

Balancing the Centuries:

The Literary Career

of

Margaret Deland

by

Phyllis M. Betz

III

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate  
School of the University of Maryland in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

1989

C.1 VOL I

Advisory Committee:

Dr. Jackson Bryer, English  
Dr. Deirdre David, English  
Dr. Virginia Beauchamp, English  
Dr. Martha Nell Smith, English  
Dr. Claire Moses, Women's Studies

Maryland  
LD  
3231  
.M70d  
Betz,  
P.M.  
Vol. 1  
Folio

## ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: *Balancing the Centuries: The  
Literary Career of Margaret Deland*

Phyllis M. Betz, Doctor of Philosophy, 1989

Dissertation Directed by: Dr. Jackson Bryer, English  
Department

Margaret Deland was once a widely recognized and critically respected turn of the century American writer. Today, Deland is hardly recognized except in specialized studies of religious fiction. This study aims to reacquaint the modern reader and critic with Deland's diverse body of fiction and non-fiction. Deland's novels, stories, and essays are strongly rooted in the cultural and social issues of late nineteenth and early twentieth century America. Deland felt the novelist's role as social observer and commentator was vitally important to a fiction's composition and effect, and she consciously incorporated a clear moral vision and program into her work that sought to balance modern and traditional beliefs and behaviors. Particularly through the stories of Old Chester and Dr. Lavendar, her best known creations, Deland illustrated how this balance could be achieved and its impact felt in an individual's private and social relationships. The development of Deland's moral view



will be a major component of this study.

Also important to this study is the process of Deland's rise and fall from public and critical view. The personal and public factors that contributed to Deland's sudden appearance on the literary scene, her developing appropriation of notice and acclaim, her eventual disappearance from public memory will be discussed. To accomplish this, extensive examination of Deland's fiction, non-fiction, and correspondence will be included. Finally, this study will apply various critical viewpoints to her works, especially feminist literary theories, to illustrate Deland's continuing value, not only as a cultural representative, but as a literary voice.

## Dedication

Not without you --

Paul, Mildred, Judith, Mike,  
Raymond, Virginia, Frederick,  
David, Rebecca, Todd, Kathleen,  
and Ulysses

## Acknowledgements

Works of this size and intention involve many hands and voices to bring them to completion. Thanks must first go to my committee: Dr. Deirdre David, Dr. Virginia Beauchamp, Dr. Martha Nell Smith, Dr. Claire Moses, and Dr. Jackson Bryer.

My thanks and gratitude must also be extended to the librarians and curators of Colby College, the University of Maine at Orono, the University of Virginia, the Western Pennsylvania Historical Society, the Library of Congress, Boston Public Library, New York City Public Library, the University of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Historical Society, the Houghton Library at Harvard for their assistance in my research. Special thanks must be given to Mr. Robert Poindexter, the son of Madelaine Poindexter, for his interest in the project and his permission to use family letters and material. Mention must be made, too, of the many antiquarian book dealers, especially Barbara Falk, who found Deland's works for me. Access to Deland is limited since her works are out of print, and without these people my study would be severely restricted.

Without the help and encouragement of these others, this work probably would not have been accomplished. My

parents, not only for their emotional support, but for allowing me to live on their generosity. Jim and Teresa Stanton, for summers in Maine of research and talk. Jack and Diane Giovinetti, for balancing scholarship with humor. Shirley Friel, for being the most understanding landlord a graduate student could ever want. And Jan Mulligan, for knowing how to work the computer.

## Table of Contents

|                                | page |
|--------------------------------|------|
| Introduction                   | 1    |
| Chapter One -- Notoriety       | 20   |
| Chapter Two -- Fame            | 92   |
| Chapter Three -- Disengagement | 197  |
| Chapter Four -- Evaluation     | 272  |
| Works Consulted                | 315  |



## INTRODUCTION

To those pupils who have an ambition to write fiction, I would say that the important thing in a short story or novel is not the plot -- it may be very slight; the important thing is the effect of the various happenings or events upon personality, their reaction upon the soul. Also, unless a piece of fiction is fundamentally true, it is worthless. By truth I do not mean a mere statement of facts, I mean that events, and the emotions that events produce, must be given as cause and effect, and both emotions and happenings must be shown to be in proportion to the whole of life.

