



# Femininity, Crime and Self-Defence in Victorian Literature and Society

From Dagger-Fans to Suffragettes

Emelyne Godfrey



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# **Femininity, Crime and Self-Defence in Victorian Literature and Society**

**From Dagger-Fans to Suffragettes**

Emelyne Godfrey

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*To Martin*

# Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	ix
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	x
<i>Note on the Text</i>	xii
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xiii
<b>Introduction</b>	1
Hot-House Flowers	3
Safety in a ‘Dangerous Novel’	6
Introducing the Texts	10
<b>Part I ‘A Door Open, A Door Shut’</b>	
<b>1 On the Street</b>	15
‘No Males at Men to Stare’?	15
The Lady is a Tramp	23
<b>2 Danger en Route</b>	26
‘The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist’	26
Panic on the Line	27
<b>3 Behind Closed Doors in Mona Caird’s <i>The Wing of Azrael</i> (1889)</b>	33
Perils of the ‘Marriage Market’	33
‘Reading Nature’s Plainest Danger-Signals’	39
Perfect Gentlemen?	44
Murder	53
<b>Part II Fighting for Emancipation</b>	
<b>4 Elizabeth Robins’s <i>The Convert</i></b>	67
Looking After Herself	67
War with Mr Wells	69
Kicking the Suffrage Football	72
Hatpins and Dog-Whips	79

<b>5 The Last Heroine Left?</b>	86
Exercising Freedom	86
Lightning Throws and Waltzes with Watts	90
Potatoes, Policemen and Mrs Garrud	99
 <b>Part III The Pre-War Female Gaze</b>	
<b>6 Elizabeth Robins and the 'White Slave Trade' Panic</b>	109
Following Threads	109
Shutting In	112
'Houses of Hell'	118
The Girl with the Lamp	127
<b>7 Read My Lips</b>	132
Richard Marsh's World of Crime	132
The Plate-Glass Partition	136
Cutting Hair	139
Handbags at Dawn	141
The Missing Jewel Case	144
The Ripper and his Shadow	147
Trapped	151
Death by Chocolate	153
<b>Conclusion</b>	156
<i>Notes</i>	158
<i>Bibliography</i>	171
<i>Index</i>	187

# List of Figures

Cover Image: Arthur Wallis Mills, 'The Suffragette that Knew Jiu-Jitsu', *Punch*, 6 July 1910, p. 9. Image reproduced with permission from Punch Ltd.

2.1	Fan-Dagger (Fan Tanto)	31
2.2	'Dagger-Fan': French, 1874. Both images of fans are the author's own and taken with kind permission of The Fan Museum, Greenwich	32
5.1	Edith Garrud in 'If You Want to Earn Some Time Throw a Policeman', <i>Sketch</i> , July 1910, p. 425. Image reproduced with permission from Mary Evans Picture Library	104

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## Note on the Text

All references to the Sherlock Holmes stories are taken from the *Penguin Complete Sherlock Holmes* (London: Penguin, 1981). In English alone, ‘jujitsu’ has a variety of spellings, including ‘jiu-jitsu’ and ‘ju-jutsu’. I have used the Japanese spelling of ‘jujitsu’ instead of the Westernized form, ‘ju-jitsu’. Japanese names are anglicized, with forenames first, followed by the surname, as this is how they were often referred to in the Edwardian texts I have examined.

# Abbreviations

Please see the bibliography for full citation details.

- Azrael: The Wing of Azrael* (Caird) Volume numbers are indicated within the brackets
- Banishing the Beast* (Bland)
- Bleak Houses* (Surridge)
- Character* (Smiles)
- City of Dreadful Delight* (Walkowitz)
- 'The Cause of Women' (Pykett)
- Crimes of Outrage* (D'Cruze)
- Curios* (Marsh)
- Danaus* (Caird)
- Dear Girl* (Tierl Thompson)
- 'Dear Mrs Garrud' (Winn)
- 'Defence of Wild Women' (Caird)
- Elizabeth Robins, 1862–1952: Actress, Novelist, Feminist* (Gates)
- Elizabeth Robins: Staging a Life, 1862–1952* (John)
- Essays on Physiognomy* (Lavater)
- Fine Art of Jujutsu* (Watts)
- Fox and the Flies* (van Onselen)
- Glimpses into the Abyss* (Higgs)
- Grain or Chaff?* (Plowden)
- The Heavenly Twins* (Grand)
- In Our Infancy* (Corke)
- Judith Lee: Some Pages from Her Life* (Marsh), including the following stories:
- , 'Hair': 'The Man Who Cut off My Hair'
- , 'Interlaken': 'Eavesdropping at Interlaken'
- , 'Conscience'
- , 'Matched'
- , 'Auld Lang Syne'
- , 'Isolda'
- , 'Uncle Jack'
- , 'Mandrake'
- , 'Napolitain': 'The Restaurant Napolitain'
- 'Maiden Tribute' (Stead)

- Manliness and the Male Novelist* (Dowling)  
*Marriage as a Trade* (Hamilton)  
*The Militant Suffragettes* (Raeburn)  
*The Morality of Marriage* (Caird)  
'Mrs Garrud Replies to Her Critics' (Garrud)  
*The New Girl* (Mitchell)  
*The New Woman at the Fin de Siècle* (Ledger)  
NUWSS: National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies  
*Odd Women: The Odd Women* (Gissing)  
PMG: *Pall Mall Gazette*  
'Of Queen's Gardens' (Ruskin)  
'Self Protection on a Cycle' (Tindal)  
*Queen Christabel* (Mitchell)  
*How to Read Character in Features, Forms and Faces* (Frith)  
'Richard Marsh: Novelist Extraordinaire' (Dalby)  
*Sherlock's Sisters* (Kestner)  
*Sport and the Physical Emancipation of English Women, 1870–1914*  
(McCrone)  
*Suffragette Escapes* (Marshall)  
*Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (Brontë)  
*Tess* (Hardy)  
*Vignettes of a Memory* (Greville)  
*Walking the Victorian Streets* (Epstein-Nord)  
WAYGT?: *Where Are You Going To...?* (Robins)  
'The Woman with the Whip' (Billington-Greig)  
*The White Slave Market* (Malvery)  
'Women and Young Girls Dare not Travel Alone' (Stevenson)  
WWSL: Women Writers' Suffrage League  
WFL: Women's Freedom League  
WSPU: Women's Social and Political Union

# Introduction

When the young actress, Elizabeth Robins, came to London in late 1888, her father was concerned for her safety during her ‘wanderings about the modern Babylon’ and considered that in London the ‘hours and places of danger’ were more numerous ‘than in New York’.<sup>1</sup> Over a hundred years later, my own mother expressed similar concerns when I told her I wanted to study in London. She suggested I enrol in a women’s self-defence class she had seen advertised on television.

Instead of hand-to-hand combat, the course emphasized crime prevention. In Britain, the use of mace spray for civilian self-defence is illegal so improvisation, based on the dictates of ‘reasonable self-defence’, is necessary. Say ‘no’ with confidence, never give telephone callers the impression you live on your own, do not listen to your iPod with both ears deaf to the world, never wear clothing bearing your name and carry the number of a taxi company. To stall an assailant in their tracks ask them a ridiculous question to baffle them to buy time for escape or use a personal attack alarm which will ‘scream’ for you. We did learn palm-heel strikes and successfully defaced a number of polystyrene heads whilst experimenting in ways of gouging out an attacker’s eyes. Some of the activities raised intriguing points. We trembled at the thought of biting an attacker or piercing their eyes. How would we respond in a real-life situation, in darkness, amidst surges of adrenaline? Were we too civilized to injure, too nice to defend our own lives? Why, as one participant put it, were we suddenly behaving like ‘prim, Victorian ladies’? It seemed natural to ask, therefore, if ladies living during the Victorian era and pre-war years really were so unable or too squeamish to protect themselves.

This book investigates the everyday dangers facing British, middle-class women from the mid-Victorian era until the outbreak of World

War I. In the age of self-help, novels were a form of self-instruction. A study devoted to women's self-defence in Victorian and Edwardian literature and history is long overdue in the light of the number of classic books which have raised important issues in this area: Judith's Walkowitz's *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (1992), Lucy Bland's *Banishing the Beast: English Feminism and Sexual Morality, 1885–1914* (1995), Lynda Nead's *Victorian Babylon: People, Streets and Images in Nineteenth-Century London* (2000), *Bleak Houses: Marital Violence in Victorian Literature* (2005) by Lisa Surridge and Antonia Raeburn's *The Militant Suffragettes* (1973). Shani D'Cruze's *Crimes of Outrage: Sex, Violence and Victorian Working Women* (1998) considers how working women defended themselves with pokers, clogs, rolling pins and chairs, against intruders who 'assaulted' them and how they used the court to reclaim their reputations. I will, in the main, be considering civilian women of the middling classes in this book as I focused on bourgeois manliness in my last volume. Literature – both fiction and nonfiction – is a contemporary source of public opinion and describes the little incidents in women's lives which would not have found their way into courts but nonetheless affected how they felt about themselves and their surroundings. While a novel might be widely studied for its trenchant critique of marriage laws or sex trafficking, it is the smaller events which are also of interest here. One of the few works to look at a specific self-defence scenario in women's literature is Stevie Davies's introduction to *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848), in which she argues that Helen Huntingdon defends herself against her odious husband's houseguest and would-be rapist by pointing her palette knife at him.<sup>2</sup> The palette knife is a symbol of Helen's profession, and represents her industrious, creative nature as opposed to the broken clasp knives and split razors she finds lying around, the products of misdirected, self-destructive masculine anger.

My book is a sister volume to *Masculinity, Crime and Self-Defence in Victorian Literature* (2010) where I argued that methods of minimally aggressive forms of protection were explored and more widely adopted as a response to the increasing severity with which interpersonal violence was regarded. As one mid-Victorian commentator announced: 'The fist *has* expelled the sword and pistol'.<sup>3</sup> A gentleman was generally expected to be able to defend himself or to protect the weaker sex. *The Gentleman's Book of Manners* (c. 1881), stated that '[w]omen are not endowed with the power of defending themselves, like men. They must not resort to violence, either in word or deed. They are compelled to use a certain delicacy of manner'.<sup>4</sup> The use of the knife was widely

considered to be unpatriotic, sly and underhand. In Sarah Grand's *The Heavenly Twins* (1893) the boy, Diavolo, uses a penknife to defend his twin sister from attack from make-believe monsters but he accidentally stabs himself. While pistols were still carried it was physical and mental self-defence that tested manliness. A man was particularly lauded if he could box well, adhere to principles of fair play and not shout 'take that!' at his assailant. Self-control was key. Understatement became a performance in itself. By venturing out into the world, the archetypal man tested himself, his mental and physical strength and sought to harness the aggressive side of his nature to positive effect. Could the reverse be claimed of women who were expected to be domesticated?

### **Hot-House Flowers**

Ruskin's seminal daydream, 'Of Queen's Gardens' (1865), was a feelgood text for the middle-class wife, glorifying her role as her husband's assistant as 'the centre of order, the balm of distress, and the mirror of beauty' ('Of Queen's Gardens', p. 120). The essay extolled the separate spheres, advocating that wives be educated only so far as necessary to assist their husbands, that they should look after their homes and let their husbands fight in the dusty city for the trophies of commerce. Consequently, according to Andrew Dowling, a woman who was 'protected in her domestic sphere had less depth as a person' and 'was more of a child, or a saint, because she had not battled the dark forces of desire and pain that the representative man battled, and overcame, everyday'.<sup>5</sup> Ruskin argued that '[t]he man's power is active, progressive, defensive' and he is 'eminently the doer, the creator, the discoverer, the defender' ('Of Queen's Gardens', p. 99). Women should do more to quell men's need to fight. As he said, a 'woman's power is for rule, not for battle' ('Of Queen's Gardens', p. 99). However, her work in the home has ramifications for public life, namely she is responsible for 'the beautiful adornment of the state' ('Of Queen's Gardens', p. 120). Of course, the idea that all middle-class women never ventured forth alone is a myth. Even Ruskin's essay admits that women might step outside the house gates, 'where order is more difficult, distress more imminent, loveliness more rare' ('Of Queen's Gardens', pp. 120–121) and that perhaps they might wish to: '[U]nless she herself has sought it [a woman] need enter no danger, no temptation, no cause of error or offence' ('Of Queen's Gardens', p. 100). But the ideal of the 'separate spheres' nevertheless pervaded late-Victorian culture; it was widely believed that only men should venture into the fog and murky city to earn money while wives sweetened the home.

In *Men of Blood: Violence, Manliness and Criminal Justice in Victorian England* (2004), Martin Wiener argues that the separate sphere mentality accentuated the image of women as physically weak and in need of protection while masculine violence became increasingly stigmatized in response. He adds that ‘the “paternalist” or “gender protectionist” (sometimes called “new model patriarchy”) and the feminist – often pictured as contesting with each other, more often worked together in this sphere, both of them causing male violation of female bodily integrity to be more stigmatized and more punished’.<sup>6</sup> As Wiener’s shows, nineteenth-century women protected themselves from violence indirectly through political campaigning or by stabbing their husbands, being ‘twice as likely’ as their husbands to be ‘acquitted on the ground of insanity’ (*Men of Blood*, p. 133), un-hinged masculinity (according to the ‘civilizing offensive’). However, his study is limited to examining a small number of spousal murders committed by working- and middle-class women. Wiener’s argument gives the impression that in a climate where violence was increasingly considered to betoken un-British, un-hinged masculinity, the reporting of such murders only reinforced the cultural perception of women’s feeble-mindedness as well as their physical weakness. A retort seems to come from Teresa Billington-Greig who considered the perspective of female vulnerability from a pre-war perspective: ‘Just as these neuropaths [the supporters of the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1912] hold that man is vicious, do so they hold that women are impotent and imbecile weaklings, incapable of resisting him’.<sup>7</sup>

‘Of Queen’s Gardens’ echoes through the literature of women’s self-defence. It was ridiculed, shaken up or reconstituted in order to present a counter argument. The novels, plays, stories and first-hand accounts I will be looking at are chiefly concerned with portraying women as whole human beings who entered the world, encountered and dealt with risk, ran the gauntlet of dodging marriages to unsuitable men and physically defended themselves. Sometimes in order to protect their gardens (reconceptualized as their home or as Britain, to be defended against German attack) they had to enter the male domain and challenge existing laws and attitudes. Sometimes their gardens were swept away by misfortune. Or they never even owned them in the first place.

The metaphor of the garden was used to discuss the violence of the world outside and around the female body. The term ‘hot-house flower’ occurs frequently in the texts that I have looked at in this book. John Stuart Mill wrote in ‘The Subjection of Women’ (1869) that ‘in the case of women, a hot-house and stove cultivation has always been carried on [...] for the benefit and pleasure of their masters’.<sup>8</sup> So, women were raised as innocents, as soft white (virginal and pure) flowers to be

plucked by husbands who were selected by their families. A frequent feature of the texts I am examining here is what I will call the dark epiphany, the moment when a woman becomes initiated into knowledge of crime and sexual danger. I will be looking at feminist campaigns for legal change but I will also show how literature offers us images of women who themselves do the punishing when the family home becomes a place of danger and when the police are out of range.

A history of women's self-defence is linked not only to well-documented campaigns over a woman's legal right to her own body but also to the widespread challenge over existing everyday terminology. Kim Stevenson writes that a woman threatened with sexual assault had to conform to 'the stereotypical standards of the day to protect her virginity, or – if married – her honour, whatever the cost'.<sup>9</sup> Honour could also often be synonymous with virginity. The philanthropist, Olive Malvery, wrote *The White Slave Market* (1912) in order to appeal for the raising of the age of consent to eighteen. The book is frequently referred to in secondary texts on white slavery but it is a useful resource as it illustrates some self-defence scenarios as well as alleged stories of victims' experiences such as the girl whose 'superhuman strength' allowed her to 'succeed[ ] for days in protecting her honour' against 'the advances and ill-treatment of the monster in human form' (*The White Slave Market*, p. 99). In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman* (1891) Tess tells Alec, her rapist, that she could not love him: 'I have honour enough left, little as 'tis, not to tell that lie'.<sup>10</sup> She feels she has already lost much of her honour in losing her virginity to him, but she does cling onto honour as defined by honesty.

'A woman who has lost her chastity is always a discredited witness', was a view expressed in 'Maiden Tribute' ('Maiden Tribute', 6 July 1885, p. 3). Cicely Hamilton, who co-wrote a stage adaptation of Robins's *Where Are You Going To...?*, was frustrated at the way in which a raped woman's 'reputation' – 'a species of honour in the minds of others' (*Marriage as a Trade*, p. 89) – was put in the dock. Hamilton exposed this injustice through reference to a dystopia: 'In a world where the pick-pocket class had the upper hand [...] to have one's pocket picked was in itself a disgrace which must on no account be [...] communicated to the police. To reveal [...] that your purse had been snatched from you by force would be to make yourself a mark for scorn and for hissing, to bring upon yourself an obloquy far greater than that accorded to the active partner in the transaction [...] after all, you must have dangled the purse temporarily before his eyes. [...] That, it seems to me, is the exact position with regard to what is commonly termed a woman's "honour"' (*Marriage as a Trade*, pp. 87–89).

Honour was associated with masculine uprightness and the worst insult that could be given to a man was being called a liar, a direct attack on his reputation as a gentleman. The insult could provoke many a duel in the days before the practice was phased out in Britain near the middle of the nineteenth century. By the end of the Victorian era, the insult could certainly lead to a fistfight. As a young man, the Marylebone magistrate, Alfred Chichele Plowden, was half-heartedly called a liar by a cabman: '[A]s an Englishman I was impressed with the conviction that whatever else a man might call you, if he used the word liar it was your imperative duty to knock him down [...] and I struck Cabby a blow full in the face. [...] [W]e quickly made friends, but not before a little urchin, who knew far more of the ways of a Police Court than I did at that time, and the value of a good witness, had run up to me and touching his cap said : "Please, sir, I heered him call you a loiar !"'<sup>11</sup>

Hardy's novel argues that Tess's honour should not be measured by her virginity but rather the integrity of her character, her 'purity' of heart, while Hamilton illustrates the ridiculousness of relating honour to maidenhood. Writing in the wake of *Tess*, Hamilton discusses being confused as a child by the ancient story of the 'admired' Lucrece who was raped by Sextus Tarquinius. She could not understand why, instead of stabbing him or ordering his punishment, Lucrece stabbed herself. Hamilton concluded that Lucrece was 'silly'. She wrote *Marriage as a Trade* during the heyday of girls' fiction. Sally Mitchell argues that the late-Victorian era and the years prior to World War I were the heyday of girl's fiction when the school leaving age and the age of consent were raised, career and recreational opportunities increased and the average age of first marriage became twenty-five years, thus extending the time in an adolescent girl's life between home and school life and marriage.<sup>12</sup> She writes that 'honour' frequently occurs in school stories for girls and she defines the term as 'fairplay, defence of the weak, honesty, openness', as well as independent thought and not slavishly following adults' dictates (*The New Girl*, p. 87). I think that the phenomenon Mitchell discusses is a reflection of the idea that while women could feel anger against sexual aggression, they could display all the masculine virtues accompanying the heroism of fighting for honour, loosening the ties that exclusively bound honour to sexual 'purity'.

### Safety in a 'Dangerous Novel'<sup>13</sup>

Literature written for or by women often used imagery featuring monsters and ghouls to create a sense of threat. A fetishist who allegedly

targeted young, beautiful ladies in the late-eighteenth century and stabbed them in the buttocks was known as the 'London Monster'. Images of women covering their bottoms with metal pans appeared in the press.<sup>14</sup> A century later other monsters that targeted women caught the public's attention. William Thomas Stead's articles published in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, entitled 'The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon' (1885), grew out of the campaign to repeal the Contagious Diseases Acts, passed in the 1860s to tackle the spread of venereal disease in the army by forcibly examining prostitutes via a speculum. Raising the age of consent from thirteen did not seem to find favour in the House of Commons, as, it has been widely suggested, the Acts would have affected the liberties of MPs' sons. Stead, who was an inventor of the modern tabloid press and also particularly interested in the subject of women's safety, investigated the world of child prostitution. The results of his findings were published in 'Maiden Tribute', which appeared on 6, 7, 8 and 10 July 1885.

Selling more than 1.5 million unauthorized copies, 'Maiden Tribute' is a reworking of the ancient Greek myth in which the defeated Athenians paid penalties to King Minos, transporting, every nine years, seven boys and seven girls to the Cretan labyrinth. The children become hopelessly lost and eventually come up against the voracious part-man, part-bull creature, the Minotaur. In Stead's melodramatic and somewhat pornographic account, London is the imposing labyrinth in which poverty-stricken, helpless girls (Stead famously mentions less about boys) are decoyed, locked in, drugged, strapped down and left to the mercy of wealthy male clients willing to pay around £5 to satisfy lusts just short of murder. The image of the Minotaur stuck in the public consciousness. As Mona Caird argued: 'Such being our melancholy conviction, we feel it unavoidable to continue to offer as propitiation to the ravenous monster an entire sex, and so keep him in riotous health and spirits'.<sup>15</sup>

Like a good melodrama, there was also a hero to battle with the beast. Stead adopts the role of Theseus, the Athenian who sailed to the labyrinth to slay the Minotaur. If Theseus used a ball of string given to him by Ariadne to guide himself through the maze, Stead employs the knowledge of the shady figures in the business – brothel keepers, procuresses and prostitutes – who lead him further down an alleyway of grimy revelations. The image of the intrepid modern Theseus battling against the forces of crime was later re-envisioned in Doyle's 'The Adventure of the Final Problem' (1893) where Holmes tells Watson the process of tracking down his spidery nemesis in London's world of crime: 'I seized my thread and followed it, until it led me, after a

thousand cunning windings, to ex-Professor Moriarty [...] [H]e is the organizer of half that is evil and of nearly all that is undetected in this great city.'<sup>16</sup> The evil influence that Stead had uncovered was untamed masculine, criminal sexual desire and his weapon was the printed press. Following the 'Maiden Tribute', the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885 raised the age of consent from thirteen to sixteen while the Contagious Diseases Acts were repealed in 1886. Although Stead focused on the working-class he also wrote that '[m]ost respectable little girls of the middle class are sometimes accosted when looking into shop window by pleasant-spoken, well-dressed ladies' ('Maiden Tribute', 8 July 1885, p. 4). What this book will look at is how the ladies in these texts reacted when they encountered their nemeses stalking around their gardens, their city streets.

H. G. Wells is generally known today for his romances about interplanetary invasions, time-travelling machines and men in the moon, so the modern reader would be forgiven for not associating him with women's self-defence. Actually his tale of free love, *Ann Veronica: A Modern Love Story* (1909), nicely represents the major themes of this book. The novel was banned by numerous libraries and was attacked in the *Spectator* as a 'poisonous book' as it depicted an Edwardian woman pursuing an affair with her married science teacher, Capes. Ann Veronica, the novel's eponymous heroine, had offended the laws of nature which decreed that women should wait to be pursued. Wells's usual publisher, Frederick Macmillan, had rejected the book, concerned about the possible public outcry. Thanks to the emerging publisher, T. Fisher Unwin, the novel appeared in 1909, causing a sensation and rapidly progressing through a number of print runs in that year alone; my own copy is the nineteenth impression of that year.

It is well known that *Ann Veronica* is an exploration of attitudes surrounding the place of women in society. But what is less appreciated is that as a consequence, the novel considers the ways in which women of the time were hampered in their movements, from being constrained from declaring emotions to the act of walking down an urban road. As *Ann Veronica* is my book's leitmotif, a plot outline is due. The novel embodies Wells's conviction that the 'development of civilisation'<sup>17</sup> rested on the physical, political and sexual emancipation of women. Desperate to break free from suburbia, twenty-one-year-old Ann Veronica wants to see life: 'All the world about her seemed to be – how can one put it? – in wrappers, like a house when people leave it in the summer. [...] [O]ne could not tell what colours these grey swathings hid' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 10). Her innocence is alluded to in her rumination

on a career: 'She saw herself in very much Vivie's position – managing something' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 101). Wells is referring to George Bernard Shaw's play, *Mrs Warren's Profession* (1898), which argued that economic deprivation was to blame for prostitution. In the play, Mrs Warren tells her bright, professionally minded daughter, Vivie, that her blue-stockinged education was paid for by family-owned brothels. Shaw describes Vivie as 'business-like' and Wells uses the same adjective in reference to Ann Veronica to link the innocent Vivie with a naive Ann Veronica.

Ann Veronica runs away from her father and her stuffy Aunt Jane (his sister) to London where she meets a spectrum of Edwardian societies, from vegetarians to suffragettes. In uncovering the bric-à-brac of life, some uncomfortable truths are revealed. Her father's neighbour, Mr Ramage, lends her £40 and treats her to dinners and opera outings. As he ogles her, the reader knows he expects his reward. Stephen Kern's study of nineteenth-century British and French novels and paintings argues that a man was typically portrayed directly gazing at woman while her gaze is averted. He calls this the 'proposal composition'. Yet, the woman in the picture is not merely a muse but must decide (an active role) whether to accept the man's offer while the man pines for her, to the point of appearing ridiculous and even sinister.<sup>18</sup> The episode is frozen in time in painting. *Ann Veronica* considers what happens next, when the woman has to resort to an even more active role and defend herself physically. When Ramage takes her to a hotel room, a 'cabinet particulier', Ann Veronica becomes blatantly aware of his true intentions. This scenario of dawning realization has been referred to as the 'Hitchcock moment' in which the 'guy you decided to trust turns out to be really scary – and your mind can't react swiftly enough'.<sup>19</sup> She is forced to fend him off physically. Through the character of Ann Veronica, Wells presents a new ideal of womanliness in harmony with traditional notions of femininity whilst sporting more robust 'manly' qualities.

It has been widely asserted that *Ann Veronica*'s credentials as a feminist text are hampered by the ending of the novel: Ann Veronica and Capes are respectably married and are reconciled with her father. The effervescent Ann Veronica lays down her vibrant rebelliousness and is married, pregnant and hemmed in by 'all this furniture' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 352) which is now unwrapped, connoting sexual knowledge. The ending of *Ann Veronica* can be considered what Stead called a 'boomerang ending', one in which the unconventional heroines resume a traditional role.<sup>20</sup> Yet, Well's heroine is not punished for her transgressions unlike her fictional predecessors, the eponymous unmarried 'fallen' women in Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman* (1891)

and Elizabeth Gaskell's *Ruth* (1853). In fact, Ann Veronica has some very lucky escapes indeed.

## Introducing the Texts

Bland argues that with literature, including 'Maiden Tribute', '[t]he message ran: nowhere was safe for girls and young women, regardless of class' (*Banishing the Beast*, p. 300). Instead of reading novels as warnings we need to see these as manuals, albeit entertaining ones, for helping women recognize danger. While I have included key topics there are some aspects which there is not enough space to cover or which have been covered elsewhere. My focus is largely on middle-class women in Britain but my bibliography lists sources which have touched on the subject of self-defence and violence in the British Empire. The first women police forces are sadly outside my timeframe. However, this book is a prelude to the stories of the struggles of these ladies, trained in jujitsu and the drill, who had to come to terms with lewd and violent behaviour on the streets and underground shelters in the service of policing public morals during World War I.

The first chapter situates Wells's treatment of street stalking in *Ann Veronica* within contemporary discussions about 'male pests', exploring whether Ann Veronica could be regarded as a flâneuse, the female equivalent of the flâneur. Looking at the dangers of railway travel and solitary cycling, I will show how subjective women's safety was. If we consider women's self-defence, we need to look at what was regarded as risk. In Mona Caird's novel *The Wing of Azrael* (1889), marriage is represented as a risky affair. Her novel is representative of the way in which fiction is a powerful means to describe and discuss danger and the mechanics of intimidation. As D'Cruze writes, '[t]he violence of manipulation or silent threat did not come to court' (*Outrage*, p. 23). *Azrael* is riddled with discussions on how to spot a fake gentleman and argues that a knowledge of physiognomy is particularly important when it comes to choosing a partner. For Caird, women's self-defence involves probing and challenging society's expectations. It might require super-human effort to resist the immense pressure to marry. Caird's heroine cannot avoid her marriage and Caird shows how murder could be the worst result of incompatibility. She also assesses the role of anger in self-defence. But in what way could her heroine have managed her cruel husband? The chapter on Caird also highlights that my book looks not only at bad men but also considers villainesses and mothers who are neglectful of their daughters.

By the early-twentieth century, women's self-defence became more physical as women entered the world of sports. Elizabeth Robins's published work and her diaries extensively discuss female vulnerability and merit a book entirely to themselves. *The Convert* is a suffrage novel and considers the various methods of self-defence used by campaigners as well as the dangers they encountered. A book on Victorian women's self-defence would be incomplete without a detailed discussion of the expansion of Japanese martial arts for women, the phenomenon of the 'ju-jutsuffragettes' and fantasy hand-to-hand combat scenarios written by the most famous ju-jutsuffragette of them all, Edith Garrud. Ann Veronica, a jujitsu girl, also makes an appearance here, pitting her skills against Mr Ramage. The last part of the book ends with the years prior to World War I and focuses on the female gaze and two different depictions of female detectives. My second chapter on Robins examines her bestselling indictment of white slavery, *WAYGT?*, which looks at the consequences of bringing up girls as hot-house flowers and tries to fill in gaps in girls' education by discussing various risks they might encounter. The women featured in my book are not always successful in their bids to defend themselves: this is a book about female agency, not omnipotence, and in *WAYGT?* Robins painstakingly describes the anguish of her failed heroine who is prevented from becoming a detective. Nasty surprises come in pretty packages for Richard Marsh's lip-reading detective, Judith Lee, a character who has been likened to Sherlock Holmes. I end this book with her as she represents in many ways a culmination of the qualities extolled by writers in the earlier chapters.

# **Part I**

## **‘A Door Open, A Door Shut’**

# 1

## On the Street

### 'No Males at Men to Stare'?

'The police? – oh, bother your police!'

Richard Marsh, 'An Illustration of Modern  
Science' (1901)

En route from Green Park tube station to the London Library, one strolls past the Ritz Hotel, caviar shops, art galleries and the sumptuous little boutiques of the Burlington Arcade. It is a pleasant afternoon walk. Ann Veronica wanders around this area, with her dark hair loosened and her 'collarless blouse' confess[ing] a pretty neck' and falls into 'a pleasant dream' (*Ann Veronica*, pp. 98 and 101). She is captivated by the buzz of the city and walks aimlessly, with pleasure, like a *flâneur* in the conventional sense of the word – detached, observing, free from domestic constraints. With the development of enticing multi-storey department stores in the West End from the mid-Victorian era onwards, and the growing acceptance of and demand for ladies' public toilets, women spent more leisure time in the city, consuming the sights. Various historians have considered how women explored the city not only as consumers but also music hall performers, Salvation Army Lasses, clerks, female journalists, milliners and typists.<sup>1</sup>

Yet, the quaint, petite statue of Beau Brummell that stands at the end of the arcade today attests to the area's alternative character. Over one hundred years ago, the West End was synonymous with gentlemen's clubs (which still exist) and a respectable woman was well-advised not to saunter down these streets after lunchtime. Nearby Bond Street was 'as impassable [...] as any swamp alive with crocodiles', and 'the Burlington Arcade was nothing but a fever-stricken den' and 'a renowned resort

of streetwalkers' which was 'forbidden from lunchtime on'.<sup>2</sup> Helena Swanwick, the younger sister of the painter, Walter Sickert, was told by her mother that if she walked around Piccadilly or Oxford Street alone she would be mistaken for a 'bad woman',<sup>3</sup> a recollection which suggests the ways in which word of mouth was used to spread tips on safety and self-defence. A suffragette was also allegedly approached by a 'gentleman' who insulted her by saying that she 'ought to be walking [as a prostitute] in Piccadilly'.<sup>4</sup>

While Ann Veronica daydreams about Vivie Warren, specimens from Mrs Warren's world intrude on her pleasurable experience of the city. On entering Piccadilly, a man with 'bright' eyes sidles up to her at a crossing, whispers to her, then disappears. She then observes an old man ogling at a woman with a 'painted face' and a certain 'unreality in her splendour', who sashays past her (*Ann Veronica*, p. 102) a prostitute beckoning a client. This image presages Ann Veronica's own predicament with Mr Ramage, whose attentions, she later learns, she has unwittingly encouraged. In this street scene, the client is an object of Ann Veronica's gaze. She notes how he is dressed and observes the 'desire and appraisal' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 103) in his eyes. This scene emphasizes the fragile identity of the male stroller. His features are easily readable, even to Ann Veronica, who is only gradually comprehending the events that are occurring before her eyes. Far from being omniscient, the client-*flâneur* is portrayed as an idiotic figure, controlled by the prostitute. According to Walkowitz, the 'stare of the prostitute repeatedly challenged the glance of the *flâneur* in the great metropolis of the fin de siècle' (*City of Dreadful Delight*, p. 1). Nevertheless, Ann Veronica, a respectable woman, is no longer in control of the way in which she would like to be seen.

Is she a *flâneuse*? Was there such a thing? Wells's heroine slowly becomes conscious of her own vulnerability, learning that a girl cannot go 'freely alone in the world' where 'evil walks abroad' and 'petty insults' are set to test her. (*Ann Veronica*, p. 103) Wells alludes to the shattering of her calm thus: 'She went on her way now no longer dreaming and appreciative, but disturbed and unwillingly observant behind her mask of serene contentment' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 102). Ann Veronica is therefore rudely awakened to the dangers in which her identity as a lone woman in the city place her. This observation is further underscored in an etiquette manual: 'Ladies may walk unattended in the streets, being careful to pass on'.<sup>5</sup> This was 'hardly the demeanour that would be expected of a *flâneuse*' (*The New Woman at the Fin de Siècle*, p. 158). While it has been argued that there was no such thing

as the flâneuse (only the prostitute who, like a man, could roam the city) because a female pedestrian was always self-consciously observed, more recent historians such as Deborah Epstein-Nord, have argued that female flâneurie is possible, characterized by the awareness that they are transgressing boundaries. Whilst advancing the argument for the existence of the *flâneuse*, Deborah Parsons has at the same time questioned stability of the male gaze and *flâneur*.<sup>6</sup> I think Wells's short story, 'The Door in the Wall' (1906), illustrates Parsons's argument: a successful politician doggedly searches West Kensington for an enchanted garden he came upon as a child. Whilst he is using his leisure time, he is neither detached, nor omniscient as he cannot dictate when the door appears in his life. Mark Turner's book on cruising shows that dispassionate, distanced flâneurie does not characterize all kinds of masculine experience of the city; the cruiser wanders the city in possible anticipation of physical interaction.<sup>7</sup> This observation can also be applied to an analysis of the female pedestrian, who, anxious to avoid one type of contact, wonders if she will need to use a defensive manoeuvre.

An unhinged spectral pursuer follows Ann Veronica from Grosvenor Square to Oxford Street, into a tearoom, and then down a street. He is a 'crawling, sneaking' man, 'with long white hands of which he made a display' (*Ann Veronica*, pp. 104–105). In *Bleak House* (1853) Esther Summerson is pursued by Mr Guppy, who 'haunt[s] street corners and theatres, stifling her with his ridiculously dejected gaze'<sup>8</sup> while in *The Odd Women* (1893) Gissing has Monica stalked by her possessive suitor, Edmund Widdowson, who justifies his behaviour as concern for her welfare. Ann Veronica's stalker mysteriously vanishes but his presence alters her relationship to the city. As it grows dark, Ann Veronica finds that 'against the sinister, the threatening, the monstrous inhumanity of the limitless city, there was nothing now but this supreme, ugly fact of a pursuit of the undesired, persistent male' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 105). She becomes aware of her own vulnerability and the impossibility of police protection. When Lady Greville's maid was unable to accompany her she would walk alone, soberly dressed. She writes that she was often approached but when her accosters 'saw it was distasteful, [they] generally gave up'.<sup>9</sup> One night, she was walking down a fashionable street and was pursued by a persistent gentleman but despite being tempted to give him a piece of her mind, she walked briskly on, concluding that 'on this occasion, as on many others, silence was the best answer' (*Vignettes of a Memory*, p. 149). Clearly this form of stalking was such a known social problem that one man who approached her to warn her of a loose string on her clothing, felt compelled to reassure her that he was 'a married

man' and therefore had no designs on her (*Vignettes of a Memory*, p. 150). Whilst walking with her maid on a summer evening in the park by Park Lane, she and her maid were seized by two men and 'had to fight and struggle to get rid of them', an event which discouraged her from walking in the park (*Vignettes of a Memory*, p. 150). Looking back to the late-Victorian era, Robins described being accosted by 'disgusting old men' at a street crossing and in church. When it came to discussing these and similar experiences (such as actresses being accosted by men in their lodgings), silence reigned: 'If a young woman of the time I am writing about met with a certain order of disagreeables, she knew better than to discuss them. The theory was she had brought them on herself – if only by leaving home. [...] It was, I think, partly the sheer ugliness of these manifestations that unnerved me, and largely the illusion that they ought not to happen to me. That they did happen was a disgrace. No one must know.'<sup>10</sup> Wells writes that if Ann Veronica spoke to a police officer 'she did not know what would ensue' and that she might 'have to charge this man and appear in a police court the next day' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 104). Thus, Wells alleges that women often felt alienated from the beneficial effects of such law-enforcement strategies due to the possible humiliation incurred by legal proceedings. Wells suggests that there are some scenarios where, despite nineteenth-century developments, law and order are uncertain and the individual must rely on his or her own resources.

For Ann Veronica, the city becomes a phantasmagoria of uncanny, unstable male spectres. While her tearoom stalker is a ghost-like figure, his desire for her consumes his own self-control. He sits 'gloating upon her' and takes off his silk hat, a signifier of respectability (*Ann Veronica*, p. 104). His pursuit of Ann Veronica is 'flitting' and 'dogged' as well as 'idiotic, exasperating' and 'indecent' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 104). Sylvia Hardy notes the connection between Wells's allusion to eyes and sexual intent and points out that in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899) Sigmund Freud links eyes with male genitalia.<sup>11</sup> The man at the crossing ogles Ann Veronica with 'bright' eyes and a 'hungry gaze' while the tearoom stalker 'gloats' with 'rather protuberant' eyes. (*Ann Veronica*, pp. 101, 104) Thus, Wells employs symbolism to accentuate the danger posed by male sexuality by implying that the male gaze has potential physical consequences, both for the spectator and for the female object of his gaze.

The darkened opera box in which Ramage and Ann Veronica sit to watch *Tristan and Isolde* is an enclosed space. This particular episode in the novel reflects the paintings of opera scenes by Pierre Renoir and Mary Cassatt which feature male opera-goers ogling women behind

their opera glasses while the women look away from them (*Eyes of Love*, pp. 75–78). Ramage's 'flushed' face, his confession of love and 'urgent flow of words', that cease with the 'climaxes' and 'short rushes' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 194) of the curtain, are highly suggestive of his intent to sexually consummate his friendship with her. While Wells communicates Ramage's perceptions, he does so in order to emphasize the ardour of male sexual aggression. Ann Veronica has the impression of him 'stretching [his] hungry invisible tentacles about her' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 192). He has become a sea monster or an alien – she regards him as a stranger, 'a man close beside her', (*Ann Veronica*, p. 192) an ogler in an opera box.

Ramage attempts to touch her wrist and she pulls away, and says '*don't*' emphatically. She follows this with another 'quick defensive movement' when he tries to grasp her again. Ann Veronica attempts to pity Ramage rather than be intimidated and offended by him and he slyly massages these feelings of sympathy by playing the role of the pining, suffering, slightly hysterical and therefore unthreatening admirer. She also reminds herself that this friend of hers is funding her freedom so she feels she cannot dismiss his attentions rudely. There is a sense of movement too as she finds herself, so to speak, at sea. Her head 'swims', her mind is 'flooded' with new sensations and she struggles against the emotional surge of the ambient music and seafaring-themed stage setting while Ramage's insistent words flow into her ears. So, in this scene, Wells explores the minds of both characters to indicate the full extent of the 'disconcerting' and 'oddly sinister situation' (*Ann Veronica*, pp. 191, 195) in which Ann Veronica finds herself to explain why, although she feels uncomfortable around him, she does not realize the full danger. While the Wagnerian maelstrom forms the background to Ramage's pressured pleadings, the subdued light of the box reflects her dim awareness that there is something afoot. Her self-composure returns when the auditorium is brought to life again: 'The lighting-up pierced the obscurity of the box, and Ramage stopped his urgent flow of words abruptly and sat back' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 194). Feeling that she should humour her creditor, Ann Veronica feels that Ramage should be allowed to explain himself and tells him that a public auditorium is not the place for such a tête-à-tête. As he begins to formulate a plan, he 'stare[s] at her, trying to guess at the mystery of her thoughts' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 195). As this glimpse into his character suggests, the power of the male gaze is limited because although, as far as he is concerned, he has paid for Ann Veronica's company that evening, he cannot purchase her mind.

Dinah Mulock Craik, the celebrated author of the self-help novel, *John Halifax, Gentleman* (1856) discussed non-corporeal protection. Her essays, *A Woman's Thoughts about Women* (1858), were written for middle-class, unmarried women and first published in *Chamber's Edinburgh Journal*, a periodical aimed at young people in the lower and middle classes. Craik did not have much time for the stereotypical vision of separate spheres which Ruskin later professed in 'Of Queen's Gardens': 'The age of chivalry, with all its benefits and harmfulnesses, is gone by, for us women. We cannot now have men for our knights-errant, expending blood and life for our sake [...] Nor, on the other hand, are we dressed-up dolls, pretty playthings, to be fought and scrambled for – petted, caressed, or flung out of the window, as our several lords and masters may please.'<sup>12</sup> In *Agnes Grey*, Brontë's governess-heroine is hypocritically reproved by her mistress for failing to take into consideration the safety (and reputation) of her charge, Miss Murray: '[I]t is not proper for a young lady of her rank and prospects to be wandering about by herself in that manner, exposed to the attentions of anyone that presumes to address her; like some poor neglected girl that has no park to walk in, and no friends to take care of her' (*Agnes Grey*, p. 179). As far as Craik was concerned, a servant's safety should not be sacrificed for that of the daughter of the house. Craik suggests that women should be bound by a duty of 'self-dependence' (*A Woman's Thoughts*, p. 32) and encourages women to empower themselves, albeit in a subtle manner. She advises female pedestrians to walk with humility and thus save themselves from the penalty of being termed 'unfeminine'. Women are not to model themselves on 'any Amazonian fashion', donning 'the unnatural armour of men', resulting in the 'mutilation' of 'fair woman-hood'; rather, they should 'exercise every faculty, physical, moral, and intellectual [...] allowing no one to rust or lie idle, merely because their owner is a woman' (*A Woman's Thoughts*, p. 34). For Craik, a woman may undergo tribulations but 'never [be] defenceless; foot-sore and smirched [...] degraded or humiliated, unless by her own act she humiliates herself' (*A Woman's Thoughts*, p. 35). This is how they should negotiate their way in the streets and through life, holding their heads up high and ignoring insults from predatory men. However, Craik omits to mention how they should respond to physical danger.

According to a contemporary etiquette manual, a lady could 'cut' (ignore) a gentleman but the latter was not permitted to do the same to her: 'No man may stop to speak to a lady until she stops to speak to him. The lady, in short, has the right in all cases to be friendly or distant. Women have not many rights; let us gracefully concede the few that

they possess.'<sup>13</sup> To discourage a domineering man, a lady could respond to his attentions with a 'stiff bow without a smile'.<sup>14</sup> At the same time that the streets were infested with garotters (who were depicted as preying on men), *The Times* received letters on urban nuisances which suggest that the etiquette manuals were idealistic to say the least. For example, 'Puella' writes that she had never been accosted on Oxford Street and recommended that women be modestly-attired (*The Times*, 9 January 1862, p. 10). Her views are contested by other female writers, who argue that they have been regularly approached by men (*The Times*, 18 January 1862, p. 10). In 'Out Walking', the controversial woman of letters, Eliza Lynn Linton, argued that 'nine times out of ten' women were to blame 'if they are annoyed in the streets'.<sup>15</sup> She suggested that women dress soberly, like 'grey moths' ('Out Walking', p. 136). Yet, she added at the same time that some men, whom she called 'prairie dogs', persist in stalking female pedestrians ('Out Walking', pp. 136 and 139), an admission which problematizes her assertion that it is women who are at fault.

Dressing like a grey moth did Lady Greville no good: '[A]lthough I was quietly dressed, and I hope looked what I was, a respectable young woman, there was scarcely a day when I, while waiting for an omnibus, was not accosted' (*Vignettes of a Memory*, pp. 105–106). In a letter to the press, entitled 'Insults to Women by the Police', Olive Schreiner wrote that as she was making her way home, accompanied by her male friend, a physician, she was confronted by a policeman who mistook her for a prostitute and was not easily persuaded to the contrary. She concluded that 'there are in London some hundred thousand women who are unable to defend themselves against the hands of the police' (*Daily News*, 5 January 1886, p. 6).

The subject of male-female street etiquette was revisited in the 'male pests' discussion in the *PMG* in 1887 as Walkowitz has shown (*City of Dreadful Delight*, p. 51). Women contributors related their experiences of being followed and 'insulted'. One female reader avoided Regent Street and Piccadilly (*PMG*, 19 July 1887, p. 2) while another claimed she had never been accosted and always took the last train home (*PMG*, 21 July 1887, p. 3). The police were apparently reluctant to interfere in situations involving male followers as they claimed that the perpetrators were often their moneyed, social superiors (*PMG*, 27 July 1887, p. 2). One male contributor argued that the source of 'insult' stemmed from ladies 'being taken to belong to that lower class of girls who welcome such self-introductions' and besides, 'tens, hundreds of girls [...] desire [...] to be addressed by unknown men in the streets of London' (*PMG*,

30 July 1887, p. 2). Another male contributor argued that some ladies liked to chat (*PMG*, 30 July 1887, p. 2) and at the same time, it was also impossible to stop men from ogling at women (*PMG*, 21 July 1887, p. 3). However, as Wells indicates, women cannot choose who will pursue them. One example is given of a near-rape, prevented by a scream and the subsequent intervention by a police officer (*PMG*, 27 July 1887, p. 2). A vigilance committee is suggested (*PMG*, 19 July 1887, p. 2) and one female reader recommends lady pedestrians to wear Salvation Army bonnets as a way of expressing their sexual unavailability (*PMG*, 27 July 1887, p. 2). Caird argued that if society was used to seeing women out and about, then they will be less and less of a novelty and less likely to be harassed ('*Defence of Wild Women*', p. 828).

The subject of his gaze, Ann Veronica imagines Ramage's 'tentacles' on her; then she must brush him off. Ruth Slate, born in 1884, described in her diary how she was followed and angered by the occurrence: 'Walked back alone. Accosted by man, lost way, but kept calm. Would accompany me right the way home – anxious for me to see him again. If I had had an umbrella with me he should have received the best thrashing I could give for *daring* to say the things he did to me. Could not sleep [...] the man – is there one worth trusting?'<sup>16</sup>

While 'male pests' were making an appearance in the *PMG*, Frederick Charrington (heir to a brewery fortune who also turned his hand to working for the Temperance Movement and collaring drunken policemen) was busy closing brothels, in response to the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885. His successes did not come without a struggle from the women and the owners – in Oxford Street he and his assistant were pelted with rotten fish. While Charrington made an effort to re-house girls saved from the hands of brothel owners, the closure of brothels meant that more prostitutes were forced to take their clients into dark corners, placing them at greater risk. '*Maiden Tribute*' was not the only media sensation to promote the discussion of sexual danger as the mid-Victorian articles in *The Times* show. At the time that the numerous articles on Charrington's work were reported, descriptions of the mutilated bodies of murdered women began appearing in the papers. One graphic article quoted a coroner's shocked reaction to the murder of Martha Turner (Martha Tabram), who is considered by some to be one of the first of Jack the Ripper's victims: 'The man must have been a perfect savage to have attacked the woman in that way'.<sup>17</sup> Nowadays we are led to believe that the whole of female society was terrified of venturing forth; however, as a young woman living in the late nineteenth century, Lady Greville was not put off these newspaper reports.

She felt that she was 'liv[ing] two lives, the one in the West, the other in the East End' (*Vignettes of a Memory*, p. 158). Whilst engaged in charitable work in London's East End, she lived with a clergyman and was told not to worry when she heard cries of 'murder!' during the night (*Vignettes of a Memory*, p. 155). She claims she found it easier to walk alone in the Ratcliffe Highway and 'in the haunts of the Whitechapel murderer' as she 'never was molested or insulted' as she had been in the West End.

### **The Lady is a Tramp**

Just as 'Darkest Africa' was being opened up by missionaries and empire men of business, social investigators and philanthropists, like Lady Greville, ventured into darkest London and saw themselves as explorers of poverty. Mary Higgs's *Glimpses into the Abyss* (1906) is a collection of personal testimonies and essays written to draw public attention to the condition of lodgings and workhouses. It was an answer to James Greenwood's *A Night in a Workhouse* (1866) and Jack London's *The People of the Abyss* (1903).

