonathan and David, as mentioned, is one based on boyhood friendship. The loyalty of David to Saul is that of a youth, who respects and admires an older, wiser man. Of importance, too, is David's loyalty and love to his mother as seen in the beginning and again toward the end of the play.10 Thus we have represented in one character, David, three ordinary loyalties of the adolescent boy. There is that respect of equality and faithfulness to one of one's own age and sex. Although Barrie saw this in many instances, certainly foremost must have been the ever present relationship between the Davies boys. Secondly, there is that respect of a boy for an older man, which David has for Saul. Barrie often makes fun in writing about what the Davies boys thought about him, but he knew, and the whole world knows, that they were gratefully loyal and faithful to him as their most generous friend and guardian. Lastly, the relationship between David and his mother and Barrie and Margaret Ogilvy is very similar. There is that same immediate grasp of each other's meaning, that same love of fun, that same desire to help in each other's work as much as possible.

In our fourth play, A Kiss For Cinderella, Cinderella's loyalty to the children she protects, to her employer, the artist Bodie, and to 'her' policeman is in a sense a reflection of her

10 Especially in Act I., and in Act III, sc. 1.
loyalty to herself and her ideals. Of this loyalty to herself and her ideals, which is really her complete self-sacrifice in favor of others, we had best treat under generosity.\footnote{11}

As exemplars of generosity in Barrie's adolescence let us take Cinderella and Margaret Dearth. Cinderella's whole life is motivated by doing things for others. The mystery of why she is so anxious to earn all the money she can is explained when we learn that she is taking care of some war orphans, whom she hides in boxes at her little shop, "Celeste et Cie - The Penny Friend". Her generosity has no limitations of any sort. It makes no difference to her that one of her orphans is English, one French, one Belgian, and one even German. It is according to her nature to do the utmost in kindness. Even her way of earning money for these children is by doing things for others. Thus her little shop is a place where one may get advice, have his temperature taken, have a suit measured or obtain cough medicine, and all this for only a penny. This shop business is an evening affair, for she works hard all day cleaning rooms in the house where the artist, Mr. Bodie, has his room and studio. Her gift of taking care of others is seen as soon as she makes her first appearance:

CINDERELLA (breathlessly). Did you rang, Sir?

BODIE (ashamed). Did I? I did - but - I - I don't know why. If you're a good servant, you ought to know why.

\footnote{11 Cinderella is the adolescent in Barrie's plays who makes the greatest sacrifice.}
(The cigarette, disgusted with him, falls from his mouth; and his little servant flings up her hands to heaven.)

CINDERELLA (taking possession of him). There you go again! Fifty years have you been at it, and you can't hold a cigarette in your mouth yet! (She sternly produces the turpentine.

BODIE (in sudden alarm). I won't be brushed. I will not be scraped.

CINDERELLA (twisting him around). Just look at that tobacco ash! And I cleaned you up so pretty before luncheon.

BODIE I will not be cleaned again.

CINDERELLA (in her element). Keep still. (She brushes, scrapes, and turpentines him.)

There is little doubt that Cinderella, with all her kind work for others and her constant bustling about is another picture of Margaret Ogilvy. It is all too easy to compare the two of them. In giving Cinderella her character of the genuine humanitarian Barrie drew heavily from his knowledge of his mother's active youth.

Going back to the Dearth and Margaret scene in *Dear Brutus* we find an example of generosity which is slightly different. It is based on the fact that Margaret has an appreciation and sympathy for one of her own sex, which she most likely does not fully understand. That we may understand this let us see the scene in

12 Barrie, "A Kiss For Cinderella", in *The Plays of J. M. Barrie*, 413.
which Alice, who in real life, outside the forest, is Will Dearth's wife, appears. She, as Mrs. Finche-Fallowe (in the forest) comes upon them and immediately tells them how hungry she is. It is Margaret who is the most generous, with a full enthusiastic generosity:

MARGARET (sparkling). I know! You said we had five pounds. (To the needy one) Would you like five pounds?

DEARTH Darling, don't be stupid; we haven't paid our bill at the inn.