Margaret Deland to Mr. Shipherd  
28 April 1925

At the turn of the century Margaret Campbell Deland (1857 - 1945) was a widely acclaimed and critically respected American writer. Today, Deland is hardly recognized except in specialized studies of religious fiction. This study aims to reacquaint the modern reader and critic with Deland's extensive body of fiction and non-fiction because the addition of her literary voice and response will add to the ongoing recovery and discussion of women writers, their texts, and their connections to their society. Deland's novels, stories, and essays were strongly rooted in the cultural and social issues of late nineteenth and early twentieth century America. She deliberately incorporated some of the most controversial issues of her day into her early writing and continued to examine the implications of situations and reactions that she considered vital to an individual's public and private role. Deland felt that the novelist had a clear purpose as a social observer and commentator to bring the reader's attention to important social and moral questions and to provide an impetus for the reader to action. Throughout her fiction and non-fiction Deland established and developed a specific moral vision and program that sought to balance modern and traditional beliefs and behaviors and maintain the ideals of the past in conjunction with the progress of the present. Deland

illustrated how this balance could be achieved particularly through the stories of Old Chester and Dr. Lavendar, her best known creations, but all of her writing displayed the same concern for the reader's finding a sense of proportion in order to live a sane and successful life. When placed in their social context, Deland and her world allow the modern critic an opportunity to understand a complex period in American literary and social history; when taken out of context, Deland's fiction reveals a careful and appealing talent, still capable of attracting readers.

Deland's popularity as a writer is evident; she was considered an author of note whose work appeared, from the beginning of her writing career, in major papers and magazines. Deland received praise from established journals that strongly influenced the country's reading habits. Reviews and lengthy examinations of her stories and novels regularly appeared in Harper's, Atlantic Monthly, Critic, Independent, and other magazines.

Deland's fiction garnered praises for its characters who had "the stamp of an individual, local life...[and] dramatic feeling...[and] genuine psychological insight"<sup>1</sup>; her literary style was called "lucid"<sup>2</sup> and full of "clear-sighted observations"<sup>3</sup> with a "striking fidelity"<sup>4</sup> to life. During Deland's most productive period reviewers

compared her to Mrs. Gaskell, George Eliot, and Jane Austen; among contemporary women authors she was placed with Edith Wharton, Mary Wilkins Freeman, and Sarah Orne Jewett. Her fiction was seen as valuable to contemporary and future readers; several reviews affirmed that Deland and her fiction would have "a permanent place in our literature."<sup>5</sup>

Simple popularity must not be the only factor to consider in the critical decision to reacquaint a new audience with a writer. Deland can easily be seen as a product of Eastern publishing house advertising; she was extensively publicized in Eastern journals (her most frequent publisher was Harper and Brothers). However, Deland's books were reviewed in the Overland Monthly published on the West Coast, in Life published in Chicago, and the Athenaeum, the London Bookman, and London Saturday Review. Besides being a popular and successful writer, Deland was highly respected by her contemporaries; she was one of the first women elected to the National Institute of Arts and Letters (1926). Her interest in and writing on psychic phenomena brought her an invitation to speak at a symposium held at Clark University (1926). Deland served on a variety of charitable committees. Her most notable one was the organization of a canteen for servicemen in France during the First World War. Her



correspondents included Louise Chandler Moulton, Elizabeth Garver Jordan, the Harpers, the Houghtons, James Fields, and many other literary people. This facet of Deland's reputation, its development and decline, adds compelling evidence for choosing her as a representative voice of late nineteenth century American women's culture.

In addition to this public evidence of Deland's close connection to social issues and changes are the numerous non-fiction essays that give expression to her responses to the changes she saw and felt. Deland viewed herself as a capable observer and competent commentator. Her essays covered the major events in fin de siecle American life: the movement for women's suffrage, women in the work force, the changes between generations regarding moral and social questions, the right for an individual to choose a preferred religious practice, responses to the war, and many other topics. This body of work maintains a consistent view of events and forms of criticism that offers a particularly substantial grasp of late nineteenth century conservative but committed America. Deland's biases come through quite readily; she shared her culture's prejudices against the large waves of Irish and Italian immigration. She deplored what she saw as the relaxing of correct moral standards, and she frequently upheld traditional ideas of woman's position in society.



Despite such views, Deland took unwed mothers into her house and attempted to find them jobs where they could keep their children. Although Deland was a vehement supporter of the First World War, even writing a series of highly chauvinistic essays on the rightness of the Allied cause, she was also the author of an article entitled "Beads" (Harper's, July, 1918) that had her being branded as a pacifist and a traitor. The portrait that emerges from the non-fiction is of a woman of strong convictions and prejudices, a woman who felt committed to offering her opinions and suggestions to the wider audience. It is also a picture of an open mind, an individual willing to look squarely at a situation and examine it fully, a woman willing to change her position if her evaluation demanded such an action. Deland's life, her profession, her actions mark her as a product of her culture, and an examination of her life and work allows the modern critic the opportunity to rediscover the wide variety of beliefs and actions that informs that life.

The fictional work echoes Deland's commitment to observing and evaluating her society and its behavior. The early novels, particularly, focused on specific issues under debate during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Deland addressed the loss of faith in John Ward, Preacher (1888), the search for God in Sydney (1891), and

divorce in Philip and His Wife (1894). These books brought Deland immediately into the public eye, and brought her extreme critical and public responses. Deland became notorious for the subjects she chose and the manner in which she presented them.