Higgs describes herself as an 'explorer'. She entered a parallel world in which, dressed as a tramp, even her friends and family (who believed she was on a 'walking tour') would not have recognized her as she tested places of refuge right under their noses. As the workhouse gruel and bread was not only unappetizing but provided insufficient energy, Higgs secretly carried Plasmon (dried milk) powder which was also consumed on Ernest Shackleton's Antarctic Expedition of 1902. This descent into poverty was like the ascent of a mountain – an endurance test. Dressing down as a tramp in need of shelter Higgs put herself in numerous precarious predicaments with the opposite sex. She learnt that to be female and escape from poverty virtuously was like attempting to scale a sheer rock face. It was a subject which angered her but she was aware that she needed to express her frustration with a nod to cool, masculine rationalism. With reference to male and female Alpine explorers, Elaine Freedgood writes that men overplayed the dangers while female writers veered away from such sensationalism: 'If a woman were to report the dangers of a risky climb, she might be seen as hysterical rather than heroic'.<sup>18</sup> So, the female writer transferred her fears onto the scenery instead, describing a ledge, not herself, as being 'giddy'.

Higgs designs her investigation in which she 'studie[s] personally the microbes of social disorder' (*Glimpses into the Abyss*, p. vi), in which 'exploration' is 'the method of science', which is 'the nearest road to accurate knowledge', 'the results' of which 'amply justif[y] the

experiment' (*Glimpses into the Abyss*, p. 87). This is an emotional experience, a thesis rendered more palatable to the male reader (men are frequently characterized as predatory in this book) as it is framed as hard fact.

For self-defence, she took a female friend who was 'willing to share the possible perils of such an experiment' (*Glimpses into the Abyss*, p. 87). While the conditions which the two women witness – hard bug-ridden beds, the inability to wash and eat sufficiently – are in themselves humbling enough, it is through their treatment as women that their descent down the social scale is apparent. Men working on a barge attempt to call the women to them. To modern eyes this seems a fairly harmless experience, yet to a middle-class woman it was deeply shocking. The men would never have spoken so freely to them had they not been wearing old bonnets and shawls. If they had been dressed as ladies, as the men's social superiors, Higgs suggests that they may have been spared the experience. Having assuaged male readers by her rational approach at the outset, Higgs drops her scientific tone in favour of a personal note to express her surprise at the encounter:

I could not help contrasting the way in which men looked at us with the usual bearing of a man towards a *well-dressed* female. I had never realised before that a lady's dress, or even that of a respectable working-woman, was a *protection*. The bold, free look of a man at a destitute woman must be felt to be realised. [...] I should not care to be a *solitary* woman tramping the roads.

(*Glimpses into the Abyss*, p. 94)

Financial security is not only protection against the harshness of the world, what is clear is that money could buy respectability which in itself was a form of defence.

Higgs gives numerous examples of the vulnerability she feels whilst female and destitute. When the women encounter a male pauper who guards the entrance to a workhouse surrounded by trees, he interviews them and admits Higgs's friend. He keeps her back, telling her that she is 'just the right age for a bit of funning' and tells her to come to him later: 'I was too horror-struck to reply; besides, I was in his power, with no one within call but my friend, and all the conditions unknown and strange. Probably silence was best; he took it for consent, and, as other tramps were coming, let me pass on. [...] A solitary woman might have been at the mercy of the man at the gate some time' (*Glimpses into the Abyss*, p. 110).

The horror in her narrative continues to grow. If attempting to kiss her friend is not bad enough, Higgs learns he has the key to their room. Thankfully the wardress takes her under her protection. In a lodging house, a 'powerfully made' man, who looks 'cruel and lustful' makes Higgs avert her gaze but he continues to stare at them (*Glimpses into the Abyss*, p. 100). At the gate of another lodging house, another man begins to talk 'in a familiar and most disagreeable manner' and propositions her. 'Being two we were protection to each other, and passed off the conversation as well as we could', 'What might happen to a single woman alone with such men?' (*Glimpses into the Abyss*, pp. 120–121).

# 2

## Danger en Route

### **'The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist'**

'An unknown man in a lonely place is a permitted object of fear to a young woman privately bred.'

Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw* (1898)

By the 1890s, the safety bicycle had become *the* symbol of female emancipation, allowing a woman to direct her own course of travel unchaperoned. As a consequence, if the New Man desired to attract her attention, he had to exert himself to keep up. Set in 1895, Doyle's 'The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist' (1903) makes us aware that there were safety issues attending the work and travels of the New Woman. In this story, Sherlock Holmes gives us one of his best demonstrations of self-defence when he finds himself in a boxing match against a physically stronger adversary, Jack Woodley. The confrontation excites him and he refers to the match as a 'delicious treat' ('The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist', p. 532). The fight arises because Woodley has designs on Violet Smith. Her employer knows this and tries to protect her by successfully disguising himself and following her on his bicycle. (Woodley eventually kidnaps her and forces her to marry him but Holmes rescues her and declares the marriage void.)

Marcus Tindal's 'Self Protection on a Cycle' (1901) advised male and female cyclists how to use their bicycles against attackers. Implementing his advice required 'nerve' and Violet certainly demonstrates this quality. When pursued down a lonely country road by a male cyclist, Violet Smith shows presence of mind: 'I slowed down my machine, but he slowed down his. Then I stopped altogether, but he stopped also. Then I laid a trap for him. There is a sharp turning of the road, and I pedalled

very quickly down this, and then I stopped and waited.' Tindal showed how ladies could transform their machines into shields. The lady cyclist was advised to ride straight at her attacker and swerve suddenly to catch him off guard. Alternatively, she could backpedal into the front wheel of her assailant, causing the pursuer to fall from his machine or swerve in front of the pursuer, making sure to knock his front wheel with her back wheel and thus destabilizing his bicycle. However, he says that the close hand-to-hand techniques utilized by the men in the accompanying photographs were, he jokes, 'hardly suitable for use by lady cyclists, unless particularly strong-minded and strong-armed!' ('Self Protection on a Cycle', p. 429). Thus, at the very beginning of the Edwardian period there were doubts as to women's ability to engage in physical self-defence as they needed to behave in a ladylike manner. The water squirt is recommended as 'a simple means of defence [...] for the use of fair cyclists' ('Self Protection on a Cycle', pp. 427 and 429). Adverts claimed that this device was capable of shooting a 'shower of water' for twenty feet or more at dogs and footpads. Nevertheless, this water pistol, whose shape mimicked that of an offensive weapon, was a less-aggressive response to crime, representative of a larger trend away from using weaponry. Such less-violent forms of personal protection were considered to be suitable for women. Even Sherlock Holmes himself is reluctant to use firearms when extricating Violet Smith from the clutches of Woodley at the end of the story. Holmes rescues Violet, but far from being a completely passive victim she has demonstrated that she can respond assertively to threat.

### Panic on the Line

Early train carriages were self-contained and did not have a connecting corridor, so passengers were alone together in this confined, often darkened space, between stations. This space was used for illicit sex as well as being the perfect place to commit crime, from petty theft to murder. It is no wonder that Ruskin was moved to write that murder in the 'darkness of the railway' represented human behaviour, shorn of honour ('Of Queen's Gardens', p. 126). Today a plaque by Victoria Park marks what is considered to be the first actual murder committed on British railways. It occurred on 9 July 1864. Thomas Briggs's fractured skull was discovered between Hackney Wick and Bow on a North London Railway train while a first-class carriage was found covered in a red substance – confirmed to be blood. The case caused mass panic and commuters were scared to travel after dark.

Train crashes and railway disasters were so compellingly awful that they also made a frequent appearance in literature and periodicals featured numerous stories of people tied to the tracks and murderously attacked. Clearly the train's speed was not the only thing that was fast-paced. In Marsh's *The Beetle*, his sadistic monster is supposedly killed in a train crash while the railway network allows Judith Lee's serial killer to perpetrate his deeds and dramatically escape punishment at the hands of the courts (see below). Following Charles Dickens's own traumatic train accident at Staplehurst in Kent on 9 June 1865 in which his train plunged into the river below, his ghost story, 'No. 1 Branch Line. The Signal Man', was published in the Christmas edition of *All the Year Round* in 1866. The story played on the idea that the tunnel could be a site of confused messages and disasters waiting to happen.

Mixed messages were indeed a frequent problem when male and female strangers were forced to share these closed spaces. Etiquette manuals attempted to give advice: 'In railway travelling you should not open a conversation with a lady unknown to you, until she makes some advance towards it' (*Habits of Good Society*, p. 328). However, what happens if a woman is chatty and then regrets it and would like her pursuer to leave her alone? Ann Veronica converses with Ramage, the affluent, middle-aged, neighbour of her father whilst travelling to town by train and her father is shocked by her chattiness and her choice of subjects. Dowling has argued that 'the armoured knight could just as easily be the woman's rapist if he wasn't already her saviour' (*Manliness and the Novelist*, p. 19). Ramage's chivalrous gestures and words are certainly timed and designed to gain Ann Veronica's trust. Ramage 'hand[s] Miss Stanley to the platform as though she had been a duchess' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 27) and later tells her that it is not indecent for older men and younger women to fraternize unchaperoned, adding the phrase of the Knights of the Garter, 'Honi soit qui mal y pense' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 79). In *Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, Mr Hargrave, offers to be Helen Huntingdon's 'protector' and yet he 'insults' her with his predatory sexual advances (*Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, p. 357). Likewise, Ramage's intention is not to serve his 'queen', but to violate her.

In the manuscript of Robins's play, *My Little Sister*, which I examine below, the mother in the story is more worried about a fellow passenger striking up a conversation with her teenage daughter, Bettina, on the train than she is about her taking the wrong train at a junction.<sup>1</sup> If a woman encountered an unsavoury character, she was expected to rebuff his advances clearly. Olive Malvery relates an incident when a man she believed to be a pimp entered her first-class carriage at Victoria Station

while her husband was obtaining a newspaper. While he was teasing her for her silence, her husband returned and exhibited typically exemplary wordless Victorian masculine defensive behaviour: 'My husband said nothing at all, but simply turned round and took the man by the collar of his coat and somewhere around the waist line, kicked open the door of the carriage, and with a dreadful bang bumped the creature down upon the platform' (*The White Slave Market*, p. 205). Malvery wonders what might have happened had her husband not been with her that day. The response was that society would have expected her to protect herself physically to her upmost ability to prove to a court that she had fought to guard her honour. 'Resistance', writes D'Cruze, 'was required to be physical' and 'the court was interested in evidence of resistance because of the bearing this had on the fraught issue of consent' (*Crimes of Outrage*, p. 159). A costly court case in which a woman's reputation would be staked against her male passenger's (particularly if he was an esteemed gentleman) would, however, have often been too great an ordeal to undergo, forcing victims into silence. Sometimes railway companies could assist with prosecutions. When a gentleman brandished his stick at his fellow female passengers, 'roar[ed] out an obscene offer' and 'grossly assaulted' one of them, the Great Western Railway Company charged him under its private byelaws, principally because he had interfered with the quality of the passenger's journey,<sup>2</sup> and presumably might drive away other customers.

A famous example of female self-defence is offered in the extraordinary testimony given by a young, middle-class woman, Rebecca Kate Dickinson, during the Valentine Baker Case of 1875. The case has some features in common with Wells's portrayal of Ann Veronica and Ramage's relationship. They first become acquainted in a train. Like Ramage, Colonel Baker, uses 'a conversation on theatres'<sup>3</sup> to reel in his intended prey and Ramage attempts to lure Ann Veronica by softening her with a trip to see Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* and sits too close to Ann Veronica in their hansom cab. Whilst travelling in a first-class compartment to London on 17 June 1875, Colonel Valentine Baker (1827–1887) – an army reformer and friend of the Prince of Wales – had allegedly tried to 'kiss' her 'on the lips' and put 'his hand underneath [her] dress, on [her] stocking, above [her] boot'. Despite Baker being a 'strong and powerful man' she outwitted him by pushing down the window, screaming and escaping onto the footboard where she hung until the train stopped at the next station. Witnesses also confirmed that they had seen him in a state of undress.<sup>4</sup> Although she did not plan to press charges, her brother, a Royal Engineers officer, instigated proceedings, and Baker

was arrested and tried at the Croydon Assizes in July. Rebecca gave her evidence to the court ‘with much propriety’, her respectability being communicated to readers by her ‘natural’ aversion to ‘an investigation of that painful nature’. Whilst acquitted of attempted rape, Baker was convicted of indecent assault, sentenced to a year’s imprisonment and fined £500. Queen Victoria was disgusted by his behaviour and he was cashiered. Was he sufficiently punished? A London correspondent for the *Lancaster Gazette* maintained that the social ostracization for a man of Baker’s position was far worse for a gentleman than for a working man as Baker was very publicly ‘ruined’.<sup>5</sup> Baker did later gain respect for his services to the Turkish sultan and displayed heroism in controlling a cholera outbreak in 1883 in Cairo. He was buried in 1887 with full military honours. Stevenson describes how Kate has often been portrayed as arrogant for her affrontery at merely being kissed, however, and compellingly argues that ‘historical sources demand a careful examination and sensitivity to the language and expressions used in order to fully understand what is *actually* being represented’.<sup>6</sup>

The *Lancaster Gazette* suggested a solution to the problem of unsolicited attention: the hand fan. With the growth of interest in ‘Japonisme’ in Britain during the last half of the nineteenth century, the fan became a fashion statement for the urban woman and was used to commemorate events and promote products.<sup>7</sup> Any internet search for ‘The Language of the Fan’ conjures up countless websites which claim that there was a secret code that ladies could use to communicate messages through the haze of the social decorum of the ballroom. The famous French fanmaker, Duvelleroy, published a list of gestures including ‘I hate you’, ‘I love you’ and ‘kiss me’. It is likely that this publication was a marketing device rather than an attempt to capture a widely ‘spoken’ language. However, girls may have invented their own signals and artists could have been inspired by this code just as they often were with the ‘language of the flowers’.<sup>8</sup> Fans were used in art and literature as extensions of the body, as adverts for the emotions. In Margaret Veley’s poem ‘A Japanese Fan’ (1876) the narrator describes to a listener the story depicted on a fan. The longing and tone of resignation suggests that the listener is also the muse.<sup>9</sup> The open fan is emblematic of the exposure of the teller’s heart, inviting confidence. Alternatively it could be used to guard one’s body space. In Francis Sydney Muschamp’s oil painting, *Scarborough Spa at Night* (1879), a seated lone young woman leans away from two strange men who crane over her and have rudely not removed their hats. As Stephen Kern writes, her fan is ‘spread out like a claw to keep him away’ (*Eyes of Love*, p. 41). It is also noteworthy



Figure 2.1 'Fan-Dagger' (Fan Tanto): Japanese, late-nineteenth century. Both images are the author's own and reproduced with kind permission from The Fan Museum.

is that her manipulation of the fan bears a resemblance to the gesture corresponding to 'I am engaged' or 'I am married' in Duvelleroy's list.

What the surprised *Lancaster Gazette* journalist saw in the window of a ladies' finery shop in Regent Street was a 'dagger-fan'. The dagger-fan is not to be confused with the 'fan-dagger' or fan tanto in which the grip and scabbard have been carved to look like a closed fan. (See Figure 2.1.) In Fortuné du Boisgobey's *Le Crime de L'Opéra* (1879) a blackmailer is stabbed in an opera box by one of three masked ladies with a 'Japanese fan-dagger, or poniard so made as to be concealed under the form of a fan' (PMG, 31 Dec 1879, p. 11). The silken-sheathed weapon that Boisgobey describes would be a variation on the tanto.

The dagger-fan is the opposite of the tanto in concept.<sup>10</sup> It appeared in the *Ladies' Treasury* and its competitor, *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, both cheaply priced and designed for a middle-class readership. Identical images were also featured in *Harper's Bazar* and *La Mode Illustrée, Journal de la Famille*. According to the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, this 'dainty little dagger' was described as a 'pretty ornament', worn on a waistband, of crimson silk and Russian leather. (See



Figure 2.2 ‘Dagger-Fan’: French, 1874.

Figure 2.2.)<sup>11</sup> To one reader, eager to obtain the fan for her first ball, the sheath was ‘the pretty part’ of the fan.<sup>12</sup> It appears to have been one of possibly a variety of models, sold at different prices. The vendors were advertised in the papers and their addresses printed at the request of readers. They were ‘all the rage’ in Paris.<sup>13</sup> They became sufficiently well-known that the inventor of the ‘Oxford Suspension Clasp’ claimed that with this mounting prayerbooks could be carried ‘from a lady’s girdle, after the manner of the dagger fan and such-like elegant and useful paraphenalia’ (*The Times*, 7 December 1875, p. 12). The *Lancaster Gazette* correspondent spotted ‘an ornamental but sufficiently formidable looking dagger, sheathed in velvet, and with a silver chain to attach it to the waistbelt of the fair wearer [...] labelled “The New Dagger Fan.”’ As he wrote: ‘The fan was intelligible, but the dagger was a puzzler to me, until I bethought myself that it was probably intended for protection in travelling. A lady’s toilette can be made very expressive of her tone of mind. There was a certain style of head-dress much in vogue a few years ago, which went by the name of “Follow me, my lad,” and why should not a dagger, worn as an ornament, say just as plainly, “Keep your distance, Sir.”’ (*Lancaster Gazette*, 14 August 1875, p. 7.).

# 3

## Behind Closed Doors in Mona Caird's *The Wing of Azrael* (1889)

### Perils of the 'Marriage Market'

'The young women of Jane Austen's time [...] were properly brought up, and sat still and straight, and took the luck fate brought them as gentlewomen should. And they had an idea of what men were like behind all their nicety. They knew they were all Bogey in disguise. I didn't! I didn't!'

H.G. Wells, *Ann Veronica* (1909)

A portrayal of the emotional consequences of marrying the enemy, *Azrael* is a bleak yet bracing novel. Particularly apt at the aesthetisation of peril, Caird gives her female readers an education in spotting danger. She routs out the bogeyman in the wedding trousseau and spares no emotional expense in condemning Victorian expectations surrounding marriage and motherhood, pulling us through a troubled *fin-de-siècle* seascape, the Gothic howling around our ears.

According to a reviewer of *The Wing of Azrael* in the *Academy*: 'It is impossible to say whether [Caird] is a born novelist or merely a born controversialist.'<sup>1</sup> When this novel appeared in 1889, its author was already a household name, a fire starter who had thrown a 'flaming bomb'<sup>2</sup> at the typical Victorian vision of gender relations. Now considered an early radical First Wave Feminist for whom the sea was a powerful symbol of social change,<sup>3</sup> Caird wrote seven novels and a range of articles on the 'woman question'. Her most famous article is arguably the simply titled yet punchy *Westminster Review* piece, 'Marriage' which appeared in August of 1888, fuelling a large-scale debate. In this article, Caird cannily appropriates the grand narrative, an obvious example

being Emile Rousseau's 'Discourse on Inequality' (1755) in which it is stated that the advent of private property in human history heralded the start of social inequality. John Stuart Mill (whose work was influential for Caird), argued that 'from the very earliest twilight of human society, every woman (owing to the value attached to her by men, combined with her inferiority in muscular strength) was found in a state of bondage to some man' ('The Subjection of Women', p. 475). Caird disagreed; in the beginning there was matriarchy. Caird inserts *herstory* into the long historical vision: when men raided neighbouring settlements, they seized and subjugated women. As 'Marriage' argues, medieval women had comparative freedom to choose their suitors. Thereafter, she argues, women were socially conditioned to be helpless. Her view of history has interesting implications for discussions on women's propensity to defend themselves using physical force: '[A]t different epochs, we have records which amply prove [...] that physical strength, in either sex, depends on the method of training in early life, and that there is nothing to prevent women, in the course of a few generations, from recovering the physical power which their mode of existence, and the ill-usage suffered during the long patriarchal ages, have combined to destroy.'<sup>14</sup>

Caird's use of temporal shifts in her work has been widely commented upon<sup>5</sup> but what has not attracted attention is the way in which she shows that the future of women's self-defence lies in looking to the past. At the same time, her tips on self-defence can be applied once women have the freedom to make decisions, not to listen to the voice of society. As I will show, Caird contributed to debates about masculine versus feminine strength during the Edwardian era.

For Mill, married women became the 'personal body-servant[s]' of men ('The Subjection of Women', p. 505) and Caird adds: 'The outcast class was formed into a strictly regulated band, subject to special laws, while the "honest" women were gathered into another fold and dedicated equally to the service of man, but under different conditions' (*The Morality of Marriage* p. 82). The links between so-called respectable married women and prostitutes were drawn in other areas too. As Lucy Bland points out, various legal rights had been won by the late 1880s. For example the Married Women's Property Acts 1870 and 1882 gave a wife the same rights over her property as an unmarried woman; a wife could keep any money she earned as well as her possessions instead of submitting them to her husband upon marriage. Under the Matrimonial Causes Act 1878, wives who had been beaten could apply to a magistrate for a separation order and for custody and for

maintenance of children below the age of ten (in 1886 deserted wives were included in this Act). However, legally a wife was considered to be under the 'protection' of her husband and her body was considered the property of her husband's (enshrined in the principle of coverture). Caird argued that this legally and socially sanctioned clipping of his wife's wings had a negative impact on the husband, forcing him to seek stimulation elsewhere. As husband and wife began to lead radically different lives, the housebound wife fretted over her absent husband but did not dare to air her concerns as she had been taught to indulge him in his whims. Caird made various suggestions which might help ameliorate gender relations: the co-education of girls and boys, and that the sexes should be able to socialize more freely without the pressure to give or accept offers of marriage, while the marriage bond itself should be replaced with partnerships in which both men and women were financially independent and therefore able to make choices.

Following the appearance of 'Marriage', London's bestselling paper, the *Daily Telegraph*, asked its readers, 'Is Marriage a Failure?', and the newspaper elicited around 27,000 responses between 9 August and 29 September from barmaids to barristers. A highly critical review of *Azrael* argued that 'unhappy marriages are common enough'<sup>6</sup> but the journal was in fact appropriately describing a situation which Caird set out to tackle. Edging into the *Daily Telegraph's* marriage debates were the Whitechapel Murders in which the vivisectionist's knife was ferociously turned on the female body, attacking notions of public decency. These gruesome murders set the scene to *Azrael* which takes as a major theme the physical domination and the sacrifice of women.

The title refers to the Angel of Death to whom, according to ancient scripture, a scapegoat was offered. *Azrael* hovers over the whole novel and has his eye on a young woman named Viola. Caird draws out Viola's sorrows over the lengthy triple-decker format stipulated by the highly influential Mudie's circulating library. Viola is the only daughter of the Sedley family. As the men of the family are spendthrifts, she is denied an education, which is all the more tragic as she has an enquiring mind. Caird challenges the following misconception that woman 'thinks not profoundly; profound thought is the power of the man' and she is 'the counterpart of man, taken out of man, to be subject to man; to comfort him like angels, and to lighten his cares'.<sup>7</sup> Like the ideal Gothic heroine, the aptly named Viola is highly attuned to the music and sounds of nature. In this way, *Azrael* anticipates much of the imagery, characterization and social commentary which defined her more famous novel, *The Daughters of Danaus* (1894). Like Viola,

the main character of *Danaus*, Hadria Temperley, is a talented musician but she is forced to sacrifice her ambitions in order to meet family obligations. As Caird writes: 'It is possible that women, in virtue of their susceptible physical constitution and nervous system (a quality, by the way, which distinguishes the man of genius from the ordinary being), are more responsive than men are to their surroundings.'<sup>8</sup> At the novel's opening, Viola is a child, awake at midnight and puzzled by the nature of eternity and reality. Caird portrays Viola's as a 'little metaphysician': 'The child touched herself tentatively. Yes, she was, she *must* be real; a separate being called Viola Sedley, – with thoughts of her own, entirely her own' (*Azrael*, 1, p. 3).

A pensive child, Viola is profoundly stirred by that mainstay of Gothic fiction – bad weather. She gazes across the grounds but her eyes cannot penetrate the corrosive mist which 'curses' and 'shrouds' and 'chills' the atmosphere and 'work[s] its stealthy way into the heart' (*Azrael*, 1, p. 5). This sense of foreboding is the keynote of the novel. Peter Brooks has observed that there is no God in Melodrama, but that 'the radical emotion is a feeling of the "eerie" and "uncanny"'.<sup>9</sup> As the *Academy* concluded: 'Mrs. Caird does know the Eerie [...] and can people it with a variety of human life as no other contemporary writer can'.<sup>10</sup> This creeping mist symbolizes the presence of ignorance, both in the sense of not possessing knowledge and also of narrow-mindedness. Viola 'longs' to see beyond the nearby trees to the 'wider horizon' of the sea but the limited view leaves her 'unsatisfied'. While Wells avoids the gothic fog, the beginning of *Ann Veronica* also sees an impatient and inquisitive Ann Veronica confined in a 'wrapped' world. Just as the fog burdens the air, Viola's confinement to the domestic sphere chokes her spirit and in this opening passage alone one is left with the impression that in this mouldy atmosphere saplings rot before they have a chance to bloom.

Viola's passionate emotions are constantly suppressed by the religious dictates of her mother, Marion Sedley, a pathetic martyr to the cause of wifely duty. She silently suffers the demands of her husband, Richard, who believes that an unmarried woman is 'a cumberer of the ground', a phrase which is used in such a context in *Tenant of Wildfell Hall* and also in Robins's *Convert*, in which the unmarried Vida Levering describes herself to her half-sister as 'a mere cumberer of the earth' (*Convert*, p. 47). Marion has ailed since the birth of her first child and is 'a vampire soul' (*Danaus*, p. 447), tiring Viola and infecting her with a sense of gender inferiority. When Viola is told that she must marry Sir Philip Dendraith's son, Philip, the girl meekly complies, even though she finds

Philip morally repellent and sinister. Like countless other women Caird discusses in 'Ideal Marriage', Viola is reduced to a commodity. This aspect recalls *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) where Signor Montoni offers Emily's hand in marriage to a potential suitor, Count Morano, whose insistent manner repulses her, but then retracts his offer to Morano as his whims and fortunes dictate. In *Azrael* Philip Dendraith buys Viola from Mr Sedley, giving Viola's job-shy brother Geoffrey badly needed networking opportunities and bestowing on Sedley the finances to manage his debts. The futility of this transaction is made even more absurd when we learn that Sedley still squanders the money.

In 'The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist', Violet Smith is kidnapped, tied up and forced to marry Mr Woodley. Sherlock Holmes warns that 'a forced marriage is no marriage, but it is a very serious felony' ('The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist', p. 536). As Caird argues, often bona fide marriages have come about as a result of pressure, and are little better than forced marriages. The mythical figure of Andromeda is evoked often in *Azrael*. As Caird observes: 'The old legends of maidens who were chosen every year and chained to a rock by the shore to propitiate gods or sea-monsters seem not in the least out of date' ('Defence of Wild Women', p. 815). This imprisonment turns inwards when Viola feels that she is held 'to the small and local elements of her life', and her happiness 'pinioned' by 'a little fretting chain' which 'chinks' in her ears (*Azrael*, 2, p. 141). Such imagery was also depicted in painting. The watercolourist, Edna Clarke Hall (1879–1979), studied at the Slade School of Fine Art in the 1890s and married in 1898. The frustration of being pinned down by domestic life was reflected in her depiction of coastal scenes in which a lone woman, surrounded by nets and other fishing paraphernalia, gazes longingly at the boats in the distance.<sup>11</sup>

This novel shows how mothers actively put their daughters in danger. Viola is appalled at seeing Philip use his 'enormous strength' to punish a horse (*Azrael*, 2, p. 18). The lesson here is that if a woman wanted to know what her potential husband was really like, she needed to observe how he treated his steed. Viola vows to end her engagement to him, however her mother implores her to continue with the marriage, disregarding her concerns about Viola's happiness but also her safety. As the novel argues, relationships between women could be potentially abusive because they allowed a flabby-minded or unstable woman to permit the marriage of her daughter to a dangerous man. In *Great Expectations* (1861) the jilted Miss Havisham adopts Estella, and the beautiful girl becomes her tool to break men's hearts. She is sacrificed to the hardened rake and admirer, Bentley Drummle, with the purpose of

emotionally wounding him. However, it is Estella who is injured when she becomes his wife. When Tess returns home after Alec has violated her, Tess confronts her mother: 'Why didn't you warn me? Ladies know what to fend hands against, because they read novels that tell them of these tricks; but I never had the chance o' learning in that way, and you did not help me!' (*Tess*, pp. 72–73). Her response to Tess's misfortune is tantamount to a futile *never mind*. As the reader knows, Mrs Durbeyfield regretted sending her daughter away as she watched her leaving with Alec. She swallowed her own fears when she should have acted to prevent her daughter being put into Alec's care. When Richard Sedley's sister, Lady Augusta Clevedon, consoles Marion, she dismisses Marion's concerns relating to the suitability of the marriage and Philip's bad temper and hypocritically pontificates that 'women are all the better for a little frightening' (*Azrael*, 1, p. 213). As Caird remarks: 'It had, however, never occurred to Lady Clevedon to look out for the terrific creature who could frighten *her*' (*Azrael*, 1, p. 213). Through the dismissive attitude taken by Lady Clevedon, Caird shows that women could be complicit in sexual violence as they not only failed to protect younger women under their care but pressured them into contemplating offers of marriage which they themselves would have found unappealing.

After Marion Sedley's death, Viola is prompted to change her own life. Harry Lancaster, the man with whom she is in love, persuades Viola to override her womanly duty and to escape with him by boat to France. Their relationship would be Caird's ideal form of partnership, based on friendship and affection. Viola is supported in her decision by the rebellious New Woman, Mrs Sibella Lincoln, who collects artefacts which represent an era before the modern times which signal women's oppression. Having left her own husband, Sibella is deemed a social outcast and lives on a thin strip of land next to the sea, and it is the bracing air, not the dank and musty vapours of the Sedley-esque drawing room, which fills her lungs. Just as Viola is about to leave her husband, Philip threatens to incarcerate his wife, robbing her of her walks by the sea. In response, Viola stabs him. Seeing the horror flit across Harry's face, Viola is fearful his reputation will be tainted by association with her. She darts towards away from him towards the sea with Harry in hot pursuit, pleading for her return. A vertiginous denouement ensues.

*Azrael* was published worldwide in 1889 but until recently it remained out of print, obtainable only as rare triple-decker first editions or in microfilm format at the British Library. In 2010, three separate reprints sprang up.<sup>12</sup> With regard to this novel, critics have focused on Caird's discussions of marriage and the New Woman, the

anti-vivisectionist message and, to a lesser extent, the anti-war perspective. However, the novel is permeated with discussions on gentlemanliness, an aspect curiously under-examined in criticism on this novel. If her female readers can disentangle themselves from the fronds of social expectations and familial obligation, they might be able to apply the tips Caird suggests in the novel and avoid Viola's fate. They can unmask a fake gentleman and, in doing so, avoid a rogue husband.

### 'Reading Nature's Plainest Danger-Signals'

'As he drew near, a feeling of intense enmity arose within her, which reached its highest pitch when he addressed her in a fine, low-toned voice of peculiarly fascinating quality. Every instinct rose up as if in warning.'

Mona Caird, *The Daughters of Danaus* (1894)

Answering the question of whether or not Caird was merely 'a born controversialist', Lyn Pykett has argued that Caird produced 'self-conscious aesthetic' novels, in which she not only drew on earlier forms of writing (such as sensation fiction with its murdereresses and villainous husbands) but also played with time, giving a voice to her heroine's emotions (Pykett, 'The Cause of Women', p. 133). While Caird's articles persuaded, her fiction inspired readers to feel her arguments. I argue that as part of her aesthetic programme, Caird uses physiognomy to indicate danger and to provide suspense. As George Burgess commented in *The Art of Reading Character* (1885): 'Physiognomy will point out to husbands and wives their excellences and defects, and show them how to blend their natures so as to secure the greatest amount of happiness. Physiognomy can point out to lovers before marrying, whether or not they could be happy together in marriage.'<sup>13</sup>

Sharrona Pearl has demonstrated that physiognomy was highly prevalent in Victorian Britain and was not just confined to judging facial characteristics; clothing and hairstyle also formed part of the assessment of character. Indeed, Henry Frith argued in his 1891 guide on physiognomy, *How to Read Character in Features, Forms and Faces*, character can be read in boots and in the angle at which a hat is worn.<sup>14</sup> 'Pocket physiognomy' (Pearl's term) also offered a popular shortcut to understanding a person's character in an urban environment where decisions needed to be made based on brief encounters.<sup>15</sup> A knowledge of the art of reading people came to be considered a useful piece of kit,

along with a mirror or a comb in a lady's bag. *Azrael* is riddled with physiognomic clues, lessons in reading what Dr Watson describes in Doyle's 'The Adventure of the Empty House' (1903) as 'nature's plainest danger-signals'.<sup>16</sup> Although Plowden cautions that 'nothing can mislead like the human countenance', he nevertheless advises that 'the mouth is perhaps the most expressive feature, and the hands of a liar are seldom at rest' while 'abnormal ears' are 'significant'. During trials, he kept an eye on witnesses once they had left the box to watch the expressions flit across their faces as evidence for the opposition was heard (*Grain or Chaff?*, pp. 225–226).

In *Danaus* a man's propensity to harm or to be indifferent to suffering can be read in his style of walking. Caird's heroine, Hadria Temperley, observes a conversation between the vehement anti-vivisectionist, Professor Fortescue, who walks 'quiet[ly]' and 'firm[ly]' and the novel's bad guy, Professor Theobald, who ambles with an 'insinuating, conceited tread' which suggests that he is a 'cunning wild animal' (*Danaus*, p. 211). As one author wrote: 'How often from my window have I been able to mark a man by his walk!'<sup>17</sup> Hadria feels that the professor would be capable of conducting 'ruthless psychical experiments' on people (*Danaus*, p. 217).<sup>18</sup> Hadria's physiognomic judgement is correct: when she rejects him as a lover, he vengefully asserts paternity over the girl that Hadria has adopted.

In *Azrael*, Caird uses physiognomy as a way of distinguishing debased characters from intelligent and sympathetic natures. In *Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, Helen Huntingdon thinks herself an excellent physiognomist but she wrongly ascribes Arthur Huntingdon's ruddy complexion to a hearty state of health, rather than to alcoholism, thus downplaying the scale of his debauched nature. Viola's father has a 'ruddy face' and 'bleared light blue eyes' which point to his self-indulgent lifestyle (*Azrael*, 1, p. 19). By contrast, Harry's friends, Caleb Foster (a philosopher) and Dick Evans (a parson's son), have large foreheads, indicators of enormous intellects. In particular, Caleb has a 'capacious head, with square, scientific brow' which means that he can 'draw[ ] accurate deductions from closely observed data' and play tennis in an 'eminently scientific' manner (*Azrael*, 1, p. 177). This also accords with George Burgess's observation that a large well-proportioned, high forehead betokened a 'high and elevated nature' and the ability to study philosophy.<sup>19</sup> Physiognomy is also wielded as a weapon by characters to denigrate each other. Harry has an uneasy feeling about Philip: 'There is something polished and cold-blooded about that young Adonis, with his white teeth, that gives me a shiver up my spine' (*Azrael*, 1, p. 34).

Philip says of Harry: 'Flowing moustachios and blue eyes, even in the absence of regular features, are not to be trusted' (*Azrael*, 2, p. 74).

The topic of the 'perfect gentleman' was widely discussed in Victorian literature. Caird uses this ever-popular theme to draw in male readers, instructing them in the ways in which marriage is not only injurious to women. Blue-eyed Harry is the novel's gentleman: 'With all his boldness and freedom, he was what [Lady Clevedon] was pleased to call a "gentleman"' (*Azrael*, 1, p. 21). He is 'amusing', 'sympathetic', 'genial, ready is help, quick to foresee and avoid what might wound another's feelings' (*Azrael*, 1, p. 81) and possesses what Samuel Smiles calls 'truest politeness' which 'comes of sincerity and is 'the outcome of the heart'.<sup>20</sup> For Caird, a gentleman need not be handsome but possess an open countenance like Harry, who has a 'frank humorous face, whose charm lay chiefly in its expression' (*Azrael*, 1, p. 17). Like Viola, he is stirred by nature. Due to family financial pressures, he is pushed into a career in the army. His anger is defensive and is roused by witnessing acts of cruelty. On seeing Philip beat his horse, Harry wrenches the whip from his adversary's hand and snaps it in two.

'Gothic heroes and heroines worry about everything', observes Clive Bloom.<sup>21</sup> As Caird shows, Viola should be concerned: Philip's physiognomy suggests danger. Caird spends much time in the thrall of her villain, describing his appearance and facial gestures on numerous occasions. Philip Dendraith is 'handsome, polished and keen-witted' with 'a face and figure almost faultless' (*Azrael*, 1, pp. 20 and 31). The Swiss pastor, Johann Kaspar Lavater, who famously spread awareness of physiognomy in the late eighteenth century, also propounded *kalokagatheia*, the Platonic idea that visually attractive people were good-natured while bad characters were ugly as a consequence. His work was reprinted many times throughout the nineteenth century. The following passage merits a lengthy quotation because here Caird complicates the principle of *kalokagatheia*; even beautiful people can commit atrocious crimes. She also obsessively revisits the following descriptions, perhaps as fascinated by Philip as her characters are:

Philip Dendraith, framed by the rough Norman window, stood out very strikingly. [...]

There was only too much strength in the thin delicate lips, and in the square jaw which gave vigour to the face, without heaviness. The eyes were rather small and close-set; keen in expression. Dark, sleek hair, closely cropped, harmonised with a smooth, brown and colourless skin; a laugh or smile displayed a set of miraculously white teeth,

even and perfect as if they had been artificial. As often happens, this last perfection gave a singularly cold expression to the face; after the first shock of admiration (for it was nothing less), this became chillingly apparent, but the eye still lingered on the chiselled outlines with a sort of fascination. Philip Dendraith seldom smiled, but when he did the smile had always the same character. It was steely and brilliant, with a lurking mockery not pleasant to encounter. His manners, young man as he was, were very polished; he was by instinct a courtier. (*Azrael*, 1, p. 80)

Peter Brooks argues that in melodrama ‘evil is villainy; it is a swarthy, cape-enveloped man with a deep voice’.<sup>22</sup> Viola is meek, the dark-haired Philip is self-confident and mischievous. If the villain in melodrama holds the stranglehold on power, Philip’s control of Viola ensures that Harry and Viola must overcome great odds to defeat him. Caird implies a symbiosis between Philip and the Romanesque ruins which surround him. He resembles his handsome eighteenth-century ancestor, Andrew Dendraith, who repaired the castle and stabbed his wife to death in the west wing after he discovered she had a lover. The ‘shock of admiration’ that Philip provokes points towards feelings aroused by encounters with the Sublime. Philip’s chiselled features are like jagged peaks of the Alps;<sup>23</sup> they are beautiful to look at but dangerous to those who venture closer. His heart is chilled, like the castle ruin through which the icy wind whispers and his nature is lightless, suggested by the ‘close-set’ eyes which resemble the tiny windows of the Norman castle. A professor of archaeology, Theobald ‘points out the fine Norman window’ (*Danaus*, p. 259). Theobald is interested in *history from the top down* – the dynasties of men whose wives have been subsumed into their family lines and locked away in castles.

Philip’s eyes are predatory and as keen and watchful as a detective’s. By contrast, Viola’s grey eyes are large, the sign of a sensitive nature (*Azrael*, 1, p. 6). She feels; he analyses. Caird describes the dual nature and ‘sinister meditations’ that lurk behind Philip’s smile: ‘The polite cheerfulness and even gaiety of his demeanour during the evening suddenly fell from him like a mask; his brow clouded, and his thin lips set themselves in a hard, disagreeable smile’ (*Azrael*, 2, p. 102). Theobald’s lips also tighten, especially if his vanity is injured. That Philip is a sadist is not in question. Lavater tells us how to spot a man who laughs at another’s misfortune: ‘Such characters have commonly little upper or under lip, a sharply-delineated middle line of the mouth, which at both ends turns disagreeably upwards, and fearful teeth’ (*Essays on*

*Physiognomy*, p. 477). In Frith's guide, a firm jawline coupled with thin lips suggests a ruthless nature, 'point[ing] to a man who would have little pity or compassion, probably honest, but with no more sentiment in exacting his bond than Shylock' while close-set eyes show 'an indication of cunning' (*How to Read Character*, pp. 56 and 39). Philip's teeth are brilliantly white which Lavater argues is a positive trait: 'White, clean, well-arranged teeth' betoken honesty and faithfulness (*Essays on Physiognomy*, p. 395). But Caird finds their perfection sinister. Alluded to on several occasions throughout the novel, his straight teeth are metonymic of his nature: he is visually too perfect to trust, a control freak, with the cunning and conscience of a demon. Gleaming teeth would become an iconic metonym of the blood-sucking Undead, an image which appears in *Varney the Vampyre* (1847). Bram Stoker developed it to considerable effect in *Dracula* (1897). The idea that Viola's blood has been sacrificed at the altar is conveyed during her wedding ceremony when the sun's rays stain her dress a bloody colour. Philip leeches happiness from Viola who is always depicted as pale in his presence and particularly so after their honeymoon when they have spent time alone. As Frith maintains, one must consider each feature as part of a picture of the whole; if we assess Philip's physiognomy in this way, we have the portrait of a man who sticks at nothing to acquire and maintain unyielding control of his property.

Physiognomy was a guide but it did not provide a comprehensive view and physiognomists could not agree on the significance of features. As fiction shows, sheer preference and dislike played a part in assessing character. In Dickens's 'Hunted Down' (1859), the narrator, the manager of a life insurance office, comments that: 'You, for instance, give a great deal of time and attention to the reading of music, Greek, Latin, French, Italian, Hebrew, if you please, and do not qualify yourself to read the face of the master or mistress looking over your shoulder teaching it to you [...] There is nothing truer than physiognomy taken in connection with manner [...] An observer of men who finds himself steadily repelled by some apparently trifling thing in a stranger is right to give it great weight. It may be the clue to the whole mystery. A hair or two will show where a lion is hidden.'<sup>24</sup> The story's narrator is repulsed by Julius Slinkton's suspiciously precise centre-parting. He is correct in his unease as he later learns that this self-controlled man is a murderer and fraudster. Viola's predicament is that she does not have the freedom to act on her impressions as she is forced to marry a man whose outwardly pristine appearance repels her; while Hadria does not listen to her inner voice, to her regret.

## Perfect Gentlemen?

'There was no way out—and there were no dogs at Kerfol.'

Edith Wharton, *Kerfol* (1916)

A gentleman is one to whom courtesy is a sin and falsehood a crime.

W. R. Browne, 'The English Gentleman',  
*National Review* (1886)

How many are the forms and gradations of animalism and selfishness, often under an outward varnish of civilization and even cultivation, living at peace with the law, maintaining a creditable appearance to all who are not under their power, yet sufficient often to make the lives of all who are so, a torment and a burthen to them!

John Stuart Mill, 'The Subjection of Women' (1869)

The adjectives 'polished' and 'varnished' frequently occur in discussions of gentlemanliness throughout the nineteenth century. The character of the public school gentleman was 'manufactured' and then a metaphorical 'varnish' was added to the product. This implied that a gentleman was a veneered object and to become one was an *accomplishment*. For instance, Samuel Smiles portrays the gentleman as a rough stone that can be cut: 'Most men are like so many gems in the rough, which need polishing by contact with other and better natures, to bring out their full beauty and lustre.'<sup>25</sup> In *Danaus*, there is a discussion about whether the act of analysing character can be likened to the act of looking at paint or at varnish. According to Professor Fortescue, 'if the paint theory be correct, then it is true that to know one's fellows is impossible, you can only know the upper coat; whereas if the truth lies in varnish, the substance of the nature is revealed to you frankly, if you have eyes to trace the delicacies of the markings, which tell the secrets of sap and fibre, of impetus and check' (*Danaus*, p. 233). Despite his attempts at rendering his character non-transparent, Philip is readable. As Caird advises: 'Perhaps a man's views about women are the crucial test of his own character: if there is in him the slightest taint of vulgarity, *there will it inevitably betray itself*' (*Azrael*, 2, p. 4). Philip has the outward trappings of gentlemanliness. He is fluent in French and is a society

smooth-talker, a contrast to his blustering father who is an upstart gentleman, an inventor of superfluous gadgets. Whilst repelled by Sir Philip Dendraith's intrusive manner, Lady Clevedon is fooled by the 'fine-looking' lad and his suave performance (*Azrael*, 1, p. 34). However, 'his manner, always polished, was now as perfect as any manner can be that does not take its rise in warmth of heart and wealth of sympathy. [...] Philip Dendraith had certainly never been shocked at vice in his life, and at folly he laughed. He could listen to a tale of cruelty without the slightest thrill of anger against the perpetrator of the deed, or of pity for the sufferer' (*Azrael*, 1, pp. 178–179). Despite a vigorous application of public school education, the ungainly splinters of a bad character will protrude through the glaze. Moreover, according to novels and etiquette books of the day, a true gentleman was supposed to be unselfconscious; Philip vulgarly calls himself a 'gentleman' (*Azrael*, 2, p. 114).

Philip's sadism is apparent in his maltreatment of animals. Caird was an ardent anti-vivisectionist and she used the stock image of the rich lout striking his animals and ill-treating the wife. His predecessors are Bentley Drummle in *Great Expectations* and Arthur Huntingdon in *Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. In *Tess*, Alec D'Urberville's struggle to tame his murderous (female) horse clearly parallels his bid to subdue the stubborn Tess who is unresponsive to his flatteries. In Edgar Allan Poe's horrific tale, 'The Black Cat' (1845) a husband drowns his affection for his wife and their household pets in drink and brutally murders her with an axe and hangs Pluto, the cat, but not before gouging out the creature's green eye. To accentuate the horror of her own villain's cruelty, Caird indulges in a little irony: his name means 'a lover of horses'.<sup>26</sup> Viola is horrified when she sees the form that this supposed affection takes by the manner in which he treats his steed: 'The creature was flinching, and tried to escape from the heavy blows; his glossy sides were bleeding and foam-flecked, and with every savage stroke of the whip he gave a desperate plunge' (*Azrael*, 2, p. 18). Once Viola is married, she is surprised to find her cat, Maria, lying with a broken leg on a hard floor. Maria had disturbed Philip in his 'sinister meditations' and he had 'put out his foot and kicked her to the other side of the room, hearing, not without satisfaction, a dull thud as the creature struck against the panelling' (*Azrael*, 2, p. 103). The way in which Philip 'lift[s] the cat in his arms' and then casts her out in a controlled manner represents the carefully metered combination of affectionate gestures and scorn with which he toys with Viola. Viola draws a link between her and the animal: "He has hurt us both, but you blink and purr before the fire [...] You are a model of what a respectable cat or a wife should be" (*Azrael*, 3,

p. 139). Named Maria, the cat symbolizes a holy icon of womanhood, exploited for pleasure, desecrated and cast out of the home.

These animals have their own way of getting revenge, however. Poe's mutilated Pluto (whose appropriately namesake is the Roman God of the Dead) rises from the underworld and his cries alert the police to the whereabouts of his mistress's concealed body. (In Anne Brontë's *Agnes Grey* (1847), the beaten female dog, Juno, is Pluto's analogue, named after the Roman queen of the Gods.) Like Pluto, Maria's suffering visually testifies to the violence she has received and alerts her mistress's suspicions. When Mrs Barber, the housekeeper, tries to establish if the cat was left on her own with Philip on the night she sustained her injury, Viola's reply tacitly indicates her growing realization of the brutality her husband could be capable of: 'Viola was never very explicit on this point. She could not, or would not, state whether the cat came out of the room or remained behind with Philip' (*Azrael*, 2, p. 105). Her reluctance to answer the housekeeper's question suggests a denial of the true nature of her marriage at a stage in the novel before she learns to question with full force whether a wife really should obey a husband she has been forced to marry.