ALICE (with bravado). All right; I never asked you for anything.

DEARTH Don't take me up in that way: I have had my ups and downs myself. Here is ten bob and welcome. (He surreptitiously slips a coin into Margaret's hand.)

MARGARET And I have half a crown. It is quite easy for us. Dad will be getting another fiver any day. You can't think how exciting it is when the fiver comes in; we dance and then we run out and buy chops.

DEARTH Margaret!

ALICE It's kind of you. I'm richer this minute than I have been for many a day.13

Such is the generosity of Margaret Dearth and it is indeed a reflection of Barrie's own generous spirit. His adoption of all the Davies boys is only the most colorful example of that spirit. He gave not only money to his family, and he was able to give more than they dreamed existed, but, also, love and affection in times of trouble. When his mother was sick he was there as much as

possible to aid her by his presence. Having a mother such as he had and being as altruistic as he was himself, it was not difficult for J. M. B. to make his literary children generous. In fact it would be hard to understand if it were otherwise. Nor would it be right for us to think that this procedure was based on anything but the firm conviction that the adolescent is generous to and cooperative with others, even to extreme.

We may conclude concerning these three virtues, enthusiasm, loyalty, and generosity, that Barrie had observed them often in the many children he knew and loved. He must certainly have seen them in the Davies boys as they grew up right before his eyes. The three influences, then, that we spoke of at some length in Chapter Two, his mother, the Davies boys, and his own childhood were certainly, on the whole, influences which reflected these three virtues. The transition Barrie, as an artist, had to make from real life to literature was not difficult.
CHAPTER IV

FAULTS OF THE ADOLESCENT

It must constantly be remembered that we are not speaking of any adolescent, but of Barrie's adolescent. How close his adolescent approximates a true one, and how much he may err, here or there, will be discussed in the concluding chapter. This is mentioned now because it will help explain the brevity of this chapter. To Barrie youth is essentially good. It is a much easier problem to trace universal traits of goodness in all his characters, in men and women, as well as in adolescents, than it is to find evil. Nor is it to be held against him that he was a firm believer in the goodness of human nature.

It is especially difficult to find any serious faults in the characters we are treating - David, Margaret, Amy, etc. Small faults there are, now and then, but they are never stressed, never too apparent. Another thing - it is not possible to say of selfishness, for example, as we said of generosity, that all our characters possess it. No! Cinderella has this little imperfection; David, this one; and Amy, that one. Are there, then, any small faults that may be found in common, not necessarily possessed by all the adolescents, but, perhaps, by two or three? It is certain that
of some faults youths might have - laziness, untruthfulness, stealing, and selfishness - there is no trace.

The two most common faults of character we find are stubbornness and to a degree, boastfulness. In a few places in each of the four plays may be found something which shows that the character is at least capable of stubbornness. For example, when Alice in Alice Sit-By-The-Fire fears that Amy is keeping something from her, something a mother has a right to know, she demands her right as a mother. Amy, however, stubbornly refuses to divulge her secret:

ALICE Ah, but I had no mother. And even at that age I knew the world.
AMY (smiling sadly). Oh, mother, not so well as I know it.
ALICE (sharply). What can you know of the world?
AMY (shuddering). More, I hope, mother, than you will ever know.
ALICE (alarmed). My child! (Seizing her) Amy, tell me what you know.
AMY Don't ask me, please. I have sworn not to talk of it.
ALICE Sworn? To whom?
AMY To another. (ALICE, with a sinking, pounces on her daughter's engagement finger; but it is unadorned.)
ALICE Tell me, Amy, who is that other?
AMY (bravely) It is our secret.
ALICE Amy, I beg you -
AMY (a heroic figure). Dear mother, I am so sorry I must decline.
ALICE You defy me! (She takes hold of her daughter's shoulders.) Amy, you drive me frantic. If you don't tell me at once I shall insist on your father...1

The humor of the situation is delightful but there is little doubt but that Amy means what she says, and will not easily be moved to change her opinion.