While the later work did not deliberately set out to examine specific problems, Deland's fiction continued to explore the difficulties individuals faced at moments of crisis or decision. Many of Deland's characters are forced to choose between holding to traditional solutions or bending, even breaking, them when necessary for personal growth. The inherent purpose of Deland's fiction rested on a firm moral basis; the stories often illustrated what she considered the best moral decision one could make under the circumstances presented. Deland's morality, however, was not of a prescriptive or prohibitive nature; most of the stories emphasized the importance of bringing the situation back into balance. Extreme behavior of any kind, fanatic or uninhibited, was to be avoided. Although Deland had achieved her greatest critical and popular success by the First World War, her production fell dramatically afterwards. Unaffected to any great degree by the modernist revolution in literature, Deland continued working in the forms and styles she had developed at the turn of the century. The

death of her husband, her increasing commitment to spiritualism, and her age influenced the decline in her output. Her last literary efforts centered on two volumes of autobiography, one a conventional telling of her life, the other concentrating on a young girl's moral development.

The subject of the fiction, the output of novels and short stories, the range of the non-fiction -- all these provide sufficient support for renewed study of Margaret Deland. The work, so clearly a product of its time, helps the modern critic understand one of the most complex and important periods in American life, an era that confronted intense alterations in its make-up that modern society must still come to terms with. The recovery of Deland and her work increases the knowledge of women authors and their particular focuses and strategies. Deland's novels and stories center their plots on female characters and their struggles, successes, and failures. Deland's own achievements as a successful writer bring the issue of turn of the century female writers into sharper focus; many studies of early nineteenth century women's fiction now available have expanded critical awareness of the depth and extent of American fictional expression. At this time, however, little attention has been given to the popular women writers of the latter part of this century.<sup>6</sup>



Only in studies of regional literature have women authors of this period received notice. The gap between Stowe and Chopin and Wharton needs to be filled, and Deland offers a starting point.

Studying the rise and fall of Deland's popularity broadens the critic's understanding of the entire literary process; focusing on the relation between a writer and her popular acceptance encourages the modern reader to examine the basis of such appeal. It allows the distinction between high and low, canonical and non-canonical texts to be loosened; thus the wider influences that move between a popular and private cultural record can be more closely evaluated. Deland should not be studied as a cultural artifact, a static voice that merely offers echoes of another age. In spite of what some still influential critics have held -- that these women and their works are dated, sentimental, and false -- the characters and their concerns still affect a modern reader. Even where recent critical viewpoints accept the necessity of including such writers in current studies, there is frequently found a sense of disapproval for the inclusion of popular literature and its practitioners.<sup>7</sup> The whole question of value returns with the preceding statement; the assigning of values cannot be avoided when recovered authors are set against the standard texts. The

process of valuation, however, can be modified, and, in reclaiming Margaret Deland and her works, the criteria of judgment are challenged, not denied.

The outlines of Margaret Deland's life are easy to recapture: born in 1857, Deland was raised by her father's brother and his wife after the deaths of her parents. Benjamin Campbell and Lois, his wife, were from wealthy and cultured backgrounds, and Deland's early life was spent in affluent surroundings. The large house with its extensive acreage most likely provided the setting for many of her Old Chester stories. While she was still a child, Deland learned that she had been orphaned at birth and that discovery clearly affected her deeply. Later in the fiction Deland would create many characters who had lost one or both parents. Deland stayed in Pennsylvania until her sixteenth year when an attempted elopement and other confrontations caused Deland's uncle to place her with other relatives. Although unidentified in the autobiography, they encouraged her desires for independence, and eventually she was accepted at Cooper Union (now Hunter College) in New York. She earned a degree in Design and Drawing; soon after Deland was hired as an assistant instructor and taught for two years.

During her second summer vacation Margaret met Lorin Deland, whom she married the following spring. The



Delands moved to Boston, where Margaret Deland maintained her main residence until her death in 1945. In the early years of their marriage the Delands devised many schemes to add to Lorin's income, including selling milk, eggs, and produce they had raised. Deland's first literary efforts were also undertaken to increase their income. Eventually Lorin opened an advertising business and his efforts proved successful. The Delands were able to move into a more fashionable area and take part in a wider social life. Deland's literary production also proved financially rewarding; with the proceeds from her first novel the Delands purchased a summer home in Kennebunkport, Maine. Having no children, Margaret was able to focus her attention on writing and on charitable works. The Delands' life moved smoothly until Lorin's death in 1917. Margaret was devastated and began to withdraw from an active involvement with the world. Deland maintained this reduced connection until her own death in 1945.