Probably the most dramatic example of animals avenging woman-kind, which, like *Azrael*, is set against a grim background of stonework, is a short work by Bram Stoker which resumes some of the imagery of Poe's 'The Black Cat' (1845). Elaine Showalter describes the staking of the vampire, Lucy Westenra, in *Dracula* (1897) as an act of 'gang-rape' with an 'impressive phallic instrument' (p. 181).<sup>27</sup> Published four years after *Azrael*, Stoker's 'The Squaw' is an absorbingly grisly tale of male control and female resistance, ending with the narrator axing a cat to death with an executioner's sword. In this tale, two honeymooners enjoy a visit to Nuremberg, accompanied by their friend, Elias P. Hutcheson, a blusterer with a penchant for fighting and for oppressing Native American women. His predatory nature is alluded to in the name of the place where he comes from: 'Bleeding Gulch', Nebraska. Hutcheson ignores the protestations of the narrator's wife, Amelia, and tosses a stone over the city wall, killing a kitten. In response, its seething, green-eyed, Poe-esque mother utters a 'muffled cry such as a human being might give', a description which suggests that 'The Squaw' is representative of late-Victorian anxieties surrounding the overlap between humans and animals.<sup>28</sup>

When the men see that the cat cannot scale the high wall that separates them and Hutcheson jests that he is not scared by her, she becomes subdued. The narrator comments: 'See! [...] The effect of a

really strong man. Even that animal in the midst of her fury recognises the voice of a master, and *bows to him!* [my italics] ('Squaw', p. 41). In fact, she stealthily pursues Hutcheson (she represents an angered Native American woman who stalked his acquaintance for the theft of her papoose but was killed by Hutcheson) and his two friends to their destination – the torture tower. If cats could demonstrate human feelings, then the human inclination towards *beastliness* is represented by the torture chamber, containing symbols of 'man's injury to man' ('Squaw', p. 44) over the ages. However, the tendency to injure is still alive in the behaviour and attitudes of Hutcheson. He is keen to experience the 'Iron Virgin' from the victim's perspective and has an eye to employing this torture device against Native Americans, so he brazenly tempts death by entering the mansized device, while the tower custodian slowly draws down the door on him. In an act of symbolic female self-defence, the black cat attacks the custodian (she scratches his eyes) who lets go of the rope causing the once inert Iron Virgin, like a giant mousetrap, to close in on the murderous intruder who so daringly violated her space in jest. Hutcheson is staked by the Iron Virgin and his eyes and vital organs are punctured. Disgusted, the narrator cuts in two the cat which, now satisfied, is busy licking Hutcheson's blood. Therefore the narrator ends the cycle of female self-assertion. The narrator states that 'I think no one will call me cruel' as he has murdered the cat, but Stoker's representation means that Hutcheson is also not a pleasant enough character to be worth avenging. However, this action is too late as the cat, and indeed, the Iron Virgin, have accomplished their mission of enforcing justice. The narrator is therefore hardly a heroic protector. In fact, this grim set of events would not have transpired if Amelia's good advice had been heeded.

Hutcheson's invasion of the Iron Virgin, witnessed by the two newlyweds, also raises the question of sexual consent, the integrity of the female body and the trauma of birth. These are hinted at by the name of Hutcheson's hometown – Bleeding Gulch – and also by the birthmark on Amelia's first child, which the narrator believes was impressed upon the mother's body from the stressful occurrence at the Torture Tower. The narrator's outburst of violence resembles the axing of the narrator's wife in 'The Black Cat' (1845), and one feels that this bloody incident is not an especially auspicious start to married life especially as the cat in 'The Squaw' symbolizes motherhood. As Lisa Surridge observes in her chapter on *Azrael*, the novel discusses the theme from a woman's perspective when, as Walkowitz has argued, it was absent in the extensive marriage debates of the time (*Bleak Houses*, p. 195). If, as Surridge argues,

under Victorian law, a woman was considered to consent to sexual relations as a consequence of the marriage ceremony and could not retract this consent after her marriage, then 'the Victorian female body thus represented a tenuous foundation for selfhood, its integrity threatened by the wife's legal inability to refuse consent to sexual relations' (*Bleak Houses*, p. 198). This novel asks, to what extent then could a woman maintain integrity of character if her body is not her own, when she is subject to the will of, to quote Stoker's narrator in 'The Squaw', 'a really strong man'?

The child Viola suffers her way to the conclusion that her life is a series of scenarios in which her body is threatened. The first three pre-marital assaults on her person take place in Volume One. When Philip and his father accidentally encounter Viola and her family whilst on a walk around the countryside, a teenage Philip comments lecherously on her 'fine eyes' and asks to see what colour they are. This sense of threat is heightened by their discrepancy in age: Philip is his late teens while Viola is a child. She promptly shuts her eyes, closing the lids over them like protective armour. As Surridge says, 'Victorian literary tact dictates that the girlhood scenes do not depict actual rape, but they unmistakably represent sexual violations' (*Bleak Houses*, p. 198). Philip's sexually predatory nature is indicated by his gaze: 'He could stare most people out of countenance' (*Azrael*, 2, p. 49). Sylvia Hardy's reading of *Ann Veronica* also accords with this interpretation. She argues that in order to negotiate the restrictions placed on the Edwardian writer in discussing sex openly, Wells portrays male (predatory) desire by referring to staring, bulging eyes. *Ann Veronica* is stalked on the streets of London, her pursuer regards her with 'protuberant' eyes and the threat of sexual assault which has been looming over since her arrival in London culminates in the optical interaction of *Ann Veronica* and Ramage, who has 'rather too protuberant eyes' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 54), in the cabinet particulier: 'Her eye met his four inches away, and his was glaring, immense, and full of resolution, an enormous monster of an eye.'<sup>29</sup> When *Ann Veronica* sees Ramage later in the novel, after their scene in the cabinet particulier, he regards her with 'eyes distended with indecipherable meanings' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 198). Philip tries to read Viola's soul through her eyes. As Lavater says: 'The eye appertains more to the soul than any other organ [...] expresses sensations the most lively [...] and sentiments the most delicate [...] as they take birth' (*Essays on Physiognomy*, pp. 385–386). The Iron Virgin gouges out Hutcheson's greedy orbs, while, in the cabinet particulier, some of *Ann Veronica*'s hair 'escape[s] its hairpins' and comes 'athwart Ramage's eyes' (*Ann*

*Veronica*, p. 145). A modern self-defence manual argues that '[n]o matter how many weights our macho-man lifts [...] their eyes can not be strengthened, so use this weakness to your advantage'.<sup>30</sup> Viola cannot count on the protection or understanding of her playmate brother Geoffrey who thinks Philip is an amusing companion. Although Philip symbolically tries to possess her in soul by peering into her eyes, he does not succeed.

In the next predicament, the threat to Viola's person is more marked. As a child, Viola, Geoffrey and her mother visit the Dendraith residence and Philip's father demands a kiss from Viola, 'bending down without waiting for permission' (*Azrael*, 1, p. 44). She protests and hides under the carriage rug. The old man laughs and offers her a sweetmeat for a kiss, which is a form of prostitution disguised as innocent horseplay. Money, gender and social standing buy him the right to torment young girls – Sir Philip typifies the beast described by Stead in 'Maiden Tribute' who devours virgins: 'The blindest unbelief must admit that in this "English gentleman" we have a far more hideous Minotaur than that which Ovid fabled and which Theseus slew' ('Maiden Tribute' 8 July 1885, p. 5). Stead told his readers about mothers whose interests lay not in the welfare of their thirteen-year-old girls but in the price which they would receive for selling them. In *Azrael*, Viola's mother barterers her daughter in order to create a good impression on the Dendraiths, remonstrates with Viola and tells her to give Sir Dendraith a kiss. Viola fears 'her mother's sacred wishes and her own feelings' (*Azrael*, 1, p. 44) collide and she is in turmoil, but she tries to assert her right to her body despite the odds against her. As Sir Philip leans over Viola again, she panics, throwing herself towards the farthest side of the door, injuring herself and almost falling out of the carriage. When Viola takes refuge in one of the Dendraith's rooms to recover, she is shocked when Sir Dendraith tries to enter: "'Don't let that man come in; don't let him come in!' she cried wildly' (*Azrael*, 2, p. 47). This is a similar reaction to that of a young girl in Stead's 'Maiden Tribute' when a client takes this child-victim by surprise: '[T]he child's voice was heard crying, in accents of terror, "There's a man in the room! Take me home; oh, take me home!"' ('Maiden Tribute', 6 July 1885, p. 6).

She is rescued from her fall by Philip Dendraith Junior, a gentleman-knight errant to the rescue. However, as Andrew Dowling has argued of Victorian paintings featuring knights saving near-naked maidens, knights who would be the distressed damsels' rapist, Philip indeed profits by his chivalrous act by taking her in his arms and reaping his sexual reward by 'quietly kiss[ing] her in spite of her violent resistance'

(*Azrael*, 1, p. 49). Her response is to strike him, hide under the carriage covers and burst into tears. These sentiments are justified even if their expression is immature. She has no means of defending herself against Philip's stronger force and does not have a sufficiently witty command of the English language to use as a putdown which might have offered her a more socially gracious but effective means of resistance. Philip, on the other hand, knows how to 'mak[e] more severe jests against himself' thus disarming his drawing-room adversaries (*Azrael*, 2, p. 3). Sibella Lincoln also has the social finesse to deal with Philip's personality. As Caird writes, through their pleasantries, she and Philip maintained 'a state of secret war', in which they 'fenced with one another with never-flagging energy and skill' (*Azrael*, 3, p. 127).

Caird tells us that this experience of being kissed by Philip has been a rude awakening for Viola:

Her grief was all the bitterer because she could not express it in words even to herself; she could only feel over and over again, with all a child's intensity, that she had been treated with insolence, as a being whose will was of no moment, whose very person was not her own; who might be kissed or struck or played with exactly as people pleased, as if she were a thing without life or personality. Her sense of individual dignity – singularly strong in this child – was outraged, and she felt as if she could never forgive or forget the insult as long as she lived. The jocular good-natured way in which it had been offered made it only the more unbearable.

(*Azrael*, 1, pp. 50–51)

Lacking the means to express her suffering, Viola feels like a silent victim. Importantly, 'outrage' was another term for rape and readers might have been aware of the word's use in this way in court cases. By 1909, Ann Veronica was still wrestling with her feelings on being 'mauled about' by Ramage in the cabinet particulier. Wells's sensitive portrayal of the aftermath of their confrontation and his description of her interiority contributes to the telling of *herstory*:

She fell to rubbing her insulted lips savagely with the back of her hand. 'Ugh!' she said.

'The young women of Jane Austen's time didn't get into this sort of scrape! At least – one thinks so....I wonder if some of them did – and it didn't get reported. Aunt Jane had her quiet moments. Most of

them didn't, anyhow. They were properly brought up, and sat still and straight, and took the luck fate brought them as gentlewomen should. And they had an idea of what men were like behind all their nicety. They knew they were all Bogey in disguise. I didn't! I didn't! [...]

For a time her mind ran on daintiness [...] That world of fine printed cambrics and escorted maidens, presented itself to her imagination with the brightness of a lost paradise, as indeed for many women it is a lost paradise.

'I wonder if there is anything wrong with my manners,' she said [...] 'If I had been quite quiet and white and dignified, wouldn't it have been different? Would he have dared?...'

For some creditable moments in her life Ann Veronica was utterly disgusted with herself, she was wrung with a passionate and belated desire to move gently, to speak softly and ambiguously – to be, in effect, prim.

[...]

'You ass and imbecile, Ann Veronica! You female cad! Cad! Cad!'

[...]

She washed her face with unwonted elaboration before she went to bed.

(*Ann Veronica*, pp. 209–10)

We are invited to sympathize with Ann Veronica's feelings as they raise key concerns over the nature of nineteenth-century intimate violence. The unreported 'scrapes' to which she alludes are commonly referred to in crime history as the 'dark number', which problematize attempts to assess the level of violent crime. Ann Veronica is confused over who is to blame. Ramage is the 'Bogy' but she calls herself a 'female cad'. It is no wonder that women's journals took a harsh view of Ann Veronica's predicament: 'She [...] accepts theatres and a loan from a married stock-broker, whose face she smacks when he, not unnaturally, takes the usual view of her actions'.<sup>31</sup> Judging by her feisty response to the requests of Sir Philip and his son, Viola, unlike Ann Veronica, does at least have the insight to put the blame on Sir Philip and his son, but Marion is her stumbling block, always pushing her to feelings of guilt.

The third scene takes place in the ruined Dendraith castle on the cliff edge onto which Viola wanders, longing for the sea. Her poodle has darted on ahead and encounters Philip, together with Harry and a philosopher named Caleb Foster who look on while Philip ties the poodle's legs together and throws stones at the dog. In art especially, dogs symbolized loyalty and Viola's poodle frequently consoles her. The

narrator in Edith Wharton's ghost story, *Kerfol* (1916), uncovers the trial records of a sadistic lord who is gnarled to death by his wife's, dead, avenging dogs, animals which he had strangled in order to threaten his wife.

Notably, Harry is an ineffective hero. The poodle's legs have already been bound and it is only after the third stone is thrown that Harry contemplates interfering. He is however interrupted in this would-be gallant act by the angry Viola who appears on the scene and retrieves her poodle herself. She confronts Philip who restrains her and, telling her she is 'of the forgiving sex', asks with mock deference for her pardon and for a kiss, 'combining the ideas of punishment and betrothal' (*Azrael*, 1, p. 102). His strength is a master for her, and his arm bars her escape. Slipping from his grasp looks as hopeless as an attempt to knock down the 'Norman stonework against which the large well-formed hand [is] resting' (*Azrael*, 1, p. 102). He expects her to try to break herself free from his grasp, but instead she pushes him out of this castle, the element of surprise being an effective defensive tactic. As Agnieszka Źabicka points out, in this scene 'the man temporarily turns into the helpless victim, and the powerless female child into the aggressor'.<sup>32</sup> Injured, he is revived and recovers, untroubled by the event. But Viola, whose mind is both startled by her propensity to commit murder and frightened by the fear of hell-fire, is softened towards Philip and over time he begins his sly courtship of her.

Philip courts her with roses and a phony reverence which she increasingly starts to doubt. Wells portrays Ramage as a self-styled knight who 'whip[s] out to hand Miss Stanley to the platform as though she had been a duchess' and quotes the motto of the Knights of the Garter when assuming an air of being a man of advanced opinions regarding the social relations of the sexes: 'Now, you and I can gossip at a gate, and *Honi soit qui mal y pense*' (*Ann Veronica*, pp. 27 and 79). Ann Veronica's handsome suitor, Hubert Manning, who describes himself as a 'woman-worshipper' and 'A Socialist of the order of John Ruskin', attempts to woo Ann Veronica and appeals to Ruskinian sentiment, telling her that women are 'serene' and 'politics are so dusty, so sordid' and 'ugly', while 'a woman's duty' was 'to be beautiful'. He is searching for his own 'queen' to worship (*Ann Veronica*, pp. 36–37). Ann Veronica tells Manning that 'when it comes to the idea of queens [...] there's twenty-one and half million women to twenty million men' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 129). Although she does temporarily agree to marry him, she thinks

that his 'courtly bearing' is ridiculous (*Ann Veronica*, p. 203). Such sentiments are exposed as pompous idealism.

## Murder

"*Don't, Jack! Don't! oh – oh!*" shriek followed shriek.  
"*Not the knife, Jack! not the knife!*"'

Richard Marsh, 'The Adventure of the  
Phonograph' (1898)

Like Viola, Ann Veronica also resents the invasion of her body space and she asks herself if Ramage would have tried to take advantage of her if she had behaved meekly. *Azrael* shows that men like Ramage and Philip Dendraith Senior and his son would indeed have 'dared', particularly if she was passive and lacked the ability to defend herself against family expectations and the unwanted attentions of relatives-to-be. This is made particularly clear once she marries Philip. His father feels at liberty to ask the latest Dendraith acquisition for a kiss and pats her on the cheek whenever he likes. Philip also expects wifely submission on Viola's part. In an explicit passage in order to try to convince Viola not to marry Philip, Harry tries to convey what marital duties entail: 'It is as if you were drowning in some deep sea, dragged down and smothered by a mass of tangled weeds [...] Some day you will see it all yourself: a rough, rude hand, instead of a loving one, will tear it off, and then how bitter will be your regret with no human being to comfort or to help you!' (*Azrael*, 2, p. 71). The idea that there was no such thing as rape in marriage was alive in British law until the 1990s.<sup>33</sup> As Mill argued, a modern 'chained' wife did not have a right to her own body and her husband could 'enforce the lowest degradation of a human being, that of being made the instrument of an animal function contrary to her inclinations' ('The Subjection of Women', p. 504). Harry self-confessedly attempts to play Perseus to Caird's Andromeda, dissuading her from marrying Philip, the sea monster, but he is an ineffective rescuer.

Observing her sister's unsure expression at the altar and her tearful state in the early days of wedded life Ann Veronica concludes that 'perhaps marriage hurt' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 71). The emotional effects of Viola's nightly marital duties are seen in her pale face and the shadows under her eyes. Caird's description reads like a literary application of Mill's observation on non-consensual sex within the marriage: 'The night – the time for solitude, stillness and repose, the time to build up strength and draw

in new hope and peace – the night was a living hell!' (*Azrael*, 2, p. 169). To further emphasize the sexual attacks on her person, Caird writes that:

Philip seemed to take a delight in humbling and humiliating his wife by every means in his power, and his power in that direction was unlimited. Though it was all done in his most polished manner, though he never forgot that he was what he called a 'gentleman,' his conduct towards her was of a kind that no woman of her type could forgive, even if she tried. She [...] knew now why [Harry Lancaster] had said that he would rather see her lying dead before him than married to Philip Dendraith.

(*Azrael*, 2, pp. 113–114)

Here Caird counterposes the image of the chivalrous gentleman, a figure normally associated with chivalry and consideration towards women, with the most ungentlemanly conduct imaginable towards women. Before her marriage, Viola suspected and then discovered that Philip was, to use Ann Veronica's words, 'Bogey in disguise' but Caird's heroine could not comprehend what this meant for her in practice as a wife.

Philip's early desire to look into her eyes accords with his role as gaoler, detective and assessor of character and information, who makes Viola fear that he 'read[s] every secret in her eyes' (*Azrael*, 3, p. 116). As the famous detective Jack Whicher told *Household Words* in 1850: 'The eye is the great detector. We can tell in a crowd what a swell-mobsman is about by the expression of his eye.'<sup>34</sup> When Philip suspects Viola of seeing Harry, he tells her he has 'ways and means of finding out everything' (*Azrael*, 2, p. 191). He employs his housekeeper to follow her and inform him of her movements and he arrives home at random times of day. When Viola wanders into the forbidden territory of the west wing, she is caught off-guard by Philip and then by his housekeeper, Mrs Barber. Her marital home has become like Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon, which was a circular or semi-circular prison design in which the inmates never knew when they were being watched. As Foucault has said: 'The prison, the place where the penalty is carried out, is also the place of observation of punished individuals. This takes two forms: surveillance, of course, but also knowledge of each inmate, of his behaviour, his deeper states of mind, his gradual improvement.'<sup>35</sup> The prison Philip constructs has the desired effect: 'There was no evading Philip's vigilance. It seemed as if her most secret thoughts were at his mercy' (*Azrael*, 3, p. 112). When she learns that Philip has set the housekeeper to spy on her, her feelings are positively Poe-esque: 'Viola

was reminded of the gruesome old story of the prisoner shut up in a tower, whose walls encroached a foot each day, till at last they closed in and crushed him to death.' (*Azrael*, 3, p. 112).

The view that marriage is akin to gaol is bluntly stated in Philip's lengthy threat near the end of Volume Three when she is on her way to meet Harry to escape with him by boat:

'I have secured the services of a most superior person, who will henceforth be always your cheerful and instructive companion [...] [who] has been accustomed to the care of what are pleasingly termed *mental cases*, and she is therefore as keen and quick as a detective. [...] [H]usband and wife are one; there must be no separation. [...] A fond husband parted from his wife!—[...] You really can't call me a tyrant, when that is my only form of chastisement. Kisses till you are subdued. [...] What! not subdued yet? More kisses required — If I could make you understand, that somehow or another, by fair means or foul, I intend to reduce you to submission and that *immediately*, you would save yourself and me a lot of fruitless trouble.'

(*Azrael*, 3, pp. 195–199)

So, Viola is to be an incarcerated wife like Sir Percival Glyde's wife in *The Woman in White* (1862). Her mind is to be reshaped by a sinister, unspecified kind of psychological intervention by a professional, the process of reformation hastened physically by Philip with his kisses, or, as he calls them, 'the tender punishment' (*Azrael*, 3, p. 197). Caird's use of the m-dash to suggest off-stage sexual acts (cloaked in the term 'kisses') is reminiscent of what Susan Winnett has described as the 'mad dash of narrative' in the key 'nonscene' of Heinrich von Kleist's tale, 'The Marquise of O' (1808), in which an 'angelic' Russian officer rescues a widow from the hands of marauders and, after she falls unconscious, rapes her. When she realizes she is pregnant but has no idea who the father is, her family temporarily cast her off but all is well at the end of the story when her innocence is made apparent, the father's identity is revealed and she eventually forgives the officer and marries him. As Winnett argues, this story contains 'the most delicately accomplished rape in our literature'.<sup>36</sup> The action is left hanging mid-sentence: 'Losing all consciousness entirely, she fell to the floor. Thereupon – when, soon after, her terrified women appeared, he arranged for a doctor to be called; assured them, putting on his hat, that she would soon recover; and returned to the battle.' Disturbingly, the father despotsically

condemns his daughter at one moment and then kisses her on the lips 'exactly like a lover' so that father and daughter give the impression of being a 'bridal pair'.<sup>37</sup> In von Kleist's tale, rape is legitimized through its conflation with love and affection; in *Azrael*, Caird presses home the idea that it is hate and control masquerading as love that is responsible for marital rape. What Philip describes as 'tender punishments', are to Sibella 'legalised insults and indignities' (*Azrael*, 3, p. 10).

Philip believes that he can restrain his wife as if she were an animal: 'If a man buys a pointer who will not point, he has either to send him back to where he came from, or to train him into better ways – with the help of the whip, if necessary' (*Azrael*, 3, p. 122). As his speech to her shows, he contemplates psychological and sexual methods. Far from being a glorious role, motherhood, in Caird's view, is a method of controlling women. She uses Philip to make this point when he tells his wife that society expects her to produce children: 'A married woman who has no children may give her husband trouble, but the first baby infallibly drives the nonsense out of her. After that the game is in his hands. She has to behave rationally for the child's sake' (*Azrael*, 2, p. 177). 'Put her in the family way', was advice given to husbands with recalcitrant wives.<sup>38</sup> Thus, Philip uses her body in order to control her mind and assert his conjugal rights.

When Viola expresses doubt over Philip as her future husband, her mother tells her that her impending marriage is 'an 'opportunity' that 'may have been given [her] for the saving of this young man's soul' (*Azrael*, 1, p. 230). In *The Heavenly Twins* (1893), Sarah Grand's (her real name was Frances McFall) heroine, Evadne Frayling, responds to such notions with the riposte: 'Although reforming reprobates may be a very noble calling, I do not, at nineteen, feel that I have any vocation for it' (*The Heavenly Twins*, p. 89). During its first week of publication, Grand's novel sold 20,000 copies.<sup>39</sup> When she discovers her husband, Major Colquhoun, has had a sexually active past, Evadne refuses to consummate their marriage thus defending herself from possible infection, while Edith Beale, the protected daughter of a clergyman, marries the syphilitic Sir Mosley Menteith, gives birth to an ailing child and dies painfully. While Menteith at the outset appears handsome, Evadne notes 'something repellent' about his appearance: 'She acknowledged that his nose was good, but his eyes were small, peery and too close together and his head shelved backward like an ape's' (*The Heavenly Twins*, p. 178). As this excerpt suggests, while a face could not always be read for signs of infection, a knowledge of physiognomy could be helpful in assessing character.

Surridge argues that in *Azrael*, Viola's husband 'has neither venereal disease nor a sexually profligate past', and so the question Caird is considering is whether a wife should have the freedom to refuse intercourse without having a specific reason (*Bleak Houses*, p. 203).<sup>40</sup> However, sexual profligacy and the attendant threat of disease do appear in the novel. Caird does not give us reason to believe he is infected with a disease other than vanity but the risk is always attendant when living with a man of his habits. There are many references to Philip's profligate lifestyle. Philip 'lives a life of low and selfish pleasure, only a little more prudently than others, so that, while many of his contemporaries had gone to wreck and ruin altogether, he was still prospering' (*Azrael*, 1, p. 167). He flirts with Arabella Courtney and Sibella and his absence from the marital home invites the reader to speculate how he spends his time. As Caird writes, 'in afterlife Viola learnt about the outcast of her sex', (*Azrael*, 1, p. 142) namely the women who are prostitutes or those who are considered fallen and are discarded from polite society. If Viola were infected as a result of her husband's extra-marital affairs, the law might be unsympathetic as the case of *R v Clarence* (1888) 22 QBD 23 showed. In April 1888 (a year before *Azrael* was published), Charles James Clarence was charged under sections 20 (grievous bodily harm) and 47 (actual bodily harm) of the Offences Against the Person Act, 1861, with having infected his wife, Selina Clarence, knowing he was suffering from gonorrhoea. She would never have agreed to intercourse had she known her husband was carrying the disease. Despite the fact that he was initially found guilty, on appeal, the conviction was quashed on the grounds that by being his wife, she was deemed to have consented so there was therefore no assault.

As Žabicka observes, *Azrael* and the traditional tale of Bluebeard depict a man's home as a place of femicide yet inherent in both of these tales is a potential for female resistance. Bluebeard's wife disobeys his orders, discovers the murder scene and avoids the same fate for herself while Viola breaks Philip's rules and sneaks into the west wing.<sup>41</sup> Just before her marriage to Philip, Harry gives Viola an ornamented and supposedly blood-stained knife purportedly used in duels in Renaissance Italy. Harry suggests it can be used for more peaceful purposes as a paperknife. Viola thrusts the weapon into her thick hair and defiantly wears it during the wedding ceremony, a gift from Harry given to her as an individual before she is legally tied down as Philip's wife. This stealthy carrying of a weapon for defensive and decorative purposes points to images of defiant femininity from history. When Ann Veronica physically defends herself against Ramage, his surprised

retort is: '[B]y Jove! you are fierce! You are like those Roman women who carry stilettos in their hair' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 202). Both Wells's and Caird's dark-haired heroines are prefigured by an image in Henry Simmons Frieze's study of the Italian sculptor Giovanni Duprè: 'The blood of the women is not different from that of the men; and if the latter carry knives in their pockets, the women wear a stiletto in their hair – conspicuous with its silver handle sticking out from the masses of jet-black braids; and this weapon they know how to wield on occasion to the peril of any poor wight who has even innocently incurred their wrath.'<sup>42</sup> The tone of Frieze's – and indeed Ramage's – description of these foreign women suggests fascination and repulsion. The carriers of such items are depicted as unstable, ready to burst out unjustifiably in an unfeminine manner.

In Volume Two, Viola enters the west wing and places her weapon alongside the objects belonging to Andrew Dendraith's wife, therefore symbolically pledging her allegiance to her murdered female ancestor. As we have seen, in Volume Three just as she is about to escape with Harry, Philip confronts her and threatens her with incarceration alongside other forms of torture. He attempts to extract the knife from her hands whilst kissing her cheek. Harry, arriving too late on the scene to defend Viola against her husband, is as ineffective as he was in Volume One when Viola's dog was being tortured by Philip. Philip threatens her and amusedly whispers cutting words in her ear to which we, the readers, are not privy. Viola burns with 'blinding passion' and the 'wildest fury', and stabs him with the Calonna knife. The man falls down dying, and curses her unreservedly: 'May the gallows spare you for a more hideous fate; may you suffer all that your soul most abhors; may you be the tool and chattel and plaything of men, may they drag you to the lowest depths of humiliation. [...] may the pride of your soul be withered [...] The curse of the dying is said to avail much. May this curse stick to you and drag you down to hell, *Murderess!*' (*Azrael*, 3, p. 201–202). Reviewing for the *Academy*, William Wallace felt that Philip was 'an irritating monstrosity', and that the exit speech 'which he makes, after being very properly stabbed to death by his wife', bore the tone not of 'Euripides' 'but Mr. Toole in "Paw Claudian"' (an 1884 spoof of the critically acclaimed 1883 play, *Claudian*, which was set in Byzantium).<sup>43</sup> The tight control Philip has maintained finally unravels. His body and mind are subject to destruction just as the castle, a 'fine example of later Norman work' (*Azrael*, 2, p. 121) is gradually being eroded by 'the sea'. To underscore this impression, Caird writes in 'Marriage', that 'new ideas – like waves on an iron-bound coast – create not a little clamour as

they beat upon the granite of age-long creed and custom. That clamour attests their reality and their strength' (Caird, *The Morality of Marriage*, p. 110). In this murderous confrontation between husband and wife, we also have a clearer indication of the side of the personality he shows to Viola when they are alone. The varnish is flaking.

Pykett has linked *Azrael* to George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* (1876) ('The Cause of Women', p. 135) in which the cosseted heroine, Gwendolen Harleth, wishes the death of her husband, Henleigh Grandcourt, who controls her and has degraded her to distraction.<sup>44</sup> The connection between the two novels was indeed also noted by contemporary readers. To *Myra's Journal* Philip was 'but Grandcourt over again'. The *Otago Daily Times* remarked that '(t)he whole subject is the theme of "Daniel Deronda," for just as Grandcourt crushes his wife so utterly that he degrades her into all but actual crime, so Philip Dendraith goads Viola till she does actually commit crime'.<sup>45</sup> When Grandcourt accidentally falls overboard and dies, Gwendolen is haunted by her guilty wish to see him dead but she is absolved through her desire to be a kinder person and is allowed to live. In a damning review, the *Otago Witness* considered *Azrael* no better than a cliché, a 'customary waxwork show' of stock characters and staid imagery – the moon, the howling sea and a ruined castle.<sup>46</sup> Yet, as Pykett observes, *Azrael* is more than a mere rehash of sensation fiction (with its villainous husbands and tormented, isolated wives). Caird elaborates on Eliot's portrayal of the suffering wife Pykett posits that 'Caird [...] does what neither Eliot nor the sensationalist novelists dared, and produces a narrative in which the victim-heroine's fear and hatred is converted into a self-assertive act of murder' ('The Cause of Women', p. 135). I would also add that in this scene, feminine anger is converted into a form of self-defence which assures that the attacker is quelled. Philip's blood is insufficient reparation for the indignities following Viola's sacrifice at the altar on her wedding day: 'His blood seems to wash away some of the blackness, the hideousness of the past [...] -- but oh, no [...] nothing can do that; there are no words for it; -- the horror is in my heart, and it burns there; it burns -- it will never cease burning -- never, never!' (*Azrael*, 3, p. 204). While, by her own admission, Viola lacks the language to describe trauma, Caird equips her with a voice.

Now a murderer, social ostracization, arrest, trial and hanging await her. In *Tess*, Hardy's heroine kills her rapist after her husband, Angel Clare, finally surfaces to rescue her from her bleak life as Alec's mistress. Tess is discovered at Stonehenge, and is tried and hanged. As Surridge maintains: 'Viola destroys herself as she stabs her husband, since the

text denies that one can achieve selfhood by destroying another human being'.<sup>47</sup> Viola punishes herself by running from her pleading lover's arms, determined to avoid ruining his life by his association with a murdereress. She is last glimpsed staring towards the sky before the scene is cloaked in 'pitch-black, rayless, impenetrable darkness' (Caird, *Azrael*, 3, p. 224). Surridge bases her argument on Caird's 1908 essay, 'Punishment for Crimes against Women and Children', where she warned readers not to 'increase the sum of the deeds of vengeance and violence that fill the world with groans'.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, she argues that '[t]he whole course of civilisation tends towards the dethronement of brute force in favour of the force of thought and sentiment' ('Defence of Wild Women', p. 829). Yet, as Caird argued in her earlier campaign against vivisection, 'Beyond The Pale' (1897), 'the day will surely dawn when man will overcome the savage in him so far as to hold that killing *except in self-defence* is unlawful' [my italics].<sup>49</sup> She is therefore fighting for her life and, given Philip's superior bodily strength, has to resort to homicide as the most extreme form of protecting herself.

In this novel, Caird sacrifices her heroine to prompt a change in gender attitudes but she also has to work within cultural confines. Just as Caird was bound by the three-decker format imposed by Mudie's, her plot must to some extent satisfy contemporary attitudes towards the murdereress and the fallen woman. While she kills purely to defend herself, the form that Viola's defensive act takes is not commensurate with ideals of the civilizing offensive. As we have seen with Frieze's description of the Mediterranean stiletto-wielding woman, the use of the knife for fighting and protection, particularly an Italian knife, is frowned upon. Pierce Egan's well-known self-defence manual was supplemented with a word on the 'Englishness' of physical heroism, arguing that 'Englishmen need no other weapons in personal contests than those which nature has so amply supplied them with'.<sup>50</sup> In 1910 it was argued that 'the native of Southern Europe flies to his knife' whereas the 'Britisher [...] is handy with his fists in an emergency'<sup>51</sup> while elsewhere it was maintained that the 'Italian, Greek, Portuguese, or South American' 'give preference to the knife' but the Englishman prefers boxing.<sup>52</sup>

As Judith Knelman points out, in the nineteenth century, murdereresses were more publicly condemned than wife-murderers because killing was considered so antithetical to the nurturing tendencies of the female sex. Furthermore, the crimes of adultery and murder were felt to reinforce each other because 'though normal women were thought to be untroubled by sexual desires, criminal women were assumed to be

driven by them'.<sup>53</sup> While adultery in husbands was tolerated as a typical masculine peccadillo, the adulteress was particularly feared as her actions might introduce illegitimate heirs. The dying Philip hopes that she becomes 'the chattel and plaything of men'. Wiener has argued that the public hanging was 'a pornographic invasion of the integrity of the body, carried out in public by the agents of the state'.<sup>54</sup> As Knelman expands, during public hangings, 'it is highly likely that men got a sexual thrill out of seeing a once aggressive woman subdued, quaking in terror'.<sup>55</sup> Public hanging had been abolished by the 1880s but Viola would have nonetheless been a public spectacle. When Caird was writing *Azrael*, the waxwork of Elizabeth Gibbons, a middle-aged middle-class woman who shot her husband in a fit of jealousy in 1884, was displayed at Madame Tussaud's Chamber of Horrors which also displayed other murderesses including Maria Manning who murdered her lover in 1849, and whose effigy was finally removed in 1971. Another young woman displayed there was named Eleanor Pearcey who, in 1890, brutally murdered her male friend's lover and his child, disposing of their bodies in separate locations. Like Pearcey's waxwork, Viola might have been presented to gawping visitors in a model of the scene of the murder, together with as many of the objects associated with the crime as Madame Tussaud's could acquire.

Stephanie Forward has written that there 'is a tendency for critics to concentrate on her gloomiest novel, *The Wing of Azrael*, and on *The Daughters of Danaus*, but in doing so they miss much that is constructive and optimistic'.<sup>56</sup> Yet, there are positive tones to *Azrael* and, working within cultural restrictions, Caird has found a little space for rebellion. While she punishes her adulteress with death, her use of the motif of the sea nonetheless provides a counterpoint to popular images of drowned, prostrated women. In a chapter fittingly titled 'Adrift', Viola and Harry take a boat trip together before Viola is married. Viola's hat is blown off. The hat was a sign of respectability and self-control and in discarding her headgear, Viola throws caution to the wind and disregards social convention. Harry admiringly places 'a crown of seaweed' (*Azrael*, 2, p. 37) on her hair. This wreath of flowers against this watery background recalls images of Shakespeare's Ophelia who commits suicide in *Hamlet*, a character who symbolized female insanity. Hatless, Viola is not unhinged, but freed. Far from arguing that Viola is insane, Caird shows that the maddening circumstances in which she is placed in the novel would try even the hardest of individuals.

Harry warns her that by marrying Philip, she will 'drown[ ] in some deep sea, dragged down and smothered by a mass of tangled weeds'

(*Azrael*, 2, p. 71). Images of falling or drowned women abound in art. Some of the most famous include George Frederick Watts's *Found Drowned* (1848–50) and Augustus Leopold Egg's triptych, *Past and Present*, (1858) in which an adulteress is cast out of the middle-class home and ends up under a dank, watery archway. Viola takes charge of her own fate and casts herself off before society has a chance to do so. Although the women in the paintings discussed above are pushed to commit suicide or die because they are fallen, in *Azrael* it is being respectably married that pushes Viola to the water's edge. But, by offering herself to the sea with which she feels so much affinity, Viola falls from the narrative, but she does not fall from grace.

Whilst illustrating their incompatibility, Caird unpacks some of the reasons behind masculine aggression. Philip is frustrated because he can 'neither frighten her nor soften' his wife and cannot reach 'the real woman' who has 'withdrawn from him inexorably' (*Azrael*, 2, p. 112). Caird tells us that he loves her in his own way (*Azrael*, 2, p. 111). The peril with psychologizing a villain (Soames Forsyte who commits marital rape in John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga* (1906–22) is a good example of a domestic tyrant whose suffering is described in detail) is that the reader begins to feel pity towards him to some degree. One reviewer confessed to having 'a sneaking sympathy with Philip Dendraith', arguing that his anger is 'not wholly unreasonable' in view of Viola's 'case-hardened' nature.<sup>57</sup> Philip's attractiveness coupled with revelations of his vulnerability therefore dilutes Caird's feminist message but then Caird reminds us that it is Philip's insecurity (and fear which leads to hate) which is also to blame for his violent treatment of his wife. The virtue in illustrating Philip's sufferings is to show that just because a husband could be cruel, he was also not omnipotent.

Despite being shy and awkward and seemingly unwilling to defend herself when Philip enforces his nightly marital rights, Viola has reserves of anger. As a modern self-defence instructor remarks: 'Many a woman has suffered the physical violence of a partner but if their child becomes the victim, out comes the artillery.'<sup>58</sup> In *Azrael*, Viola's need to protect animals replaces the mothering, protective instinct and through this, Caird shows the utility of woman's latent anger in the defence of others: 'Viola could not feel frightened of a man who might be capable of physical violence towards her [...] [S]he actually longed to do battle with him herself, on behalf of the ill-used animal: intense indignation deprived her of all fear' (*Azrael*, 2, p. 19). Of course, Viola's anger takes her to extremes of behaviour but the novel, with all its confrontations between Philip and Viola, nevertheless does illustrate the effectiveness

of feminine force against a stronger opponent, especially when unhampered by feelings of guilt and hell fire. While for Caird society is to blame for every unhappy marriage, young women should wherever possible seek to exercise confidently their instincts so they can recognize emotional blackmail masquerading as duty and should learn to say no to pressure. Meek women are only doing violence to themselves, she argues. If heroines could redirect their anger – a vastly underestimated force – into assertiveness then society would be the better for it.

## **Part II**

# **Fighting for Emancipation**

# 4

## Elizabeth Robins's *The Convert*

### Looking After Herself

'There's nothing that shakes my nerves like seeing a woman struggling and kicking in a policeman's arms', shudders Lord Borrodaile (*Convert*, p. 67). Robins was fascinated and also troubled by women's supposed vulnerability and the restrictions this placed on their movements. *Convert* famously explores the brutality that women could experience in their campaigns for suffrage and considers some real-life methods of tackling violence. Robins's writing is infused with illustrations of perilous everyday situations in which women could find themselves. The Sherlock Holmes stories present a multiplicity of scenarios in which Victorian men were required to defend themselves using physical force, a wide variety of everyday objects (such as the fire poker or the walking-stick) or a number of weapons of the time including the life-preserved (a cudgel which was weighted at one end). This chapter will show that what Doyle as a male writer did for the depiction of threat to men, Robins also achieved for danger to women.

Elizabeth Robins was born during the American Civil War and her early life and career was marked by bereavement and struggle. Her mother was committed to an asylum and in 1887 her actor-husband donned a suit of armour, not in preparation for a gallant role on stage, but to drown himself. Robins worked hard and by the late 1880s, she had made a name for herself on the American stage. In September 1888, she came to London merely on a passing visit from Norway, and met Oscar Wilde who gave her some encouragement. Robins was still unknown in Britain but she decided to stay, determined to achieve success and earn money to fund her mother's release from a mental asylum and to pay for her younger brother's education. Her first two

years in London, later described in her autobiography, *Both Sides of the Curtain* (1940), were spent in dingy lodgings. In *Daniel Deronda*, Herr Klesmer warns Gwendolen (before her marriage to Grandcourt) that if she took to the stage she could be subjected to 'indignities'. A vague notion of these 'alarm[s]' her.<sup>1</sup> Actresses were treated with a familiarity which angered Robins. She accused one stalker in her diary (which she kept from the age of thirteen until the end of her life): 'Do you think because I am an actress you can get acquainted with me in this irregular fashion?' As Angela V. John remarks, while restraint characterized the proper relation between the sexes, the actress, by virtue of her profession, inspired the illusion that she was also emotionally and physically available to the spectator.<sup>2</sup> She was stalked, sent bunches of flowers, and in turn had to ward off fellow lodgers and watch out for men waiting in the dingy staircase near her bedroom.

Uncomfortable encounters whilst working and travelling furnished her with thrilling stories, too. *Under the Southern Cross* (1907) looks at the etiquette of dealing with marriage offers, but it is also a cautionary adventure. At the outset, the story is described as the narrator's 'little act of self-abasement for the instruction of [her] sex' (*Southern Cross*, p. 2). Blanche, a 20-year-old headstrong American girl, accompanies her married friend on a South-American cruise and is wooed by a fiery Peruvian, Federico Guillermo de Bach. She dismisses his gauchely expressed semaphores and, despite observing an expression which was 'dimly threatening in the deep eyes' (*Southern Cross*, p. 181), follows him down a dark side street in Guatemala where, silencing her, he presses her to marry him (this action could be interpreted as an attempt to rape her). Robins reverts to the present tense to convey her heroine's shock: 'My puny resistance is nothing to those athlete's arms, he holds me close one instant and I, breathless, struggle to free my hands, and push his hot cheek away from mine. "How dare you; you are no gentleman!"' (*Southern Cross*, p. 208). He tells her that it is useless to resist as she cannot speak Spanish and any passersby who attempts to assist her will be faced with his gun. He adds that she does not need to fear him, a statement which, given the situation in which he has placed her, seems rather ironic. It also, however, gives her an indication of a point of weakness in his character in that he in his own way feels that he is protecting her. So, she cunningly extricates herself from the situation by appealing to his heated notion of chivalry, reminding him of his promise to return her to the ship: 'If any other man had roughly treated me, had abused my confidence, and, finding me defenceless, had forgotten what all brave men owe to women what would you do to such a man? [...]

You know you would half kill the man who would strike a woman. Some half-mad man has done worse than strike me, Guillermo, and his name is Guillermo de Bach. You are so strong, and you say you love me; will you take my part against this man?' (*Southern Cross*, p. 214). Caird argued that: 'There is no more finished tyrant in the world than the meek sweet creature who cares nothing for her "rights," because she knows she can get all she wants by artifice; who makes a weapon of her womanhood, a sword of strength of her weakness, and does not disdain to tyrannise over men to her heart's content by an ungenerous appeal to their chivalry' ('Defence of Wild Women', pp. 812–813). However, Blanche, who is hardly shy and retiring throughout the story, has no recourse to defending herself against an intimidating man and successfully uses an 'appeal to [de Bach's] chivalry' to save herself. This act is not 'ungenerous' but a way of levelling the playing field. Rather than blame him directly and inflame the situation, she suggests that the man who has dared to insult her is not him but a beastly Mr Hyde side which he must valiantly conquer and slay.

Although Blanche extricates herself from her predicament, her victory is not completely clear-cut. For instance, she asks herself whether she also shared some of the responsibility as she unwittingly led him on and thus Robins's tale warns that it could be unsafe to toy with a man's affections. Surprisingly, given Robins's feminist leanings, de Bach is not punished and Blanche bids him a sentimental, pitying farewell at the end of the story. It can also be argued that he has been reduced to an object of pity rather than fear although he still roams at large outside the boundaries of the story; Robins's readers are therefore to be kept on their guard lest they meet him when travelling.

### War with Mr Wells

Robins became nationally renowned in the early 1890s as a Henrik Ibsen actress. Ibsen embraced controversial topics and his play, *Ghosts* (1882), boldly probed the problem of congenital venereal disease ('the sins of the father'), provoking a large-scale public outcry in England. Offstage, Robins was a perspicacious writer and turned her literary talent to examining social issues, becoming a prestigious campaigner for women's suffrage. Performed before packed theatres, her play, *Votes for Women!* (1907) formed the basis to *Convert*, and has been described by Elaine Showalter as 'the most influential piece of literary propaganda to come out of the suffrage movement'.<sup>3</sup> In *Votes for Women!* we learn that an unmarried woman, Vida Levering, has had an affair with the

career-driven Hon. Geoffrey Stonor. She has an abortion so that Stonor can avoid incurring his father's animosity and subsequent disinheritance. When Stonor becomes a Member of Parliament, Vida uses Stonor's dark past to press him into supporting the women's suffrage bill and smooth relations between him and his fiancée, Jean Dumbarton, who sympathizes with Vida's plight. So, while the novel describes how Vida became attracted to the cause of women's suffrage, Stonor is also a convert. *The Manchester Guardian* considers that this was the weakest element in Robins's plot: enlisting her former lover's support was 'rather inconsistent with the claim to independence which was urged as one of the strongest suffragist arguments'. Nevertheless, the paper argued, her depiction of suffragette meetings and rowdies was evocative.<sup>4</sup>

On the basis of the success of the play, Methuen rewarded Robins with an advance of £1000 for a novel based on the piece. The last five chapters of *The Convert* (1907) parallel the three acts of *Votes for Women!* (*Elizabeth Robins, 1862–1952: Actress, Novelist, Feminist*, p. 162) while *Convert* (1907) describes in detail Vida's early encounters and growing involvement with the suffrage campaign. The suffragettes' arguments and the crowds' challenges, as well as their physically and sexually threatening comments, were drawn from the sights that Robins saw when she attended suffragette meetings and accompanied Christabel Pankhurst to the Huddersfield by-election in 1906 in preparation for writing the plot. She even showed Emmeline Pankhurst a draft of the *Convert*. Crucially, Robins used the term 'sex-antagonism' in the novel, expressing what she perceived to be a latent sexual hostility between men and women.

Showalter deems *Convert* 'a worthy contribution to the literature of the suffrage movement, particularly in its willingness to face the spectre of sex-antagonism' and advises that in this regard it 'be read in conjunction with H. G. Wells's *Ann Veronica*' (*A Literature of Their Own*, p. 222). Both *Convert* and *Ann Veronica* are so closely related to contemporary politics and society that the characters and the issues to which both novelists referred have obvious real-life equivalents. In *Ann Veronica*, when Ann Veronica is confronted with Ramage's pressing sexual desires and frustrated by her own secret worship of Capes – 'this slavery of sex' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 161) she visits the offices of the Women's Bond of Freedom, which was clearly the Women's Social and Political Union. Christabel Pankhurst also appears in both novels, as Kitty Brett in *Ann Veronica*; Ernestine Blunt's character in *Convert* has similar traits to Christabel too.<sup>5</sup> While Robins depicts the young Ernestine (a legal eagle, like Christabel) as cool and collected, Wells says that Kitty was 'about as capable of intelligent argument as a runaway steam-roller'

(*Ann Veronica*, p. 227). Robins expressed her disappointment in Wells's view of women through Vida's comments: 'He is my novelist. So I've a right to be sorry he knows nothing about women [...]. [H]e can't help betraying his old-fashioned prejudice in favour of the "dolly" view of women' (*Convert*, p. 244). His chaotic, bespectacled Miss Miniver, whose hair is out 'demonstrating and suffragetting upon some independent notions of its own' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 96), presents Ann Veronica with a badly reformulated projection of Caird's views on primitive matriarchy. She would have been defined by *Votes for Women* as a 'frump'.<sup>6</sup> Mary Phillips wrote that the typical suffragette was often conceived to be a 'gaunt, unprepossessing female of uncertain age with a raucous voice [...] who invariably [wore] elastic-sided boots, and [carried] a big "gampy" umbrella'.<sup>7</sup> The WSPU also disassociated itself from 'manly women' who wore 'short hair, billycock hats, and other articles of masculine attire'; the ideal suffragette was 'dainty and precise in her dress', taking care to dress well as well as to endeavouring to look feminine.<sup>8</sup> According to Emmeline Pankhurst's biographer, Paula Bartley, Mrs Pankhurst wanted to 'feminise politics, not to masculinise women'.<sup>9</sup> Not all women were convinced. Helen Corke felt that while women should have the vote, the suffragettes discarded 'dignity, beauty, reserve and poise' in pursuit of the suffrage (*In Our Infancy*, p. 163).<sup>10</sup> Wells was also sceptical of the benefits to femininity of militant campaigns. In *Ann Veronica*, he describes Mrs Charlotte Despard as an 'old lady in an antimacassar' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 141).<sup>11</sup> He depicts the pantechnicon raid of February 1908, in which vans entered the grounds of the Houses of Parliament and poured out suffragettes in the manner of the 'Trojan horse' legend (*The Militant Suffragettes*, p. 62). Wells describes the women as 'tittering', 'ominous little black objects, minute figures of determined women at war with the universe' (*Ann Veronica*, pp. 230 and 233). Determined to be arrested, Ann Veronica has a fit of 'passionate violence' and attacks the policeman who attempts to arrest a 'once nice little old lady in a bonnet' who is 'still faintly battling and very muddy – one lock of greyish hair straggling over her neck, her face scared, white, but triumphant' whose 'bonnet drop[s] off and [is] trampled into the gutter' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 236).