A bit of wilfulness is seen in Margaret, also, two or three times. Once, when Alice Dearth (Mrs. Finch-Fallowe) tells Margaret that her daddy doesn't like her to touch such a woman, Margaret answers:

MARGARET Oh, yes, he does. (defiantly) And if he didn't, I'd do it all the same. This is a bit of myself, Daddy.²

Of course, such a remark can hardly be the basis for judging that Margaret is a stubborn girl. Rather, it but helps round out her boisterous, joyful, youthful character by showing us that she has some of the usual emotional unbalance of her age.

In regard to the second common fault which may be seen to some extent in all the characters we are considering it is interesting to note that Barrie handles the matter very carefully. When children pass into their teens they begin to see things clearer, and they recognize their own failures and achievements. Without realizing it they often speak of their own abilities, their own accomplishments at too great length. Everyone likes to be congratulated, to have his or her success commented upon, but to the adol-

² Ibid, "Dear Brutus", 517.
escent this is so necessary, that if no-one else will do the back-slapping, he will do it for himself. This is something of Barrie's attitude, an opinion which he controls well, for no-one of his adolescents is an out and out braggart. Amy is proud of the fact, and she speaks openly of it, that she knows 'life' - oh, so well. Cinderella is not backward in letting Bodie know that without her he is truly a helpless individual. Margaret Dearth tells her father very frankly that she is lovely when she looks in her mirror, a little pool of water. Certainly Dearth will not deny it, but is it not significant that it is Margaret who comments upon it. For it shows that Barrie understands that it is at this early age that the female begins to take great interest in her own appearance. Cosmo, Amy's brother, desiring to warm up to his mother whom he has not seen for so many years, tries to impress her with his knowledge of literature, - "Cosmo (neatly). My favourite authors are William Shakespeare and William Milton. They are grand, don't you think?" We have already seen that when David first met Saul he tried to make an impression upon him by relating of his father's possessions. That is a nice turn to the everlasting theme of boyhood's favorite boast - "My father can do this. My dad says that . . My dad owns a . . " The examples which have been given here are just a few of quite a number of such incidents which show up the little fault of boasting.

3 Ibid, "Alice Sit-By-The-Fire", 267.
Concerning other minor faults not much need be said for they are mainly individualistic. Cosmo, an Osborne cadet, can be blunt in true boarding-school boy fashion. For instance before his and Amy's parents arrive home from India, ever fearing what his father will do, Cosmo says to Amy: "All I can say is that if father tries to kiss me, I shall kick him."\(^4\) Again, having discussed the possibility with Amy that the sun of India may have affected the color of their parent's skin, Cosmo lets slip: "I love you, mother, and I don't think you're so yellow."\(^5\) So, too, Cinderella, now and then, is more frank in expressing her opinion than would seem necessary. Margaret, in particular, and sometimes David, have a tendency to show off. Other faults, if one looks hard enough, might be found, but not many. It does not seem to have been Barrie's notion that the faults in youth should be accented in literature. In almost every case, the faults detailed in his youthful *dramatis personae* not only make the person more complete as an individual, but also add no little amount of charm and interest.

\(^5\) *Ibid*, 268.
CHAPTER V
CHARACTERISTIC ATTITUDES
OF YOUTH

In their way of thinking, in their interests, and especially in their attitudes toward the same and different subjects, the male and female adolescent differ a great deal. It is a natural result of her sex that the young lady should become interested in marriage, motherhood, and homemaking in the early or middle teens; while on the other hand, the adolescent boy does not seriously consider marriage, fatherhood or the earning of a living for his family, until later, either in the late teens or early twenties. Thus it is that in our four plays we have Margaret (who is very close in age to Cosmo and David) and Cinderella, who is only two or three years older, speaking of such things as marriage and motherhood.