'Until I read *Ann Veronica* I did not know how meanly you thought of the movement,' Robins wrote to Wells. His response to her was: 'I do believe, I have believed, in women's suffrage – I don't believe in the Pethick-Lawrence-Pankhurst movement. There's absolutely nothing in *Ann Veronica* against the suffrage & only a gentle kindly criticism of the suffragette side of it.'<sup>12</sup> Wells was due to give a talk to the Women

Writers' Suffrage League (WWSL) which had been formed in 1908 (it was linked with the NUWSS), of which Robins was president at its founding. She personally had him replaced. The WFL was angered by his depiction of the suffragettes in *Ann Veronica*, arguing that 'Ann Veronica is the type of woman that appeals to the nastiest kind of man – to the species that delights in ejecting Suffragists in an objectionable manner'.<sup>13</sup> Robins also criticized Wells's espousal of free love and its consequences for women. Robins was a friend of the Fabian, Maud Pember Reeves, whose daughter, Amber, was having an affair with Wells. Robins was concerned about Wells's sexual selfishness and offered her friendship to Amber who, despite Robin's and her mother's misgivings, refused to end her relationship.

### Kicking the Suffrage Football

Robins uses mainly two scenes in *Convert* – the drawing room and the suffragette meeting – to explore the tension between women's emancipation and chivalry. Paul Filey, the *Convert's* resident Ruskinian, fantasizes about women dismounting their dusty bicycles and returning to their lofty pedestals. Robins's minute representation of the workings of polite society shows up these notions of chivalry to be ridiculous. While women are scorned for talking too much, at social gatherings they are expected to use the gift of conversation to entertain the men. As Miss Miniver says, in the natural world 'the males have to please [the females]' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 43). Ladies are also expected to listen politely when the notion of equal rights for men and women is raised and ungallantly laughed down, like, as Robins notes, a football is kicked about by a group of schoolboys. As Robins writes, 'underneath that old mask of chivalry was a broad grin' (*Convert*, p. 241). However, a questioning spirit is brewing along with the tea. One young female participant 'would almost as soon have stood on her head in Piccadilly as have said anything original' hides under her ladylike façade rebellious thoughts which are 'as carefully hidden as a conspirator would a bomb under his cloak' (*Convert*, p. 53).

It is pleasant to encounter acts of generosity on public transport but feminists at the beginning of the last century objected to common courtesies being offered at the expense of concessions of far greater significance. Cicely Hamilton defined chivalry 'as a form, not of respect for an equal, but of condescension to an inferior; a condescension which expresses itself in certain rules of behaviour where non-essentials are involved' (*Marriage as a Trade*, p. 130). As one suffragette says: 'We can

open doors for ourselves' (*Convert*, p. 140). Robins illustrates the flimsiness of chivalry when she describes the treatment of a suffragette speaker. While the woman acts demurely, men gallantly offer her their hard-won seats but as soon as she tremulously stands up and attempts to lecture them, they see she cannot 'take care of herself' and verbally abuse her (*Convert*, p. 226). So, here Robins debunks notions that chivalry is a shining, timeless facet of English gentlemanliness. Rather, for her the concept is based on whim and on the assumption that the woman accepting the knightly favour will act according to masculine expectations. Chivalry wears thin when a woman 'assert[s] herself in a manner which may be consistent with her own desires, but which is not consistent with the desires of average male humanity' (*Marriage as a Trade*, p. 138).

Protectiveness was a component of chivalrous behaviour but as Gissing's *The Odd Women* showed, there were not enough of Mr Manning's and Mr Filey's gallant heroes to go around. For Hamilton and Robins, true chivalry means equal opportunities although both women write that working women are not protected by male employers (for Hamilton capitalism equals masculine dominance) but preyed upon and underpaid, 'spending the best years of their lives, spending all their youth in that grim dirty street making cigars for men. Whose chivalry prevents that?' (*Convert*, p. 139). The devaluing of a woman's work renders her and her family economically vulnerable. She must therefore marry 'and exchange[ ], by the ordinary process of barter, possession of her person for the means of existence' (*Marriage as a Trade*, p. 19). Vida shocks her polite audience by relating her exploration of the poorer areas of the city, dressed down in old clothes. Higgs had written that 'the bold, free look of a man at a destitute woman must be felt to be realised' (*Glimpses into the Abyss*, p. 94). In this tribute to *Glimpses into the Abyss*, Vida's words are almost identical: 'You'll never know how many things are hidden from a woman in good clothes. The bold free look of a man at a woman he believes to be destitute – you must *feel* that look on you before you can understand – a good half of history' (*Convert*, p. 263). The struggles of the suffrage campaign took women out into the roads with their sandwich boards and exposed them to the derisory male gaze.

To counter the argument that women are naturally weaker and less capable than men and should be paid less, Hamilton shows that economic oppression has in fact no basis in nature. While male and female animals are expected to fight for their territory and protect their offspring, Hamilton writes that 'woman is the one animal from whom

[man] demands that it shall deviate from and act in defiance of, the first law of nature – self-preservation' (*Marriage as a Trade*, p. 14). The novel argues that ladies merely play the part of inoffensive dinner companions and conform to standards of etiquette when their male guests themselves fall short of the mark. Women could and should use their natural weapons, their voices, to defend their interests in a campaign that could be long and arduous: 'A woman who insists on [...] fighting her own battle [...] may not get from man anything more than respect, but in the long run, she will certainly get that' (*Marriage as a Trade*, pp. 147–148). The question was, what was more important – a seat on the omnibus or seat in parliament?

Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughter Christabel Pankhurst founded the WSPU in Manchester in 1903. The aim was to work independently of party politics and to discourage electors from voting for a candidate who opposed votes for women. Mrs Pankhurst felt that the NUWSS's peaceful methods of persuasion did not appear to be working and was disgusted at the way in which the Suffrage Bill was laughed down in Parliament in 1904. She adopted a different tactic. The campaigns of her suffragette contemporaries are paralleled in *Ann Veronica* when Ann Veronica's father stubbornly ignores the reasons for her flight from domesticity in a conversation framed as a political debate. Stanley considers his daughters to be his property. His hat and umbrella lie between them 'like a mace in Parliament' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 188) and to emphasize his authority he shakes his umbrella at her while she is unarmed. Like the campaign undertaken by the suffragists and suffragettes, her demand for freedom falls on deaf ears. Ann Veronica stands her ground, risking being cut off from her father. She eschews stale family life and strives for an adventurous, independent existence in the metropolis. Her drastic actions reflect the way in which the Women's Social and Political Union, having failed to secure parliamentary recognition of female suffrage and by implication, female freedom, is forced to consider militant action. When Lady John asks her guests to 'conceive the sublime impertinence [...] of an ignorant little factory girl presuming to stand up in public and interrupt a speech by a minister of the Crown' (*Convert*, p. 67), she is referring to millworker Annie Kenney who, together with Christabel Pankhurst, interrupted the Liberal meeting at the Manchester Free Trade Hall in October 1905, and was arrested, an event which kick-started the WSPU's militant phase.

In 1906, Emmeline Pankhurst made London the nerve centre of the WSPU. In 1907 a 'Women's Parliament' was set up at Caxton Hall, in political and geographical opposition to the Houses of Parliament,

offering a convenient launch pad from which to deliver petitions in reaction to specific parliamentary decisions. To increase the public profile of the WSPU, large-scale peaceful events and bazaars were held frequently. Women's Sunday was a gigantic event, which attracted a crowd of around 300,000. Wells's wife attended the Women's Sunday Hyde Park meeting on 21 June 1908 and Wells's name appeared in a petition for female suffrage signed by over three hundred 'thoughtful men of all classes' (*The Times*, 23 March 1909, p. 6). Lovat Dickson writes that Wells completed a draft of *Ann Veronica* at the end of July 1909.<sup>14</sup> In the year or so prior to the completion of the novel, there were a number of attempts by suffragettes to enter Parliament physically and symbolically: the Scottish suffragette, Flora Drummond, attempted to break into a Cabinet Council meeting at 10 Downing Street in January 1908 and the three-day Women's Parliament on 11–13 February took place in the same month as the pantehnicon invasion. In front of large crowds, suffragettes were turned away from the House of Commons on 30 June and in response to this rebuff, two women smashed the windows of 10 Downing Street. Nowadays, we learn in history classes that the suffragettes chained themselves to railings. They used modified belts and chains which had been used in lunatic asylums. In retrospect, the use of these particular items appears an ironic and apt riposte to the widespread attempt to classify suffragettes as medically insane and the action could be considered an attempt to subvert the image of the restrained, incarcerated wife in the attic or madhouse. Whatever the symbolic meaning, the use of these readily adaptable items presented the embarrassed police officer, who was used to dealing with lower-class ruffians, with the predicament of rifling through a lady's clothing to find a corset-like belt and undo the constraints.<sup>15</sup> After the publication of *Ann Veronica*, WSPU militant activity continued to escalate to fever pitch. Property and buildings were targeted, bottles of acid were slipped into pillar boxes, telegraph connections were cut, campaigners went on hunger and thirst strike. Some women were not convinced by these tactics. As Eva Slawson told her diary: 'I find *The Suffragette* does not impress me! [...] I cannot get over the cool manner in which the militant actions (burning of homes, wrecking of pictures, etc.) are reported.'<sup>16</sup>

Following the sticky summer of 1914, war broke out. In a decision which split the WSPU, Emmeline Pankhurst announced that the WSPU should support the war effort. In protecting their country from becoming a German satellite state (Mrs Pankhurst was pro-French and strongly anti-German), women were also guarding the possibility of female suffrage in a free, post-war Britain. The war was an opportunity

to demonstrate women's capability to the British government now that the Ruskinian garden that needed protecting was Britain. Ultimately in 1918, British women over the age of 30 who satisfied certain property qualifications and other restrictions regarding marital status were given the vote. In 1928 men and women in Britain were enfranchised on the same basis, from the age of 21. Whether women would have been enfranchised had the suffragettes not forcibly drawn attention to female suffrage before the outbreak of the war, is still the subject of debate.

Part of the WSPU campaign was to try to persuade with words, which became a deed of bravery. In mounting the podium, speakers risked their reputations as ladies and also their safety. Unlike *Ann Veronica*, Robins's novel was warmly received by the women's movement. Neither *Ann Veronica* nor *Convert* offer wholly glossy representations of the campaigners. When Wells describes the pantehnicon raid, he presents the suffrage cause as if he is watching suffragettes by aerial vision, observing 'minute figures' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 233). Wells sniggers at the women from afar; Robins focuses on their emotions. She eschews the use of a soft light because she desires to show them not as straggling-haired unhinged harridans but as scarred soldiers, weary from the battle. Having heard her genteel peers denigrate the suffragettes as hysterical and unsexed monsters, Vida and her half-sister, Janet Fox-Moore (the wife of a gouty, controlling and lecherous husband), slink disguised into a suffragette meeting in Trafalgar Square, to see the women for her own eyes. Whilst intending to be spectators, the women feel uncomfortable at becoming objects of the policemen's gazes. The men look at them 'in a curious, direct fashion, not exactly impudent, but still in a way no policeman had ever looked at either of them before' (*Convert*, p. 87). This treatment encourages Vida to empathize with the women she watches; already their reputations, like those of the suffragettes, are under threat. Vida is surprised to see how tired and 'depressed' and 'faded' the suffragette speakers look. Robins links their sad-looking state not to madness or weakness but to the exhaustion of campaigning and the dreary conditions of their lives. While Miss Claxton, the most famous of the speakers, is 'more robust-looking than the others', she is pale and has a bad posture because has she had to start work too early in life instead of participating in sports and play (*Convert*, p. 90).

Unlike *Ann Veronica*, *Convert* explores the fearful reception of crowds whereas Wells's depiction of Ann Veronica's arrest was more humorous. *Convert* showed that those speakers who were nervous had good grounds to be frightened and described their reasons in detail. The interjections from members of the crowd raise the tension, with phrases

uttered such as 'I'd like to bash her head for her!' and 'she ought to be smacked' (*Convert*, pp. 124 and 123). Just as the louts at the lectures take pleasure in fantasizing about violence towards the suffragettes, so do the men in society drawing rooms, one of whom utters 'in cheerful vigour' that they need 'a good thrashin' (*Convert*, p. 70). In view of these perils, spectators at these events think it must be 'dreadful to put such very young girls up there to be stared at by all these louts' (*Convert* p. 115), a statement which echoes the spirit of 'Maiden Tribute' in which young girls are sacrificed to brutes.

When Vida invites Miss Claxton to her sitting-room, Miss Claxton tells her about the violence female campaigners could encounter: 'They punish us by underhand maltreatment – of the kind most intolerable to a decent woman' (*Convert*, p. 186). Elaine Showalter incorrectly assumes that Miss Claxton's statement describes police violence.<sup>17</sup> Rather, as Miss Claxton says, it is the stewards who keep order at the meetings who punish the suffragettes 'in ways the public don't know' (*Convert*, p. 186). As Miss Claxton adds, 'Nobody, no woman, wants to talk about it. And if we did they'd only say, "See! You're killing chivalry." *Chivalry!*"' (*Convert*, p. 187). The ambivalent relationship between suffragettes and the police was also represented in Katherine Roberts's little-known *Papers from the Diary of a Militant Suffragette* (1910). The 'diary' is an illustration of the bridge between historical and fictional writing. Given the smooth progression of the events in the book, the diary is likely to be a work of fiction. It is told from the perspective of a woman who becomes initiated into the movement, and in this Roberts's book is quite possibly inspired by the *Convert*. The narrator of the story describes suffragettes and officers deciding on what is to be reported in the press so that a speaker was arrested 'walking away between two tall policemen, with whom she was conversing in a friendly way' while in the press, this interaction was depicted as 'struggling, kicking, and biting, the women were dragged through the street'.<sup>18</sup> The diary also depicts officers helping women in their campaigns. As the narrator says, police officers tell suffragettes about the virtues of jujitsu: 'I walked up to my policeman, who was discussing the advantages of ju-jitsu with another prisoner.'<sup>19</sup> Mary Richardson punctured Velázquez's *Rokeby Venus* in March 1914 at the National Gallery in protest at the police's treatment of Mrs Pankhurst at a meeting in Glasgow. There had been times when Richardson felt that police interference protected women from the worst insults. When, after one affray, she found herself hatless and dishevelled, she was 'only too glad to have four strong arms of the law holding on to [her] and marching [her] away'.<sup>20</sup>

However, while the police could protect campaigners, they could also pose a threat, as was seen on what suffragettes dubbed 'Black Friday', a notorious chapter in suffragette history. When the first Conciliation Bill failed on 18 November 1910, a deputation, including Emmeline Pankhurst and Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, marched from Caxton Hall to the House of Commons. They were rebuffed and over 300 women who had marched with the deputation famously became the target of police brutality:

The methods applied to us were those used by the police to conquer the pugilistic antagonist, to fell the burglar, to maim the hooligan [...] I was gripped by the breast; by no means an exceptional act, for – heart-breaking to relate – I am medically informed that younger women [...] were also assaulted in this and other repellent and equally cruel ways. [...] When walking along the road I found myself in danger of being knocked down, and endeavoured to regain a place on the pavement, but had scarcely secured a footing when a policeman made a rush at me. He held and violently shook me, while his helpers twirled round my arms as if to drag them from their sockets [...]<sup>21</sup>

Other struggles followed, the next significant one being only four days later, when 200 suffragettes entered Downing Street to protest against the treatment of the women who had marched on Black Friday.

When Marion Wallace Dunlop was arrested in July 1909 for scribbling words from the Bill of Rights onto the walls of the House of Commons, she was relegated to the Second Division, rather than the First Division, where political prisoners were normally housed. As 'common prisoners', they were given ill-fitting green and brown prison uniforms respectively and treated with marked contempt and shut in cells which were the 'hygienic level of tramps' lodging-houses' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 238).<sup>22</sup> Dunlop objected to being placed in the Second Division as she was a political prisoner so she went on hunger strike. Others followed her lead, including Sylvia Pankhurst and Lady Constance Lytton who, disguising herself as a seamstress, threw a stone, was arrested and forcibly fed. Lady Lytton was shocked by the way that staff treated her, believing her to be a working-class woman. Concerned that women might die from starvation – and hence becomes martyrs to the cause – the government decided to implement a strategy of force feeding. The first woman was force-fed in Winsom Green Prison, Birmingham in September 1909. Mary Richardson described being 'trussed up and 'pinned to the floor'

while a liquid was poured into her 'aching, bruised, quivering body', an ordeal which made her feel 'in some strange way, disintegrated [...], soul and body' (*Laugh a Defiance*, p. 84). Sylvia Pankhurst's description of her experience also evokes a sense of psychological and physical fragmentation: 'Occasionally after the torturers had left the cell, that poor body and its voices, which seemed not part of me, protested, wailing in rage and misery.'<sup>23</sup> Robins drew attention to the way in which doctors, who were supposed to heal, instead 'execute[d] physical punishment upon defenceless prisoners, overpowered, gagged, bound' (*Way Stations*, p. 3).

### Hatpins and Dog-Whips

'Social conditions, the lack of opportunity, her physical disadvantages, as well as the refinement and delicacy of the feminine character, combine to place a woman more or less at the mercy of the violently disposed and criminal portion of mankind.'

Percy Longhurst, *Jiu-Jitsu and Other Methods of Self-Defence* (1906)

Suffragette literature readily depicted victimized suffragettes but it also encouraged women to 'take to the noble art of self defence and to the defence of their prisoner-champions'.<sup>24</sup> Published much earlier, *Convert* reflects the spirit of the contents of the *Suffragette*. Robins makes it clear that women who are *fighting* for female suffrage are actually reluctant to fight – 'the great mass of women never in all their lives wanted to hit anybody or anything' and are in essence engaged in a campaign of self-defence 'when they see their homes and the holiest things in life threatened and despised, how quickly after all *they can learn the art of war*' (*Convert*, p. 119). Here, they are waging a defensive war on behalf of voiceless women. When Vida asks Miss Claxton how she and the other suffragettes endure being manhandled, Miss Claxton reminds her that there are 'thousands of meek creatures who have never defied anybody' who 'bear worse ignominies', as 'every man knows' (*Convert*, p. 187). For Miss Claxton, protecting women (like Viola Sedley in *Azrael*) from being sold to the highest bidder is worth all the rough treatment she receives in her campaigns. The depiction of Miss Claxton as a female combatant acts as a corrective to the Ruskinian perception that 'by her office, and place ... [woman] is protected from all danger and temptation [while] man, in his rough work in open world, must entail all peril and trial [...] [and could] ... be wounded, or subdued, often misled,

and *always hardened*' ('Of Queen's Gardens', p. 99). Miss Claxton is a woman who is battle-scarred but she has been fighting a noble cause. Ruskin says that 'the woman's power is for rule, not for battle', ('Of Queen's Gardens', p. 99). Yet Miss Claxton embodies the notion that a woman could enter the public domain in order to rule over man's bellicose nature; she could not do this whilst cloistered at home.

We see Vida struggling to pierce her hat with a hatpin whilst holding a veil and her gloves in her other hand when she looks up and catches sight of Stonor, who is equally surprised to see her. This is a fleeting encounter between two people who have a history although Jean can see through the *veil* of secrecy. Vida is frequently shown respectfully buttoning up her gloves when she is thinking of her past affair with Stonor; in this scene her emotional nakedness is apparent as she stands before Stonor with ungloved hands. Of course, the female suffragette speakers are also vulnerable at the hand of the loafers who come to hear them speak in order to denigrate them. These hecklers poke fun at methods that women have used to defend themselves, jeering at the ways that women have practised 'the art of war' with hatpins, linking this with the unfeminine acts of scratching and spitting.

The hatpin occupied an awkward place between the sartorial and the social constructions of femininity. Until the late-Victorian era, bonnets were kept in place with a tied bow but from the 1880s they were worn at the back of the head, which required hatpins of around two inches long to keep them in place. As bows went out of fashion, headgear was becoming increasingly elaborate and weighty. At the turn of the century, a hat could be adorned with ribbons, fruits and flowers while hair-pieces were also employed to make hair look more voluminous. This assemblage required substantial hatpins which were themselves works of art, the ends often being topped with precious stones, frosted glass and metalwork. A woman was expected to be proud of her hair; when Mary Richardson was released from prison, she was eager to put up her hair with hairpins, which were provided by a matron and sympathizers who understood the importance of a neat coiffure. The hatpins that secured the Edwardian hat, a staple of the lady's wardrobe, and gave her the appearance of respectability were on average now roughly six to nine inches long and by the end of the Edwardian era they could even reach sixteen inches – veritable stilettos. There was one novelty hatpin, dated circa 1906, which was even crafted to look like a sword-stick.<sup>25</sup>

However, fashion came at a price. By 1900, hatpins were receiving a rather bad press and the numerous police reports in the press gave the impression that the tightly laced corset was not the only controversial

article of feminine fashion to injure the wearer. The newspaper reader was warned that hatpin-related head injuries could be incurred in the mere act of shopping. The story of a shopper who fainted and punctured her brain during her fall and subsequently died of her injuries was framed as a warning to ladies not to wear their hatpins facing inwards.<sup>26</sup> There were also accounts of customers accidentally poignarding each other in the scrum at the high-street bargain sales and the hatpin was considered particularly dangerous in crowded spaces, notably lifts, omnibuses and the underground. Two pin historians of the era, Eleanor D. Longman and Sophy Loch, suggested that women should wear guards on their hatpins, '(f)or "pin-pricks" are becoming more and more serious, and we now frequently find paragraphs referring to trouble with hatpins in any newspaper we happen to take up'.<sup>27</sup>

As can be expected, the widespread availability of this fashion accessory across the classes also had ramifications on the world of crime. As one American paper wrote: 'A woman can't very well carry a stick. But she has a weapon in a long hatpin, and she might also have an ammonia squirt gun or a package of red pepper to throw in the eyes of the thug.'<sup>28</sup> In Doyle's 'The Adventure of the Abbey Grange' (1904) Sir Eustace Brackenstall sets fire to his wife's dog, beats her with a blackthorn cudgel and stabs his wife twice on the arm with her own hatpin. In the press reports, on at least one occasion the hatpin was used as a method of suicide. Eye stabbings frequently featured in newspaper columns, which were motivated by self-defence, revenge, or, in the case of an infant who allegedly killed his younger brother and pierced his brain, jealousy. Other parts of the body were also targeted. A serial pin pricker was also on the loose in the 1890s and he liked to stab his victims, unaccompanied women, in the chest and trunk with sharp implements, particularly hatpins. He was indeed late-Victorian Birmingham's and Northampton's equivalent of the London Monster of the eighteenth century and more than once likened to Jack the Ripper.

One paper commented that 'the wonder is that we have not heard of [the hatpin] oftener as an instrument of secret assassination'.<sup>29</sup> However, there certainly were examples of sneaky crimes. During a trial at the Old Bailey in 1902, a gang of men and women were convicted and sentenced to hard labour and penal servitude for the murder of William Rosser, a bricklayer's labourer in March 1902. The post mortem examination revealed that he had died of blood poisoning, resulting from an abscess in his lung in which there was 3.5 inches of a hatpin embedded. The medical consultant concluded that '(t)he pin would go in and make practically no mark – it could be unobserved for twenty-nine days'.<sup>30</sup>

In *That Affair Next Door* (1897), by Anna Katharine Green, one of the founding mothers of detective fiction, a wife sees her own murder. That is to say, she witnesses her husband wedge with glee a hatpin into the brain of a woman who, in the dark, he mistakes for his wife.

British magistrates began declaring long hatpins to be dangerous weapons and anti-hatpin campaigners sprang up across Europe and the USA. Early twentieth-century legislation was considered to limit the length to nine inches.<sup>31</sup> In Germany fines were imposed on women who wore pins without guards. Plowden, stated that 'a hatpin is as dangerous a weapon in the hands of a woman as a revolver in the hands of a man'. He believed that hatpins should be licensed, but doubted whether this was feasible.<sup>32</sup> When one considers the frequency of hatpin crimes and accidents in the press, coupled with the very public manner in which the WSPU forced the issue of votes for women into the fabric of the media, it comes as no surprise that there was concern over the figure of the hatpin-wielding suffragette. As Longman and Loch note, in 1908 female prisoners in Clerkenwell Sessions were permitted to appear wearing hats, minus hatpins lest they attack bystanders (*Pins and Pincushions*, p. 127). The suffragette, Katherine Willoughby (Kitty) Marshall notes hatpins were banned in prison chapel. She kept on her slippery feather toque in an imaginative manner: 'I made a hole through each side of it and wore a tooth brush through it so that it kept on when my head was bowed in prayer. It caused some little interest, I am afraid, amongst the worshippers in the chapel.'<sup>33</sup> When the hecklers in Robins's *Convert* poke fun at the idea of suffragette using pins for self-defence, they are attempting to denigrate these campaigners as social liabilities which is why Miss Claxton is particularly keen to counter the idea that suffragettes 'spit and scratch and prod policemen with [their] hatpins' (*Convert*, p. 220). Robins does not condone the use of the hatpin in actual fighting, but, as the scene with Vida and Stonor shows, the hatpin is useful in symbolizing the struggle to cut through the mesh of women's oppression. The tension between Vida and Stonor is eventually pierced when Vida figures out how to wield her emotional armoury, stunning Stonor with her story and linking her emotional pain to the women's cause.

Robins appears to be more approving of a different weapon wielded by suffragettes. Miss Claxton is known by hecklers as 'the one wot carries the dog-whip' (*Convert*, p. 90). Her blue 'tam-o-shanter' (a Scottish hat which was also worn for sports such as motoring or golf) and tougher build reveal that she is inspired by the Scottish suffragette, Flora Drummond. Like Miss Claxton, Mrs Drummond worked from a young age, first as a telegraphist and then a manager of a typewriter company.

She was in charge of WSPU processions and wore a military uniform with epaulettes and a sash bearing the word 'general'. Drummond's sobriquet was 'Bluebell' and later 'The Precocious Piglet' for her tenacity in cornering Winston Churchill. As well as marshalling the suffragettes, Drummond was also required to keep the rowdies in order. In *Convert*, the crowd is hostile to women who have the temerity to lecture to the sterner sex, particularly Scottish women who 'tell [Londoners] "ow to do [their] business" (*Convert*, p. 91). The hecklers begin 'cat-calling and inquiring about the dog-whip' (*Convert*, p. 90). Vida asks her why she enters into close combat with men, and wonders why she does 'anything so futile as to pit [her] physical strength—considerable as it may be—against men's' (*Convert*, p. 186). Vida wonders how the dog-whip can possibly assist Miss Claxton against brute force. As Miss Claxton explains: 'A man's fear of ridicule will restrain him when nothing else will. If one of them is publicly whipped, and by a woman, it isn't likely to be forgotten. Even the fear of it—protects us from some things. [...] [L]ittle Mary O'Brian went out, without consulting anybody, and bought me the whip. "If you will go," she said, "you shan't go unarmed. If we have that sort of cur to deal with, the only thing is to carry a dog-whip"' (*Convert*, p. 188).

As Joanne Gates observes, 'Vida learns that the dog whips that suffragette women are ridiculed for carrying have more than symbolic meaning; they deter police misconduct' (*Elizabeth Robins, 1862–1952: Actress, Novelist, Feminist*, p. 164). However, the importance of the symbolism cannot be overemphasized. The whip, in all its various forms, was a potent and controversial punishment icon of justice as well as of inhumanity and sadism. It could be a measure of the perceived heinousness of a particular crime. In response to the public outcry against the garrotting panics of the 1850s and 1860s, the Security from Violence Act 1863 was passed, declaring that garotters be punished with 50 strokes of the lash on top of other punishments normally given to violent robbers. Angus McLaren has observed that flogging frenzy returned during the late nineteenth century and with the white slave panic. Plowden argued that 'had flogging been the law of the land, not one of [George Chapman's] unhappy wives would have been poisoned' (*Grain or Chaff?*, p. 191).<sup>35</sup> In *Azrael*, Philip's sadism is apparent through the pleasure he takes in the whipping of his horse. In 'The Adventure of Black Peter' (1904), Captain Peter Carey has fits of delirium tremens and flogs his wife and daughter in the park. Their screams wake the neighbourhood. There are a number of instances in literature where a whipping, or the threat of being egregiously whipped, is a way of

bringing a man into line. In *The Prime Minister* (1876) the resentful, and indeed unhinged, Ferdinand Lopez threatens to horsewhip his political competitor. Sherlock Holmes's favourite weapon is a hunting crop which he uses to administer a humiliating slap to cowardly criminals in 'The Red-Headed League' (1891), and 'A Case of Identity' (1904), a story in which a stepfather pretends to be her lover in order to keep his daughter and her fortune under his control. The dog-whip was an everyday item used to train canines but it could be ferociously wielded to train dogs 'into better ways' (*Azrael*, 3, p. 122). Who could fail to notice Jack London's tale of the trials of an abused dog, *The Call of the Wild* (1903), which contained numerous descriptions of the injuries resulting from an application of the whip?

The dog-whip was also a potent symbol of injustice for one of the WSPU's founding members, Teresa Billington-Greig. Originally from a lower-middle-class background, she worked as a teacher and then became a paid organizer for the Independent Labour Party. She joined Emmeline Pankhurst's inner circle but broke away from the WSPU when her style of leadership became more dictatorial. Together with Charlotte Despard and Edith How-Martyn, she set up the more democratically run Women's Freedom League (WFL) in 1907. In her piece, 'The Woman with the Whip' (1907), she discusses the treatment of women at meetings and concludes that 'insult of this kind could come only from curs, and for them the dog-whip was the fitting punishment'.<sup>36</sup> Having used her dog-whip in an early suffragette campaign, she kept the item as a memento, an 'everyday' weapon that represents the struggle against 'the accumulated wrongs of centuries' ('The Woman with the Whip', p. 43). She lists various injustices against women and one of these was the double standard when it came to stalking: 'A woman being approached insultingly by a man can only charge him with annoyance [...] Day after day at a single Police Court in London scores of wretched women appear charged with solicitation, but it is a rare thing for one man to appear for annoying women.' The result is that certain areas of the city – notably Piccadilly – became 'plague spot[s]' for respectable women' ('The Woman with the Whip', p. 50). As Malvery writes, followers could also pose an even greater threat than being mere shady would-be clients: 'The "pimp" is, without any exception, a cur. The one thing he would dread would be a horse-whipping' (*The White Slave Market*, p. 108).

When Helen Ogston, a university graduate, signed up to interrupt Lloyd George's speech at the Albert Hall in December 1908, Sylvia Pankhurst attempted to dissuade her from taking her dog-whip. Instead

of 'slashing about with a whip', Sylvia thought she should take her umbrella as it would be easier to control the direction of her parries. But Helen felt she needed the extra protection of her lash. When stewards tried to collar the protesting suffragettes, she defended herself, temporarily keeping the stewards at bay with her dog-whip, which she 'flicked delicately', (*The Times*, 7 December 1908, p. 6) but her wrist was burnt by a man's cigar and she was hit on the chest. The bedraggled and 'hatless', state of the women who returned from the Albert Hall scrum elicited some sympathy from the press and at a suffragette meeting which shortly followed the incident, Helen Ogston was warmly received. 'Let me touch the hand that used the dog-whip!' exclaimed one woman in the audience.<sup>37</sup> The dog-whip could be particularly coveted as a collector's item and Teresa Billington-Greig was not the only suffragette for whom the dog-whip was a memento of combat. The Museum of London keeps a dog-whip which was found in the hands of Maud Arncliffe Sennett, who ran a party accessories shop in London and sat on the committee of the WFL, when she was arrested in November 1911 for breaking windows in the *Daily Mail*'s office. She kept the receipts for her dog-whip, hammer and the chain she used and added them to her scrapbook.<sup>38</sup> Other commentators were not so sympathetic. When Helen Ogston gave a speech at Maidenhead men sprang up with dog-whips to edge her and her colleagues off the platform and Sylvia Pankhurst mentions that at one meeting in Ipswich the crowd sang a specially written song about the dog-whip and brandished this and other weapons, including walking-sticks, at the militants. Reporting on Helen's appearance at the Albert Hall in 1908, the *Illustrated London News* dubbed her 'The Woman with the Whip', and scathingly drew an analogy between suffragettes and drunkards. Yet, the accompanying front-page illustration depicts her masterfully wielding her weapon whilst nearby men frantically overturn seats in the bid to reach and overpower her. This contrast is indicative of the two-fold reaction the woman with the whip provoked.

# 5

## The Last Heroine Left?

### Exercising Freedom

Emmeline Pankhurst understood the value of sports for politics. After she was elected to the School Board for the City of Manchester in 1900, she promoted physical education for children in Board Schools, which she hoped would result in a fitter British nation. The suffrage campaign helped extend the notion of *mens sana in corpore sano* to women's lives. On the one hand, suffragettes and their sympathizers worked hard to prove that women had the physical and mental stamina to qualify for a say in how their country was run. On the other hand, if suffragettes' critics maintained that the qualifier for the vote was brawn, then suffragettes questioned men's right to vote on precisely that basis as not all men were physically able, for instance, to defend their country. Caird wryly pointed out that polling booths should be 'provided with an automatic boxing machine, at once testing and registering the force of the candidate's biceps'.<sup>1</sup> The confrontation between Ann Veronica and Ramage in a locked hotel room embodies both tactics of argument.

Debates raged on the suitability of sports for middle-class women, and the impact of physical culture on their roles as mothers and wives. Some of the opinions expressed were based on 'scientific' arguments while others were the result of personal whim. What was also apparent was the way in which sports were enmeshed in discussions over political emancipation. Physical culture forms a backdrop against which Wells explores the struggle for women's rights. For instance, in 1911, the sportswoman and suffragette, Rhoda Anstey, told a group of young female students that 'women would probably get the vote and they must prepare themselves to exercise it properly'.<sup>2</sup>

Kathleen McCrone notes that Jane Austen's Catherine Morland had a liking for cricket while Elizabeth Bennett was depicted taking long walks. However, by the middle of the century, bourgeois aspirations to gentility led to the prioritization of leisure over exercise and the creation of the lady who was not supposed to have the strength to exercise.<sup>3</sup> Women were discouraged from exercise due to perceived health risks which were said to adversely affect a woman's chance in the marriage market, but some critics responded by discussing the benefits of mild physical activity. Mid-Victorian journalists and medical experts did campaign for the right of women to exercise and highlighted, for example, the deleterious effect of too much needlework. The first female physician, Elizabeth Blackwell, wrote in praise of 'bodies that can move in dignity, in grace, in airy lightness, or conscious strength, bodies erect and firm, energetic and active – bodies that are truly sovereign in their presence, the expressions of a sovereign nature'.<sup>4</sup> Believing that degeneration could be prevented in England by educating mothers in healthy ways of life, Herbert Spencer's *Essays on Education* (1857) advocated more vigorous forms of exercise for women. Spencer pointed out that if boys could become gentlemen despite participating in aggressive sports in public school, then women could also become ladies. Eliza Linton offered an interpretation on this view. In her article for *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, entitled 'Modern Mannish Maidens', she provided her own taxonomy of suitable sports for the late-Victorian woman based on the criteria that 'no game or situation where girl or woman is seen in public should be such that from its nature she is liable to pose therein ungracefully, clumsily, or unbecomingly'.<sup>5</sup> She recommended rowing, walking, riding side-saddle and golf for 'young women in polite society' who desired a slice of the physical culture in which their male counterparts were excelling.

Ann Veronica enjoys walking, tennis, badminton, hockey and Japanese martial arts. Nicola Beauman observes that Wells was 'a realistic middle-class novelist who was well aware of the boundaries of propriety'.<sup>6</sup> Within these boundaries, he argues that physical expression is crucial for women's physical and personal development. Lady Palsworthy perceives her niece to be suitably shy and ladylike' but has not seen her 'running like the wind at hockey' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 49). Freedom, not restriction, allows her to maintain her feminine composure and her 'graceful figure'. Wells importantly links her capacity to defend herself to her skill as 'an ardent hockey player' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 200); she is a girl who can sustain hard knocks.

As McCrone says, 'the transition from gentle callisthenics and crocodile walks to real physical education and competitive games was gradual

and did not occur to any extent before at least the 1880s' when competitive sports really began to rival the more gentle forms of exercise (the 'crocodile walk') offered at schools (*Sport and the Physical Emancipation of English Women, 1870–1914*, p. 18). Physical education also offered career opportunities. The same decade saw the founding of bourgeois Physical Education Training Colleges, institutions in which women set the standards. This new area of expertise was moulded exclusively by and for the needs of women; there were no male-led equivalents to challenge these endeavours significantly until well into the twentieth century (*Sport and the Physical Emancipation of English Women, 1870–1914*, p. 119). These institutions were oriented to middle-class girls destined for positions in middle-class schools. A key figure in women's physical education was Martina Bergman-Österberg. Originally employed by the London School Board, she was Superintendent of Physical Education in Girls' Schools from 1881 and opened the Hampstead Physical Training College and Gymnasium in 1885. It is possible that Wells heard of Bergmann-Österberg's achievements. She put on an 'impressive' gymnastic display at the Crystal Palace in 1887 and appeared in the *PMG* and the *Lancet* after working for the London School Board. As Sheila Fletcher argues, Bergmann-Österberg's feminist values clashed with her belief in eugenics. While she believed in greater opportunities for women in the world of physical culture, her resignation from the Board was prompted by her conviction that working-class women were not the ideal models on which a vibrant womanliness could be built (*Women First*, p. 23). As McCrone says, Bergman-Österberg maintained that middle-class physical training and feminism were interlinked and 'in order to raise the status of their sex and take charge of their own salvation by acquiring the economic independence essential for true emancipation [...] women had to be healthy and strong, to which end a sound physical education was indispensable' (*Sport and the Physical Emancipation of English Women, 1870–1914*, p. 110). Sporty Ann Veronica seizes control of her own destiny by physically defending her dignity against a man who thinks he can buy her.

Ann Veronica learnt to play hockey and to practise jujitsu at high school, a type of day school the intake of which was mainly but not exclusively middle-class and so there was some opportunity for girls of different backgrounds to mix. High schools taught a range of subjects, including physical education, but they also scheduled time in the day for girls to return home to do homework and assist with household duties (*The New Girl*, pp. 76–77). The day school was an ideal compromise between Ann Veronica's thirst for knowledge and her father's

desire not spend his money on an expensive education for a daughter he would like to control.

In *Ann Veronica* Wells engages in debates on the relation of suffrage to physical culture. Critics linked the suffragette to the sportswoman, and *Hockey Field* quotes a schoolgirl who states that hockey made women 'mannish' and neglectful of their domestic duties and just the 'detestable' sort likely to become suffragettes.<sup>7</sup> McCrone points out that 'Victorian women's entry into sport was directly related to the campaign for female higher education which began in the 1860s and was one of the most crucial aspects of the women's rights movement [although] many of its leaders were not especially notable as advocates of the general emancipation of women' (*Sport and the Physical Emancipation of English Women, 1870–1914*, p. 21). Bergmann-Österberg did not directly participate in the English women's suffrage movement (*Women First*, p. 29). While the first sportswomen were not necessarily feminists, some figures, such as the founder of the Chelsea College of Physical Training in 1898, Dorette Wilke, did recommend that staff and students become members of the Gymnastic Teachers' Suffrage Society, founded in the year in which *Ann Veronica* was published. One of its members was Rhoda Anstey. She had been a student of the Hampstead School and her aim was to create physical education teachers. However, although Ann Veronica believes in votes for women, she has ambivalent attitudes towards the more extreme tactics used by the suffragettes. Wells draws a careful line between, on the one hand, sportswomen such as Ann Veronica, who physically benefit from vigorous exercise and, on the other hand, what Wells saw as the excesses of man-hating militants whose monomaniacal pursuit led them to take exercise in the form of tussling with policemen.

Despite the advances in physical education for women, various sports still came under scrutiny from critics at the turn of the century. Intensive swimming and rowing were considered taxing for the heart and the former was alleged to turn hair white (*Sport*, p. 201). While an increasingly popular middle-class sport, Ann Veronica's favourite sport, hockey, attracted widespread criticism on two grounds. Firstly it was considered to be unfeminine, and secondly, critics argued that the physical strains incurred by girls in playing this close-contact team game could have a deleterious effect on the future of the British race.

In the early 1900s, hockey was still associated with class snobbery although growing numbers of girls working in factories and offices took to the sport (*Sport*, p. 134.). Ann Veronica runs 'like the wind' during play. Linton would have disagreed: when they ran, girls 'waddled' and the 'maiden of the period whacking away at a hockey-ball'

looked ridiculous.<sup>8</sup> There was widespread concern regarding the ‘cricket stoop’, ‘golf stride’, ‘football roll’. Hockey was seen to cause the ‘hockey walk’ (*Sport*, p. 200.). In 1911, a suffragist and gynaecologist, Dr Mary Scharlieb, maintained that hockey was a threat to the future of the British race. She identified what she called the ‘flat-chested neuter girl’ who not only lacked ‘feminine grace’, but whose ‘narrow’ hips could no longer function efficiently (*Women First*, p. 28). Scharlieb had either not read Wells’s novel or she was unconvinced by his portrayal of Ann Veronica. However, a year later in Ethel M. Dell’s bestselling, middlebrow women’s novel, *The Way of an Eagle* (1912), a nineteen-year old heroine is recommended to take up hockey as a means of recovering from psychological and physical trauma.<sup>9</sup> Thus, like Dell, Wells employed fiction in order to challenge the idea that playing physical sports ‘unsexed’ women. Wells tackled such prejudices by describing Ann Veronica as a highly feminine hockey player who possesses a graceful posture.

Critics have argued that Ann Veronica sacrifices her interests and aspirations for Capes<sup>10</sup> and that Wells, ‘while admiring the intelligent, free-spirited and free-loving woman, liked her, finally, to subdue her liveliness in deference to the male’.<sup>11</sup> When Ann Veronica and Capes walk in the Alps, they are ‘dressed akin’, ‘rucksacked and companionable’ (*Ann Veronica*, p. 235). Wells shows that far from compromising Ann Veronica’s femininity, such clothing ‘suited the fine, long lines of her limbs far better than any feminine walking dress could do’ (*Ann Veronica*, p. 337). Wearing the same costume as Capes allows Ann Veronica to reach a state of ‘unprecedented physical fitness’ (*Ann Veronica*, p. 337). Ann Veronica’s pursuit of knowledge and her physical activities (this rescues her from attack by Ramage) lead to a satisfactory outcome. Exercise for women also addresses eugenicist concerns: the end of the novel sees Ann Veronica pregnant with the man of her choice even if she does choose to defer to him in the end.

### **Lightning Throws and Waltzes with Watts**

‘Hitherto, it seems to have been a man’s privilege to act as “defender of women.” But why should this be so? Why, I ask, should women not practise healthy sports and pastimes just as much as members of the opposite sex?’

Marie Studholme, in ‘The World of Women’ (1909)

As Ann Veronica was traversing the area around the Burlington Arcade, dogged by a sense of unease, she would have flitted past the Bartitsu Light Cure Institute, on Albemarle Street, by the Ritz Hotel. The founder of the institute, Edward William Barton-Wright (1860–1951), is credited with introducing Japanese martial arts to Britain and for pioneering self-defence classes for women.<sup>12</sup> Whilst working in Japan as an engineer, Barton-Wright learned jujitsu which was based on the idea that one could overpower a more formidable enemy by applying pressure to certain areas of the body and using the aggressor's superior strength and weight against him. One of his teachers was Jigoro Kano, who founded Kodokan judo in the 1880s. Despite the fin-de-siècle craze for *Japonisme*, Japanese martial arts were not widely known by the British public until 1899, when the highly popular *Pearson's Magazine* showcased Barton-Wright's two-part article, 'The New Art of Self Defence: How a Man may Defend Himself Against Every Form of Attack'. *Pearson's Magazine* combined adventure fiction and real-life accounts of danger and discovery and in 1897 serialized H. G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds*. Like Wells's novel, Barton-Wright's articles focused on a method of overpowering mightier, or indeed multiple, attackers. His new art of self-defence was a blend of various influences, including boxing, la savate (French kick-boxing) and jujitsu. The brand name, 'Bartitsu', suitably encapsulated this eclectic array of styles and was made up of the 'itsu' from jujitsu, together with a segment of his own name. It was this combining of styles which has led modern martial arts historians to agree that he pioneered mixed martial arts, around sixty years before Bruce Lee founded Jeet Kune Do.<sup>13</sup>

Barton-Wright's timing was impeccable. The hooligan scare of the late 1890s, a growing anti-weapons stance reflected in novels and gun legislation alike, plus the revelation of the physical unfitness of Boer War recruits resulted in the creation of a gap in the market for a method of self-defence that was life-affirming, minimally aggressive and suited for the patriotic Englishman for use against miscreants. In 1901, *Pearson's Magazine* published another two-part article, 'Self-Defence with a Walking-Stick: The Different Methods of Defending Oneself with a Walking-Stick or Umbrella when Attacked under Unequal Conditions'. Barton-Wright appeared in various popular magazines, from *Health and Strength* (the oldest known sports magazine in English), to the pro-British *Black and White Budget* to *The Times*. The most enduring publicity arose when Doyle succumbed to public pressure and resurrected Sherlock Holmes in 1903. In 'The Adventure of the Empty House' (1903), Holmes tells Dr Watson how he used his 'knowledge' of

'baritsu [sic], or the Japanese system of wrestling' to slip from Moriarty's grasp, thus overbalancing and casting his enemy into the tumultuous waters of the Reichenbach Falls in Switzerland.<sup>14</sup> The reason behind Dr Watson's typo is a mystery. Perhaps Doyle spotted the misspelling in an edition of *The Times* from 1901 and could not resist leaving a Sherlockian clue of his own for posterity to puzzle over? (*The Times*, 23 August 1901, p. 8). What is clear is that while Holmes was a fictional creation, his method of self-preservation was very real indeed.

The techniques presented in *Pearson's Magazine* by a quintessentially Edwardian-looking Barton-Wright, complete with patent leather shoes and a handlebar moustache, were tasters for the classes on offer at Barton-Wright's Bartitsu School of Arms and Physical Culture (also known as the Bartitsu Club), located on Shaftesbury Avenue. Founded by Barton-Wright in 1898 on his return from Japan, the club attracted experts from around the world, including the Swiss *maitre d'armes* and inventor of the walking-stick method of self-defence, Pierre Vigny, and the expert fencer, Sir Cosmo Duff Gordon, an Olympic silver medalist who was later accused of allegedly bribing crew of the *Titanic* (his name was later cleared). Barton-Wright's two Japanese assistants, Sadakazu Uyenishi and Yukio Tani, toured the music halls with him but broke away from him around 1902, possibly due to disputes over pay.<sup>15</sup> Barton-Wright turned his hand to electrical light treatments but was often faced with law suits from dissatisfied patients. He slipped into obscurity but his contribution to the development of martial arts in Europe has in recent years been justly acknowledged by martial arts historians.<sup>16</sup>

The short-lived Bartitsu Club did bring together a host of experts and laid the foundations for further developments in women's self-defence. For instance, ladies could take classes in fencing, taught by a lady instructor, Pierre Vigny's wife, 'Miss Sanderson'. In 1901, Mary Nugent interviewed him. However, despite her glowing review of the Bartitsu Club, Nugent leaves us with the nagging feeling that Barton-Wright regarded some lady pupils in a pejorative light because he felt that they were 'tiresome', always seeking cheap lessons and did not want to learn in the *scientific*, hence masculine manner. Mary Nugent, conscious of her gender, tells the reader that she suppressed a 'twinkle' in her eye.<sup>17</sup> In the *Pearson's Magazine* articles, Bartitsu and Barton-Wright's feats were marketed as a man's pursuit and his flamboyant demonstrations are devoid of female assistants. Although Barton-Wright professes to teach women, he devotes no space to women's self-defence *per se* in his articles. The Bartitsu Club was a place of refuge away from the dangers

of the street and the potentially emasculating perils of the feminine, domestic environment.