We have already mentioned in Chapter Two, when speaking of Barrie's mother, Margaret Ogilvy, that she is to a great extent the exemplary cause for the literary existence of both Margaret and Cinderella. She is, for Barrie, not only his mother, but the mother. So it is natural, when we read either Dear Brutus or A Kiss For Cinderella that our thoughts immediately gravitate to
Margaret Ogilvy. She was a rare combination of an ever busy housewife who makes time amidst all her busy activity to think about the importance of her seemingly humble work, and to joy in it. In Cinderella we see mainly the active side of Margaret Ogilvy, the constant doing for others, although, of course, her attitudes as to how to be a mother to her war orphans are very definite. Cinderella, who from early morning until the evening is to be found cleaning and fussing in the house in which Mr. Bodie lives, and who at night is found busy in her Penny Shop, earning more money for her children, sounds very much like Margaret Ogilvy:

She scrubbed and mended and baked and sewed, and argued with the flesher . . .
She had her washing days and her ironings and a stocking always on the wire for odd moments.

Margaret Dearth, on the other hand, being in different circumstances, has never had to do such work. She (as she considers the future) is that side of Margaret Ogilvy which enjoys the fact that she is a wife and a mother. It is evident, that as young as she is, she has thought about marriage, for she teases her Daddy, not meaning to hurt him, about the fact that someone else will dare to love her some day. Margaret's idea of parenthood is based, naturally enough, on the way her father treats her. She knows that he is always doing something for her; his love is so deep that he

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1 James Matthew Barrie, Margaret Ogilvy by Her Son, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1929, 29.
even was careful enough that her first impression should be a glorious one, for her 'farthest-back recollection' is of seeing the stars. Having such a father, she is a most happy child, and we know that if she were to grow up and have children (we must not forget she is a might-have-been) she would treat them as her father has treated her.

Amy should be mentioned here, too, although she is more of the big-sister than the motherly type. However, she has been faced for some years with the problem of home-planning. She has had to make a home for Cosmo, for the baby, and for herself until Alice and the Colonel return from India. It must be said that she has done a good job. However, she does not remind us too much of Margaret Ogilvy. Her point of view of life in general is too highly colored by the plays she has been seeing with Ginerva, making her much less a realist than Margaret Ogilvy.

This business of motherhood and busy house-keeping has been mentioned first because it is most important in a consideration of the female adolescent. In the boys we see none of this. Cosmo's main idea in life, as we see in the play, seems to be to make grown-ups think that he too, now is an adult. In particular does he want his mother and father to think this. His fears that they will treat him otherwise worry him a great deal. One other point we may mention and then dismiss him. Cosmo shows the not unusual,
and somewhat justifiable, disgust of a boy his age for the exaggerated affection which exists between two girls. The love between Amy and Ginerva is more than he can bear:

GINERVA . . . How did my Amy sleep?

AMY I had a good night.

(How happy is GINERVA because AMY has had a good night. All this time they have been slowly approaching each other, drawn by a power stronger than themselves. Their intention is to kiss. They do so. COSMO snorts, and betakes himself to some other room, his bedroom probably, where a man may be alone with mannish things. The maidens do not resent his rudeness. They know that poor Cosmo's time will come, and they are glad to be alone, for they have much to say that is for no other mortal ears.2

Before we proceed to The Boy David it might be well to comment on one other attitude which Amy shares with Ginerva. As mentioned above the two girls have been attending a number of dramas. They are both highly impressed with these productions and are convinced that they know all about 'life'. Barrie certainly wrote these lines with a chuckle, and yet they are not unplausible because girls seventeen years old do get such ideas. They humbly admit that before their theatre going they knew nothing of the world, but now - oh, what a difference a few plays with the problem

of the marriage triangle as the chief plot can make in their young lives. Barrie understands very well that the desire of an adolescent girl, who is in her late teens, to recognize that she is mature, and to be recognized by others as adult, is very keen. Anything that will help her realize this desire is snatched at.

For Amy and Ginerva it is the drama:

AMY (comforted). And they have taught us so much, haven't they? Until Monday, dear, when we went to our first real play we didn't know what Life is.

GINERVA We were two raw, unbleached schoolgirls, Amy - absolutely unbleached. 3

GINERVA That was because we always went to the thinking theatres. Real plays are always about a lady and two men; and alas, only one of them is her husband. That is Life, you know. It is called the odd, odd triangle.

AMY Yes, I know. (Appealingly) Ginerva, I hope it wasn't wrong of me to go. A month ago I was only a school-girl. 4

The whole dialogue is very clever and leaves no doubt in the reader's mind about the fact that Amy and Ginerva actually believe that they have come into their own, that knowledge of the world and life is at last possessed by them. This is, of course, a very common attitude for adolescents. For girls, it takes, as here, a rather sophisticated turn; for boys it is more apt to be the "know

3 Ibid, 252.
it all complex. However, we shall not see this in our plays because Barrie does not give that to us in either Cosmo or David.

David's life is greatly influenced by the fact that he is the youngest of the eight sons of Jesse. It is ever his desire to become recognized as being no longer the baby of the family but as a man like his other brothers. It colors much of the home life. When he tells his mother and his brothers that he has killed a lion and a bear, he is not believed. They pretend, however, to believe him and so eager is he for his place among them that he is easily duped and readily tells the rest of his story. His delight in their mocking reactions is almost sad, for the reader realizes how sincere is his desire to be an adult. Here, again, is another instance where Barrie must have drawn from his relationship with the Davies boys. There were five of them and we have indications, here and there, that the two youngest, Michael and Nicholas, respectively, had their share in the fate of being the baby of the family. No doubt it was less violent than in the case of David, for he lived in a supposedly more savage time; nevertheless, the example was there for Barrie to draw upon.

Another attitude which should be noted in David is one of unusual respect for others. Perhaps this, too, is the result of his being the youngest. However, whatever be the chief reason for it, he is very considerate to his mother, almost jealously respectful to his brothers, and openly full of admiration for Saul.
It makes of him not a cringing lad, but a properly humble and polite one. He has no reason for being otherwise, at least, not at the present, for how could a poor shepherd boy know that he is chosen by God to be a great king.

Before concluding this chapter, let us take one more look at Cinderella, for she typifies, because of her position as a working girl, an attitude which the others do not. To be sure, David was poor, but Cinderella's plight is different because she is one of the modern poor, a young Cockney girl who has to work her fingers to the bone for a living. She performs her labors for her war orphans' sake cheerfully, for it is her high ideal. Actually, however, she does not earn enough to feed them all, and, consequently, true to character, she is the one to suffer the lack of food. This combination of steady lack of sufficient sustenance and the genuine poverty-stricken background of the girl makes her look at the wealthy with wide eyes and open mouth. Poverty and hunger, there is little doubt that together they form the foundation for her dreams, especially, since she is so imaginative, her dreams of the great ball. It is a clever touch of Barrie's - this working of the famous Cinderella ball into the fanciful mind of a poor Cockney lass. The ball only comes about, when Cinderella, having fed her mind on such marvelous things, while she practically starved herself in regard to real food, collapses on her doorstep with pneumonia. Barrie, knowing that the adolescent must be happy, if at all
possible, made Cinderella so by giving her her dream world which had as its climax the "most celebrated ball in history".
CHAPTER VI
BARRIE'S LITERARY TREATMENT
OF THE ADOLESCENT

There is no need to discuss at any greater length the fact that Barrie does know the adolescent. By now, that must be abundantly clear. Rather, it is only necessary to show how he puts the adolescent into literature. Because he is a literary man, whose knowledge of the adolescent is unusually profound, there is no wonder that his writings reveal a great deal more to us than many a coldly factual adolescent psychology textbook.

There are two main points to be considered. In the first place, drawing upon his knowledge, Barrie is very careful to use as many devices as are possibly permitted to the playwright to make each adolescent an individual characterized by as many concrete, individuating notes as are necessary for a realistic picture. He does this chiefly in his parenthetical remarks and in the dialogue.