When Uyenishi broke with Barton-Wright, he set up a dojo (a school), The School of Japanese Self-Defence at 31 Golden Square, Piccadilly Circus in 1903 and wrote *The Text-Book of Ju-Jutsu as Practised in Japan* (1906). His career was given a boost by the public fascination with the Japanese victory over Russia in 1905. Jujitsu caught the literary imagination. George Bernard Shaw's play, *Major Barbara* (1905) contains a jujitsu contest (quite possibly inspired by seeing Barton-Wright's displays) and jujitsu also features in D. H. Lawrence's later work, *Women in Love* (1920). Marsh and Wells's interpretations of jujitsu are discussed below.<sup>18</sup>

Uyenishi's pupil was Emily Diana Watts (also known as Mrs Roger Watts) who wrote *The Fine Art of Jujutsu* (1906). It was not the first book on jujitsu for women;<sup>19</sup> but it is however the first known book on jujitsu written in English *by a woman*. Watts's style of self-presentation is both instructive and vivacious. Watts gave the instruction of jujitsu a feminine edge and had teaching experience working with the public. She therefore knew which tricks to employ to engage her audience. In 1906 Watts was already teaching her own class of fifteen boys at the Prince's Skating Rink in Knightsbridge.<sup>20</sup> Writing about self-defence from the standpoint of being an instructor allows Watts to set herself up as an authority. This embodies McCrone's idea that 'the woman who controlled her body was likely to control her destiny' (*Sport and the Physical Emancipation of English Women, 1870–1914*, p. 115). In introducing her manual, Watts offers to *guide* the reader 'to the end of the book without any mishap and hardly a bruise'.<sup>21</sup> Both the writer *and* demonstrator, Watts keeps a firm grip on the way in which she is represented. While Watts explores modes of physical dynamism, she clearly stipulates which techniques are unsuitable for women: 'The branch of Jujutsu which is devoted to wrestling on the ground is what I term the gross art of Jujutsu as opposed to the fine art [...] it cannot, or rather, should not appeal to women, for anything more rough and ungraceful it is hard to imagine' (*Fine Art of Jujutsu*, p. 107). Here, Watts expresses her preference for standing techniques (tachi-waza) as opposed to grappling for submission holds on the ground (ne-waza), which were likely considered too intimate for men and women to practise together.<sup>22</sup>

It is unlikely that Wells read Watts's specialist jujitsu manual but his description of the confrontation between Ann Veronica and Ramage is replete with the vivacity of Watts's writing. After their awkward opera outing, Ramage wishes to speak to her alone and takes her to a hotel

room on 'Germain Street' – Jermyn Street, which is round the corner from the Burlington Arcade. When Ramage attempts to force himself on Ann Veronica, Wells depicts her as a physically assertive woman, an image which may be over-optimistic given that shock can often lead to the freezing of limbs and the inability to cry out. 'If hate could kill, Ramage would have been killed by a flash of hate', (*Ann Veronica*, p. 199) writes Wells. This passage is particularly empowering as Ann Veronica is depicted not only feeling anger but directing her turbulent emotions towards the scientific application of the hand-to-hand combat skills she has learnt in high school:

She shut her lips hard, her jaw hardened, and she set herself to struggle with him. [...] They began to wrestle fiercely. Each became frightfully aware of the other as a plastic energetic body, of the strong muscles of neck against cheek, of hands gripping shoulder blade and waist. 'How dare you!' she panted, with her world screaming and grimacing insult at her. 'How dare you!'

They were both astonished at the other's strength. Perhaps Ramage was the more astonished. Ann Veronica had been an ardent hockey player and had had a course of jiu-jitsu in the High School. Her defence ceased rapidly to be in any sense ladylike, and became vigorous and effective; a strand of black hair that had escaped its hairpins came athwart Ramage's eyes, and then the knuckles of a small but very hardly-clenched fist had thrust itself with extreme effectiveness and painfulness under his jawbone and ear.

(*Ann Veronica*, p. 200)

Ramage expects to be 'the master of his fate that evening' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 202). However, Ann Veronica shapes the outcome of this confrontation. Her loosened tresses represent the unravelling of her ladylike-composure as she realizes the nature of her predicament. Yet, these rebellious dark locks attack Ramage's lascivious male gaze. Whatever one might think of Wells's advocacy of free love (and its impact on his life, his marriages and affairs), this scene allows Wells to draw a distinction between free love on the one hand (represented by Ann Veronica) and exploitative sexual promiscuity on the other – Ramage is merely a 'dissipated, loose-living man' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 314) who is living off his wife's money. In what is a duel between Ramage's sexuality and hers, her fist assertively 'thrusts' at Ramage while he, initially the attacker, becomes the passive receiver of the gesture. Her reaction is indicated by adjectives such as 'vigorous' and 'effective'. Her knowledge of how

and when to apply force allows her to subdue Ramage effectively so she 'strenuously inflict[s]' a lock on her adversary (*Ann Veronica*, p. 200). Terms such as 'strenuous' and 'strength' to describe physical might would be more commonly used by commentators in a boxing match between men. Ann Veronica's style of combat allows her verbally to challenge Ramage: "Now!" said Ann Veronica. "Why did you dare to do that?" (*Ann Veronica*, p. 200). She uses her ingenuity and threatens to smash all glasses in the room to attract the waiters' attention if he steps any closer. She muses that 'her state of mind would have seemed altogether discreditable to her grandmother' and that she 'ought to have been disposed to faint and scream at all these happenings' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 201). Her assertive action is a contrast to Thomas Hardy's depiction of, we presume, a passive Tess. While Tess tries to discourage Alec by assuming an air of reserve and by attempting to put physical distance between him and herself, during the night-time scene in the wood when she and Alec are alone, she is portrayed as asleep when Alec rapes her (*Tess*, pp. 64–65). As we have seen, Helen Huntingdon, a woman of Ann Veronica's grandmother's generation, did not faint when approached by her husband's lecherous dinner guest. The difference between her and Ann Veronica is that Ann Veronica had more options of self-defence available to her.

Watts's choice of clothing allows her to enact the manoeuvres she discusses in her writing. Her attire is a unique combination of Japanese and Edwardian dress, revealing very little flesh, yet the shape of her limbs is defined just as the puttees that Ann Veronica wears in her ramblings with Capes in the Alps flatter her figure. In his manual, Hancock advised against the wearing of corsets: 'Loose-fitting garments of any kind may be worn, but when two women are to practice, without spectators, the most convenient costume is the one consisting of a combination bathing-suit and stockings.'<sup>23</sup> Thus, when practising indoors, the female jujitsuka was to be corsetless and free to move in the way she wished.

The following statement by Watts appears quite unorthodox: 'You will have the pleasure of throwing me about and become consumed with the desire to experience the delights of falling yourself' (*Fine Art of Jujutsu*, p. 4). Watts includes jujitsu manoeuvres to counteract a garotting, sending the attacker flying to the ground, headfirst (*Fine Art of Jujutsu*, p. 89). She shows that her brand of jujitsu is the type of physical sport which allows women to explore their femininity, describing the Koshinge hip throw thus: 'The start for this is different to the others and looks rather as though we were going to waltz. Place your right arm round my waist, your left hand holding my right sleeve above the

elbow, I hold you in the usual way' (*Fine Art of Jujutsu*, 20). Therefore, Watts describes the dangerously close physical interaction of, to borrow Wells's phrase, 'plastic energetic bod[ies]' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 200). Indeed, Ann Veronica and Ramage find themselves in a wrestling-waltz, both highly aware of 'the strong muscles of neck against cheek, of hands gripping shoulder blade and waist' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 200).

Watts readily directs her writing towards both sexes, discussing manœuvres which are 'quite easy to do as no strength at all is required' (*Fine Art of Jujutsu*, pp. 95–96). Her dynamic language emphasizes her skill and alacrity. She describes the 'Hikotoshi (b)' throw in the following terms: 'The result of this is a fall so clean and quick that it is like hitting a ninepin at its base' (*Fine Art of Jujutsu*, p. 14). It is 'the most lightning throw in the list of "Landori Kata"' (*Fine Art of Jujutsu*, pp. 16–17). She writes of her students that 'they made light of damp lawns and sometimes cold winds' (*Fine Art of Jujutsu*, p. 4) which highlights the physical hardiness of her female pupils and echoes Herbert Spencer's opinion that young ladies could engage in rough sports and still maintain their ladylike mannerisms just as boys could take part in rugby and still be gentlemen. At the same time, Ann Veronica's knowledge of self-defence conforms to Wells's eugenic message that a woman should be able to choose who she considers to be the fittest partner to have children with, defending herself against 'dissipated' men like Ramage.

One can only guess what Eliza Lynn Linton's opinion on jujitsu might have been; she died the year in which Barton-Wright was setting up the Bartitsu Club. Watts and Wells's depiction of a jujitsu heroine grimacing in concentration may not have encouraged Linton's approval. Nor would she have liked the idea of women engaging in 'masculine' forms of sport and fighting. Expressing her scepticism at boxing for women, Linton asked: 'Who is to tell, with the set of the "flowing tide" this way, where she is to land? Why should she not take to the "gloves," single-stick, the foil, hurdle-racing, or any other of the recreative pursuits we have hitherto regarded as the peculiar property of men and boys?'<sup>24</sup> According to the *New York Times* flab-busting boxing was beneficial for 'stout' women with 'nerves'. It taught the female boxer how to read minds through eye contact. But the article pointed out that such vigorous exercise was not automatically becoming to women: 'Above all things, beware of a scowling, tightly drawn, savage boxing face. For what availeth a graceful body with a distorted face?'<sup>25</sup> The well-known actress, Marie Studholme, practiced jujitsu with Tani and she maintained that ten minutes' training was worth the 'entire contents of a chemist's shop' and a proficient jujitsuka could be

'a veritable hooligan's terror'.<sup>26</sup> But she also added a note of caution: British women learning jujitsu develop wrinkles faster than British men because they feel jujitsu will be of greater benefit to them as *weaker vessels* and are therefore more determined to learn, frowning through their efforts at concentration. Thus, the jujitsuka was instructed to exhibit her femininity whilst exercising, but she should avoid pulling a strange face in the process!

Yet, there was the allure of a woman concentrating in the heat of a confrontation. Wells describes Ann Veronica's facial expressions, her 'hardening' jaw, whilst in confrontation with Mr Ramage while Watts opts for a realistic approach, telling the reader that her ferocious facial expression is not softened so as to give the impression of reality. In this way, Wells breaks with convention and Watts retains control of her image, becoming her own muse, but, given contemporary attitudes towards beauty and women's sports, Watts does nonetheless feel compelled to explain why she has retained her frown. In *Ann Veronica*, Wells's heroine is permitted to contort her features as she is battling against dark forces in the shape of her uncontrolled anger and Ramage's daunting sexual aggression.

Linton may have approved of the rules laid down by female jujitsu and fencing instructors. Indeed, while Watts explores modes of physical dynamism, she clearly stipulates that the 'gross art of Jujutsu' is unsuitable for women. In 1907, even prominent male athletes and wrestlers expressed their distaste towards the idea of women wrestling.<sup>27</sup> 'Miss Sanderson' replied that while it was 'undignified' for women to wrestle on the floor before a mixed audience, the throws, locks and holds of jujitsu were 'elegant and interesting' ('Should Women Wrestle?', p. 183). Judging by their widespread representation in the press and in fiction, Japanese martial arts became an international craze, attracting not only British and European women but also wealthy New York socialites and vaudeville stars, including New Zealand's 'The World's Famous Ju-Jitsu Girl', Florence Le Mar. Japanese martial arts were also introduced into schools as part of a girl's education. Agnes Baden-Powell's *The Handbook for Girl Guides, Or How Girls Can Build the Empire* (1912) contains numerous references to the benefits of jujitsu as a form of exercise, interspersed with discussions on how to spot suspicious passers-by and tie up burglars. According to Miss Cowdray, the headmistress of Crouch End High School for Girls, ju-jitsu taught girls 'self-control, hardiness, and fearlessness in face of physical dangers [...]. It was less dangerous than other sports: 'We have never had an accident at jiu-jitsu, although we have had

one at tennis! Does it make girls too masculine, undomesticated, self-assertive? I may tell you that our best exponents of the art are as little averse to cooking as to books or even [...] to writing poetry.<sup>28</sup> So, here we see a move to make self-defence as much a part of a woman's accomplishments as boxing had been a part of the public schoolboy's repertoire especially as the New Girl did not know when skills in personal protection might come in handy.

During the tussle with Ramage, Ann Veronica, is, according to Simon Bacon, more excited by his desire than frightened.<sup>29</sup> Yet, it is her knowledge of jujitsu which diverts her away from feelings of intimidation and invites her mind to concentrate on the *strangeness* of being kissed. She is an 'indignant queen', affronted outside her Ruskinian domestic sphere and 'alarmed and disgusted'. She is 'highly excited' by 'some low adventurous strain in her being' which moves around 'the rioting ways and crowded insurgent meeting-places of her mind', which intimates to her that 'the whole affair was after all [...] a very great lark indeed' (AV, p. 202). It can be argued that in this passage Wells downplays the gravity of sexual assault, presenting the crime as an 'adventurous' process of initiation into the adult world of sensuality. He seems to reassess this depiction as he adopts a more serious tone in a later scene where she is alone in her room (my discussion of this scene can be found in my chapter on *Azrael*), torn between feelings of guilt and revulsion at being 'mauled about'. Her act of self-defence, together with the temporary curiosity that she feels in the cabinet particulier, subverts the notion that once a girl was raped she was ruined forever. The sexual knowledge she has acquired in the process has not corrupted her and tarnished her sense of self-worth. Ann Veronica's physical riposte to Ramage's advance demonstrates that Wells admired women's attempts to defend themselves and their values from attack, altering the plots of their own lives.

Wells likens her sensual ruminations as a guided jaunt through a bustling city. This imagery recalls Tom and Jerry's escapade through the metropolis in *Life in London* (1821), their introduction to the brutalities and enticements of metropolitan life. Indeed, Ann Veronica's first encounters with the shadier sides of London occur in the grander areas of London in Piccadilly which date back to the Regency period. Egan's two flâneurs amuse themselves by taking lessons in that 'manly' art of self-defence. Here, Ann Veronica's hobby gives her a knowledge of self-defence, allowing her go on 'a lark', to savour the 'delights' of the city, of being buffeted about, without being emotionally bruised.

## Potatoes, Policemen and Mrs Garrud

“You were a heroine,” I exclaimed, with spontaneous admiration.

“If I was, I think I must be the last one that’s left,” she said quietly, closing the book.’

This was the boastful claim of martial arts teacher, Edith Garrud, when she was interviewed by the journalist, Godfrey Winn. It was June, 1965. To celebrate her birthday, he brought her a sugary lemon gâteau and his equally saccharine interview with her was printed in the popular magazine, *Woman*. His interviewee was ‘as tall as the highest oak tree in the land’ for he admired her and the dynamic and feisty role she played in the suffrage cause. Winn explained to readers that Garrud was ‘the first lady ju-jutsu expert in Britain’.<sup>30</sup> In the light of Emily Watts’s work, we now know that this statement is incorrect. By the time Edith was making a name for herself during the Edwardian era, the notion of women’s self-defence training had already been well established. Nevertheless, Edith Garrud was probably the first lady teacher to strenuously forge the link between Japanese martial arts for women and the female suffrage.

When Uyenishi left for Japan at around the end of 1908, his pupil, William Garrud, took over Uyenishi’s dojo. Edith assisted her husband with the women’s and children’s classes. She belonged to the WSPU and led the WFL’s athletic branch in 1908. By 1909, she was giving demonstrations showing how to counter police aggression and ‘establish the superiority of the trained feminine mind’ over ‘untutored masculine strength’.<sup>31</sup> In May 1909, William and Edith Garrud were asked to give a jujitsu demonstration for the WSPU Bazaar at the Prince’s Skating Rink, London. At the last minute, William was taken ill while his wife nervously filled his place, encouraged by Mrs Pankhurst. Edith was assisted by a ‘policeman’ who allowed himself to be thrown, a curious sight which, according to the WSPU magazine, *Votes for Women*, ‘drew in full houses’.<sup>32</sup>

By the end of the Edwardian era, she had established her own dojo, the School of Ju-jutsu at Argyll Place (now part of Great Marlborough Street), off Oxford Street. She and her dojo feature in Peter Simon Hilton’s 2003 feminist play, *Edith Garrud’s Dojo*, and Gillian Linscott’s pre-war murder thriller, *A Perfect Daughter: A Nell Bray Mystery* (2000), in which one of her pupils investigates the apparent suicide of a young wannabe suffragette. Edith became the trainer for ‘The Bodyguard’, a group of around twenty-five members, organized by the Canadian-born Gertrude

Harding in order to protect Emmeline Pankhurst from re-arrest under the Prisoners (Temporary Discharge for Ill-health) Act 1913 (Cat and Mouse Act) which had been passed in order to let suffragettes who had been taken ill recover at home before being sent back to jail to complete their sentences.

Kitty Marshall recounted being helped by some gentlemen who formed a protective ring round her and saw her into a taxi. There are a number of similar stories. But it was important that suffragettes attempted as much as possible to make a show of defending themselves. In 1913, Sylvia Pankhurst advised her followers that: 'The police know ju-jitsu. I advise you to learn ju-jitsu. Women should practise it as well as men. Don't come to meetings without sticks in future, men and women alike.'<sup>33</sup> The Bodyguard tied Indian clubs, used in school drills, round their waists and swung them at anyone attempting to arrest suffragette leaders or used them to knock policemen's helmets over their eyes. They also employed items that came to hand. At St Andrew's Hall in Glasgow in March 1914 (the event which prompted Mary Richardson's mutilation of the *Rokesby Venus* with a meat cleaver), police tried to arrest Mrs Pankhurst and the Bodyguard defended her with chairs, and flower-pots and water buckets while one militant fired a blank pistol. The cover of the 1913 edition of the *Suffragette*, entitled 'Brute Force: The Government's Only Weapon', depicts a woman wrestling with a male attacker. The woman valiantly looks up at her stronger and taller opponent, and waves a flag bearing the word 'justice', (*Suffragette*, 19 December 1913, p. 1) a visual encapsulation of assertive suffragette self-sufficiency.

Bodyguard members were compelled to improvise in their armoury. In Roberts's *Pages from the Diary of a Militant Suffragette* (1910), a suffragette pads herself with cotton wool, surrounded by cardboard to prevent broken ribs. An excellent account of the use of minimum force is offered in the memoirs of Emmeline Pankhurst's bodyguard and close personal friend, Kitty Marshall. The various activities in which Marshall was engaged illustrate the breadth of the WSPU campaign; she ran a stall selling farm produce at Prince's Rink WSPU exhibition 1909, threw a potato wrapped in messages (she chose a potato as her husband advised her that this was less violent than a brick in case someone was injured) at Winston Churchill's fanlight, was arrested on Black Friday and played a major role in delivering, an often disguised, Mrs Pankhurst from danger. Her husband, Arthur Marshall, a partner in a City law firm, acted as a solicitor for WSPU prisoners. Although unpublished, her action-packed, frank and at times slap-stick memoir, *Suffragette Escapes and Adventures*, drafted in 1947, describes her

experiences outside and inside prison. In an incident which is particularly representative of her book, she describes with humour the undignified violence that women could encounter by merely speaking to a crowd: 'We got a good crowd, including a cowardly young man, who thought it good fun to throw ripe tomatoes at us. He was not a particularly good shot because he hit the mayor below the chin and the tomato burst all over his face' (*Suffragette Escapes*, p. 49). She writes: 'My husband did not approve of my being knocked about [...] I went to stay with a friend who was also a very keen Suffragette. When staying with her we made some stiff cardboard armour to be worn back and front under a blouse so that the thumping of the policemen would not be [so] painful' (*Suffragette Escapes*, p. 49). During the mid-Victorian garrotting panics, various forms of defensive armour – including belts with pistols and spiked chokers – were sold which claimed to offer the male pedestrian protection against strangulation. Unlike these mid-Victorian torture devices, Marshall's cardboard shield is worn to protect its owner and not to injure the assailant.

As tension mounted, the Bodyguard met in secret locations, in basements and attics, and members were photographed and followed home by detectives who attempted to learn their addresses and names. Therefore a member of the Bodyguard could be engaged in her own cat-and-mouse chase in which she dodged her pursuer by swiftly changing trams that were still moving and slipping into dim side streets. Edith Garrud told the suffragette historian, Antonia Raeburn, that her dojo was a refuge for militant campaigners. Suffragettes responded to the failure of the second and third Conciliation Bills by disguising themselves as shoppers, whipping out their toffee hammers and smashing the windows of around four hundred shops on Oxford Street and Piccadilly. As Rappaport notes, some shops had stocked suffragette paraphernalia and this protest was a test to shopowners, reminding them of a debt they owed to their loyal female customers, to use their voting rights to punish the Liberal government.<sup>34</sup> Edith's dojo was, so to speak, a convenient *stone's throw* away from the action. When women returned to Garrud's dojo from their campaigns, incriminating items were hidden under the floorboards, under the exercise mats. If police officers appeared at the door, Edith told them that they were interrupting a ladies-only jujitsu class. Only one old man was permitted to enter and he left, seeing nothing suspicious (*The Militant Suffragettes*, p. 167). As the above interview shows, Garrud sneakily subverted contemporary codes of etiquette. What is also particularly compelling is that the jujitsu class was a respectable mask for aggressive campaigns such as

stone-throwing, which suggests that jujitsu was by then considered an acceptable pursuit for women.

Edith is often portrayed as a heroic suffragette, an empowering example from Edwardian history. By the 1960s she chose to present herself as the woman who ignored the air raid sirens and bravely stood in her garden, shaking her fist at Hitler's bombers as they flew over her house. To what extent did she merely don the mantel of militant feminism and align women's self-defence with the suffrage cause to drum up business? For whatever reason, she did not evade the Census, a campaign which was spearheaded by the WFL of which she was a member. As one commentator observed: 'I am not aware that she worries much about the vote or anything like that; she does not take a leading part in their meetings, but [...] it is she who is teaching the other members of the art of ju-jutsu.'<sup>35</sup>

She seems however to have enjoyed the excitement and the publicity. The *Daily Mail* famously coined the derogatory term 'suffragette' in 1906 (which was adopted by militant campaigners) to differentiate the WSPU from the more restrained NUWSS; in 1909 *Health and Strength* magazine devised a new label: 'jujutsuffragette'. Edith Garrud is mentioned in 'Ju-jutsuffragettes: A New Terror for the London Police', around half a year before the publication of *Ann Veronica*. She helped to fashion the image of the militant suffrage campaigner with martial arts skills to the extent that *Punch* represented the archetypal campaigner in 'The Suffragette That Knew Jiu-jitsu: The Arrest', which is the front cover of this book.<sup>36</sup> In the *Punch* cartoon, the ju-jutsuffragette is a feminine, tiny figure, representing what Wells calls those 'minute figures of determined women at war with the universe' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 233). This cartoon represents, to quote Edith, 'what might be if women learn to defend themselves when unjustly treated'.<sup>37</sup> The image depicts a petite but feisty lady who flexes her muscles and invites a group of cowering police officers to arrest her. Behind her we see her victims. One officer hangs off the railings, another is impaled on spikes while two officers lie on the ground around her. In response, their colleagues cower from this solitary 'ju-jutsuffragette' whose discarded hat symbolizes mental frenzy at a time when to walk around hatless was not considered acceptable. There is also a dog-whip at her feet. At the editor's request, the image was reprinted alongside Edith's article on women's self-defence, entitled 'Damsel versus Desperado', which appeared in the summer edition of *Health and Strength* of 1910.<sup>38</sup> The woman in the cartoon was tiny and determined but she was also physically capable of defending herself. Like the suffragettes adopting the

scathing *Daily Mail* sobriquet, Mrs Garrud took the *Punch* image into her heart and lovingly showed the cartoon, pasted inside her scrapbook, to Godfrey Winn. It is very much hoped that this scrapbook will resurface.

The up-market *Sketch* contained an article with a set of photographs featuring Edith Garrud putting locks on a ‘policeman’ but pointed out to readers that ‘it should be explained that those Suffragettes who learn ju-jitsu do not do so with any idea of scrimmaging with the police, but they feel that it is good that they should know how to protect themselves, and, if necessary, throw “unpleasant young men” out of their meetings’.<sup>39</sup> (See Figure 5.1.) Rosemary T. VanArsdel argues that: ‘Women’s periodicals [of the 1880s and 1890s] that specialized in the personal interview usually were instrumental in urging women of these decades to look beyond their traditional roles, to dare, to venture, to take risks, and the example offered in the interview provided one of the chief encouragements’.<sup>40</sup> VanArsdel’s study focuses on women’s periodicals; however, Garrud appeared in publications which had mixed-sex readerships. Her publicity stunt was more than a mission to encourage women: it was an endeavour to influence male readers to conceptualize femininity in more dynamic terms (in opposition to images of hobble-skirted women of the era). In her photographs for *Sketch*, the calm and composed Mrs Garrud adds a touch of elegance to the hand-to-hand combats that came to represent the militants’ struggle for the vote. At the time that Edith appeared in the papers, hat brims could easily reach 24 inches. Only when she is grappling on the ground does her enormous hat eventually fall. Thus in Garrud’s vision, women preserve their ladylike qualities.<sup>41</sup> Wells cheekily but sympathetically portrays Ann Veronica metonymically as ‘all hat and ideas’ (*Ann Veronica*, p. 27), and on the brink of ‘war’ with her father. While she demonstrates her jujitsu skills against Mr Ramage, when she is later arrested during the Trojan Horse raid on Parliament, Ann Veronica’s knowledge of martial arts mysteriously vanishes. Wells does not depict her using jujitsu against the policeman which is probably indicative of his misgivings about portraying militant suffragette heroism. She experiences feelings of ‘wild disgust’ and helplessness as she is arrested and attacked with mud, ‘draggled’ and ‘insulted beyond redemption’ (*Ann Veronica*, pp. 169–171). By contrast, in her interview with Godfrey Winn, Edith Garrud recounted being told by a policeman that she was creating an ‘obstruction’ during a demonstration near the House of Commons. ‘Excuse me, it’s you who are making an obstruction,’ she responded. Pretending, in a ladylike gesture, to drop her handkerchief, she threw the policeman over her shoulder, and



Figure 5.1 Edith Garrud in 'If You Want to Earn Some Time Throw a Policeman', Sketch, July 1910, p. 425. Reproduced with kind permission from Mary Evans Picture Library.

then slipped into the crowd ('Dear Mrs Garrud', p. 22). How much of this memory is mediated by time is debatable but Edith did at the time propound the image of the heroic female campaigner versus the policeman in the *Sketch* piece.

In suffragette parades, campaigners dressed as Joan of Arc or Boadicea thus retold history as *herstory* through suffragette pageantry. As R.W. Connell has argued, 'women are presumed unable to compete in the masculine world of violence and are not legitimate participants in the exchange of physical aggression'.<sup>42</sup> Wells and the female campaigners considered in this chapter sought to reinstate women in the public and political arenas by demonstrating their capacity to protect themselves, although Wells disapproved of the more brazen stunts organized by suffragette militants. Sidney Low's observations in *Votes for Women* that 'fighting is not a question of physical strength at all, but of skill, coolness, and practice'<sup>43</sup> demonstrate the importance of jujitsu and other forms of minimum force for tackling the argument that women did not deserve the vote because they did not fight for their country.

Campaigners believed that the vote gave women a way of changing laws which had been made by men on behalf of men at the expense of women. Garrud argued that jujitsu gave women a method of changing nature. As biologists Patrick Geddes and J. Arthur Thomson had written in their popular book, *The Evolution of Sex* (1889), among the higher animals 'males are more active, energetic, eager, passionate, and variable; the females more passive, conservative, sluggish, and stable'. The former are 'katabolic'; the latter 'anabolic'. They argued that these attributes will not change through time.<sup>44</sup> In the cabinet particulier scene in *Ann Veronica*, male and female strength is equalized through jujitsu and Edith argued that such active characteristics in jujitsu such as 'quickness [and] vitality' will win the day. In a piece for *Votes for Women*, Mrs Garrud wrote that 'physical force seems the only thing in which women have not demonstrated their equality to men, and whilst we are waiting for the evolution which is slowly taking place and bringing about that equality, we might just as well take time by the forelock and use science, otherwise ju-jitsu'.<sup>45</sup> Her belief in evolution characterized by parity between the genders may have unsettled male readers. As Sally Ledger's book notes, 'physically masculine New Women in *Punch* were accompanied by pictures of correspondingly effeminate men'.<sup>46</sup> Her vision prompted her to write 'Damsel versus Desperado', appearing in *Health and Strength*. She situates her fictional self-defence scenarios in a deserted country lane and has her money-laden girl-jujitsuka attacked

by 'a rascally hooligan' and a villainous 'dastardly ruffian', the latter armed with a knife.<sup>47</sup> The hooligan is reduced to 'squeals' and is 'thrown off as a "thing" beneath contempt' while the ruffian's arms and legs are tied into a knot, preventing him from 'savagely' beating her.<sup>48</sup> Garrud consoles her male readers: only violent men – 'things beneath contempt who are not worthy of that exalted title'<sup>49</sup> – are to be emasculated by the new dainty, but physically capable, woman. Essentially a business-woman, Edith Garrud would have realized she needed to tread a fine line between attracting rebellious female pupils and appeasing her male supporters. She emphasized that 'policemen, on the whole, are the greatest friends and admirers the woman suffragette has' and 'look after them, resent[ing] any impertinence offered [to them]' ('Mrs Garrud Replies to Her Critics', p. 284). In a later article of 1911, derived from a performance given at Garrud's dojo, jujitsu is extended to a working-class context. It is a pictorial essay, accompanied by a narrative at the bottom of the page. A coster's wife not only defends herself from a beating by her drunken husband, but also knocks her violent spouse to the ground.<sup>50</sup> Caird's Viola and Wells's Ann Veronica need not feel guilt for defending themselves with force, for, as Edith's piece argues, the men who target them do not deserve sympathy. Mrs Garrud responded to criticisms that women's jujitsu is only effective because attackers are too chivalrous to punch the female jujitsuka and thereby trounce her: 'Does that mean that should Mr. Evans so far forget his manly chivalry as to try to snatch a kiss from a girl, and she promptly gave him a "head twist" in order to avoid the kiss and show him she resents the liberty – Mr. Evans would knock the girl down?' 'It is', she argues, 'the lack of manliness in many that makes women obliged to take their own parts [...]'" ('Garrud Replies to her Critics', p. 284). So, Mrs Garrud brazenly appeals to, yet tests, the limits of chivalry whilst at the same time envisaging a world beyond sexual assault, a place in which all a woman walking down a lonely road had to fear was the theft of her valuables. Moreover, as if in answer to Craik's essays on women, Garrud and Wells show how women can protect themselves more vigorously without losing sight of their femininity, donning the 'armour of men' but without 'mutilating' their 'womanhood'.

# **Part III**

## **The Pre-War Female Gaze**

# 6

## Elizabeth Robins and the ‘White Slave Trade’ Panic

### Following Threads

‘Have we not the white slave trade in our midst?’

Mona Caird, *The Daughters of Danaus* (1894)

It’s night in the city. Along a dimly lit side road waits a cab, its open door persuades the passerby to enter while its red brake lights glare threateningly at us. The following words are sucked into the open door: *Know What You’re Getting Into?* This image, along with other more shocking pictures was in recent years released as part of the Mayor of London’s Safer Travel at Night campaign which was launched in 2002 to caution city-goers (particularly women) against accepting rides in unlicensed minicabs. The tagline of this poster may as well be the subtitle to Elizabeth Robins’s *Where Are You Going To...?* (1913), a novel in which two young women catch a ride at Victoria Station and are lured into a horrendous fate.

Appearing as *My Little Sister* in the United States, *WAYGT?* was generally received with resounding praise, described by the press as ‘a burning tract for the times’, and a ‘true work of art’.<sup>1</sup> According to *Votes for Women*, *WAYGT?* ought to be recommended reading for anyone who could not understand what motivated women ‘to go to prison for the sake of their enfranchisement’ (*Votes for Women*, 17 Jan 1913, p. 228). There was a voracious demand for this novel. During its first six months in the United States over 18,000 copies were sold while, in England, 25,000 were ordered within the first few weeks of its publication (*Elizabeth Robins, 1862-1952: Actress, Novelist, Feminist*, p. 211).

A major influence on Robins was her friend, W. T. Stead. Robins was composing her first draft of *WAYGT?* in the spring of 1912, a heady

time when West End shops rang with the sounds of splintering glass. A month later, the *Titanic* disaster claimed Stead's life. Robins described him as a gallant protector of the vulnerable: 'He saw the women and children into the boats. And he seems to have left some silent charge behind, that other lifeboats should be sent out to save the women who are launched on angrier seas in a blacker night.'<sup>2</sup> An international anti-white-slavery movement was already under way. Backed by various feminists, friends of Stead and organizations such as the National Vigilance Association, the Criminal Law Amendment Bill became an Act in December 1912 ('The White Slave Act'). Amongst its conditions, police could arrest suspected procurers without obtaining a warrant, and men who were convicted of preying on young girls could be whipped.

White slavery, WAYGT?'s theme, was a term which dated back to the mid-nineteenth century, describing the plight of child workers whose services were auctioned off to employers. By the 1880s white slavery was associated with the panic over girls abducted and sold into prostitution. It is often argued that the white slave phenomenon was a moral panic, in which the press is mobilized by escalating numbers of accounts of specific crimes perpetrated by 'folk devils' who are readily distinguished by certain features. During the mid-Victorian, anti-garrotting moral panic, garotters (criminals who temporarily strangled gentlemen in order to effect a robbery) were depicted as beetle-browed, hulking, cloth-capped miscreants.<sup>3</sup> White-slave traffickers allegedly duped, drugged and violated vulnerable poor girls whose loss of honour prevented them from returning home, forcing them to work as prostitutes. Wealthy gentlemen became melodramatic villains, the victims' guardians were shown as neglectful and procuresses were styled as evil fairy godmothers. There was another folk devil, too. According to Malverv, the would-be pimp was marked out by his style of dress: he is 'sleek-looking, well-dressed' but also 'flashy-looking' and 'vulgar' (*The White Slave Market*, p. 203 and p. 205). Malverv recounts such an attired 'foreigner' attempting to address her in a train. As Charles van Onselen notes, the term 'foreigner' was in general another term for a Jew. Onselen's biography of Jewish serial criminal and international white slave trafficker, Joseph Silver (born Joseph Lis), shows Silver prowling London's East End in the 1890s looking for young victims whilst dressed in the latest style of suit and wearing a fob watch.<sup>4</sup> He is dressed to impress, and to deceive. Like other moral panics, the white slavery scare may well have been exaggerated (not to mention influenced by racial prejudice), but Onselen's biography nonetheless describes a real

individual who slipped in and out of this underworld in the years spanning the publication of 'Maiden Tribute' and WAYGT?

In a blistering attack on Emmeline Pankhurst's anti-white-slavery campaign, Billington-Greig argued in 'The Truth about White Slavery' that there was no substantive evidence for the scale of the panic. A month after her article was published, Queenie Gerald, who had been living on the 'immoral earnings' of other women, was sentenced on 10 July 1913 under the new White Slave Traffic Act to three months' imprisonment while the identities of the men who had visited her premises were shielded; as suffragette literature protested, Queenie Gerald was not punished sufficiently.

Robins's own novel was based on hearsay, inspired by a story about two girls which Amber Reeves's mother had told her. The book was intended to be a collaboration between her and John Masefield, who was seventeen years her junior. He wrote her a fan letter in response to *Votes for Women!* in November 1909 just as Wells's novel about the affair between a single woman and a married man in *Ann Veronica* was causing a stir in the *Spectator*. Although Robins's diary states that they only met eleven times, Masefield wrote her 260 letters during their half-year, role-play relationship in which he enlightened her on his sexuality, about 'the wild beast in man'. As John emphasizes, this information exceeded the necessary material needed for writing a book on white slavery (*Elizabeth Robins: Staging a Life, 1862–1952*, p. 178), but knowing more about the proclivities of masculine sexual, predatory nature may well have allowed Robins to more effectively lace skeins of danger round her innocent heroines.

Desiring to know more about the lives of vulnerable women, she accompanied Major Hillyer of the Salvation Army to observe the nocturnal doings of prostitutes near Piccadilly Circus. She was troubled to learn that one girl had entered the trade under the age of consent and uncomfortably read the effects of drink and destitution on the bodies of the women and men they saw in the first pub they visited. The women's attire arrested her attention to the extent that she underlined her impressions. Some women wore 'very tight skirts' and others had 'very striking toilettes'. The women were short, their growth, she surmised, was stunted by poverty while she concluded of both the men and women: 'The eyes of nearly all show the effects of drinking'.<sup>5</sup> At that time of this exploration into the seamy sides of London, she was staying with her friend and fellow suffragette and writer, Zoe (Margaret) Hadwen. When Robins returned home, Zoe was amused by her extraordinary dress but Robins was distracted by her experiences that evening: '[I]f I laughed I was far from merry. Those faces.'<sup>6</sup>

## Shutting In

'It isn't safe to be an *an exquisite womanly creature* in this rotten world.'

Sarah Grand, *The Heavenly Twins* (1893)

WAYGT? is set in contemporary England with references to the royal family, telephones and motorcars. Yet the main characters live in deep countryside. Most of the novel describes the childhood and adolescence of two sisters, the unnamed narrator and her sister, Bettina, who is two years her junior. In a draft of the play, kept in the Fales Library, the mother's surname is Dorrien and the narrator is, significantly, named Honor. The opening of Robins's novel echoes Malvery's *The White Slave Market*. Robins was acquainted with Malvery and together they formed part of the Council of the National Association of Women's Lodgings which Mary Higgs had founded. *The White Slave Market* begins with an image of her children playing against a backdrop of blue sky while the start of Robins's novel describes the sisters' infancy in a cottage called Duncombe House. If Grand's innocent maiden, Edith Beale, 'sparkles' (*The Heavenly Twins*, p. 155), then Bettina herself is the sunlight whose 'shining curls' (WAYGT?, p. 3) and effervescent personality radiate warmth as she frolics around the garden. Extracted from a song that Bettina sings periodically throughout the course of her life, the title of the novel lures us with a childlike air: 'Where are you going to, my pretty maid?' Constantly modified, this ditty works on us through the book as we watch Bettina gambol blindly to her doom.

As she grows older, the narrator learns that their mother is receiving a pension only while she lives. They cannot be true Ruskinian queens as their house is rented and will one day have to fend for themselves. Their mother is chokingly over-protective and has an obsessive-compulsive fear of germs from telephones and fears Betty being handled. Like Edith Beale in *The Heavenly Twins*, this cosseting does not save her from danger. As *Votes for Women* glowingly noted: 'Miss Robins has placed her terrible indictment of society, not where economic pressure is most obvious, in the home of the sweated labourer, but where it is cloaked by a romantic vision of chivalry and protection, in the home of the carefully guarded young girl, where ignorance is encouraged as innocence and chaperonage is considered to spell safety.'<sup>7</sup> The *New York Times* felt that the story was readily universalizable, lamenting that young women were still given 'inadequate training', were brought up as 'hot-house flowers' and were 'ignorant and therefore helpless'.<sup>8</sup> The novel argues

that a girl must have strong willpower to break such confines, and fortunately the narrator learns to cope. When a doctor is urgently needed, she overrides her mother's obsession with public telephones but her capability is tested because she knows little of the outside world.

This novel is replete with ill omens as carrion crows draw nearer. As in Anne Brontë's *Tenant of Wildfell Hall* and *Agnes Grey* (1847) the presence of motifs of blood sports indicate malign influences. In *WAYGT?*, an early inkling of the cut-and-thrust of the adult world is indicated by the reference to a hunt which is taking place just outside the protective perimeter of greenery in which they live. Judging by the butterflies that inhabit the garden in which they play, this nearby natural world is a microcosm of the world that lies beyond this rural haven; as Robins indicates, they will encounter 'ordinary red admirals and spotted footmen and painted ladies' (*WAYGT?*, p. 191) in human form later on in the novel.

Bettina's mother's overprotective nature is emphasized in the novel's opening pages. When the girls and their nurse answer an enquiry from a female passerby, their mother's protectiveness is alarmingly aroused. Both Helen Huntingdon and Bettina's mother are driven by such forceful apprehensions of danger when they see strangers speaking to their children that their restrained natures are cast aside, along with their headgear and hairpins. The strange man who enters, like a knight into the Sleeping-Beauty garden in Brontë's novel, is Gilbert Markham. He is not kidnapping but rescuing Helen's son, Arthur, from a fall from a tree. We never learn whether Bettina's mother's specific fears surrounding the lady visitor were founded but the novel later informs us that her concerns over her daughters' safety had some justification.

It is clear that the natures of both lone mothers are influenced by past trauma. Bettina's father earned a Victoria Cross in the Sudan and died whilst hunting tiger cubs. Helen Huntingdon dons the widow's weeds to assume the mantle of anonymity and social respectability after running away from her husband. The mothers impart a sense of specific dangers that they fear to their children. Having suffered her husband's attempts to corrupt Arthur, Helen accordingly teaches her son to loathe alcohol, to respect his mother and to take care of animals. As John argues, Hillyer's comment to Robins that most prostitutes had been abused by their fathers appeared in *WAYGT?* in the form of an unnamed trauma only obliquely alluded to by the mother in the novel (*Elizabeth Robins: Staging a Life, 1862–1952*, p. 188). After her own mother's death, a relative was brought in to manage the household but instead of looking after the four-year-old girl 'she ministered to all his [the father's]

whims and perversities' (*WAYGT?*, p. 104). As she concludes: 'I had seen a great deal of evil before I was grown' (*WAYGT?*, p. 104). *Convert* showed that speaking out did not come naturally to women as they had been taught to keep silence.

Sunshine is innocence, while sexual danger is alluded to by stormy and destructive weather. Colonel Dover briefly smudges the picture of the rural idyll. He is the 'roll of thunder behind the cloud' (*WAYGT?*, p. 16). A widow with fond memories of her husband, Bettina's mother is 'afraid of giving in' (*WAYGT?*, p. 11) to Dover and becoming his wife. As we saw in the chapter on *Azrael*, Robins's fellow member of the Women's Suffrage Writers' League, Mona Caird, had famously compared marriage to prostitution. Already in delicate health and secretly fearful for the family's financial future, Bettina's mother nevertheless cringes from giving her body to a man she does not love. She pretends not to hear Dover's pleas to enter her home during a fierce storm which the girls fear will break down their house, just as the narrator fears Dover will violate her all-female domestic sanctum. As Amanda Vickery has argued, the house was considered in bodily terms whereby 'unglazed holes in the earliest primitive houses were known as the wind eye, the origin of our window' therefore 'if windows were eyes, the doors represented the mouth, vagina or anus, and the hearth the breast, heart, soul or womb'.<sup>9</sup>

Dover's pounding ceases when he is killed by lightning. However, he effects a destabilizing ingress into their small world because the tree under which he shelters is 'riven from root to crotch' (*WAYGT?*, p. 15). The men who carry Dover's body into their unstained home also soil the floor with their dirty boots. As Vickery argues, 'ink thrown on windows and excrement daubed on the door were visceral attacks on the person, and were read as such'.<sup>10</sup> The significance of this act as a form of physical assault is alluded to using one of the many ellipses she also uses to the entrance of adult concerns and the growing knowledge of threat: 'Their feet left muddy marks in the hall. ...' (*WAYGT?*, p. 15). His dead, 'fixed reproachful eyes' (*WAYGT?*, p. 15) burn with masculine sexual aggression, focused on their mother, unlike Elias P. Huteson's staked, and therefore inert, eyes. In the play of *WAYGT?*, the mother attempts to tell the narrator of an occasion when a trusted male acquaintance showed her a different, darker side to his nature. She likens the experience to strolling around a corner in her garden and encountering a 'wild beast'. She says that such an experience can be avoided by reading books and by using one's instinct.<sup>11</sup> Where there is dirt, there is danger.

When the mother and her daughters venture out on winter walks, they are often hastened home by an ominous white fog which glides

towards them 'like the ghost of an inundating sea', pierced by a bird's cries which act as 'a danger signal' (WAYGT?, p. 17). *The New York Times* found this description particularly effective: '[O]utside a danger walks, not alluded to, but guarded against, and we too seek to hasten back with Bettina and her sister and her mother as they return from their walks or visits, to shut and bar behind us the strong, comforting doors.'<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, a weighty sense of insecurity remains, as a number of images associated with invasion suggest. Bettina's mother does not trust the servants with locking up and evinces an urge to control this process herself. As with ellipses, dashes of varying length are also employed to denote worrying but unspeakable thoughts: "Tell them not to forget to put the chain on the door." Oh the times we had been told that! "One may easily think a stiff bolt has gone home, and all the while —" (WAYGT?, pp. 113–116). The mother may distrust the servants because they may have appeared to her to have looser definitions of security, sharing space, open doorways and buildings with numerous neighbours (*Crimes of Outrage*, p. 56).

If battening down the hatches was traditionally considered a safeguard against burglars, the saying of prayers and performance of magical rituals was believed to ward off other nocturnal intruders from the supernatural world. With the growth of scientific knowledge, developments in gas and electric lighting, the expansion of policing, and later opening times for shops and henceforth greater opportunities for nocturnal urban strolling, the hours lost to ghouls, witches and trolls could be reclaimed. Nevertheless, during the nineteenth century, a public fascination with ghost and vampire stories was unleashed, not to mention the craze in Spiritualism. In fiction, the middle-class home became the site of hauntings and could be invaded by the ghosts of past traumatic events. A writer whose work excellently embodies the domestic Gothic phenomenon is the American writer Mary E. Wilkins Freeman whose ghost stories mainly feature female characters who discover that there is something amiss with the swaying rose bush in the garden, the shadows on the wall and the chintz that keeps changing colour. In WAYGT? Robins describes the nightly fortification of Duncombe House as a process of shutting in, and employs the domestic Gothic to create a presentiment of forces at large: 'Another enemy, craftier, deadlier than any that might haunt the heath at dusk, had got into the house' (WAYGT?, p. 18). This ghostly presence is a *persona non grata* and evading this Bogeyman's grasp becomes a child's game: 'At bed-time, in dim passages, you felt his breath on the back of your neck. He never faced you. Always he was behind you. But he was never at his deadliest

while you had your shoes and stockings on. He waited behind the curtains, or under the bed, to clutch at your bare feet as you jumped in' (WAYGT?, pp. 18–19). Here, the traditional fear of the night as a disorientating force is evoked in which 'formless fears' sneak around in 'shadowy places' (WAYGT?, p. 21) and the 'enemy breath[es] in the dark' (WAYGT?, p. 303).

Returning to the image of the *wind eye*, Robins alludes to a risk of contagion seeping in through the window. Bettina's mother cossets her as she believes that Bettina suffers from fragile health and shuns draughts. Caird likened a state that overprotected its people to parents who 'keep their whole family in unventilated rooms, because now and then somebody, in a weak state of health, might take cold from an open window' with the result that 'the ordinary, every-day, necessary good is sacrificed in order to guard against the possibility of an exceptional evil' (*The Morality of Marriage*, p. 151). The narrator shields her little sister from sights of suffering which arouse Bettina's distaste. Their mother's horror of disease and associated destitution is apparent when the sudden presence of a rain-sodden hop-picker threatens, in Bettina's mother's view, to 'bring[ ] a whiff of the sick world's infection through [their] windows' (WAYGT?, p. 41). The unwelcome visitor is shooed away. The scene is comparable to the incident in *The Heavenly Twins* where Edith Beale and her mother encounter a destitute woman in the road but, despite their Christian beliefs and horror at seeing suffering, fail to help her proactively beyond suggesting she enter a workhouse to seek shelter. Robins further accentuates the social message of the novel through the narrator's growing critical stance towards her mother's lack of consideration of those less fortunate. The narrator compares the pleas of the starving hop-picker to Bettina's fussy dismissal of her pudding and is ashamed when her mother sacks a kindly teenage housemaid for her illicit relationship with a neighbouring labourer's boy. Therefore, through witnessing these two acts of unfair dismissal the narrator becomes acquainted with the harsher side of respectability. In reference to the American title of the novel, *My Little Sister*, the mother has, in this way, neglected her socially disadvantaged sisters.

When the narrator is around seventeen years old, Bettina strikes up a friendship with their landlord's breezily self-assured daughter, Hermione, who initiates Bettina into her world of men and motor-cars. The signs are inauspicious, however. Hermione rides a horse to death and whips dogs, acts which are so often a sign of an untrustworthy nature. As Bettina and the narrator can see from a photograph, Hermione's fiancé, Guy Whitby-Dawson, looks far from savoury.

Whitby-Dawson has insufficient funds to marry, so their engagement is a long one. Hermione's influence is not for the better as she draws out Bettina's blasé flirtatious side, attracting the smitten Ranny Dallas who protectively forbids her to dance with a Captain Boyne, knowing the man is not to be trusted. There are no real heroes in this novel. Ranny is childlike while Eric Annan, the narrator's suitor, is effectively married to his scientific research and opposed to her bid to study medicine.

In a key, overlooked passage, we see the narrator's growing awareness of the secret fears that have dogged her mother. When Bettina does not return from an evening visit to the Helmstones' residence, the narrator fears for the first time the Helmstone's head chauffeur who she surmises might be taking Bettina home. She tries to dismiss this apprehension, which she defines as a 'sudden, indefinable dread' and a 'childish thought' (*WAYGT?*, p. 117) but then ruminates that his over-worked underling, 'a weakling, and unhappy' man who might turn out to be 'evil – desperate' and exploit his power over Bettina (*WAYGT?*, p. 118). She also considers what might the influence of alcohol on the behaviour 'decent' men be, a thought which is once again concluded with a long dash. The shift from innocence to understanding and a fledgling ability to protect herself is apparent in this excerpt when she consoles her mother as to the actions of the Helmstones:

My mother was the first to speak: 'They are haphazard people, I sometimes think. ... You don't suppose they would send her back with a groom. ...?'

I said that I was sure they would not, though an hour before I would have asked, Why not? (*WAYGT?*, p. 119).

Her mother's insistence that the servants should have walked across the heath at night and brought back Bettina recalls Craik's remonstrance in 'A Woman's Thoughts About Women' against middle-class mothers risking their young maids in order to protect their daughters. As in the scene involving the dismissal of the hop-picker, Robins highlights the mother's two-faced attitude towards the protection of women. When walking alone on Redcar sands by sunset, Robins heard a man's footfall behind her and worried that he might think her a servant, a fear which points to the vulnerability of women in service.<sup>13</sup> During the same evening in which Bettina is out late, Robins's narrator learns more, albeit obliquely, from her distracted mother about a frightening burglary in her old home. The narrator's mindfulness is contrasted with her mother's requests for assurance. Her mother's gaze is that of a traumatized

victim, a woman with a knowledge of criminality beyond her daughters' little enclosed world who sees in her fanciful mind's eye the spectres of past crimes: 'Her eyes looked through me, as though I were a ghost, as though the bodyless Dread she looked on once again for an instant – as though *that* were the most real presence in the room' (*WAYGT?*, p. 117). Her expressive eyes vary in expression. One moment they are 'veiled' and 'heavy' and the next they carry a 'flash of bright fixity', suggestive of an 'old listening fear', giving the impression that she 'heard more than we – a something behind the music' of the creaking house. Yet, the whites of her eyes 'see' more than the 'the pale blue iris', which suggests that however intently she looks for danger, she averts her gaze when it appears later in the novel (*WAYGT?*, pp. 106, 19–20).

### 'Houses of Hell'

'What could they do? – except telephone again to the police the vague and non-committal fact of a girl decoyed and lost to sight in the labyrinth of London.'

(*WAYGT?*, p. 279)

John notes that while 'Maiden Tribute' emphasized the villainy of the mother who sold her child and shifted the focus of the blame away from men, in *WAYGT?* Robins refocuses on male sexuality as the force that keeps white slavery going, while Bland writes, 'feminists in the 1912 campaign tended to cast men generically in the role of the potential abductors of any woman; white slavery was another item in the inventory of sins committed by males against all females' (*Elizabeth Robins: Staging a Life, 1862–1952*, p. 189; *Banishing the Beast*, p. 301). Yet, in practice it is the women in position of responsibility or influence who shape, whether by accident or design, the dreadful consequences of the two sisters.

By introducing a shady dressmaker into her story, Robins secures with a double-knot the fastenings which link two sheltered, middle-class girls with the London underworld. When Bettina's mother refuses to allow her to go on a yachting tour with the Helmstones, she encourages the narrator to write to Aunt Josephine (Mrs Harborough), the girls' paternal aunt. This musty dame is beguiled by a photograph of Bettina and invites her to stay in London with her in her flat in fashionable Lowndes Square during the time of King George V's coronation. The narrator is to accompany Bettina. On Hermione's recommendation, Madame Aurore sews the girls' dresses.

Aurore's role in the story is strongly scented with fairy-tale references. As Gates has insightfully observed, this novel recalls Christina Rossetti's fairy tale poem, *Goblin Market* (1862), in which two sisters, Lizzie and Laura, are tempted by goblins to buy their luscious fruits. Laura succumbs and eats the fruit – an act which has often been considered sexually symbolic – but her sister redeems her. As Gates points out, Bettina, who plays the role of the fallen sister (who has presumably been tempted by Hermione), is not so lucky (*Elizabeth Robins, 1862–1952: Actress, Novelist, Feminist*, p. 209). Aurore is a 'yellow-hair[ed]' female goblin, with 'boot-button' eyes (WAYGT?, p. 211) whose neck is scarred and doused in cheap perfume which pollutes the air. Like the monkey's paw in W. W. Jacobs's 1902 successful horror story of the same name, Aurore is a withered unlucky charm. There is a suspicious disconnection between her vulgar and cheap appearance and the gorgeous dresses she vends. The girls' mother dislikes and avoids the intruder while the narrator is mostly hoodwinked by Aurore's feigned interest in the girls' outfits and concern for their financial circumstances, yet observes her greedy overuse of coals. Bettina, impressed by Aurore's wares, disregards the dressmaker's faults and divulges details about their lives, making her mother uncomfortable.

When the girls ask Aurore about her life in London, Aurore's response is curiously snappish and she adds that the maintenance of virtue depends on one's circumstances: '[Y]ou can be *extrêmement* good here. More. She would go so far as to say you must be a genius to discover how to be bad here' (WAYGT?, p. 214). There is, as far as Aurore is concerned, '[s]omesing in ze air' in insalubrious places that turns good people to crime (WAYGT?, p. 215). This recalls the imagery of rotten air entering the house, of a miasma of sin drifting like the mist across the fields around Duncombe. Aurore has been secretly commissioned by a brothelkeeper to literally groom unwitting girls for the trade, work which pays for her luxurious material. As she muses, the girls and their mother are only virtuous and respectable because they have not been driven to crime, a remark which echoes *Mrs Warren's Profession*. Like Joseph Silver, Aurore uses fashionable clothing to lure her bait. Aurore's finery spells Bettina's downfall; like the goblins in Rossetti's poem, Aurore's disappearance offers no opportunity for retribution. Despite the mother's efforts, a witch has indeed got past security, invaded Duncombe House and escaped.

In a previous chapter, we looked at the dangers of travelling; this section considers the perils on arrival. The scene in which the girls arrived in London presents itself as a lesson in making sure you know who you

are meeting. Aurore pilfers the only photograph the girls have of Aunt Josephine so that the brothel owner can impersonate her when she meets the two sisters at Victoria Station. 'Maiden Tribute' describes the railway station as a key meeting point between insiders, who decoy girls into cabs ('Maiden Tribute', 6 July 1885, p. 5). A girl of Bettina's age came to see her wealthy uncle in London, 'when a woman, addressing her by name, asked *her where she was going*. [my italics] "To my uncle, who lives at –". She was taken to a brothel ('Maiden Tribute', 8 July 1885, p. 4). This excerpt poignantly features a modified version of title of Robins's novel. Another contemporary source discussed a story about two girls who were to be met by an aunt en route to a dentist. Despite the efforts of a detective, they are never found.<sup>14</sup> In 'Maiden Tribute', the woman who had lured the girl to a brothel had read the name on the girl's boxes – nowadays parents are appealed to not to dress children in clothing bearing their names as this would give an attacker the opportunity to approach them on familiar terms. Malvery argued that: 'Every railway station is the haunt of the procurer of a female creature of this species' and while the men can be dressed as clergymen, 'their behaviours, faces, and manner, if watched for a little while, generally give them away' (*The White Slave Market*, p. 233). The casual physiognomist should be prepared.

The narrator ponders over the differences between the lady she meets at Victoria Station and the Aunt Josephine of the photograph. A game of gazes takes place between two women who operate on either side of the law. The narrator is aware that 'Aunt Josephine' watches a 'dowdy woman' who is in turn observing her. Is she a detective? The narrator knows that there is something worth watching but she does not know the meaning of this ocular exchange.

An East London paper discussed predators 'resort[ing] to the process of going about in cabs, snatching up girls, placing them inside, and carrying them off to their den'.<sup>15</sup> Robins's personal notes about her excursion with Major Hillyer present taxis against the night sky as an ominous presence, in which prostitute and client are driven away: 'We saw the faces pass and repass. Then up a side street taxis – the couple were put in and drove away. 2 more got into taxis brought boldly up in the glaring light.'<sup>16</sup> 'Unarmed Citizens May Here Learn How to Foil the Ubiquitous Thug' describes the precaution one could take when travelling alone in a stranger's vehicle: 'If you take a taxi, by the way, note the number of the machine; it may come useful if the chauffeur is a crook and something happens to you.'

In 1914, the Coronet Theatre applied to the Lord Chamberlain for permission to stage *WAYGT?* The verdict of the Lord Chamberlain's

committee was that the play was 'sillier than the speeches and articles to which it owes its existence' but nonetheless was 'sincerely meant as a warning exposure of a real, if rare, social evil'. The novel featured a brothel scene, and was 'undesirable for further representation before a mixed audience' and staging it could not be justified especially as *Mrs Warren's Profession* had been censored.<sup>17</sup> The supposed home of 'Aunt Josephine' is a brothel, a prison which is hermetically sealed from police interference, an unholy *closed space*, 'as silent as a church on a week-day' (WAYGT?, p. 231). While the narrator's mother barred the door to outside threats, 'Aunt Josephine' bars the windows to keep in the girls and is therefore the darker inversion of the narrator's watchful mother. The iron rods that divide the window are decorative and distance the clients from feelings of guilty unease. When the girls are at dinner with the clients, the narrator's pensive-looking dinner partner awkwardly dismisses her enquiries about the windows and tells her that the building was once 'a private madhouse' (WAYGT?, p. 250).

The British public had adorned the streets with Coronation bunting in the summer of 1911, but an alternative flag trails from Robins's narrative. In the long mirrors in the brothel, the sisters see multiple reflections of themselves wearing white, green and purple forget-me not flowers (WAYGT?, p. 239). This image of the duplicated duo conjures up the ghosts of other girls who have been dressed by Aurore's hands and ended up in this sinister palace of mirrors. The colours in which they are adorned and dressed appear throughout the novel in the form of Bettina's green shoes; the 'heathery sea' which surrounds their cottage; *The Emerald Isle* that the narrator plays on the piano; blonde-haired Bettina's pearl and emerald pendant and the lavender and verbena their mother places by the white paper of their wardrobe-shelves. They are the colours of the WSPU – purple (dignity), green (hope), white (purity), a colour scheme which was devised in anticipation of Women's Sunday. Robins wore these colours to WSPU parades and was keen on marketing the cause through clothing and branded accessories. WSPU-themed jewellery was a fashion statement. Emmeline Pankhurst was given amethysts, emeralds and pearls in a necklace by the WSPU following her first two prison sentences in 1908. Zoe, whose choice of garden flowers was influenced by the suffragette colours, gave Robins yellow irises and lilies (the WWSL colours) to take to the 1911 Coronation Suffrage Procession.<sup>18</sup>

By weaving these colours into the lives of her characters, she links the subject of WAYGT? to the suffrage cause. 'We feel that we can only fight the brothel by the ballot, we can only reduce prostitution at the poll',

urged one enthusiastic reviewer.<sup>19</sup> 'To break a window is not comparable to selling an innocent girl into slavery', wrote Malvery (*The White Slave Market*, p. 67). So, Malvery evokes the civilizing offensive, under which property crimes became less harshly punished than those against the body, in order to argue for the severity of white slave trafficking in the ranking order of crimes.

The narrator cannot understand the meaning of the pornographic photographs on the walls and the words she hears, but she senses that they are significant. At dinner, the narrator hears bizarre phrases uttered and she feels 'creepy' and 'strange'. Her mother taught her French and as a result she can understand the words which have been uttered *sotto voce* in her presence. Despite her gift for foreign languages, the language of the brothel is alien to her: 'I felt like a learner in a foreign tongue. I understood the words but not the sentences' (WAYGT?, p. 242).

The dinner guests are 'The Colonel', 'The Tartar' and an unnamed rich man with a sad face who the narrator calls 'my man' as he is her neighbour at the dinner partner. The men are clearly known to each other. Caird's Philip Dendraith cuts too dashing a figure to be a completely effective representative for the evils of male sexual sadism, but Robins's villains are of a suitably unwholesome appearance. In fact, neither the Tartar nor the Colonel have any redeeming features. Reeking of brandy, the Colonel has a 'red blotchy face' and bleary eyes which imply that 'he ha[s] a cold' while purple lines run across his face like the 'tracery of very tortuous rivers on a map' (WAYGT?, p. 240). As visitors to waxworks or anatomical exhibitions would have divined, his face bears the marks of venereal disease. Here Robins indicates to us that the narrator must handle him as an explorer might navigate perilous terrain in Darkest Africa.

The Tartar is inclined to rotundity and has swollen lips, the latter being a typical physiognomic clue to his lascivious character. His head is shaped like a 'bullet' or a 'canon-ball' (WAYGT?, p. 244), which further emphasizes his seafaring background.<sup>20</sup> While the Colonel represents the army, the Tartar is a naval man. Indeed, Robins paints an unfavourable portrait of the British navy when the unhappy man tells the narrator about the navy trawling the coast of Ireland for prostitutes.

The atmosphere intensifies when Bettina remarks that the Tartar bears a strong resemblance to Whitby-Dawson who has a duelling scar from his duel with a student in Heidelberg whilst at university. The Tartar's embarrassment and the snidely cognisant comments of his peers tell us that she has guessed correctly. In *Way Stations*, Robins wrote that 'physical violence, not in women only, but in men' was 'a recrudescence of

the ape and tiger instinct that has been responsible for the thousand failures of humanity to attain a true civilisation'.<sup>21</sup> Duelling was illegal in England and even clandestine duelists would have known not only how unfashionable the practice was by the mid-Victorian era but also what risks they ran when it came to punishment. The last recorded duel to take place on British soil was in 1852, between two Frenchmen. By the 1860s, Anthony Trollope could write that 'few Englishmen fight duels in these days' and that those 'who do so are always reckoned to be fools'.<sup>22</sup> Duelling, however, flourished in Germany and was fought with pistols. The university duel, the 'Mensur', was fought with swords. Far from being an unfortunate consequence of the confrontation, the scar, the *Renommierschmiss*, was proof of the participant's bravery and ability to withstand pain and plenty of gore. Jerome K. Jerome's account of the Mensur in *Three Men on the Bummel* (1900), is chilling: 'Now and then you see a man's teeth laid bare almost to the ear, so that for the rest of the duel he appears to be grinning at one half of the spectators, his other side remaining serious; and sometimes a man's nose gets slit, which gives to him as he fights a singularly supercilious air'.<sup>23</sup>

A *Renommierschmiss* was practically a ticket into politics and influential German circles. The Tartar represents a gamut of mutually reinforcing predatory tendencies, from duelling, and possibly naval warfare, to the patronage of brothels. Onselen's biography of Joseph Silver tells us that he too had a respectable veneer but was not only a white slave trafficker but also serial offender. Among his many guises, he was a hotelier, shop owner and barber but he was also a pickpocket, smuggler, bank robber and a pathological misogynist who stole his victims' identities.<sup>24</sup> Whether we agree or disagree with Onselen's theory that Silver's criminal profile and his vehement need to punish sexually active women fit that of Jack the Ripper, what the biography does do is show that the kinds of crime depicted in *WAGYT?* to create suspense – burglary, rape, theft – could all be linked and perpetrated by the same hand. Writing about duelling, Jerome's observation that 'underneath our starched shirts there lurks the savage, with all his savage instincts untouched',<sup>25</sup> is certainly reflected in the dinner scene in *WAYGT?*. While the table is set for an expensive meal (they eat caviar), we know that the Tartar will unleash his 'savage' side later on the unknowing victims seated near him.

A social canker, the Tartar also embodies the dangers of marriage, straddling two worlds. He is Bettina's rapist and Hermione's dissipated fiancé. Elaine Showalter has argued that the panic over syphilis at the Fin de Siècle pervaded literature and can be paralleled with the AIDS crisis of the 1980s.<sup>26</sup> Cicely Hamilton (who was one of the founders of

the WWSL in 1908 and collaborated with Robins to create a stage play based on the WAYGT?) learnt about venereal disease by chance: 'Those of us who have discovered that there are risks attaching to the profession of marriage other than the natural ones of childbirth, have very often made the discovery by accident – which ought not to be. I made the discovery in that way myself while I was still very young – by the idle opening of a book which, because it was a book, was a thing to be opened and looked into. [...] I remember the thought which flashed into my mind – we are told we have got to be married, but we are never told *that!*' (*Marriage as a Trade*, p. 81). Phyllis Bottome was shamed by her classmates for her ignorance and interrogated her embarrassed mother: '[S]he took me in her arms and then and there unrolled before my horrified eyes, an amazing – a most complicated and a wholly tragic – picture of the life between the sexes. The pains of childbirth – the greater physical strength of men – their far from greater moral strength – the white slave traffic – nothing was spared me. Even worse than the alarming pictures her words evoked, was her obvious terror of the facts that she was relating to me. It was her fear and evident repulsion that shook me to the foundations of my being.' What her mother tells her makes her feel 'rage' against the 'monster'. She takes contradictory attitudes towards self-defence. She decides to pretend her mother's words are untrue yet tells herself that 'it would be wise to acquire as soon as feasible both a bulldog and a revolver' and learns 'wild feats of physical strength', wrestling schoolgirls who are older than her.<sup>27</sup> The American author, Helen Keller (1880–1968), who lost her hearing and vision to illness at the age of nineteen months, protested against what she felt was the avoidable blindness and suffering inflicted by sexual promiscuity: 'Must we leave young girls to meet the danger in the dark because we dare not turn the light upon our social wickedness? [...] Every child has a right to be told by his parents and teachers about his birth and his body, for in such knowledge lies true innocence and safety.'<sup>28</sup>

Whilst working in Manchester as a Registrar of Births and Deaths and a Poor Law Guardian, Emmeline Pankhurst saw the impact of the blight of syphilis on women's lives, recalling seeing pregnant thirteen-year-olds with venereal disease and learning how doctors kept mothers in ignorance of the cause their children's deaths.<sup>29</sup> In *The Great Scourge and How to End It* (1913) Christabel Pankhurst quoted the narrator's unhappy dinner partner when he tells her in undertones about prostitution: 'I knew an official who'd had charge of the chaklas. You don't know what chaklas are? Your father knew. If you'd gone riding round any one of the cantonments you'd have seen. Little groups of tents. A hospital

not far off. Women in the tents. Out there it's no secret. They're called "Government women." The women are needed by the army' (WAYGT?, p. 266). Having consulted medical specialists, Pankhurst argued that most of the male population were suffering from venereal disease. 'Votes for women and chastity for men' was her book's slogan. Quoting widely from a large number of medical specialists, she advised men to abstain from sex and argued that abstinence was not deleterious to masculinity. (This unfortunately conforms to the stereotypical vision of the Victorians being sex-averse, an image which countless recent novels and period dramas have been trying hard to address!) She did have a captive audience though; when *The Great Scourge and How to End It* was serialized in the *Suffragette*, copies sold rose from 10,000 to 30,000.

Curiously, Robins gives the third male dinner guest, the thirty-six-year-old unhappy man, a favourable physiognomy; the narrator describes him as handsome and his youthful-looking skin appears not to bear the ravages of his lifestyle. Employing *kalokagathia*, Robins possibly intended that his repentance and growing desire to assist the narrator to escape render him more visually appealing. While Bettina is busy dancing with the tipsy Colonel and Tartar, the unhappy man, impressed that the narrator has 'a will of [her] own' (WAYGT?, p. 250), and that she has accompanied her sister to London even though she does not know the metropolis, clandestinely vows to help her. He reveals to her that she is actually in 'one of the most infamous houses in Europe' (WAYGT?, p. 258), tells her how to avoid the customary spiked drinks and instructs her in her escape whilst giving the pretence to the others seated in the room that he eventually intends to rape her. At first she thinks he is mad and fears it is he, not 'Aunt Josephine', who is dangerous. Robins creates tension here as the narrator secretly pinpoints her enemies without arousing her sister's suspicions as to her panic. Increasingly convinced by his honest portrayal, she begins to trust the unhappy man and, in the process, begins to understand her mother's traumatic experience in India.

Robins argues in this passage that the empire was managed not simply by governments and monarchs in their clubs but also by a manipulation of gender relations. This was the unofficial side to foreign policy. It was also a lesson learnt in growing up. 'There are worse than tigers in the world's jungle [...] "It is a thing," she said, "that even happy women learn"' (WAYGT?, p. 114). Like Ann Veronica in the cabinet particulier, the narrator's vision 'swims' as she digests the revelations before her: 'Interpretation came pouring down upon her almost blindingly: she understood now the whole room, the waiter, the whole situation'

(*Ann Veronica*, p. 201). In fact, the room veritably seems to 'dance' with Bettina. While one could argue that Wells reduces the perilous situation in the cabinet particulier to a sexually educative experience in *Ann Veronica*; for Robins the confrontation with the beast shows up the ugly side of masculinity.

Malverny writes that a governess who was decoyed 'maintained as unsuspicious an attitude as she could' (*The White Slave Market*, p. 208). Dissimulation is a frequent feature of detective fiction and here the narrator must now fool 'Aunt Josephine', a woman who is herself is wearing a disguise and has also, of course, assumed a false name. 'Aunt Josephine' has a 'full yellow eye', black iris (WAYGT?, p. 231) and beak-like nose which earn her the name of the Grey Hawk in the narrator's mind (this hawk is presaged in the imagery of fog earlier in the novel). The narrator's mother's gaze is fearful but the Grey Hawk's prominent yellow orbs watch sideways, turning red when she is riled (WAYGT?, p. 245): 'The tilt of the outstretched head was exactly like a bird's. Watching sideways – watching ... for what?' The gaze of 'the eye' makes the narrator 'shrink' and Bettina feels compelled to follow the Grey Hawk's orders and drink the alcohol that is proffered (WAYGT?, p. 250). Clearly, the Grey Hawk is a consummate mind-reader and it takes the narrator all her effort to mask her inner turmoil. She does not move 'by so much as a hair', keeping 'as still as a stone', and maintaining a 'blank' expression while the 'devouring-eyed men' roam the room (WAYGT?, pp. 257–262). So, while the men's gazes are ravenous, her real adversary is the Grey Hawk as she coolly oversees the proceedings while the men become increasingly more intoxicated.

The unhappy man alerts her to her pallor and bids her to bite her lip in order to put back some colour that the fear has drained from them. Shocked at seeing her draw blood, he gently retrieves the handkerchief from her grasp. As Sue Thomas remarks, the blood-stained handkerchief is a souvenir of conquest which would be shown to the other club members as proof of conquest.<sup>30</sup> He is indeed deliberately surreptitious in his reprisal of his property: 'I hardly noticed that he took his blood-stained handkerchief out of my hand' (WAYGT?, p. 271). The narrator's name in the play was Honor, while the narrator in the novel escapes, having defended her honour through her pluck and self-control. There is another reason for him to take back the handkerchief. His laundry might have borne his initials which would have incriminated him – the apprehension of a criminal by the initials on his linen was a point discussed in Fergus Hume's bestseller, *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* (1887). Instead of acting as the unhappy's man's souvenir, the handkerchief

could have been a clue had she the wherewithal to examine his initials. The unhappy man escorts her to the front door: 'I must stay,' he said, 'to give you time. Then, when I've seen you out of this ... a door open, a door shut – and I shall never see you again' (*WAYGT?*, p. 270). He pays the footman for his discretion, and tells the narrator where to run for the nearest taxi which will take her to the real Mrs Harborough. Whilst psychologically demanding, her actual escape is undramatic: according to an Australian MP, a gymnastic teacher climbed down a drainpipe.<sup>31</sup>

In the chapter entitled 'Where?', the narrator tries to enlist the support of the police to track down her sister, but every trace of the evening has vanished, like the handkerchief. She realizes that she had not known the address to which she had been taken. The novel argues that criminals and victims alike could simply vanish. The link which winds back to the man in the brothel is gone; Ariadne's thread is broken.

### The Girl with the Lamp

*WAYGT?* is an essay in light and shadow, evoking the contrast between innocence, and the process of learning and suffering.<sup>32</sup> The narrator's mother explains the burglary and loss of her husband as a sharp contrast in emotional tones: 'I was bright and shining one moment, the next all blackness' (*WAYGT?*, p. 115). During a moment of 'glittering' (*WAYGT?*, p. 115) silence, when the narrator and her mother are waiting for Bettina to return home after visiting the Helmstones, the narrator describes her mother's eyes which 'glisten[]' (*WAYGT?*, p. 20) in the candlelight but are ominously surrounded by a 'fringe of shadow' (*WAYGT?*, p. 20). As the girls arrive in London, the narrator's remark is replete with feelings of claustrophobia, accentuated by changes in light: 'We were in a dim place, between a smoky wall and a rattling train going out as we came in' (*WAYGT?*, p. 227). They have left their rural and safe past behind them and are hemmed in and prevented from turning back as events lock into place.

As dusk encroaches and danger beckons on the sisters' arrival in the metropolis, Robins turns up the voltage. At dinner in the brothel, the electric lights are 'dazzling' (*WAYGT?*, p. 243) and when the narrator collapses at the police station, she notices that 'the electric light was fierce in their faces [the faces of the police officers]'. This perception leads to a moment of chiaroscuro: 'Then the light and they were gone. We were driving in silence through streets of shadow sharply streaked with light. I crouched in the corner, and fought the flames that shrivelled up my flesh' (*WAYGT?*, p. 295). The jarring effect of the glare

against the darkness evokes the narrator's severe sense of desolation and dislocation in a city in which urban technology, represented by the electric light, illuminates social problems. In *Votes for Women!* Vida likens Jean's conversion to the suffragette cause as an emotion which has been dormant, like electricity: 'It had been there since the world began—waiting to do away with the dark. So has the thing you're fighting.'<sup>33</sup> At Duncombe the girls had been *living in the dark* when it came to knowing about women's oppression. The narrator's new knowledge brings the shady mechanisms of the world into the light but it offers her no consolation.

If electric light signifies sobering knowledge, then natural sunlight represents innocence. Here Bettina is sunshine internalized. During the journey to London, the oncoming evening is reflected in the orgasmic colour of Bettina's cheek, the 'fiery rose', which their fellow passengers admire. Her innocent beguiling manner causes one man to walk by their carriage and stare at Bettina. To the narrator's consternation, Bettina is not uneasy at being ogled and cannot understand what it is about her mannerisms that arrest the gazes of passersby. The narrator, however, feels that Bettina should behave more modestly but is at a loss to explain what is wrong with her manner. Later, the men in the brothel provoke her to blush by making statements which she, embarrassed, does not understand. Robins synthesizes Bettina's blush and the play of light and shadow which pervades the novel to reach a damning conclusion about the worst excesses of masculine desire: 'The lamp of a young girl's hope, held up in her little world, to help her find a mate – that light was pale beside the red glare of this fierce demand from men' (WAYGT?, p. 298).

When she arrives at Mrs Harborough's house, the narrator is shocked at her tardiness in responding to the narrator's request to contact the police and raid the brothel. To her horror, she cannot remember where the house is located and thus learns the peril of not observing her surroundings properly – the novel's interrogatory title, *where are you going to?* may as well be *where have you come from?*<sup>34</sup> Eventually the cabman who took her to Mrs Harborough is located, but despite his drunken condition, the narrator implores him to drive her to the police station nearest to the brothel where Bettina is still kept prisoner. Her concerns over his fitness to drive are realized when he swerves around on the road and this scene ties in with the narrator's earlier fears surrounding drunken drivers and chauffeurs.

Twice the narrator is asked to give information for police paperwork which the officer takes down using a blunt pencil, which symbolizes his

limited usefulness. Kitty Marshall humorously remarked: 'I never came across a policeman with a pencil that would write' (*Suffragette Escapes*, p. 80). The narrator is told to appeal to Scotland Yard, to the man 'in charge of all such cases', an individual who is featured in a picture on the wall illuminated by electric light. The man to whom the narrator refers is Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Edward Henry who held the position from 1903 to 1918, the plumed hat and sword described in the novel forming part of his ceremonial uniform. WAYGT? is therefore designed to appeal to him but without naming him directly which gives the appeal a personal yet timeless quality.

In an appealing yet accusatory tone, the narrator tries to catch the attention of the new queen: '*Oh, why are you Queen of England, if you can't help Betty?*' (WAYGT?, p. 288). In this iconoclastic novel, key British personages and the paraphernalia of valour in war – the Victoria Cross and the sword – are ineffectual. However brave he may have been, the girls' father's Victoria Cross is of little help in their economic difficulties just as the Commissioner's sword cannot slice through the paperwork and break down the door of the brothel. The cross and sword symbolize the idea that while masculinity could be aggressive, it could also be inert. Here, white slavery is an enemy that cannot be fought in the battlefield as it is everywhere.

Bettina's sufferings continue outside the novel through the narrator's visions. Returning to garden imagery, she thinks of her sister being 'stung' (WAYGT?, p. 303) senseless by a swarm of bees, an image which clearly connotes rape. As a child, D. H. Lawrence's friend, Helen Corke (born in 1882), is teased by boys that the Whitechapel Murderer is on the loose in her home town. She does not believe her parents when they tell her that the story is a fabrication just as she does not believe her father when he tells her that bees only sting when harassed – 'the creature flew down from the window-pane and stung me on the knee. So now, though I tell myself that Papa is wiser than the boys, the penumbra of terror lingers' (*In Our Infancy*, p. 25). The garden is therefore not safe.

The narrator falls ill and, passing through different stages of consciousness, hears a 'monster', which is in reality the London milk cart. Her response to these sounds is the normal reaction of an unconscious mind to unfamiliar noises but as she is not permitted to leave the sickroom, she has merely no sense of perspective. As part of Silas Weir Mitchell's 'rest cure' recalcitrant patients (mainly women) were forbidden from engaging in intellectual or physical activity. Charlotte Perkins Gilman's own experience of rest cure inspired her disorientating short story, 'The Yellow Wall-Paper' (1891), which describes a wife being

driven mad by the patterns surrounding her in the room to which her husband, a doctor, has confined her for her treatment. Gilman's narrator scratches away the wallpaper and imagines impatient 'creeping' women beneath the layers of paper. Robins conflates fantasy and real-life to aesthetic effect but shows that fear is founded – there is a 'monster' at large and it is devouring her sister. When one character fears that 'she has lost her mind', she tells the reader: 'But no, it wasn't lost! It was serving me with devilish clearness. More pictures, and still more' (p.296) [...] Nobody knew how much of the time, behind closed eyes, my mind was broad awake' (WAYGT?, p. 301). Robins's narrator hears of Ranny's futile attempts to track Bettina to Paris which was 'the commercial sex capital of the world' until World War I (*Fox and the Flies*, p. 110.) Gilman's narrator tells the reader she would have benefitted from being able to write and exercise her mind; Robins's narrator knows that she needs to be searching for her sister, not lying in bed. She is prevented from being a detective by being confined to her sickbed. Frustrated, she engages in search and rescue in her mind, imagining pacing the streets, scrutinizing the faces of outcasts – tramps, criminals, hop-pickers – under her lamp. Her name, Honor, could on the one hand suggest that she has escaped with her honour (her virginity) intact. But this is not the reading that Robins, or Hamilton, who co-wrote the play, intended. She protects her sister and mother and shows pluck and tries so desperately to be a heroine, to find her sister, but her gallant acts are suppressed by her unheroic fiancé, Eric, who knows only how to nurse her. Paradoxically, it is only the unhappy man in the Grey Hawk's brothel who recognizes her true fighting spirit.

Bettina remains forever out of the narrator's reach just as the information that Robins seeks on her excursion with Hillyer eludes her grasp. Robins briefly slips into the role of flâneuse, and self-consciously surveys her surroundings: 'Three girls on corner. Street women. I observe them.'<sup>35</sup> Yet, she is uncomfortable. Her Salvation Army disguise does not suit her – it makes her feel 'v[er]y queer'.<sup>36</sup> In order that they discover that she is an imposter, Robins says little when speaking to the women and she also cannot hear the anecdotes of nearby prostitutes. When approached, the prostitutes keep the Salvation Army representative at bay. '[N]ot tonight' is their response. This phrase was referred to in the press coverage of the Whitechapel Murders. A witness testified that he saw the murderer's victim, Elizabeth Stride, on 30 September 1888, the night she was murdered, talk to a man in a long overcoat: 'As I passed them I heard the woman say, "No, not to-night, some other night." That made me turn round, and I looked at them' (*The Times*,

6 October 1888, p. 6). As Sue Thomas argues, Robins 'fail[s] to seduce them into trading the confessional narratives that would help her make fictional copy'.<sup>37</sup> During Robins's excursion with Major Hillyer, the closest that Robins comes to meeting a real-life Bettina is a Scottish girl who looks more 'dignified' than her peers (*Elizabeth Robins: Staging a Life, 1862–1952*, p. 188). Robins asks her to tea at Zoe's home and interrogates her about her clients but receives a cagey reply: 'She gave me a curious quick look full of unconscious eloquence "You don't know" she said and changed the subject.'<sup>38</sup> The girl's mysterious comment is of importance to Robins as 'You don't know' is underlined with a squiggle. The narrative of the girl on the street is forever suspended because Robins's expected house guest does not surface.

'The innocent girl once outraged', the matron of a lock hospital had told W. T. Stead, suffered 'a lasting blight of the moral sense', and 'the foul passion from the man seemed to enter into the helpless victim of his lust' so that 'she never again regained her pristine purity of soul' ('Maiden Tribute', 8 July 1885, p. 3). Hardy aimed to show that Tess, despite being raped and giving birth to an ailing child, was still a 'pure woman'. Whilst she tackles numerous subjects boldly in the novel, at the end Robins elides any discussion about the physical consequences of Bettina's ordeal at the hands of the syphilitic Colonel and his cronies. Here, the narrator sees Bettina's angelic, 'pale young face [...] leaning down out of Heaven', consoling her and bidding her to fight against the monster (WAYGT, p. 311). This etherealized image of Bettina resounded better with the public. In a letter, Eva Slawson told Ruth Slate that she was perturbed by the novel: '[T]he book upset me, made me long to move heaven and earth to lessen this evil – it seems to me a problem beyond the power of mere legislation. I was so glad to find this terrible and sometimes morbid book ending with a cry of hope.'<sup>39</sup>

# 7

## Read My Lips

### Richard Marsh's World of Crime

'I all at once became conscious, as I struggled to ask help of God, that I was wrestling with something evil.'

Marjorie Lindon's narration, *The Beetle*,  
by Richard Marsh

Richard Marsh (1857–1915) appears to have relished inventing gruesome ways to torture and murder his characters. A popular crime writer who also found himself on the wrong side of the law, Marsh is today largely known for his bestselling detective horror novel, *The Beetle: A Mystery* (1897), published in the same year as *Dracula*. *The Beetle* is Marsh's most famous novel. It was an instant hit. By way of example, the *Academy* said: 'Dracula, by Bram Stoker, was creepy, but Mr Marsh goes one, oh! Many more than one better.' The *Glasgow Herald* agreed: 'Mr Marsh has, so to speak, out-Heroded Herod.'<sup>1</sup> Bram Stoker's blood-sucking count has, of course, endured in the popular imagination, although at that time it was the monstrous and sadistic serial killer in *The Beetle* who mesmerized readers into buying the novel, securing more sales for Marsh than for Stoker until the 1920s. According to Hugh Greene, the brother of the novelist, Graham Greene, Marsh was 'a man haunted by demons'.<sup>2</sup> Marsh's novels are certainly a disorientating world where palmists are not to be trusted, where cigars are accompanied by evil forces and where it is highly inadvisable to accept sweets from strangers.

While he was penning fiction in well-known periodicals in the 1880s, researchers will probably not be able to find Marsh's work unless they know that the man they are looking for wrote under a different name: Bernard Heldmann. Richard Bernard Heldmann was

born in St John's Wood, in North London, on 12 October 1857. His father, Joseph Heldmann, was a lace merchant and had converted from Judaism to Christianity while his mother, Emma Marsh, was the daughter of a lace manufacturer from Nottingham, a city famous for its lace production. The start of Richard Heldmann's life was beset with difficulties. By 1858, his father's business was on shaky ground. In an unflattering account in *The Times* of 1858, Joseph Heldmann was described as a 'reckless man', an 'adventurer' and also a liar (*The Times*, 16 July 1858, p. 11). Charged with tampering with his books and misrepresenting his sales figures to his suppliers, he applied for and was refused bankruptcy and was forced to leave the lace manufacturing business. He nevertheless appears to have recovered from this setback and accepted a post teaching boys at a school in Hammersmith, West London.

Bernard Heldmann had an adventurous spirit with a keen appetite for sports. He started writing at an early age and penned stories for boys' magazines in his early twenties. Whether or not he was educated at Eton has been disputed by historians ('Richard Marsh: Novelist Extraordinaire', p. 79). In the early 1880s, George Alfred Henty, the well-loved writer of boys' fiction and editor of the boys' weekly penny magazine, *Union Jack*, appointed Bernard Heldmann, already a regular contributor, to the post of co-editor. At this time, Bernard Heldmann's fictional work was also appearing in the religious publications, *Quiver* and *Young England*, as well as the *Graphic*, a periodical to which Anthony Trollope had himself contributed. Just as Bernard Heldmann's future looked promising, events took another turn for the worst. By 1883, it became apparent that Henty's co-editor had other thoughts on his mind besides the task in hand. Henty terminated their partnership in the spring of that year and the magazine folded. Evidence recently uncovered reveals that for most of that year, Bernard Heldmann had been flitting from Britain to France to evade arrest. In February 1884, the authorities caught up with him and he was charged with the crime of forging cheques. To this day, his motives remain unclear but the judge at Maidstone Quarter Sessions saw fit to sentence him to eighteen months' hard labour. As Dalby suggests, his experience of prison life was reflected in the novels and short stories he wrote ('Richard Marsh: Novelist Extraordinaire', p. 81).

The man who emerged from jail was 'Richard Marsh', an alias derived from Bernard Heldmann's real first name and his mother's maiden name. Under this new identity, Richard Marsh's first known work was published in 1888, the year of the Whitechapel Murders. In the 1900s, Marsh began to concentrate on crime writing, incorporating

the aristocratic detective, Augustus Champnelli into his work. So far, seventy-six books and an impressive array of short stories have been credited to Richard Marsh<sup>3</sup> who worked assiduously until his death on 9 August 1915.

The stories and novels of Marsh give reasons why people commit crime, from addiction, desperation or the desire to steal another person's possessions whether these are a handbag or a husband. His stories describe a plethora of crimes, from gratuitous violence to petty theft and sexual assault. Some offences are crimes of passion while others have been planned out a very long time in advance, so that the poison of evil deeds lingers centuries later. It is worth looking briefly at *The Beetle* and *The Goddess: A Demon* (1900) as these are Marsh's most famous novels. In particular, *The Beetle* is a tale in which both male and female characters are stripped of their abilities to defend themselves against a creature that can change gender and even species. Throughout the Edwardian era, *The Beetle* and *Dracula* jockeyed for position as the nation's most popular horror novel. Originally published by Skeffington, *The Beetle* was then taken over by T. Fisher Unwin, who published *Ann Veronica*. Wells's readers could indeed cross over to *The Beetle* if they wanted to read more about urban dangers for women.

Like *Dracula*, *The Beetle* is narrated by a variety of voices. We firstly hear the account of homeless, former clerk, Robert Holt who enters a supposedly empty house to shelter from the rain. Giddy from starvation, he is easy prey for the Beetle which assaults him in the dark. After being put in a trance, the near-naked Holt is dispatched on a mission to retrieve letters of radical parliamentarian, Paul Lessingham, epistles which describe his engagement to Marjorie Lindon. Normally calm under duress, Lessingham breaks down when he hears that the Beetle is on his tracks. Lessingham's fiancée's narration describes being stalked by a nameless and shapeless entity that even climbs into bed with her and hypnotizes her into silence. Exhausted and traumatized, Holt dies. When Marjorie is abducted by the Beetle, the aristocratic detective, Augustus Champnelli, is employed by Lessingham and his narrative concludes the story. He learns that Lessingham had been drugged and kidnapped by 'the Woman of Songs' whilst in Cairo and forced to watch the violation and burning of countless young English women. Hypnotized into boarding a train and told to dress in tramp's clothing, Marjorie is probably destined for a similar fate. This scene suggests that in stripping its victims, the Beetle also robs them of their identity. A chase ensues and the train crashes, killing the Beetle, or so the reader is led to believe. Marjorie's ordeal is never explicitly explained and it

is unclear whether she is sexually assaulted by the Beetle on the train. What is readily apparent is that Marsh contributes to the novels and stories about the dangers of travelling by train, suggesting the perils of being locked up in a small space with a stranger who has evil intentions. Once a plucky girl, her encounter with the Beetle turns Marjorie into a candidate for a rest cure and it takes years for her to recover her senses. Perhaps also, the spectre of the Beetle emerges from the wreckage of the train. It haunts Marsh's work, breathing its foetid curses and dragging its slimy tentacles across the work he wrote in the last two decades of his life. Once we encounter the Beetle, we find that there is much that men, but more importantly, women, have to defend against.

Having been published in the same year, it is inevitable that *Dracula* and *The Beetle* are compared. In addition, other relevant comparators are *The Goddess* and Stoker's 'The Squaw' in which Hutcheson is pierced to death by the Iron Virgin. *The Goddess* is a locked room mystery, scented with an air of the supernatural. The novel is narrated by 'Fighting John' Ferguson, a man who has spent time in rough lands, has no qualms about killing in self-defence, keeps an 'armoury' of knives in his rooms and carries his money about his person 'for safety'. After dreaming of an indistinct, laughing female killer, Ferguson learns that his neighbour, Edwin Lawrence, has been found dead, hacked beyond recognition. Citing Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue' (1841), Ferguson fancies that the perpetrator of the crime is not human. As is revealed, the slashed body is in fact that of Edwin's brother, Philip Lawrence, whom Edwin has been hypnotized into murdering. Edwin's mesmerist is the 'goddess', an Indian idol. When his crime is discovered, Edwin throws himself before the idol to be shredded to death. The Goddess is not a deity but in fact a fiendish mechanical construction of clockwork-timed knives which extend like arms. She is an alluring construction, a mixture of the multi-armed thug goddess, Kali, Jack the Ripper and an Iron Virgin. Like the Iron Virgin, she holds the victim in her grasp and pierces his body.

Marsh's work also considers the influence of science on crime. A number of his stories feature Pugh and Tress, two long-term bachelor friends who collect quasi-fantastical objects. In 'The Ring' (from *Both Sides of the Veil* of 1901), Tress pockets a ring from Pugh's collection which turns out to have belonged to Lucretia Borgia and has been fashioned with spikes to poison the wearer to death. Three hundred years on, the ring still has the power to knock Tress for six. Another tale, from *Curios: Some Strange Adventures of Two Bachelors* (1898), features Pugh's new meerschaum pipe, a rare gift from Tress, which has been

crafted as a practical joke by an Indian juggler. The pipe contains a gum-covered living lizard, which, when the pipe is smoked and the gum melts, emerges and climbs towards the smoker. The scene in which this happens recalls the movement of the Beetle as it crawls towards its prey: 'One dreadful dream was with me all the time – of a hideous, green reptile which advanced towards me out of some awful darkness, slowly, inch by inch, until it clutched me round the neck, and, glueing its lips to my throat, sucked the life's blood out of my veins, as it embraced me, with a slimy hiss' ('The Adventure of the Pipe', p. 21).

Marsh's larger repertoire is gradually and deservedly being rediscovered, but there is very little scholarship on the Judith Lee stories. That which does exist, however, is riveting and invites comment. According to Joseph Kestner, the Judith Lee stories 'are intertextual with *The Beetle*' and Lee is 'one of the most unusual and most powerful of female detectives',<sup>4</sup> while Richard Dalby also proclaims that Judith Lee is 'Marsh's most unusual detective' and 'one who really deserves a modern revival' ('Richard Marsh: Novelist Extraordinaire' p. 84). Here we will be tracking her movements, seeing how her powers of observation both lead her into peril and also allow her to extricate herself and others from the clutches of dangerous criminals.

### **The Plate-Glass Partition**

"I am sure I shall hate that man," exclaimed Hadria.  
 "He is not to be trusted..."  
 "You can't hear, can you?"  
 "No; I can see."

Hadria on Professor Theobald, *The Daughters  
of Danaus* (1894)

'What sort of creature are you? Are you a witch?'  
*The Adventures of Judith Lee* (1916)

The genres of thriller, horror, romance and humour appealed to Marsh and he often blended these elements together with consummate skill. The Judith Lee stories appeared in the *Strand Magazine* from August 1911 to August 1912. Initially titled, 'Judith Lee: Pages from Her Life', the subtitle was dropped halfway through the series and then replaced with 'The Experiences of a Lip-Reader'. The adventures were subsequently published by Methuen later that year, under the original title, *Judith Lee: Some Pages from Her Life*. By popular demand from *Strand Magazine*

readers, Marsh brought back his detective in *The Adventures of Judith Lee*, which was posthumously published in 1916 by Methuen. Interestingly, the 1916 collection is very seldom referred to in literature on Marsh and even less so in histories of detective fiction. It does not appear in Kestner's *Sherlock's Sisters* as it was published slightly outside Kestner's timeframe, but one story will be considered here as an extension of Marsh's work and an elaboration of the themes raised in the 1912 collection.

As the *Strand Magazine* wrote in the introduction to the 1912 stories, Lee is 'the fortunate possessor of a gift which gives her a place apart in detective fiction' ('Hair', p. 215). Dickens's narrator in 'Hunted Down' tells us that while his office is separated from the main office by a thick glass partition so that he cannot hear outside, he uses this disadvantage to scrutinize his clients, gleaning information about them 'from their faces alone, without being influenced by anything they said' ('Hunted Down', p. 175). As well as being a physiognomist, Lee uses lip-reading to penetrate silent conversations which would otherwise be meaningless. Lee's mother was deaf and, having a speech impediment, was practically mute but was highly adept at lip-reading and could speak clearly although she was unable to hear her own voice. Lee's father was one of the founders of lip-reading, or, the 'oral system'. The deaf historian, David Wright, points out that the deaf child 'has no language with which to think about what he sees and experiences'.<sup>5</sup> Before the Renaissance, it was considered impossible to teach deaf people as, in the days before the printing press, hearing, speaking and thinking were considered to be dependent on each other. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Italian physician, Girolamo Cardano (1501–1576), promoted the idea that the deaf could associate objects with words while the blind might learn to read through touch. His ideas were put into practice by the Spanish monk, Pedro Ponce de León (c. 1520–1584), an oralist. The middle of the eighteenth century saw the setting up of schools for the deaf of wealthy parents, while the mid-Victorian era onwards witnessed the opening of charitable schools, the first training colleges for teachers of the deaf and, from 1893, the compulsory education for deaf children of the ages of seven to sixteen. The nineteenth century also saw the emergence of the Royal Association for Deaf People which promotes sign language, in opposition to the Milan Conference of 1880 in which lip-reading was promoted.

Helen Keller's critically acclaimed biography *The Story of My Life* (1903) famously described how her teacher, Anne Sullivan Macy, taught her to communicate by spelling letters into her hand. A pioneer at a time when higher education for women was still widely considered

unfeminine, she graduated from Radcliffe College, Harvard, in 1904. She was internationally admired; Queen Victoria had asked to meet her and among her friends and supporters were Mark Twain and Alexander Graham Bell. Bell founded the American Association for Teaching Speech to the Deaf, which advocated lip-reading. At the time that the *Strand Magazine* stories appeared, Keller was in her early thirties, around the age at which Lee is portrayed.

Through Keller's autobiography and the activities of various associations, such as the R. A. D., *Strand Magazine* readers might have been acquainted with the use of deaf-mute forms of communication. In 1900, *Sandow's Magazine* featured a story in which a wife uses 'the deaf and dumb alphabet' – sign language – to warn her husband of the presence of a snakelike burglar in the bedroom who wields a 'wicked-looking revolver'.<sup>6</sup> This story reinforces the notion that, despite having servants, a middle-class couple could still come face-to-face with a burglar in their domestic haven. While the husband strikes down the burglar and subsequently purchases a revolver for future self protection, it is the wife's pluck and use of sign language which is their saving grace. Readers may have heard of lip-reading but its application to crime solving and self protection was more novel. In *Curios*, there is a story about Pugh's latest purchase from a pawnbroker – a phonograph. In 'The Adventure of the Phonograph', Mr Pugh believes that he has discovered a new mode of catching criminals: 'We have arrived at a new epoch in the discovery of crime. For the first time the phonograph has acted as a detective' ('The Adventure of the Phonograph', p. 55). In the Judith Lee stories, Lee uses the eye in a new way to pick up signals and mentally record crimes as they happen. The Director of the Association for the Oral Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb, C. Sibley Haycock, wrote an article in that periodical about the process of reading lips. The action is itself a form of detective work. Parts of words are glimpsed and the rest of the construction is filled in using contextual information about when and where the sentence is uttered.<sup>7</sup> Nowadays 'forensic lip-readers' are employed both for the prosecution and the defence to read conversations caught on closed-circuit television to identify or eliminate suspects. Lip-reading can also be used in a more light-hearted context by the press to guess what guests at royal events are whispering to each other.<sup>8</sup>

Lee is both an insider and an outsider. Her enemies refer to her as 'half-bred gipsy-looking creature' ('Conscience', p. 68) or a 'black-faced devil's spawn' ('Napolitain', p. 312). The adventures are autodiegetically narrated as memoirs; her words are unmediated by a biographer and she is in control of the image she portrays to her readers. From an early age,

Lee is required to be her own mistress. She teaches lip-reading, works hard and appears to be very successful in her trade. She has rooms in Sloane Street, a well-to-do area of West London and, being multilingual, she undertakes numerous travels abroad as part of her work. In *The Adventures of Judith Lee*, she is so well-established in her field that her services are sought by the founders of institutes and conference organizers. Marsh, who loved staying in hotels, has Lee visit all kinds of resorts as a way of recovering from her heavy workload. A woman alone abroad, she is often placed in perilous situations. For instance, in 'Eavesdropping in Interlaken', a tale about low crime at a higher altitude, the teenage Lee, left alone in a Swiss hotel, is framed by fellow guests for theft. By virtue of her skills she can detect the culprit and rescue herself from further rough treatment by the hotel manager. A lone, observant woman in London, she is pulled into situations that echo crimes which shocked the Edwardian and pre-war public. For instance, 'Auld Lang Syne', starts off with three officers being shot by gun-toting assassins in a raid in the dark in what Lee describes as 'an epidemic of shooting' ('Auld Lang Syne', p. 121). It is a beginning which clearly recalls the Houndsditch Murders of December 1910 in which a Latvian gang of revolutionaries shot dead three officers. The event led to the Siege of Sidney Street two weeks later, in January 1911, when the Met and the City of London police forces cornered members of the gang at 100 Sidney Street in a confrontation, witnessed by Winston Churchill. The White Slave Trade and the Whitechapel Murders are also evoked in Marsh's work, which I will discuss below.