Barrie is a master at using parenthetical remarks to introduce the spoken word, a circumstance, or an action. The adolescents we have been speaking of are often touched off or described at greater length in this fashion. We mentioned in particular when
speaking of the enthusiasm of Margaret Dearth and David the many excellent to-the-point observations that were used to help us understand the character or the mood he or she was in at the moment. The same could be said of all the adolescents, a touch here and a touch there, but touches which mean so very much. The cleverness of the dialogue; its fidelity to the way boys and girls actually speak; its ever constant regard for the type of adolescent that is speaking, makes it difficult to choose examples. Of the very best, however, is the scene in which Margaret Dearth tells her Daddy that she is going to play at putting up her hair, for she will soon be doing that and she feels she should practice:

MARGARET Shut your eyes, please.
DEARTH No, Margaret.
MARGARET Please, Daddy.
DEARTH Oh, all right, They are shut.
MARGARET Don't open them till I tell you.
What finger is that?
DEARTH The dirty one.
MARGARET (on her knees among the leaves).
Daddy, such a darling of a mirror. It is such a darling mirror I have got, Dad. Dad, don't look. I shall tell you about it. It is a little pool of water. I wish we could take it home and hang it up. Of course the moment my hair is up there will be other changes also; for instance I shall talk quite differently.

DEARTH Pooh! Where are my matches, dear?
MARGARET Top pocket, waistcoat.
DEARTH (trying to light his pipe without opening his eyes). You were meaning to frighten me just now.
MARGARET No, I am just preparing you. You see, darling, I can't call you Dad when my hair is up. I think I shall call you Parent. (He growls) Parent dear, do you remember the days when your Margaret was a slip of a girl, and sat on your knee? How foolish we were, Parent, in those distant days.

Such a conversation reveals a great deal of the personality of Margaret. We know her much better for it. So it is with most of Barrie's dialogues. They are used not only to carry on the story but also to give us a better, more complete portrait of the specific adolescent. The real test to prove that the dialogue, the spoken words of his adolescents, performs its task well is in the speaking. By reading some of the speeches, some of the conversations, aloud, one understands that Barrie did have a real gift in doing this sort of thing. Not only does the adolescent say what is appropriate to youth, but what he says rings true to character. One of his most difficult problems along this line of dialogue was had in the last play that Barrie wrote, The Boy David. That he succeeded as well as he did in this enterprise of making biblical language sound realistic without losing its grandeur and dignity is to his credit. He was well beyond his seventieth year when he wrote the play, a real veteran of the drama, so we may be sure that

it is not a hit and miss affair. It is written deliberately and with serious consideration. We read in the preface to the play (written by the editor):

The speech in *The Boy David* is a compromise; simple enough in vocabulary to set us at ease with the characters; removed from reality by a mixture of Scottish locutions with a few inversions and redundancies; given a recurrent dignity by echoes of scriptural phrase.2

That is certainly evidence of a well thought out dialogue, typical of all his dialogues.

The second main point to be considered is that Barrie was sincerely faithful to his concept of the adolescent. Ever present with him was the realization, as we have mentioned a number of times, that the adolescent is youth "looking in both directions". This "looking in both directions" he saw everywhere, in all the factors which influenced him, his mother, the Davies and in himself. What he put down in black and white was what he believed to be the true situation. Sometimes he is called a sentimentalist, but there is sufficient evidence that this is false. We had much better call him a realist. It is true that he believed that there was not much evil, real evil, to be found in youth but that is hardly a genuine basis for calling him a sentimentalist. What it

actually means is that he formed his own ideas about youth, based on many years of experience with them, and then wrote it down that way, as faithfully as possible. Some idealism there is, of course. What genuine piece of art is there to be found without that? But Barrie's tendencies in regard to the portrayal of adolescent characters is chiefly realistic, so much so that we feel we know Margaret, Amy, and David personally. Barrie is often in his plays idealistic, romantic, if you will. He often used devices that other playwrights, knowing their limitations, were to wise to attempt. Fantasy, the unbelievable, the dream-like, are found many times in his plays. With the adolescent character it is a different story. Here he wrote what he knew, and that is the secret. Because he knew the adolescent's habits, virtues, and faults, so well, chiefly through the influences of his mother, the Davies boys, and his own boyhood, and because he portrayed them faithfully, using all the knowledge he had and all the methods a playwright may use, Barrie can well be called the apostle of the adolescent in the dramatic literature of the twentieth century.
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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Richard F. Burnham, S. J., has been read and approved by three members of the Department of English, West Baden College, West Baden Springs, Indiana.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

August 13, 1947

Date

Signature of Adviser