### Cutting Hair

'But this bold lord with manly strength endued

She with one finger and a thumb subdued'

Alexander Pope, 'The Rape of the Lock' (1714)

This quotation from Pope begins a chapter on women's self-defence in Percy Longhurst's book *Jiu-Jitsu and Other Methods of Self-Defence* (1906). Arguably the best-known adventure, 'The Man Who Cut Off My Hair', opens the collection with a robbery. When still a girl of around twelve years old, Lee travels alone on a train to her parents' country residence while her parents are abroad. She suddenly finds herself alone in the carriage with two men. They speak in undertones but are unaware that she has learnt from observing their lips that they plan to rob her acquaintance, Mr Colegate of Myrtle Cottage, of his collection of silver.

Aware that she is watching them, one expresses violent thoughts of 'twist[ing] her skinny neck and throw[ing] her out on to the line' ('Hair', p. 3). She not only reads lips but also body language and Lee feels that the man's eyes suggest that he is intent on this purpose and Lee feels frightened as she is alone and small. Without telling the housekeeper where she is going (the reader later realizes that this would have been a good idea – first lesson in personal protection learned), she watches as they invade Colegate's empty house. The men spot her.

These men are however, not only burglars and thieves but, as the story suggests, one is a sadist who grabs her by the throat, ties her up unnecessarily tightly and repeatedly threatens to cut her neck. In *The Beetle*, the giant scarab cuts Marjorie's hair when she is kidnapped – a symbolic rape – and her trauma disfigures her state of mind and paralyses her (*Sherlock's Sisters*, p. 199). What is shocking is the gratuitous aggression displayed by Lee's captors. When one man chops off her knee-length hair, he threatens to 'cram it down [her] throat', but lets it tumble over her, adding an ominous threat: 'I'll learn her' ('Hair', p. 7). This scene alone is replete with sexually violent references.

Lee is averse to admitting fear to the reader through the stories: 'I have seldom been afraid of anything' ('Hair', p. 8). This reminds us of Freedgood's observation discussed above that women downplay risks in order not to appear giddy and render their account questionable. When the man cuts her hair, Lee is not afraid but becomes angry and self-assertive, a feature present in the other stories. The rage she feels at the cutting of her knee-length hair, a symbol of femininity and her mother's pride, draws her attention away from the pain of her wounds and sharpens her concentration on the men's whispers.

Amused by her anger, the burglar strikes her across the face with her own hair. As we have seen in Stoker's 'The Squaw', revenge is best served with a pinch of surprise. When Lee is freed by Mr Colegate upon his return, Lee assists an inspector in tracking the thieves and the network to which they belong, perpetrators of even more prestigious burglaries. The inspector trivializes the 'outrage' done to Lee's hair just as Viola's brother fails to recognize the injury done to Viola when her personal space is invaded by the Dendraith men. Lee's anger is also suggestive of the sexual crimes which police could regard lightly. But in assisting the police in capturing the criminals, what is important to Lee is the possibility of taking revenge: 'Owing to the gift which was mine, I had been able to cry something like quits with the man who, in a moment of mere wanton savagery, had deprived me of what ought to be the glory of a woman' ('Hair', p. 19). The events at Myrtle Cottage change her life

and the details ‘never fade from [her] memory’ (*Hair*, p. 2). Her hair, having once reached her knees, never grows back to its former length which suggests non-reclaimable innocence. A reinterpretation of the Sherlock Holmes–Dr Watson format, Stieg Larsson’s hugely successful *Millennium* (first published in Swedish in 2005) series features Lisbeth Salander, who is both a rape victim and an avenging angel, using her anger to punish and bring to justice dangerous men. As Kestner points out, Lee uses the traumatic experience of the cutting of her hair, which becomes her ‘old rage’ (*Hair*, p. 19), as a motivation for solving crime, making the best of a trauma that stays with her for the rest of her life (*Sherlock’s Sisters*, p. 201).

### **Handbags at Dawn**

If Sherlock Holmes has Moriarty and Raffles has Inspector Mackenzie, then Lee’s nemesis is Marianne Tracey, a serial bigamist. In this regard, Lee is her polar opposite. Just as Sherlock Holmes distrusts women, Lee is annoyed by men, especially when the men she helps have the ‘delusion’ that her good deeds are motivated by love (*Uncle Jack*, p. 205). In ‘Matched’, Lee irascibly and frequently describes men as fools. Her negative attitude towards men does not stem from having been unlucky in love; she is merely not romantically interested in them. She never marries and expresses a loathing towards the idea of marriage which suggests that she is as much emotionally self-sufficient as she is financially independent. Importantly, her ability to see is her livelihood. Her lip-reading skills pay her bills and allow her to protect herself from being pressed into marriage for financial reasons. Whilst appealing to both men and women, the *Strand Magazine* had a large male readership so Lee’s unmarried status makes her both desirable to her readers and also as independent from considerations of romance as Sherlock Holmes is. She is arguably a more formidable multitasker than Sherlock Holmes. Solving crime is Holmes’s day job but for Lee bringing criminals to justice is a side activity, when she is not engaged in more pressing matters, such as earning a living and taking part in international lip-reading conventions.

While Holmes leads a homosocial life, Lee likes to gaze at feminine women. She describes one as having ‘the sweetest mouth’ and ‘the most delicious pout’ (*Isolda*, p. 152), and even admires those who are condescending towards her such as a woman in a grey dress who, despite having snubbed her, is still described as ‘a very striking woman, beautifully gowned’ (*Conscience*, p. 55). In one of her disguises, Tracey is as ‘black

as night' with 'black hair, black eyes, black eyebrows, and even the faintest shadow of what might be a black moustache' ('Matched', p. 75). The description is an allusion to the dark-haired, moustachio-twirling villain of the melodrama. Her disguises are complicated, and she keeps props of 'an extremely intimate kind' ('Matched', p. 83) which allow her to change shape just as Sherlock Holmes changes his stature in 'The Adventure of the Final Problem' and 'The Adventure of the Empty House'. However, Tracey's modus operandi is simple. After adopting a new identity, she woos an eligible man, marries him and leaves him stranded in a train en route to the honeymoon. She flits out of the carriage on the pretence that she has left something behind and takes with her a bag containing all their money, arranging for an accomplice to send her the wedding presents on to her while her husband is left scratching his head. Tracey is a Medusa who can disguise herself and appeal to each man's specific vision of Aphrodite but once she catches sight of an eligible man she drains him financially. The men she leaves in her wake are described as pining idiots who cannot move on with their lives; ensnared by this modern Medusa, their emotional locomotions have been arrested.

Lee, knowing her secret identity, chances upon Tracey at a cruise and confronts her but Tracey's henchman catches her unawares and she is bundled blindfolded into a boat. Lee unties herself, and describes her reaction to seeing that she is adrift on an ocean as a response of an 'exhilarating kind' ('Matched', p. 78). Like Freedgood's female alpinists, Lee does not wish her readers to think she is hysterical and fretful. She tells us that she considered crying to be an unhelpful response: 'I would have cried if I thought it would do any good' ('Matched', p. 78). Instead she decides to focus on her anger, describing her desire to catch Tracey and her accomplice and 'knock, knock, knock their heads together' and 'smash[] them up like egg-shells' ('Matched', p. 79). Anger is clearly the more useful emotion, motivating her to row with energy and reach the coast of Morocco.

Her vulnerability is clear as she is forced to tramp to Tangier (where the ship is due to dock) in the revealing evening dress that she was wearing when she was jettisoned from the ship. She is a stranger on many levels – a foreigner, a tramp, a woman walking alone. We remember from Mary Higgs's experiences as a tramp the kinds of attentions to which she is vulnerable and this is hinted at when Lee tells us that tired and dishevelled, she catches the attention of a 'highly amused mob of inhabitants' ('Matched', p. 80). She is saved from their company by a man she recognizes from the cruise although he, and all the other passengers, accost her as they presume she is responsible for the theft

of some missing valuables. Her art of lip-reading saves her from physical danger from this new, more genteel mob. She can recall Tracey's whispered words of that night and leads the passengers to Tracey's hideout in Tangiers. Lee borrows a burnous to wear over her dishevelled evening dress but its inadequate cover means that she is still 'one of the most striking figures in that singular procession' ('Matched', p. 83). The discovery of Tracey's hideout comes too late as Tracey darts through a door, and escapes Lee's grasp. With only some items recovered, the return journey to London is awkward and Lee is beset with more questions. She is tempted to disembark but is more desperate to reach home. Again, in this section of the story, Lee is a stranger among men and women of her own class; she is the loner in the crowd.

Tracey surprises Lee near a tube stop in London. Like Moriarty in 'The Adventure of the Final Problem' who visits Holmes's room and threatens him, Tracey remains calm under pressure when she strikes up a conversation with her enemy. Sherlock Holmes reaches for his firearm in Moriarty's presence; Lee is unnerved that Tracey's 'presence of mind was greater' ('Matched', p. 87) which infuriates Lee. It is her lack of calm which means that Tracey once again evades her grasp by jumping into a motor car (a gift from one of her unlucky husbands). Just before their confrontation at the Reichenbach Falls, Moriarty visits Holmes at his rooms in 'The Adventure of the Final Problem'. Of a scientific bent, he makes a derogatory remark about Holmes's physiognomy, telling him that he has 'less frontal development than [...] expected', and in the same breath informs him that 'it is a dangerous habit to finger loaded firearms in the pocket of one's dressing gown' ('The Adventure of the Final Problem', p. 472). Thus, Moriarty mocks Holmes's lack of presence of mind. Tracey also knows how to rile her enemy: 'One has to be married sometime. I wonder if you will ever be? There are men who will marry anything – who knows? [...] I had heard so much about you – about how wise and clever and wonderful you were. You are not the least like what I expected' ('Matched', p. 91). Like Irene Adler, she gets away. As her name suggests, she cannot be 'traced'.

She wrecks her male victims, appropriating them for her own ends and is an example of the comment Hardy makes when Alec has effected his purpose on Tess in the woods: '[W]hy so often the coarse appropriates the finer thus, the wrong man the woman, *the wrong woman the man*, many thousand years of analytical philosophy have failed to explain our sense of order' [my italics] (*Tess*, p. 21). Far from being a mere feminine squabble, the contest between Tracey and Lee is a duel, a match of masterminds because Tracey's crime has far-reaching

consequences for society, for patriarchy and masculine control. Tracey takes to extremes the stereotype of women marrying merely for money and thus also puts at stake the good name of the New Woman who aspired to greater ideals.

'Matched' shows that women could be fully fledged human beings, and, like men, could wander out into the world, having to master their impulses and their darker sides. They could also, like men, be extremely calm under provocation just as Tracey maintains 'a front of brass' ('Matched', p. 77) when Lee confronts her onboard the ship. The story also presents a reversal of concepts surrounding chivalry, where Lee protects and avenges weak-minded men who, whilst having bigger muscles and political power, lack one classic 'feminine' weapon – the ability to see through a woman's cunning. As Lee says 'absolute idiots all sorts and conditions of men, old and young, can make themselves over a woman' ('Matched', p. 91). Marsh offers the reader a dystopia in which men are merely the contested quarries in a larger game waged between women. The story is a tale written from the perspective of an independent woman, warning men that *they* are not protecting themselves adequately.

### The Missing Jewel Case

If 'Matched' focuses on male gullibility, then this tale contains a warning for the unsuspecting woman. The moral of 'Isolda' is never visit a fortune teller, certainly not alone, and never encourage the affections of an unworthy suitor. The heavily perfumed Isolda reads palms and his clients are young deluded ladies, persuaded by hearsay that he can predict exactly when a relative will die (which is of course suspicious) and what they will inherit and gives them tips as to who they should marry. His other clients are the unscrupulous individuals who pay Isolda and provide him with information so that he can influence his female visitors into making certain decisions. While decent men (such as Lee's friend Harry) seem to distrust him, Isolda is a hit with the ladies. As Harry says to Lee: 'Women tell me that they think he is so beautiful, and are quite rude when I tell them that I don't think so' ('Isolda', p. 144). Lee's analytical mind allows her to stand apart from her sex and as she is 'a student of character' ('Isolda', p. 145), she is also not fooled by the chiromancer.

Isolda has some of the traits of Marsh's Beetle, albeit remodelled for a pre-war readership. He is tall with long hair (instead of possessing many tentacles), his eyes are large and so are his lips which are more

feminine. His garments remind Lee of a cassock and she thinks that 'he might have been a priest rather than a layman' ('Isolda', p. 148). The rooms where he meets his guests are in Bond Street, 'that popular resort of curious characters', ('Isolda', p. 164) and indeed, as Ann Veronica and real-life women of the time learnt, of prostitutes and their clients.

Lee learns that Isolda's work 'reeks' of bribery when she oversees a red-faced and blue-eyed George Ratton instruct the fortune teller to tell the moneyed Lucille Godwin that Ratton knows that she cheated at baccarat but marrying him will save her reputation. 'She'll swallow anything', says Ratton ('Isolda', p. 145). His face, which she refers to on numerous occasions as being ruddy, betokens his wayward nature just as Viola Sedley's father in *Azrael* is red-faced. Lee tells us elsewhere that she does not trust 'white-blue eyes which [she], sometimes perhaps unjustly, associate[s] with cruelty and treachery' ('Elm', p. 273). Like Dickens's 'Hunted Down', the mere disliking of a person's features coupled with other signs of bad character could be enough to put one on one's guard. She thinks that 'a man who could conspire with such a *creature* [my italics] as Isolda against the girl he professed to love was the kind of person one ought to be warned against' ('Isolda', p. 150). So, she warns Lucille anonymously by telephone.

At her appointment with Isolda, Lucille confronts the palmist and tells him that she thinks that he is a charlatan. Concerned about the impact of this event on his career, Isolda arranges for Lucille to be kidnapped. Following a scene in which she confronts Isolda, Lucille receives a message from Jack Upcott, who she has flightily played off against Ratton, requesting to meet her in Richmond Park, 'the loneliest place round London' ('Isolda', p. 156). Jack is still abroad, oblivious to these schemings; the missive is of course from Isolda. While Lucille waits in the park, unaware that this is not a date with Jack, Isolda's henchman offers her a drugged chocolate, which she eats and falls unconscious. The next day, the henchman is dispatched to collect Lucille's jewel case and her confused sister starts to suspect she has been kidnapped. A Freudian interpretation of this scene might suggest that there is a symbolic meaning attached to her jewel case. In *Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria* (1905) Freud's account suggests that jewel case was contemporary slang for vagina. What happens to Lucille when she is kept prisoner in Isolda's lair is unknown as it appears she was unconscious throughout. Ratton suspects him of 'hanky-panky tricks' ('Isolda', p. 162). Marsh leaves these 'tricks' to our imagination. Isolda's corpulent henchman, Brayshaw, offers Ratton the 'opportunity

to marry her at once', which arouses a 'very curious' and emotional expression on Ratton's face ('Isolda', p. 163) which perhaps suggests some lascivious intentions. Lee confronts Isolda at his rooms and demands Lucille's release. Here, Lee plays Isolda at his own game; describing herself as 'Nemesis', she tells him that this time it is she who knows all.

As Brayshaw attempts to throw her out of the room, she fells him, impressing them with her 'remarkable feat'. Like jujitsu manuals of the day, she claims that such an accomplishment was achieved with 'a smattering of physical training' ('Isolda', p. 168). In 'Mandrake', Lee demonstrates her jujitsu skills when she successfully tackles a blackmailer:

I am a woman, but I am no weakling. I have always felt it my duty to keep my body in proper condition, trying to learn all that physical culture can teach me. He had the start of me; as I said, he was already choking the breath out of me before I was able to pull myself together; when I did, he did not find me so helpless as he perhaps had hoped. I only recently had been having lessons in jiu-jitsu – the Japanese art of self-defence. I had been diligently practising a trick which was intended to be used when a frontal attack was made upon the throat. His pre-occupation, his insensate rage, his unpreparedness, which was even greater than mine had been – these things were on my side. Even as, I dare say, he was thinking that I was already as good as done for – I tried that trick. His fingers released my throat, and he was on the floor without, I fancy, understanding how he got there. ('Mandrake', p. 266)

As she wishes Lucille to remain out of a public scandal, she does not hand Isolda over to the police. She therefore must work towards implementing justice herself. Even on her release, Lucille is placed in a position of vulnerability, being packed onto a train where she wakes up, not knowing what has happened to her. Luckily on her train journey she does not meet the likes of John Tung (see below). Lucille is returned to her sister and Jack arrives and there is a happy reunion. However, this happy ending is not untainted. Lee surmises that Lucille was kept drugged by Isolda's cronies, 'as doctors [...] keep patients [...] oblivious of their sufferings sometimes for weeks' ('Isolda', p. 173). Lucille's incapacitation reminds the reader of 'Maiden Tribute' in which virgins are drugged and vulnerable to clients. In Lucille's case, the evil customer is Ratton, who, Lee believes would have used 'vile arts' to 'force her to

become [his] wife, and use her money to pay [his] debts' ('Isolda', p. 169). The implications of these hints the reader can surmise.

Lucille returns home, 'a tall, slim maiden' ('Isolda', p. 170) and marries Jack. Isolda flees and is never caught. The jewel case is never returned although Jack gives her a new necklace which is perhaps symbolic of a restoration of some of her innocence. Like Gwendolen's necklace, Lucille's jewellery signifies self-esteem but its owner has also been through a trauma, which leaves a mark as Lee wonders whether Lucille ever tells Jack what has happened to her she adds: '[W]henever I see him he seems to radiate happiness' ('Isolda', p. 174). The addition of the word 'seems' in the final sentence subtly casts doubt over the complete resolution of the story.

### The Ripper and his Shadow

One thing that I found curious in the course of researching for this book was the paucity of overtly Ripper-inspired Victorian fiction of the time, which seems odd given the numerous novels and films based on the Whitechapel Murders that we have today.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps the immediacy of events dissuaded novelists from tackling the topic. Perhaps also there might be some truth in Poe's wry remark regarding real-life catastrophes and their fictionalization: 'There are certain themes of which the interest is all-absorbing, but which are too entirely horrible for the purposes of legitimate fiction. These the mere romanticist must eschew, if he do not wish to offend or to disgust.'<sup>10</sup> Marie Belloc Lowndes took the plunge and so did Marsh. In fact, he seems to have been fascinated by psychopaths and was one of those few early-twentieth-century writers, who ventured into this risky terrain and reshaped the Whitechapel Murders into fictional copy.

'Conscience' begins with sun, sea, sand and the suggestion of something shifty. Whilst relaxing on Brighton beach, Lee catches sight of a smartly dressed man of 'almost Mongolian' appearance, a dandified killer, 'Mr John Tung' (his real name remains a mystery). She sees him whisper surreptitiously to two men who pass close but pretend not to notice his presence: 'Mauve dress, big black velvet hat, ostrich plume; four-thirty train' ('Conscience', p. 48). The woman described is to be his victim. For two years, Lee reads accounts of murders in which elegantly dressed ladies are discarded from trains and hotel rooms. When she next spots Tung in Buxton, she intervenes to protect his next victim, described as 'Grey dress, lace scarf, Panama hat; five-five train' ('Conscience', p. 54). Here is a link to 'Hair' where the man on the train expresses a desire to throttle

Lee and eject her from the train. This is no idle threat, or an expression of momentary anger. Lee emphasizes that 'he looked as if he could do it too; such an unpleasant look came into his eyes that it quite frightened me' ('Hair', p. 3). Therefore there is a parallel between the threat to the woman in the grey dress and Lee's own experience as a child. A game of pursuit ensues as Lee, tracking the killer, attempts to catch the attention of Tung's next target, a haughty lady in the grey dress who refuses to engage with Lee, whom she considers to be a 'half-bred gipsy-looking creature' ('Conscience', p. 68). She thinks that Lee is a stalker and threatens to call the police if Lee does not leave her alone. Despite this brush off, Lee feels nevertheless responsible for the woman's safety.

Lee's power of lip-reading is a skill but it poses numerous challenges. In the 1880s, thousands of people took to photography. Concerns were raised over the right to privacy and reputation, especially when these permanent photographs taken by detective cameras (this was a generic term for small cameras which could be carried surreptitiously) were taken without the subject's permission. For instance, the *Punch* illustrator, Linley Sambourne, peeped into servants' rooms and photographed them asleep and secretly photographed girls in the street.<sup>11</sup> I think he could well be considered what Robert Mensel has described as a 'Kodak fiend' whose camera was a 'dangerous weapon', a threat to the unsuspecting passerby and especially girls, who were regarded as 'prey' and 'victims of the deadly camera'.<sup>12</sup> In the 1916 collection story, 'My Partner for a Waltz', Lee is photographed by a man who intends to circulate the photograph to warn other criminals of her appearance so they can be on their guard. Lee feels that this is an invasion: '[N]o one likes to be snapshotted against one's will' ('My Partner for a Waltz', p. 4). But in the first volume of stories, Judith Lee watches, unnoticed, mentally recording images of conversations onto her memory. This is, so to speak, *one in the eye* for the detective camera and the supposedly all-seeing Kodak fiend behind the lens. However, lip-reading does not provide evidence for arrest: 'I would have called in the aid of the police, though it would have been a very queer tale that I should have had to tell them' ('Conscience', p. 63). Lee must often enforce justice herself just as Sherlock Holmes acts as a supra-legal entity often not involving the police. In Doyle's 'The Adventure of Abbey Grange' (1904) Holmes (giving himself the role of the judge) and Watson (who plays the jury) decide to give Captain Crocker a head start on the police because they consider his crime – defending a woman he loved from her violent husband – to be pardonable.

Lee punishes Tung ‘in a fashion of [her] own’ (*Conscience*, p. 65). She anonymously dispatches messages and telegrams to the serial killer, telling him that he is being ‘watched’ and his ‘intentions are known’ (*Conscience*, p. 64). One she sends at Buxton station, via a twelve-year-old girl who assists her mother at the post office. The girl hands him the message and disappears before he can catch a glimpse of her. This plays to his sense of the supernatural, impressing upon him that an all-knowing entity has set the police on his trail. Disturbed, he leaves his prey alone. A month later, she later encounters him and his prey at Euston Station and has a little boy hand him a message. What is striking is that despite knowing of Tung’s dangerous nature, Lee puts these children in danger. However, whilst venturing into the zone of danger, they escape this Minotaur’s grasp without him even catching a glimpse of them. Lee’s strategy pays off. A constable and a plain clothes officer, who are oblivious to the chase, just happen to walk in Tung’s direction in a railway station as he is about to board the train in which the lady in the grey dress is sitting. Believing he is about to be arrested, Tung shoots himself dead, ‘killed by conscience’. Defending others is a thankless task, as Lee finds out when, after Tung’s death, she sees the lady in the grey dress whose murder she prevented (the lady does not know the service Lee has done her), who snubs her.

As William D. Rubinstein has observed: ‘Until the 1950s explicit sex and gratuitous, sadistic violence were largely absent from detective fiction, which revolved around the ingenious solution of a fairly-presented puzzle. The villain never got away with it and was always revealed and punished, the only exception being when he committed suicide to avoid capture. The crime was also committed for a rational motive and was never the work of a psychopath.<sup>13</sup> While Tung is punished by being pushed to kill himself, his crimes have not been committed for a ‘rational motive’ but to satisfy his own cravings. Kestner has noted the allusion to the Whitechapel Murders in *‘Conscience’* and quotes the following passage as evidence of a link between the real-life crimes and Marsh’s fictional adaptation: ‘This man seemed to have been carrying on for years, with perfect impunity, a hideous traffic in robbery and murder – and the victim was always a woman. His true name was never ascertained. It was clear, from certain papers which were found in his flat, that he had spent several years of his youth in the East. He seemed to have been a solitary creature – a savage beast alone in its lair’ (*Conscience*, p. 67; *Sherlock’s Sisters*, p. 202).

There were and still are many theories as to the identity of the Whitechapel killer. Lowndes’s *The Lodger* imagined him to be a religious

fanatic. In 'The Anti-Tobacco League' (1906) Marsh unabashedly alludes to the Whitechapel crimes of 1888. Marsh depicts the Ripper as man of good social standing, a fictional East-End figure, the Reverend Chasuble, who takes great pleasure in manufacturing poisoned cigars, carries an edged weapon in his cassock and disembowels prostitutes at night. Isolda also wears a robe which looks like a cassock, but he is hardly a well-intentioned man of God. Like Isolda, Chasuble is never caught. 'The Adventure of the Phonograph' also has Ripperesque overtones. When Pugh listens to his phonograph, he is startled when the last cylinder appears to be a recording of the brutal murder of a Jane Clinch whose body was found in an egg box in Lambeth, with linen marked 'J. C.' Pugh believes the phonograph has recorded the voice of the Lambeth murderer. His victim's pleadings are highly suggestive of the Whitechapel murders as she implores a man she calls Jack not to stab her ('The Adventure of the Phonograph', p. 51). Tress's verdict confirms this: 'This is a pretty sort of plaything, upon my word! You seem to have brought the Theatre of Horrors, Whitechapel, into your own home' ('The Adventure of the Phonograph', p. 46). Here is the vision of the slaughterer as a pure monster, whose 'insensate violence' matches the frenzied stabbings of the Ripper. Pugh engages a detective but is no longer needed when Jack Clinch pays Pugh a visit, explaining that he makes his living from attracting customers to hear his phonograph recordings. He and his wife enacted a supposed murder, entitled 'A Drama in Real Life', to attract and thrill customers. Falling on hard times, he pawned the machine but now desires Pugh to return it to him.

Tung is neatly dressed and outwardly respectable. Like a typical serial killer, he leaves a distinctive mark. Tung's calling card is a discarded body, dumped from a height, and left in a place where it is likely to be seen. As with the Whitechapel Murders, there was detailed coverage in the press, describing the state in which the bodies had been found. Here, Tung's violence is veiled and Marsh leaves the details, as Lee finds them in the newspapers, to the reader's morbid imagination: 'There were other details – plenty of them – but that was enough for me' ('Conscience', p. 49). In the winter of 1888, Mary Kelly's eviscerated corpse was found in pieces scattered across her room in Whitechapel, 'slashed about, so that the features of the poor creature were beyond all recognition' (*The Times*, 10 November 1888, p. 7.) When Tung's rooms are raided, items of women's 'belongings of all sorts and kinds' ('Conscience', p. 67) are found, the owners of which all died in suspicious circumstances. He is a fetishist and a collector of trophies of the kill, a trait which we see in later fiction in which serial killers are featured. By way of illustration, in

John Fowles's novel, *The Collector* (1963), a butterfly collector develops a taste for kidnapping young women. In Larsson's more recent novel, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (2005), the murderer photographs his strangled victims. Tung regards his prey as objects, a mindset which is made apparent in the terse descriptions he gives of his victims-to-be, referring only to their clothing. They are reduced to scissored snapshots of women whose lives are clipped short in this sartorial dissection by his insatiable lust to kill.

Both Lee and Tung are part-foreign; he is a 'savage beast' and she is a 'half-bred gipsy-looking creature' just as in the Sherlock Holmes canon, Holmes is likened to a faithful bloodhound while his nemesis, Professor Moriarty, is a predatory snake whose face 'protrudes forward, and "slowly oscillat[es] from side to side in a curiously reptilian fashion"' ('AFP', p. 472). Both Holmes and Lee are outsiders, doing battle to protect society and its values.

## Trapped

The last story of the 1912 collection, 'The Restaurant Napolitain', takes place almost entirely in a closed space. Here, the eaterie becomes a locus of the gothic, a place of entrapment, macaroni and murder. Lee considers the story to be 'one of [her] most thrilling adventures', ('Napolitain', p. 291) although in this tale her hand-to-hand defensive techniques are pushed to the limit.

Lee's lip-reading skills, not to mention her skill with languages, come in handy for her professional work but they also pull her into scenarios where she would not normally venture. What is perhaps a gift is also a curse at points, especially as 'conversations [are] forced upon [her]' ('Isolda', p. 143) when she is out to dine with friends. Whilst exploring London's Italian district at night, Lee sees the body of Emilio, a waiter at the Restaurant Napolitain. His assassin has stabbed him in the back with a knife, which makes her angry as the murderer had 'not even dared to attack him from the front' ('Napolitain', p. 295). Therefore, at the very beginning of the story, the knife is associated with cowardice, a theme which continues throughout. The murdered man had been the childhood sweetheart of his colleague, a cashier at the restaurant named Lucrezia. Lee angrily confronts the man who commissioned the kill, the proprietor of the restaurant, Signor Alessandro. Blinded by anger, Lee fails to listen to her instinct which tells her that 'he was one of those big men with soft voices whom a wise woman never trusts' ('Napolitain', p. 298). Too strong for Lee, Alessandro marches her up some stairs and locks her in a room.

The pace of the story becomes breathless as Lee searches in the dark for an exit into another room, not knowing what she will find there. This scene has the air of *Udolpho*, in which the young, orphaned Emily is also imprisoned by a powerful Italian, the shady Montoni. Here again the female detective is the intrepid explorer, venturing into abandoned buildings or sections of buildings that are normally out of bounds. Locating the 'dazzling' electric light, Judith finds she is in a sitting-room where shutters cover the windows and it is silent outside. The restaurant is a prison, like the brothels in 'Maiden Tribute' and in *WAYGT?*, cut off visually and audibly from the outside world. Lee almost admits to being scared in the darkness when she regrets not having told anyone her whereabouts: 'My courage, which had gone a little at the knees, stood up straight again' ('Napolitain', p. 301). After much groping and fiddling with locks – she manfully breaks down a lock using a fire poker – she finds a room with a telephone and alerts Inspector Ellis at Scotland Yard (who has only just received a report of Emilio's murder) who tells her that the police will arrive in ten minutes. Modern technology thus aids her in her escape from the closed space.

When Alessandro comes for her, she switches off the lights and beats him with the poker and uses just enough force to temporarily incapacitate him. In another room she encounters Lucrezia, who tells her that the restaurant is the Mafia headquarters, that Alessandro is wanted by the police all over Europe. The telephone that Lee uses is the Mafia boss's own machine so she therefore uses the criminal's weapon against him. Lucrezia tells Lee that Alessandro is forcing her to marry him. Here we see how women can turn against each other when we read that Lucrezia's mother is goading her into the marriage as Alessandro says that he will provide for her or cast her out if her daughter refuses him. As in *Azrael*, the daughter is merely a form of payment for her parents' security. Consequently, Lucrezia considers Lee, a stranger, to be her only friend. She does not trust the police to protect her as in her experience they always 'come a little too late' ('Napolitain', p. 311).

The two women progress through the labyrinthine building down to the restaurant below which has been blacked out so that no light reaches the street outside. When they reach their destination, a desperate confrontation ensues. Lee smashes the bottles on the buffet counter just as Ann Veronica threatens to break the glasses in the room. Gaspare comments: 'It looks as if she means to ruin you – she starts to destroy your stock in trade' ('Napolitain', p. 313). While the men and Lucrezia are armed with knives, Lee uses her poker and twice emphatically declines to use Lucrezia's knife. In the year in which Judith Lee first

appeared in the *Strand*, there was also an article on Glima, an Icelandic form of self-defence, which claimed to be more effective than jujitsu. At the end of the piece, there is a photograph of a woman wearing a large hat fending off a knife attack.<sup>14</sup> Lee does not wish to be spotted by Inspector Ellis using such an edged weapon which was considered, of course, very unBritish.

When she first sees Gaspare at the beginning of the story, she considers confronting him about the murder: 'He might have tried to put his knife into me – but I don't think he would have succeeded' (Napolitain, p. 296). Lee's attacker grabs her skirts and she fends him off with a fire poker (an everyday weapon which is more than once useful to Lee as we will see in the story below). She tells us that her quick reaction time allows her to deflect the force of his blows.

He is, however, highly adept at attacking. She uses her knowledge of self-defence to divert the worst of his stabs but she becomes exhausted and there is 'a reek of blood'. Her defensive skills can be contrasted with Lucrezia's whose injuries are worse than Lee's. As Kestner writes, 'the pricks of Gaspare's knife are sexual in connotation, suggesting the rape scenario of the first story in the series, *The Man Who Cut Off My Hair*' (*Sherlock's Sisters*, p. 209). The scars from his stabs are permanent and remind her of her struggle at the restaurant and her battle with crime. The police arrive just as Gaspare is about to plunge the dagger into an exhausted Lee. Seeing that arrest is imminent, he turns the knife on himself.

## Death by Chocolate

The last story which I will examine is 'The Finchley Puzzle' from the 1916 collection, *The Adventures of Judith Lee*. This collection elaborates on Lee's gypsy ancestry – she uses her peripheral identity and her 'powers' in a fake séance in order to frame a criminal. The collection also discusses the female gaze in more detail and considers the question: If criminals know that Lee is a lip-reader, how do they behave? To what extent is she a walking panopticon? How does her celebrity status as a lip-reader make her more vulnerable?

'Finchley' considers what happens when a consulting detective receives suspicious fan mail. This story a revision of Marsh's horrifying tale, 'An Illustration of Modern Science' which appeared in the collection, *The Other Side of the Veil* (1901). Beaufie Buckingham, a coquettish actress, fears for her life and requests the charmed barrister, Raymond Dyke, to draw up her will. She suspects she is being targeted

by a vengeful Spanish dancer, Giulia Santimar, for stealing and then rejecting her husband, August Rampini. Narrowly escaping death by a bite from a snake in her bouquet and a showerbath filled with acid, she approaches Dyke who is smitten and amused by her. She feels that the police would not be able to help her: 'The police? – oh, bother your police!' ('Illustration', p. 12). On the conclusion of the will, she opens a box of chocolates given to her by a fan and bites into a large chocolate. There is a 'flash, a loud report, a blinding smoke' ('Illustration', p. 16) as she is killed instantly by a tiny bomb hidden inside the delicacy. One of the lawyers is blinded and the other turns mad. It is an instance of death by chocolate, before the appearance of Agatha Christie's arsenic-laced piece of confectionary in 'The House of Lurking Death' (1929).

The story describes the lengths to which a vengeful female will go. There are consequences both for the women she targets and the men she maims. At Beauffie's funeral, there is a bouquet from Santimar and Rampini with the sinister note: 'To sleep is best'. Replete with discussions on personal vulnerability, 'Finchley' has strong overtones of Doyle's 'The Adventure of the Speckled Band' (1892). The story concerns the case of a Mr and Mrs Leblanc who are found dead in their empty house. As there is no trace of poison, the police cannot ascertain how the crime was committed. Meanwhile, Lee nervously opens a parcel. She receives a number of presents from her clients – she once received a puppy. In this story, a box greets her. She is hesitant to open this parcel as the last anonymously sent gift was 'a bomb in miniature', disguised as a large chocolate-enrobed walnut. Just as she was about to eat it, she was distracted by a noise, and dropped the chocolate which exploded with 'a blinding flash, a sudden extraordinary noise' and 'a most unpleasant smell' ('Finchley', p. 111). The parcel she now opens contains a snake which kills her puppy. She beats the ophidian dead with a poker. The method of murder is revealed: as in 'The Adventure of the Speckled Band', a snake bites its prey and disappears before any trace of the creature can be found.

Having consulted Dr Evans, an expert in ophidians, she learns that Harold Cleaver stole a snake which was small, easily concealed and the deadliest of his collection. As Cleaver owes money to Mr Le Blanc that he cannot repay, he murders him. He then tries to ensnare Le Blanc's daughter and heiress who has been abroad and has no knowledge of her parents' deaths or how they died. Lee rumbles Cleaver by disguising herself as a maid servant in his house. When she confronts him, he unleashes a snake on her but she beats it down with a revolver she has been carrying, forcing it to turn on its master. As in 'The Adventure

of the Final Problem', where Holmes grapples with the serpent-like Moriarty, here we see man fighting against nature: 'The serpent seemed to fight the man; it was a nightmare' ('Finchley', p. 141). Knowing both adversaries to be deadly to her, she does not use her revolver but, seeing the snake has bitten Cleaver sufficiently to kill him, she beats the snake with a metal rod. This scene recalls 'The Adventure of the Speckled Band', and the way in which Sherlock Holmes beats the adder, forcing the snake back through the vent, to attack Grimesby-Roylott. Holmes's aphorism that 'violence does, in truth, recoil upon the violent' ('The Adventure of the Speckled Band', p. 272) is particularly apt for 'Finchley' and 'The Adventure of the Speckled Band'.

# Conclusion

When Buffy is stalked by Angel, the boyfriend-vampire who turns bad, she discusses with her friends how to fight him. The observant viewer will notice that warnings on posters in the background underline the message of certain scenes in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, sometimes to humorous effect, sometimes with more gravity. Her discussions of this new, malevolent Angel are backgrounded by, not surprisingly, adverts of self-defence classes.

I have shown in this book that literature which discusses the dangers that women could encounter both inside the home and outside it also explores the means by which women could protect themselves. Methods such as the application of observational skills and instinct continued to play an important part even after women's martial arts, an important product of the development of women's emancipation, took hold. Young women could not always rely on parents and gallant heroes to protect them and were often required to make up their own minds about their course of action. Even walking down the street could entail a physical encounter with representatives of the harsher side of life while, as *WAYGT?* shows, the passage from girlhood to womanhood was littered with perils. The advice of parents often comes too late: only after Ann Veronica has encountered Ramage in the cabinet particulier does her father tell her that he thinks Ramage is a shady character. By describing her heroine's sufferings, Caird showed society that when a woman said no, she meant it. She also explored the theme of the uses of women's anger, leaving the thread for Wells and Marsh to pick up later. Judith Lee and Ann Veronica marshall their rage to positive effect but while Ann Veronica settles down, Lee, who knows what it is like to be a victim, is propelled to bring criminals to justice. Notions of what was acceptable and unacceptable differed slightly with each writer – Wells's

depiction of Ann Veronica's 'comforting day of admirable dissection upon the tortoise' (*Ann Veronica*, p. 133) would not have found favour with Caird, for instance. But, in general there was a trend away from interpersonal violence, at least. Male characters were frequently restrained by increasingly stern views on violence but women, such as the suffragette campaigners in *Convert*, had not only such restrictions to contend with but also the fear of sexual danger to surmount whilst at the same time using, as much as possible, minimally aggressive means of self-defence. The literature shows how they needed to work harder, but in concealing their strengths could achieve more through the element of surprise. Victorian fiction is littered with signposts that lurk in the background, if we know where to look for them. The literature shows that they had to work even harder, but in concealing their strengths could achieve more through the element of surprise. During the time that this book was being written, a quasi-neo-Victorian film adaptation of the first in three novels in Suzanne Collins's science-fiction series, *The Hunger Games*, graced cinema screens worldwide. Collins's trilogy has stirring re-envisioned the theme of Theseus and the Minotaur, setting her trenchant critique of war in a futuristic, dystopian America, in which districts are controlled by an oppressive government. The focus is not on a hero but a heroine, Katniss Everdeen, a girl from an impoverished district, and her ability to defend herself humanely when she is forced to volunteer as tribute in a fight to the death against other district teenagers in an overproduced television show, run yearly by the government as punishment for the districts' uprising. Not only does *The Hunger Games* bear shades of H.G. Wells's bifurcated world in *The Time Machine* (1895) but Suzanne Collins also relates the topic of economic oppression to sexual danger and women's self-defence. Katniss relates how, as a starving child, she narrowly avoided becoming a prostitute to a local, male authority figure by learning to hunt with a bow and arrow and thus support her family. To paraphrase Cicely Hamilton, Katniss exercises 'that first law of nature – self-preservation', challenges the status quo and in doing so at least gains the respect of the sinister President Snow who regards her as a worthy adversary.

Casting a glance back through this book and the previous volume on masculinity, it appears that Victorian fiction is littered with signposts on self-defence – tips, confessions, warnings, adverts – that sometimes lurk just behind the narrative.

# Notes

## Introduction

1. Angela V. John, *Elizabeth Robins: Staging a Life, 1862–1952* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 75.
2. Stevie Davies, 'Introduction', *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (London: Penguin, 2003), pp. viii–xxx (p. xx).
3. *Habits of Good Society: A Handbook of Etiquette for Ladies and Gentlemen* (New York: Carleton, 1864), p. 213.
4. *The Gentleman's Book of Manners* (c. 1881), p. 86.
5. Andrew Dowling, *Manliness and the Male Novelist in Victorian Literature* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), p. 22.
6. *Men of Blood: Violence, Manliness and Criminal Justice in Victorian England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 35.
7. Teresa Billington-Greig, 'The Truth about White Slavery', *English Review*, June (1913), 428–446 (p. 444).
8. John Stuart Mill, 'The Subjection of Women' in *On Liberty and Other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 1991), p. 493.
9. Kim Stevenson, 'Women and Young Girls Dare not Travel Alone', *Gendered Journeys, Mobile Emotions* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), 189–200, (p. 193).
10. Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles; A Pure Woman* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 2000), p. 69.
11. Alfred Chichele Plowden, *Grain or Chaff? The Autobiography of a Police Magistrate* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1903), p. 34.
12. Sally Mitchell, *The New Girl: Girls' Culture in England 1880–1915* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p. 9.
13. 'A dangerous novel' – see Wilfred Whitten's mawkish review in 'Review: *Ann Veronica*', *T.P.'s Weekly*, 14 (1909), 537–538, in Patrick Parrinder's, *H G Wells: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), pp. 160–164 (p. 162).
14. He has his modern equivalents in everyday life. A young, female commuter describes feeling 'a sharp prick in [her] derriere' and discovers that a man has cut a hole in her dress. Celia Smit, 'This Freak Had a Pair of Scissors', *London Paper*, 25 September 2008, p. 28.
15. Caird on sexual lust in men, *The Morality of Marriage and Other Essays on the Status and Destiny of Woman* (London: George Redway, 1897), p. 225.
16. 'The Adventure of the Final Problem', *The Penguin Complete Sherlock Holmes* (London: Penguin, 1981), p. 471.
17. H. G. Wells, Letter: 'To the Editor, *Spectator*', 1 December 1909, in *The Correspondence of H. G. Wells: 1904–1918*, ed. by David C. Smith, 4 vols (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1998), 2, p. 265.
18. Stephen Kern, *Eyes of Love: The Gaze in English and French Paintings and Novels, 1840–1900*, (London: Reaktion Books, 1996).

19. Michelle Stacey, 'How a Date Rapist Works', *Cosmopolitan*, June (2008), 148–152 (p. 152). This term is attributed to David Lisak of the University of Massachusetts at Boston.
20. Stead, 'The Book of the Month', "The Woman Who Did" by G. Allen, *Review of Reviews*, 11 (1895), 177–190, (p. 177).

## 1 On the Street

1. These include *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the Fin de Siècle* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 155. Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (London: Virago, 1992); Deborah Epstein-Nord, *Walking the Victorian Streets: Women, Representation, and the City* (London and Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).
2. Deborah Epstein-Nord quotes Virginia Woolf in *Walking the Victorian Streets*, p. 4. Jeanette Marshall in Suzanna Shonfield, *The Precariously Privileged: A Professional Family in Victorian London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 44, 50, 51 quoted in Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, p. 52.
3. Helena M. Swanwick, *I Have Been Young* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1935), p. 82. The controversial theory that Sickert was involved in the Whitechapel Murders has famously been propounded in Patricia Cornwell's, *Portrait of a Killer: Jack the Ripper – Case Closed* (2002).
4. Laurence Housman, *Sex-War and Woman's Suffrage: A Lecture Given By Laurence Housman*, 7 May 1912, pp. 44–45, kept in David Mitchell's notes for his book, *Queen Christabel: A Biography of Christabel Pankhurst* (London: Macdonald and Jane's, 1977), Museum of London.
5. *Gentleman's Book of Manners*, pp. 28–33.
6. Deborah L. Parsons, *Streetwalking the Metropolis: Women, the City, and Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 6.
7. Mark Turner, *Backwards Glances: Cruising Queer Streets in London and New York* (London: Reaktion, 2003).
8. Charles Dickens, *Bleak House* (London: Everyman, 1994), p. 157.
9. Beatrice Violet Greville, *Vignettes of a Memory* (London: Hutchison, 1927), p. 149.
10. Elizabeth Robins, *Both Sides of the Curtain* (London: Heinemann, 1940), pp. 164–168.
11. Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Freud Library, 1986), p. 52n.) in Sylvia Hardy, 'Introduction' *Ann Veronica* (London: Everyman, 1993), pp. xxix–xlv (p. xlvi).
12. Dinah Mulock Craik, *A Woman's Thoughts about Women* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1858), p. 78.
13. *Habits of Good Society*, pp. 313–316.
14. *Habits of Good Society*, p. 316.
15. Eliza Lynn Linton, 'Out Walking', *Temple Bar*, 5 (1862), 132–141 (p. 138).
16. Ruth slate's diary, 10 June 1908, reprinted in Tierl Thompson, ed., *Dear Girl: The Diaries and Letters of Two Working Women 1897–1917* (London: The Women's Press, 1987), pp. 117–118.
17. *East London Observer*, 11 August 1888, p. 5.

18. Elaine Freedgood, *Victorian Writing about Risk: Imaging a Safe England in a Dangerous World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 118–121.

## 2 Danger en Route

1. *My Little Sister*, Act I, p. 24, Series 6, Box 74, 12–15, Fales Library and Special Collections, New York University.
2. Kim Stevenson on *Spectator* report of 9 January 1864, in her article, 'Women and Young Girls Dare not Travel Alone', pp. 192–193.
3. *The Times*, 25 June 1875, p. 11. All subsequent quotations on this case are derived from this page.
4. 'The Mouse' (1910) by 'Saki' humorously discusses railway etiquette. Theodoric Voler endeavours with great shame to rid himself of a mouse in his clothing in front of a lady, not knowing that she is blind. The Valentine Baker story elements are also here, including an old-fashioned train with no connecting corridor, and a middle-aged man on arriving at the destination in a somewhat dishevelled state.
5. *Lancaster Gazette*, 14 August 1875, p. 7.
6. Kim Stevenson on Pearsall's depiction of Kate in Ronald Pearsall's *The Worm in the Bud: The World of Victorian Sexuality* (London: Penguin, 1969), pp. 398–399, in Stevenson, 'Women and Young Girls Dare not Travel Alone', p. 199.
7. Pamela Gerrish Nunn, 'Fine Art and the Fan 1860–1930', *Journal of Design History*, 17 (2004), 251–266.
8. See in particular Lynda Nead's discussion of the symbolism of flowers in 'Seduction, Prostitution, Suicide: *On the Brink* by Alfred Elmore', *Art History* 5 (1982), 310–22.
9. Virginia Blain, 'Sexual Politics of the (Victorian Closet); or, No Sex Please – We're Poets', *Women's Poetry, Late Romantic to Late Victorian, Gender and Genre: 1830–1900*, ed. by Isobel Armstrong and Virginia Blain (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 135–163.
10. Nineteenth-century journalists sometimes described the tanto as a dagger-fan but it is clear from the description that they are referring to a tanto. For example, the *Girl's Own Paper* writes that 'the most deadly instrument doubtless is the dagger fan in its polished case of laquer'. *Girl's Own Paper*, 30 June 1894, p. 623.
11. *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, 17 (1874), p. 325. The illustration is on p. 317 of the same volume. The picture is repeated in *Harper's Bazar*, 22 May 1875 p. 332. <<http://hearth.library.cornell.edu/h/hearth/browse/title/4732809.html#1878>>[accessed 20 October 2011] I am very grateful to Mrs Alexander of The Fan Museum for telling me about the tanto and the dagger and pistol fans. The dagger-fan is classed as an 'éventail armé' in Maryse Volet's, *L'Imagination au Service de L'Éventail: Les Brevets Déposés en France au 19ème Siècle* (Privately published, 1986), p. 199. As Hélène Alexander points out, the dagger-fan also appeared in *La Mode Illustrée, Journal de la Famille*, 1874, The Fan Museum, p. 354. See Hélène Alexander, *The Costume Accessories Series: Fans* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1984), p. 62.

- A variation on the novelty fan theme was also the pistol-fan, which could be decorated in American colours. Cynthia Fendel, *Novelty Hand Fans: Fashionable, Functional, Fun Accessories of the Past* (Dallas: Hand Fan Productions, 2006).
12. *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, 1 February 1875, p. 110.
  13. *The Treasury of Literature and the Ladies' Treasury*, 1 August 1874, p. 108.

### 3 Behind Closed Doors in Mona Caird's *The Wing of Azrael* (1889)

1. William Wallace, 'New Novels: Review: *The Wing of Azrael*', *Academy*, 25 May 1889, 355–356 (p. 355).
2. Annie S. Swan, *My Life* (London: Ivor Nicholson and Watson, 1934), p. 71.
3. For more biographical information on Caird see Ann Heilmann, 'Mona Caird (1854–1932): Wild Woman, New Woman, and Early Radical Feminist Critic of Marriage and Motherhood', *Women's History Review*, 5 (1996), 67–95.
4. Mona Caird, *The Morality of Marriage and Other Essays on the Status and Destiny of Woman* (London: George Redway, 1897), p. 69.
5. See *Bleak Houses*, and Lyn Pykett, 'The Cause of Women and the Course of Fiction: The Case of Mona Caird', in *Gender Roles and Sexuality in Victorian Literature*, ed. by Christopher Parker, p. 133.
6. 'The Wing of Azrael: Review', *The Literary World*, 20 (6 July 1889), p. 225.
7. Lavater, Johann Caspar, *Essays on Physiognomy*, trans. by Thomas Holcroft (London: Ward, Lock and Co., c. 1885), pp. 401 and 395.
8. Caird, 'A Defence of the So-Called "Wild Women"', *Nineteenth Century*, 31 (1892), 811–829 (p. 821).
9. Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess* (New Haven: Yale, 1995), p. 16.
10. Wallace, 'Review: *Azrael*', *Academy*, p. 355.
11. She was particularly drawn to the character of Catherine in *Wuthering Heights* (1847). See *Watercolour* ed. by Alison Smith (London: Tate Trustees, 2011), p. 165.
12. *The Wing of Azrael* (British Library Historical Collection, 2010); Warwick, Alexandra, ed., *The Wing of Azrael*, by Mona Caird, in *New Woman Fiction, 1881–1899*, Vol 3 (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2010); Tracey S. Rosenberg, ed., *The Wing of Azrael* (Valancourt Classics, 2010).
13. George Burgess, *The Art of Reading Character* (Bristol: Taylor Bros, 1885), p. 22.
14. Henry Frith, *How to Read Character in Features, Forms and Faces* (London: Ward and Lock and Co., 1891), p. 105.
15. See Sharrona Pearl, *About Faces: Physiognomy in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London: Harvard University Press, 2010).
16. Conan Doyle, *The Penguin Complete Sherlock Holmes* (London: Penguin, 1981), p. 492.
17. *Habits of Good Society*, p. 283.
18. A modern article argues that steeped fingers denote a manipulative nature. Michelle Stacey, 'How a Date Rapist Works', *Cosmopolitan*, June (2008), 148–152 (p. 151).

19. George Burgess, *The Art of Reading Character* (Bristol: Taylor Bros, 1885), p. 17.
20. Samuel Smiles, *Character* (London: John Murray, 1871), p. 238.
21. Clive Bloom, *Gothic Histories: The Taste for Terror, 1764 to the Present* (London: Continuum, 2010), p. 74.
22. Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess* (New Haven: Yale, 1995), p. 17.
23. Geoffrey, Viola's brother, remarks that looking at the forehead of the local snob, Mrs Pellett, is 'like looking up at Mont Blanc'. *Azrael*, 2, p. 119.
24. 'Hunted Down' in *Hunted Down: The Detective Stories of Charles Dickens*, ed. by Peter Haining (London: Peter Owen, 1996), pp. 174–196 (p. 180).
25. Smiles, *Character*, p. 243. For a lengthier discussion on the gentleman, see *Masculinity, Crime and Self-Defence in Victorian Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).
26. *Christian Names And What They Mean: A Birthday Book* (London: Marcus Ward and Co., 1885), p. 156. By the same token, according to this book, Viola means 'violet' flower, Harold (Harry), 'martial power' for a reluctant soldier and Richard, 'stern king', appropriate for a stern father.
27. Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (London: Virago, 2001), p. 181.
28. 'The Squaw', p. 39. Hebblethwaite, introduction to Bram Stoker's 'The Squaw', in *Dracula's Guest and Other Weird Tales* (London: Penguin, 2006), ed. by Kate Hebblethwaite, pp. xi–xxxix (p. xix).
29. Hardy, Introduction, *Ann Veronica*, (1993), p. xliv.
30. Jamie O'Keefe, *Dogs Don't Know Kung-Fu: A Guide to Female Self Protection* (Dagenham: New Breed Publishing, 1996), p. 41.
31. 'Review: *Ann Veronica*', *Vote*, 23 December 1909, p. 103.
32. Agnieszka Źabicka, 'Female Gothic Motifs in Mona Caird's The Wing of the Azrael', *Victorian Review*, 31 (2005), 5–20 (p. 16).
33. House of Lords case R v R [1991] 4 All ER 481.
34. W. H. Willis, 'The Modern Science of Thief-taking,' *Household Words*, 1 (1850), 368–372 (p. 371).
35. Foucault, Michel, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London: Penguin, 1991), p. 249.
36. Susan Winnett, 'The Marquise's "O" and the Mad Dash of Narrative', *Rape and Representation*, edited by Lynn Higgins and Brenda R. Silver (eds) (Oxford: Columbia University Press, 1991), p. 68.
37. Heinrich von Kleist, 'The Marquise of O.', *Heinrich von Kleist: Selected Writings*, ed. and trans. by David Constantine (London: J. M. Dent, 1997) pp. 281–311 (pp. 282 and p. 307–308). According to Constantine, the story caused much offence when it was published, p. 436.
38. Recollections in conversation with John Jackson, author of *A Little Piece of England*, born in the 1920s, on what his father was told by relatives.
39. Joanne E. Gates, *Elizabeth Robins, 1862–1952: Actress, Novelist, Feminist* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1994), p. 59.
40. Surridge, *Bleak Houses*, p. 203.
41. Źabicka, Agnieszka, 'Female Gothic Motifs in Mona Caird's The Wing of the Azrael', *Victorian Review*, 31 (2005), 5–20 (p. 12).
42. Henry Simmons Frieze, *Giovanni Duprè* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, 1886), p. 68.

43. Wallace, William, 'New Novels: Review: *The Wing of Azrael*', *Academy*, 25 May 1889, 355–356 (p. 355). John Lawrence Toole received much praise for his depiction of a panic-stricken middle-class man who fears garotters in Watts Phillips's *A Ticket of Leave: A Farce in One Act* (1862), written during the garotting panics.
44. Eliot's treatment of her heroine's sufferings is an elaboration of a similar subplot in Anne Brontë's *Agnes Grey* in which the eponymous governess's haughty and coquettish pupil, Miss Murray – also a spoilt child – marries a man of property and is shocked to learn that she cannot control her husband in the way she had anticipated.
45. 'The Ladies' Gallery', *Myra's Journal*, 1 June 1889, p. 304; 'Our London Letter', *Otago Daily Times*, 29 June 1889, p. 2. Papers Past, National Library of New Zealand <<http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&d=ODT18890629.2.64&e=---10---0>> [accessed 20 November 2011].
46. 'Among the Books: The Moan of the Tied': Review: *The Wing of Azrael* by Mona Caird, *Otago Witness*, 7 November 1889, p. 34. <<http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&d=OW18891107.2.130&e=---10---0>> [accessed 20 November 2011].
47. Surridge, *Bleak Houses*, p. 214.
48. 'Punishment for Crimes Against Women and Children', *Westminster Review*, 169 (1908), pp. 550–553, quoted in *Bleak Houses*, pp. 214–215.
49. Mona Caird, 'Beyond the Pale: An Appeal on behalf of the Victims of Vivisection' (London: William Reeves, 1897), p. 45.
50. Pierce Egan, *Every Gentleman's Manual: A Lecture on the Art of Self-Defence* (London: Flintoff, 1851), p. 4.
51. Andrew J. Newton was the Light-Weight Boxing Champion from 1888 to 1890 and presided over Newton's School of Arms and Physical Training in London. See J. Newton, *Boxing* (London: C. Arthur Pearson, 1910), p. 14.
52. J. St. A. Jewell, 'The Gymnasiums of London: Pierre Vigny's', *Health and Strength*, 7 (1904), pp. 173–177 (p. 173).
53. Judith Knelman, *Twisting in the Wind: The Murderess and the English Press* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), p. 262.
54. Wiener quoted in Knelman, *Twisting in the Wind*, p. 262.
55. Knelman, *Twisting in the Wind*, p. 261.
56. Forward, Stephanie, 'The "New Man" in *Fin-de-Siècle* Fiction', *Women's Writing*, 5 (1998), 437–455, p. 453.
57. 'Our London Letter', *Otago Daily Times*, 29 June 1889, p. 2. Papers Past, National Library of New Zealand <<http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&d=ODT18890629.2.64&e=---10---0>> [accessed 20 November 2011].
58. O'Keefe, *Dogs Don't Know Kung-Fu*, p. 38.

#### 4 Elizabeth Robins's *The Convert*

1. George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda* (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 263.
2. Quotation on stalkers from diary, quoted in *Elizabeth Robins: Staging a Life, 1862–1952*, p. 28, no reference to diary page given.

3. Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own* (London: Virago, 1999), p. 218.
4. 'PC', "Votes for Women": Miss Robins's Play at the Court', *Manchester Guardian*, 10 April 1907, p. 12.
5. It is accepted that Vida Levering was based on Christabel Pankhurst while, as Angela John argues, Ernestine Blunt is based on Teresa Billington-Greig.
6. 'The Suffragette and the Dress Problem', *Votes for Women*, 30 July 1908, p. 348.
7. Mary Phillips, 'The Typical Suffragist', *Votes for Women*, December 1907, p. 35.
8. 'Suffragette and Dress', p. 348.
9. Paula Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 109.
10. Helen Corke, *In Our Infancy: An Autobiography* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 163.
11. For a discussion of the real-life personages behind the fictional characters in *Ann Veronica*. Elizabeth Crawford, "'The Woman's Bond of Freedom": H. G. Wells, *Ann Veronica* and the Suffragettes', *The Wellsian: The Journal of the H. G. Wells Society*, Special Edition: *Ann Veronica*, guest ed. by Emelyne Godfrey, 34 (2011), 44–53.
12. Wells, Letter to Elizabeth Robins, dated mid-January 1910, *The Correspondence of H. G. Wells: 1904–1914*, ed. by David C. Smith, 4 vols (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1998), 2, p. 276.
13. 'Review: *Ann Veronica*', *Vote*, 23 December 1909, 103.
14. Lovat Dickson, *H. G. Wells: His Turbulent Life and Times* (London: Macmillan, 1971), p. 161.
15. Belt and chain, Museum of London, Item ID Number 66.7/2. Harold L. Smith writes that after 1912, the government attempted to get to doctors to examine suffragettes in jail to certify that they were insane. Harold, L. Smith, *The British Women's Suffrage Campaign: 1866–1928* (Harlow: Longman, 1998), p. 37.
16. Eva's diary, 22 July 1913, *Dear Girl*, p. 176.
17. Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own* (London: Virago, 1999), p. 223.
18. Katherine Roberts, *Papers from the Diary of a Militant Suffragette* (Letchworth: Garden City Press, 1910), p. 95.
19. Roberts, *Papers from the Diary*, p. 69.
20. Mary Richardson, *Laugh a Defiance* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1953), p. 117.
21. Georgiana Margaret Solomon, 'Black Friday: Letter to Winston Churchill', *Votes for Women*, Pamphlet 76 (1911) (pp. 1–4) Museum of London Suffragette Collections. Quoted with permission from the Museum of London.
22. In 1910, suffragettes were allowed to wear their own clothing and could receive food parcels on a weekly basis.
23. E. Sylvia Pankhurst, *Suffrage Movement*, p. 444.
24. Christabel Pankhurst, 'In Fear of Women', *Suffragette*, 19 December 1913, p. 255.
25. The information on hatpin sizes is from Eve Eckstein and June Firkins, *Hat Pins* (Buckinghamshire: Shire Publications Ltd, 1992). A photograph of the sword-stick is on p. 2. Many thanks to June for providing me with the extra

- information on this hatpin. During World War I, hats decreased in size and so did hatpins correspondingly.
26. *Blackburn Standard*, 10 December 1887, p. 2.
  27. Eleanor D. Longman and Sophy Loch, *Pins and Pincushions* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1911), p. 128.
  28. 'Unarmed Citizens May Here Learn How to Foil the Ubiquitous Thug', *New York Daily Tribune*, 10 March 1912, p. 4.
  29. *Derby Mercury*, 25 August 1897, p. 8.
  30. *Old Bailey Proceedings Online* ([www.oldbaileyonline.org](http://www.oldbaileyonline.org), version 6.0, 06 January 2012), May 1902, trial of Michael Benson (61) Frederick Preston (28) Margaret Bradley (32) Minnie Edwards (28) James Benson (35) (t19020505-413) <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?id=t19020505-413&div=t19020505-413&terms=hatpin#highlight> [accessed 20 November 2011].
  31. Longman and Loch, *Pins and Pincushions*, p. 127.
  32. New York Times, 12 November 1911 <<http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F70814FC355517738DDDAB0994D9415B818DF1D3>> [accessed 20 November 2011].
  33. E. Katherine Willoughby Marshall, *Suffragette Escapes and Adventures*, Museum of London, Suffragette Fellowship Collection, Group B: 50. 82/1132, p. 49. Quoted with permission from the Museum of London, p. 67.
  34. Angus McLaren, *The Trials of Masculinity: Policing Sexual Boundaries 1870–1930* (University of Chicago Press, 1997), p. 36.
  35. In March 1903, Inspector Frederick Abberline told the *PMG* that he suspected the killer was George Chapman.
  36. Teresa Billington-Greig, Teresa, 'The Woman with the Whip' (1907), in *Towards Woman's Liberty* (London: Women's Freedom League, 1913), pp. 43–52 (p. 46).
  37. This incident is described in Pankhurst, *Suffrage Movement*, 296–298. *Illustrated London News* dubbed Helen Ogston 'The Woman with the Whip', 12 December 1908, and featured an illustration of her and the Albert Hall debacle, see front page and p. 826.
  38. Dog-whip made of plaited leather thongs, 960 mm long and 32 mm wide Item ID Number 50.82/1205, Museum of London.

## 5 The Last Heroine Left?

1. Mona Caird, Letter to *The Times*, 11 August, 1908, p 10.
2. Sheila Fletcher, *Women First: The Female Tradition in English Physical Education, 1880–1980* (London: The Athlone Press, 1984), p. 71.
3. Kathleen McCrone, *Sport and the Physical Emancipation of English Women, 1870–1914* (London: Routledge, 1988), pp. 5–6.
4. Elizabeth Blackwell, 'Extracts From the Laws of Life, with Special Reference to the Physical Education of Girls', *Englishwoman's Journal*, 1 May, 1 (1858), 189–190 (p. 190). The *Englishwoman's Journal* printed articles on female suffrage.
5. Eliza Lynn Linton 'Modern Mannish Maidens', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 147 (1890), 252–264, p. 254.

6. Nicola Beauman, *A Very Great Profession: The Woman's Novel 1914–39* (London: Virago, 1983), p. 66.
7. *Hockey Field*, 18 February 1909, p. 323.
8. Linton, 'Mannish Maidens', pp. 258–260.
9. Ethel M. Dell, *The Way of an Eagle* (London, Fisher Unwin, 1914), p. 132.
10. See in particular Cliona Murphy, 'H. G. Wells and Votes for Women', *Wellsian*, 10 (1987), 11–19 (p. 11).
11. Nicola Beauman, *A Very Great Profession*, p. 66.
12. See Bowen, 'Pioneers, Richard Bowen, 'Pioneers in Bringing Jujutsu (Judo) to Britain: Edward William Barton Wright, Tani Yukio and Ernest John Harrison', *Britain and Japan: Biographical Portraits*, ed. by H. Cortazzi, 3 (2005), pp. 455–468 (p. 459). A lecture was given to the Japan Society by Tetsujiro Shidachi, and was printed in 1892 in the men's magazine, the *Idler*, edited by Robert Barr and Jerome K. Jerome. However, Shidachi's work appears to have attracted little attention at the time.
13. Tony Wolf, 'Foreword', in *The Bartitsu Compendium: History and Canonical Syllabus*, 1 (2005), ed. by Tony Wolf, (Lulu: 2005), 13–14 (p. 13).
14. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Penguin Complete Sherlock Holmes* (London: Penguin, 1981), p. 486.
15. Bowen, 'Pioneers', p. 458.
16. These include Richard Bowen, Yuichi Hirayama and John Hall, Tony Wolf and Joe Svinth amongst others.
17. Mary Nugent, 'Barton-Wright and his Japanese Wrestlers: A Man and his Method', *Health and Strength*, 3 (1901), 336–341.
18. Lesser-known fiction appeared in *Health and Strength* such as Harrold W. Fisher's 'For Her Sake: A Ju-Jutsu Story' *Health and Strength*, 12 (1913), p. 694. In 1908, *Ju-Jitsu, or the Japanese Wrestler: A Farce in One Act* (1908) was performed in Oxford. It is now kept at the British Library, in the Lord Chamberlain's Manuscript Collection, 25/08.
19. The first book is purported to be *Meine Selbsthilfe Jiu Jitsu für Damen* (1901), written by a Swiss instructor, Armand Cherpillod. The first known work written for an English market on this subject was Irving Hancock's *Physical Training for Women by Japanese Methods* (1904). The 1901 edition of Cherpillod's book is hard to find and its existence was first established by Joe Svinth in 'Women Who Would Not Be Sheep: Women's Combative Sports in the Twentieth Century' in *InYo: Journal of Alternative Perspectives on the Martial Arts and Sciences*, p. 1. <[http://ejmas.com/jalt/jaltart\\_svinth4\\_1199.htm](http://ejmas.com/jalt/jaltart_svinth4_1199.htm)> [accessed 20 November 2011].
20. Wolf, *Bartitsu Compendium*, p. 111.
21. Emily Diana Watts, *The Fine Art of Jujutsu* (London: William Heinemann, 1906), p. 4.
22. I am grateful to Tony Wolf for his explanation of 'ground' techniques.
23. Hancock, *Physical Training*, p. 9.
24. Linton, 'Mannish Maidens', p. 259.
25. 'And Now It's the Boxing Girl', *New York Times*, 25 September 1904 <<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F00F15F9395E12738DDAC0A94D1405B848CF1D3>> [accessed 20 November 2011].
26. Marie Studholme, quoted in Ellice Beere, 'Why Not Ju-Jitsu for Women?' *Penny Illustrated Paper and Illustrated Times*, 18 December 1909, p. 414.

27. 'Should Women Wrestle?', *Health and Strength*, 14 (1907), 182–183.
28. *Evening Post* (New Zealand), 4 September 1914, p. 9 <<http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&d=EP19140904.2.116>> [accessed 20 November 2011]. By the 1920s, Miss Cowdray had changed her mind about the benefits of physical education training on women, arguing that a devotion to sports made women barren and selfish. See Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (London: Reaktion Books, 1996).
29. Simon Bacon, 'Life's A Mutha!: Motherhood, Melancholia, and the Loss of Self in *Ann Veronica* by H. G. Wells and *Alien Resurrection* by Jean-Pierre Jeunet', *Wellsian: The Journal of the H.G. Wells Society*, guest ed. by Emelyne Godfrey, 34 (2011), 76–84 (79).
30. Godfrey Winn, 'Dear Mrs Garrud – I Wish I'd Known You Then...', *Woman*, 19 June 1965, 22–25 (p. 22). Taking a cue from Antonia Raeburn, Mitchell also asserts that Edith Garrud was 'the first female ju-jitsu instructor'. *Queen Christabel*, p. 140.
31. 'Ju-jutsuffragettes, A New Terror for the London Police', *Health and Strength*, 6 (1909), 421.
32. See *Votes for Women*, 21 May 1909, p. 377 and 28 May 1909, p. 723. *Queen Christabel*, p. 140.
33. 'Suffragist Militancy: Miss Sylvia Pankhurst's Advice', *The Times*, 20 August 1913, p. 8.
34. Erica Diane Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure: Women in the Making of London's West End* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 217.
35. 'Ju-jutsuffragettes, A New Terror for the London Police', *Health and Strength*, 6 (1909), p. 421.
36. 'The Suffragette that Knew Jiu-Jitsu', *Punch*, 6 July 1910, p. 9.
37. Edith Garrud, "'The Ju-Jutsu Suffragettes": Mrs Garrud Replies to Her Critics', *Health and Strength*, 7 (1910), p. 284.
38. Edith Garrud, 'Damsel versus Desperado', *Health and Strength*, 7 (23 July 1910), pp. 101–102. This article has unfortunately been torn out from the *Health and Strength* copy at the British Library, St Pancras. Many thanks to Graham Noble for providing me with his copy of *Health and Strength*.
39. 'If You Want to Earn Some Time Throw a Policeman', *Sketch*, 6 July 1910, p. 425.
40. Rosemary T. VanArsdel, 'Women's Periodicals and the New Journalism: The Personal Interview', in *Papers for the Millions: The New Journalism in Britain, 1850s–1914*, ed. by Joel H. Wiener (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1988), pp. 243–256 (p. 246).
41. The image of the hatted and defensive woman features in a number of striking photographs in W. H. Collingridge's *Tricks of Self-Defence* (London: Health and Strength Limited, 1914), p. 11.
42. Connell, *Masculinities* (2006), p. 100.
43. Sidney Low, 'The Physical Force Argument', *Votes for Women*, 4 June 1909, p. 751.
44. Patrick Geddes and J. Arthur Thomson, *The Evolution of Sex* (London: Walter Scott, 1889), p. 270.
45. Edith Garrud, 'The World We Live In', *Votes for Women*, 4 March 1910, p. 355.

46. Ledger, *The New Woman at the Fin de Siècle*, p. 96.
47. Garrud, 'Damsel', pp. 101–102.
48. Garrud, 'Damsel', p. 102.
49. Edith Garrud, 'The World We Live In', *Votes for Women*, 4 March 1910, p. 355.
50. 'Ju-Jutsu as a Husband-Tamer: A Suffragette Play with a Moral', *Health and Strength*, 8 (1911), 339.

## 6 Elizabeth Robins and the 'White Slave Trade' Panic

1. Walter de la Mare, *Times Literary Supplement*, 16 January 1913, p. 22; Hildegarde Hawthorne, 'Review: My Little Sister', *New York Times*, 23 February 1913. <<http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F6081FFB385F13738DDAA0A94DA405B838DF1D3>> [accessed 20 November 2011].
2. *Way Stations* <<http://www.jsu.edu/depart/english/robins/waysta/way00tab.htm>> [accessed 20 November 2011].
3. See Rob Sindall's *Street Violence in the Nineteenth-Century: Media Panic or Real Danger?* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1990).
4. Onselen on term 'foreigner'. Charles van Onselen, *Fox and the Flies*, p. 448.
5. Robins, 'Memoranda', Diary 1912, p. 8. Quotation with kind permission from Independent Age.
6. Robins, 'Memoranda', Diary 1912, p. 14. Quotation with kind permission from Independent Age.
7. 'Review: Where Are You Going To...?' *Votes for Women*, 17 January 1913, p. 228.
8. Hildegarde, 'Review: My Little Sister', *New York Times*, 23 February 1913 <<http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F6081FFB385F13738DDAA0A94DA405B838DF1D3>> [accessed 20 November 2011].
9. Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (London: Yale University Press, 2009), p. 29.
10. Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, p. 29.
11. *My Little Sister*, Act I, p. 24, Series 6, Box 74, 12–15, Fales Library and Special Collections, New York University.
12. Hildegarde Hawthorne, 'Review: My Little Sister', *New York Times*, 23 February 1913 <<http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F6081FFB385F13738DDAA0A94DA405B838DF1D3>> [accessed 20 November 2011].
13. Robins, Series 1A Box 3 folder 19, entry dated 'Dec. 25/96', in *Elizabeth Robins: Staging a Life, 1862–1952*, p. 116.
14. W. N. Willis, *The White Slaves of London* (London: Stanley Paul, 1912), p. 36.
15. *East London Observer*, 26 November 1887, p. 6.
16. Robins, 'Memoranda', Diary 1912, p. 8. Quotation with kind permission from Independent Age.
17. These quotations have been taken with permission from the British Library, from material in LR 310/14, Lord Chamberlain's Correspondence Files 1900–1968, Lord Chamberlain's Manuscript Collection, British Library.
18. I am grateful to Angela V. John for this information on Zoe Hadwen.
19. Mrs Ayrton Zangwill, 'Review: Where Are You Going To...?', *Suffragette*, 17 January 1913, p. 203.

20. The name has many possible meanings. At the time Robins was writing the novel, the HMS Tartar was a name given to a number of vessels. One was launched in 1907. This ship operated as a destroyer and was later used in WW1. Gareth Bellis, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. Colledge, Ships of the Royal Navy, 1, (1987), pp. 342–343, HMM Warship Histories Database.
21. *Way Stations* <<http://www.jsu.edu/depart/english/robins/waysta/way00tab.htm>> [accessed 20 November 2011].
22. Anthony Trollope, *Phineas Finn*, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 1999), 1, p. 353.
23. Jerome K. Jerome, *Three Men on the Bummel* (1900), pp. 205–206, quoted in Peter Gay, *The Cultivation of Hatred in The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud*, 5 vols (London: Harper Collins, 1994), 3, p. 11.
24. He renamed one of his rape victims, Rachel Laskin, as Lizzie Josephs, a name derived from his own name and one that reflected her status as his possession. Charles van Onselen, *The Fox and the Flies: The World of Joseph Silver, Racketeer and Psychopath* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2007), p. 5.
25. Jerome, *Three Men on the Bummel* (Bristol: J.W. Arrowsmith, 1900), p. 208, in Gay, *Cultivation of Hatred*, p. 12.
26. See *Sexual Anarchy*, particularly pp. 188–208.
27. Phyllis Bottome, *Search for a Soul: Fragment of an Autobiography* (London: Faber and Faber, 1947), pp. 95–96.
28. Helen Keller, 'I Must Speak', *Suffragette*, 26 September 1913, p. 861.
29. Paula Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 77 and 121.
30. Sue Thomas, 'Crying the "horror" of Prostitution: Elizabeth Robins's *'Where Are You Going To...?' and the Moral Crusade of the Women's Social and Political Union', *Women: A Cultural Review*, 16 (2005), 203–221 (p. 212).*
31. W. N Willis, *The White Slaves of London* (London: Stanley Paul, 1912), p. 37.
32. It is possible that this aspect of the story was emphasized with future film production in mind. *WAYGT?* was turned into a film in 1919, entitled *My Little Sister*, directed by Kenean Buel.
33. Act 3, *Votes for Women!* by Elizabeth Robins, *Victorian Women Writers Project*, Indiana University, <<http://webapp1.dlib.indiana.edu/vwwp/view?docId=VAB7192;chunk.id=d1e10358;toc.depth=1;toc.id=;brand=vwwp;query=>>> [accessed 20 November 2011].
34. On her investigative expedition with Major Hillyer, Robins asks a prostitute 'Where do you come from I said'. 'Memoranda', Diary, dated February 1912, p. 11, Box 6, Fales Library and Special Collections, New York University.
35. Robins, 'Memoranda', Diary 1912, p. 7. Quotation with kind permission from Independent Age.
36. Robins, 'Memoranda', Diary 1912, p. 7. Quotation with kind permission from Independent Age.
37. Sue Thomas, 'Crying the "horror" of Prostitution: Elizabeth Robins's *'Where Are You Going To...?' and the Moral Crusade of the Women's Social and Political Union', *Women: A Cultural Review*, 16 (2005), 203–221 (p. 207).*
38. Elizabeth Robins, Memoranda dated February 1912, p. 13, quoted in *Elizabeth Robins: Staging a Life, 1862–1952*, p. 188.
39. Letter to Ruth Slate, *Dear Girl*, 26 June 1914, pp. 226–227.

## 7 Read My Lips

1. Richard Dalby, 'Richard Marsh: Novelist Extraordinaire', *Book and Magazine Collector*, 163 (1997), pp. 76–89, p. 86.
2. *Victorian Villainies* ed. by Graham Green and Sir Hugh Greene (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), p. 9.
3. Minna Vuohelainen, *Victorian Fiction Research Guide 35: Richard Marsh*, Canterbury Christ Church University, 2009.
4. *Sherlock's Sisters: The British Female Detective, 1864–1913* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), p. 210–212.
5. David Wright, *Deafness: A Personal Account* (London: Faber, 1990), p. 135.
6. I discuss Doyle's later use of the term 'wicked-looking revolver' and of his physiognomic likening of criminals to snakes in *Masculinity, Crime and Self-Defence in Victorian Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).
7. C. Sibley Haycock, 'Lip-Reading: The Art of Judith Lee', *Strand Magazine*, 43 (1912), 14–19.
8. Hadley Freeman, 'Lip Reader Helps Jail "Amateurish" Gang for £2.9 m Heathrow Heist' <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2002/nov/23/fashion.lifeandhealth>> [accessed 20 November 2011]; Holly Watt, 'Prince William Tells His Bride Kate Middleton: "You Look Beautiful"' <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/royal-wedding/8483263/Prince-William-tells-his-bride-Kate-Middleton-You-look-beautiful.html>> [accessed 20 November 2011].
9. For instance, Chief Inspector Abberline is played by Michael Caine in *Jack the Ripper* (1988), directed David Wickes (Thames Television) and by Johnny Depp in *From Hell* (2001), directed by Albert and Allen Hughes. *From Hell* is based on the comic book series of the same name by Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell, published 1991–1996.
10. Edgar Allan Poe, 'The Premature Burial', *Tales of Mystery and Imagination* (London: Oxford World's Classics/ Chancellor Press, 1985), pp. 237–253 (p. 237).
11. See Robin Simon's *Public Artist, Private Passions: The World of Edward Linley Sambourne* (Exhibition at Leighton House Museum) (London: 2001–2002).
12. Mensel discusses these and other terms that were used in reference to amateur photographers and their subjects. Mensel, Robert E., "'Kodakers Lying in Wait': Amateur Photography and the Right of Privacy in New York, 1885–1915", *American Quarterly*, 43 (1991), 24–45 (p. 29).
13. William D. Rubinstein, 'Detective Novels: A Very British Crime', *History Today*, 60 (2010) <<http://www.historytoday.com/william-d-rubinstein/detective-novels-very-british-crime-wave>> [accessed 20 November 2011].
14. Johannes Josefsson, 'Glima', *Strand*, 41 (1911), 281–287.

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# Index

Note: 'n.' after a page reference indicates a note number on that page; page references in *italics* indicate an illustration.

- actresses, 1, 153, 18, 68, 69, 96  
anger, 1, 17, 52, 142,  
animals, cruelty to, 52, 45–6,  
    116  
*Ann Veronica*, *see* Wells, H. G.  
Anstey, Rhoda, 86, 89  
Aurore, Madame, 118–21
- Bacon, Simon, 98  
Baker, Valentine, 29  
    Valentine Baker Case, 160 n.4, 29  
Bartitsu, *see also* Barton-Wright,  
    Edward William  
    Bartitsu Club, 92  
    Bartitsu Light Cure Institute, 91  
Bartley, Paula, 71  
Barton-Wright, Edward William,  
    91–3, 96  
Beale, Edith, 56, 116, 112  
Beaman, Nicola, 87  
Bentham, Jeremy, Panopticon, 54  
Bergmann-Österberg, Martina,  
    88–9  
bigamy, 141  
Billington-Greig, Teresa, 4, 84–5, 111,  
    164 n.5  
*Black and White Budget*, 91  
Blackwell, Elizabeth, 87  
*Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 87  
Bland, Lucy, 2, 10, 34, 118  
Bloom, Clive, 41  
The Bodyguard, 99–101  
Boisgobey, Fortuné du, 31  
Bottome, Phyllis, 124  
Briggs, Thomas, 27, *see also* railway,  
    first known murder  
Brontë, Anne  
    *Agnes Grey*, 163 n.44, 20, 46  
    *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, 113
- Brummell, Beau, 15  
Burgess, George, 39–40
- 'cabinet particulier', 48, 50, 98, 105,  
    125, 126, 156  
Caird, Mona, 7, 10, 22, 33–63, 69,  
    71, 86, 106, 109, 114, 116,  
    122, 156, 157, 158 n.15,  
    161 n.3  
*The Daughters of Danaus*, 35–6, 39,  
    40, 42, 44, 61, 190, 136  
'Marriage', 33–5, 58  
'The Morality of Marriage', 34  
*The Wing of Azrael*, 10, 33–63, 79,  
    83, 84, 98, 114, 145, 152  
Cardano, Girolamo, 137  
Cassatt, Mary, 19  
Caxton Hall (Women's Parliament),  
    74, 78  
chaining/chains to railings, 75  
Charrington, Frederick, 22  
chivalry, 20, 68, 69, 72, 77–3, 106,  
    112, 144  
Christie, Agatha, 154  
Churchill, Winston, 83, 100  
    fanlight, 139  
Claxton, Miss, 76–83  
Collins, Suzanne, *The Hunger Games*,  
    157  
Collins, Wilkie, *see* *The Woman in  
White*  
Contagious Diseases Acts, 7–8  
Corke, Helen, 71, 129  
coverture, 35  
Cowdray, Miss, 97, 167 n.28  
Craik, Dinah Mulock, 20, 106, 117  
    *John Halifax, Gentleman*, 20  
    *A Woman's Thoughts about Women*,  
        20, 106

- Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885, 8, 22  
 Criminal Law Amendment Act 1912, 4, 'The White Slave Act', 110  
 D'Cruze, Shani, 2, 10, 29  
 cyclists, female, 26–7
- dagger-fan, 31, 32, 160 n.11  
*Daniel Deronda*, 59, 68  
 Davies, Stevie, 2  
 deafness, 137–8  
 Dell, Ethel M., 90  
 Dendraith, Philip  
     Junior, 36–62, 83, 122, 140  
     Senior 36, 45, 49, 51, 53, 54, 140  
 Despard, Charlotte, 71, 84  
 Dickens, Charles, train accident, 28  
     *Bleak House*, 17  
     *Great Expectations*, 37, 45  
     'Hunted Down', 43, 137, 145  
 Dickson, Lovat, 75  
 Dickinson, Rebecca Kate, 29  
 dog-whips, *see whips*  
 Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, 67  
     and the resurrection of Holmes, 91–2, 170 n.6  
     'The Adventure of Abbey Grange', 81, 148  
     'The Adventure of Black Peter', 83  
     'The Adventure of the Empty House', 40  
     'The Adventure of the Final Problem', 7  
     'The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist' 26  
     'The Adventure of the Speckled Band', 154–5  
     'A Case of Identity', 84  
     'The Red-Headed League', 84  
 Dowling, Andrew, 3, 28, 49  
 Drummond, Flora, 75, 82–3  
 duelling, 6, 57  
     duelling scar, 122–3
- economic oppression, 9, 73, 112  
 Egg, Augustus Leopold, 62  
 Egan, Pierce, 60, 98  
 Eliot, George, *see Daniel Deronda*  
*Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, 31
- Epstein-Nord, Deborah, 17  
 etiquette, 2, 16, 20, 21, 28, 45, 68, 74, 101, 160 n.4  
 eugenics, 88, 90, 96  
 Everdeen, Katniss, 157  
 eyes, 1, 16, 18, 40–9, 53, 54, 56, 68, 81, 94, 100, 111, 114, 118, 119, 122, 127, 140, 142, 145, 148
- Fabians, 72  
 fan-dagger (tanto), 31, 31  
 firearms, *see pistols*  
 flâneur, 10, 15–17, 98  
 flâneuse, 10, 16, 17, 130  
 Fletcher, Sheila, 88–9  
 Fortescue, Professor, 40, 44  
*Forsyte Saga, The*, 62  
 Forward, Stephanie, 61  
 Foucault, Michel, 54  
 Freedgood, Elaine, 23, 140, 142  
 Freud, Sigmund, 145  
     *Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*, 145  
     *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 18
- Garrud, Edith, 11, 34, 99, 101–6, 104, 167 n.30  
 Garrud, William, 99  
 Gates, Joanne, 83, 119, 109, 209  
 gentleman, definition of, 2, 6, 10, 39, 41, 44, 45, 49, 54, 73, 162 n.25  
 Galsworthy, John, 62  
 garden metaphor, 3–4, 17, 76, 80, 112, 113–14, 121, 129  
 Gilman, Charlotte Perkins, 129–30  
 Gissing, George, *The Odd Women*, 17, 73  
*Goblin Market*, 119  
 Gordon, Cosmo Duff Sir, 92  
 Grand, Sarah, *The Heavenly Twins*, 3, 56, 112, 116  
 Green, Anna Katharine, 82  
 Greenwood, James, 23  
 Greville, Lady Beatrice Violet, 17, 21, 22, 23,  
 Guns, *see pistols*  
 Gymnastic Teachers' Suffrage Society, 89

- Hadwen, Zoe, 168 n.18, 111  
 Hall, Edna Clarke, 37  
 Hamilton, Cicely, 5, 6, 72, 73, 74,  
     123, 124, 130, 157  
*Hamlet*, 61  
 Harding, Gertrude, 99–100  
 Hardy, Sylvia, 18, 48  
 Hardy, Thomas, 6, 9, 59, 95, 131,  
     143  
 hatpins, 80–2, 164–5 n.25  
 Haycock, C. Sibley, 138  
*Health and Strength*, 91, 102, 105  
 Henry, Sir Edward, 129  
 Henty, George Alfred, 133  
 Higgs, Mary, 23–5, 73, 112, 142  
 Hillyer, Major, 111, 113, 120, 130–1,  
     169 n.34  
 Hilton, Peter Simon (*Edith Garrud's  
     Dojo*), 99  
 'Hitchcock Moment, The', 9  
 honour, 5–6, 27, 29, 110, 126, 130  
 'hot-house flowers', 4, 11, 112  
 Houndsditch Murders, 139  
 How-Martyn, Edith, 84  
 Hume, Fergus, 126  
*The Hunger Games*, 157 *see also*  
     Collins, Suzanne  
 Hutcheson, Elias P., 46–8, 114,  
     135  
 Ibsen, Henrik, 69  
*Idler*, 166 n.12  
 Iron Virgin, 47–8, 135  
 Jack the Ripper, 22, 23, 81, 123, 129,  
     130, 133, 135, 139, 147, 149, 150,  
     159 n.3, 170 n.9  
 James, Henry, 26  
 'japonisme', 30, 91  
 John, Angela V., 68, 111, 113, 118,  
     131, 164 n.5, 168 n.18  
 Jujitsu, *see* sports  
 ju-jutsuffragettes 11, 102, *see also*  
     Garrud, Edith  
 Kano, Jigoro, 91  
 Keller, Helen, 124, 137  
 Kenney, Annie, 74  
 Kern, Stephen, 9, 19, 30  
 Kleist, Heinrich von, 'The Marquise of  
     O.', 55–6  
 public offence at publication of  
     'The Marquise of O.', 162 n.37  
 Knelman, Judith, 60, 61  
 knives, 2, 3, 35, 53, 57, 58, 60, 106,  
     135, 151–3  
 Lancaster, Harry, 38–42, 51–8, 61,  
     162 n.26  
 Larsson, Stieg, 141, 151  
 Lavater, Johann Kaspar, 41–3, 48, *see  
     also* physiognomy, *kalokagathia*  
 Lawrence, D. H., 93, 129  
 Lee, Bruce, 91  
 de León, Pedro Ponce, 137  
 Lincoln, Sibella, 38, 50  
 Lindon, Marjorie, 132, 134  
 Linscott, Gillian, 99  
 Linton, Eliza Lynn, 21, 87, 89, 96–7  
 Lisak, David ('Hitchcock Moment'), 9,  
     159 n.19  
 London, Jack  
     *The Call of the Wild*, 84  
     *The People of the Abyss*, 23  
 'The London Monster', 7, 81  
 Longhurst, Percy, 79, 139  
 Lord Chamberlain's committee, 120–1  
 Lowndes, Marie Belloc, 147  
     *The Lodger*, 149  
 'The Maiden Tribute of Modern  
     Babylon', 5, 7–8, 10, 22, 49, 77,  
     111, 118, 120, 131, 146, 152  
 Macmillan, Frederick, 8  
 'male pests', 10, 21–2, *see also*  
     stalking  
 Malverly, Olive, *see* 'The White Slave  
     Market'  
 Manning, Hubert, 52  
 Manning, Maria, 61  
 marital violence, 45, 83, 53–63  
 matriarchy, 34, 71  
 Married Women's Property Act, 1870  
     and 1882, 34  
 Marsh, Richard, 11, 15, 28, 93,  
     132–55, 156  
     *The Adventures of Judith Lee/Judith  
         Lee: Some Pages from Her Life*

- Marsh, Richard – *continued*  
     ‘The Adventure of the Phonograph’, 53, 138, 150  
     ‘The Anti-Tobacco League’, 150  
     *The Beetle*, 28, 132, 135, 136, 140, 144, 134  
     *Curios: Some Strange Adventures of Two Bachelors/’The Ring’*, 135, 138, 150  
     *The Goddess: A Demon*, 134–5  
 Marshall, Arthur, 100  
 Marshall, Kitty (Katherine Willoughby), 82, 100, 101, 129  
 Matrimonial Causes Act 1878, 34  
 McCrone, Kathleen, 87–9, 93  
 melodrama, 7, 36, 42, 110, 142  
 Mill, John Stuart, 4, 34, 44, 53  
 Millennium, *see* Larsson, Stieg  
 Minotaur, *see* monsters  
 Mitchell, David, 159 n.4, 169 n.30  
 Mitchell, Sally, 6  
 Mitchell, Silas Weir (‘rest cure’), 129  
 monsters, 3, 5, 6, 7, 28, 76, 81, 124, 129, 130, 131, 150  
     minotaur, 7, 49, 149  
     sea monster, 19, 37, 53  
 Moriarty, Professor, 8, 92, 141, 143, 151, 154–5  
 murder, 4, 7, 10, 22, 23, 27, 28, 35, 39, 43, 52, 53, 81, 82, 99  
     murderesses, 39, 58–61  
     serial killers, 99, 132, 149–50  
 Muschamp, Francis Sydney, 30  
     *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 37, 152  
 Nead, Lynda, 2, 160 n.8  
 Norman architecture, 41, 42  
 National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), 72, 74, 102  
 Nugent, Mary, 92  
 Offences Against the Person Act 1861, 57  
 Ogston, Helen, 84, 85, 165 n.37  
 Panopticon, *see* Bentham, Jeremy  
 pantehnicon raid, 71, 75, 76  
 Pearcey, Eleanor, 61  
 Pearl, Sharrona, 39  
 Phillips, Watts, 163 n.43  
 physiognomy, 10, 39–43, 48, 56, 120, 122, 125, 137, 143, 170 n.6  
     *kalokagathia*, 41, 125  
 pimps, 28, 84, 110  
 pistols, 2, 3, 101, 123  
     blank pistol, 100  
     gun legislation, 91  
     pistol fans, 160–1 n.11  
     water pistol 27, 143, 68  
     shootings, 139  
 Pankhurst, Christabel, 70, 74, 124–5, 164 n.5  
 Pankhurst, Emmeline, 70, 71, 74, 75, 77, 78, 84, 86, 99, 100, 111, 121, 124  
 Pankhurst, Sylvia, 78, 79, 84–5, 100  
 Plasmon powder, 23  
 Plowden, Alfred Chichele, 6, 40, 82, 83  
 Poe, Edgar Allan, 147  
     ‘The Black Cat’, 45–7  
     ‘The Murders in the Rue Morgue’, 135  
 Prisoners (Temporary Discharge for Ill-health) Act 1913 (Cat and Mouse Act), 100  
 Procureuses, 118–21, *see also* Aurore, Madame  
 prostitutes, 7, 9, 16–17, 21, 22, 34, 57, 110, 111, 113, 120, 122, 130, 145, 150, 169 n.34  
 prostitution, 7, 9, 49, 110, 114, 121, 124  
 Pykett, Lyn, 39, 59  
 Raeburn, Antonia, 101, 167 n.30  
 railway, dangers of travelling, 120  
     etiquette on trains, 160, n.4  
     first known murder, 31  
 Ramage, Mr, 9, 11, 16–22, 28, 29, 48, 50–3, 57, 58, 70, 86, 90, 93–8, 103, 156  
 rape, 4, 5, 48, 50–3, 55, 56, 62, 68, 95, 98, 123, 125, 129, 131, 134, 139, 140, 141, 153, 169 n.24  
 Reeves, Amber, 72, 111  
 Reeves, Maud Pember, 72

- R v Clarence*, 57  
 Renoir, Pierre, 18  
 reputation, 2, 5–6, 20, 29, 38, 76, 145, 148  
 Richardson, Mary, 77, 78, 80, 100  
 Roberts, Katherine, 77, 100  
 Robins, Elizabeth  
*Both Sides of the Curtain*, 68  
*The Convert*, 11, 36, 67–85  
*My Little Sister*, 28, 109 116, 169 n.32,  
*Under the Southern Cross*, 68–9  
*Votes for Women*, 111, 128  
*Where Are You Going To...?*, 5, 11, 109–31, 152, 156, 169 n.32  
 Rosser, William, 81  
 Rossetti, Christina, *see Goblin Market*  
 Rousseau, Emile, 34  
 Ruskin, John, 3, 4, 20, 27, 52, 72, 76, 79, 80, 98, 112  
 Salander, Lisbeth, 141  
 Salvation Army, 15, 130, 111  
 bonnets, 22  
 'Sanderson, Miss', 92  
 Scharlieb, Dr Mary, 90  
 Security from Violence Act 1863, 83  
 Sedley, Viola, 35–62, 79, 106, 140, 145, 162 n.23, 162 n.26  
 separate spheres, 3, 4, 20  
 'sex-antagonism', 70  
 Shaw, George Bernard  
*Major Barbara*, 93  
*Mrs Warren's Profession*, 9, 16, 119, 121  
 Sherlock Holmes 11, 26, 27, 37, 67, 84, 91, 141, 142, 143, 148, 151, 155  
 Shidachi, Tetsujiro, 166 n.12  
 Showalter, Elaine, 46, 69, 70, 77, 123  
 Siege of Sidney Street, 139  
 Slate, Ruth, 22, 131  
 Slawson, Eva, 75, 131  
 Smiles, Samuel, 41, 44  
 Spencer, Herbert, 87, 96  
 sports  
   Alpine walking, 90  
   badminton, 87  
 cycling, 10, 26, 27  
 drill, 10  
 golf, 82  
 hockey, 87, 88  
 jujitsu, 10, 11, 77, 88, 91, 93, 95–8, 99, 101–6, 146, 153  
 riding, 87  
 rowing, 87  
 stalking (includes 'male pests'), 10, 21–2  
 Stead, William Thomas, 7–9, 49, 109–10, 131  
 Stevenson, Kim, 5, 30  
 Stoker, Bram  
*Dracula*  
'iThe Squaw'  
 Stonor, Geoffrey, 70, 80, 82  
 Studholme, Marie, 90, 96  
 suffragettes, 70, 71, 9, 16, 34, 71–86, 89, 99, 100–6, 111, 121, 128, 157, *see also* WFL and WSPU, WWSS  
   belt and chain, 164 n.15  
   prison life, 164 n.22  
 Surridge, Lisa, 2, 47, 48, 57, 59, 60  
 Swanwick, Helena, 16  
 Syphilis, 123, 124  
 'Tartar, The', 116, 117, 122, 123, 125, 169 n.20  
*Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, 5, 6, 9, 38, 45, 59, 95, 131, 143  
 Tani, Yukio, 92  
 Temperley, Hadria, 36, 40, 43, 136  
 Theobald, Professor, 40, 42, 136  
 Tindal, Marcus, 26–7  
 Tracey, Marianne, 141–4  
 Trollope, Anthony, 123, 133  
 Uyenishi, Sadakazu, 92–3, 99  
 VanArsdel, Rosemary T., 103  
*Varney the Vampyre*, 43  
 Vickery, Amanda, 114  
 Vigny, Pierre and 'Miss Sanderson', 92  
 Walkowitz, Judith, 2, 16, 21, 47  
 Watts, Emily, 90, 93, 95, 96, 97, 99  
 Watts, George Frederick, 62

- Wells, H. G.  
*Ann Veronica*, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15–19,  
22, 28, 29, 33, 36, 48, 50–4, 57,  
58, 70–8, 86–98, 102, 103, 105,  
106, 111, 125, 126, 134, 145, 152,  
156, 157  
'The Door in the Wall', 17  
*The War of the Worlds*, 91  
Wharton, Edith, 'Kerfol', 44, 52  
Whicher, Jack, 54  
whips, (flogging), 83–4  
    dog-whips, 82–5, 165 n.38, 102  
Whitby-Dawson, Guy, *see* 'The Tartar'  
white slave trade, 5, 11, 29, 83,  
110–29, 131, 139  
Whitechapel Murders, *see* Jack the  
    Ripper  
Wiener, Martin, 4, 61  
Wilke, Dorette, 89  
*The Wing of Azrael*, *see* Caird,  
    Mona  
Winn, Godfrey, 99, 103  
*The Woman in White*, 55  
Women's Freedom League (WFL), 72,  
84, 85, 99, 102  
Women Writers' Suffrage League  
(WWSL), 72  
Women's Social and Political Union  
(WSPU), 70, 71, 74–6, 82–4,  
99–102, 121  
Women's Sunday, 75, 121  
Wright, David, 137  
Žabicka, Agnieszka, 52, 57