Deland's life covered major political, economic, religious, and social upheavals in American experience. She saw the city of Pittsburgh grow into a main industrial center, changing the natural and social fabric of western Pennsylvania. Deland lived through the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, participated in relief work during

World War I, and died just as American involvement in World War II was coming to its end. She witnessed and participated in the widening of women's freedoms and choices at the turn of the century. The relaxing of social and moral behaviors also came under Deland's scrutiny. These and many other alterations in her culture provided Deland with the source for her fictional and non-fictional responses. Deland's involvement in these events, while extensive, remained focused on a public level; she was very protective of her private life even at the height of her popularity. When asked to talk of her early life, Deland tended to repeat the same information from early interviews (The Youth's Companion, 1892) to the autobiographies (1935 and 1941). This reticence is further compounded by references in letters to the burning of personal papers and other material (Deland to Madelaine Poindexter, 5 April 1923). This limitation of personal material, however, provides a unique opportunity for this study to concentrate on the public life, to discover the means by which a writer's popular reputation begins, develops, and vanishes. The present study is as much a biography of Deland's reputation as it is an examination of her life and work.

This examination of Deland's public biography has been divided into four sections, each covering a specific

period in the rise and decline of her literary career. The first chapter, "Notoriety," examines Deland's sudden entrance into public notice; John Ward, Preacher (1888) placed Deland into the middle of the ongoing discussion of religious orthodoxy and the individual's right to choose a religious viewpoint. Deland's position on this issue brought her partisans on both sides, some accusing her of heresy, others applauding her defense of the individual's choice. Sydney (1891) and Philip and His Wife (1894) kept Deland in the limelight of critical and popular attention. Placing these novels in their social context will help explain the extreme responses to them. Besides engaging in controversy Deland began to develop a fictional world that would later become the source of her best known work -- Old Chester. The Story of a Child (1893) and "Mr. Tommy Dove" (1889) present the first realizations of the small, slightly backward village that won Deland a place among contemporary readers.

The second stage of Deland's career will be discussed in the chapter "Fame." This period saw the publication of Old Chester Tales (1898), Dr. Lavendar's People (1904), The Awakening of Helena Richie (1906), and The Iron Woman (1911). These were considered by readers and reviewers to be Deland's finest achievements; contemporary reviewers felt these novels belonged alongside the works of Gaskell and



Eliot. Old Chester and its inhabitants were seen as true reflections of the American past and spirit. Deland's presentation of Old Chester was so compelling that several readers requested directions so they could visit. Old Chester's appeal for its readers will be a focal point of this chapter's discussion. The world of Old Chester is more than just a nostalgic recreation; through the characters and their dilemmas, Deland touches key issues and concerns. Some of the stories are set in the past, but others take place in more modern times and present moral crises that touch immediate issues. These four books also illustrate Deland's ability to create realistic characters and to place them in dramatic situations, and this study will examine the changes in Deland's literary practices as well.

Chapter three, "Disengagement," traces Deland's withdrawal from extensive literary production. Only three new novels were published and a limited number of Old Chester stories; reprints of earlier stories became more frequent in this last phase. Deland's most important works are the two autobiographical volumes, If This Be I as I Suppose It Be (1935) and Golden Yesterdays (1941). The death of her husband affected Deland greatly; she considered him her best critic and credited him with important influence in several of her stories and novels.

The character of Dr. Lavendar, one of Deland's best known, was based partially on Lorin Deland's personality.<sup>8</sup> It was after her husband's death that Deland developed a deep interest in spiritualism; she wrote several articles for the Woman's Home Companion, provided the foreword for a book on psychic phenomena, and participated in a symposium on the subject. The reasons behind Deland's withdrawal from public view become the major issue here mainly because her critical reputation had been established. Her name appeared in many anthologies of American literature in the first decades of the twentieth century; biographical and critical studies were published quite frequently.<sup>9</sup> Deland even became the subject of several Master's theses. Yet her fiction receives little critical attention today; placing the changing social situation against Deland's subjects and treatments will provide some answers to this loss of popularity.

Deland's non-fiction will be incorporated into each of these three chapters as needed. The subjects of the essays often fall into groups that reflect the novels' dominant themes. An especially large number of essays are devoted to various aspects of the changing situation and behavior of women; others are aimed at changing moral positions and the differences between the generations. Two collections of essays were published during Deland's



life: The Common Way (1904) and Small Things (1919). The first collection includes pieces commenting on a variety of subjects: churchgoing, generational differences, Christmas, and grief. The second, her responses to war. A few essays deal with writing and the art of writing. They offer a point of comparison for this study; differing presentations of Deland's beliefs and evaluations can be placed against the fictional works to provide a more extensive insight into her creative processes. The essays also allow a fuller sense of the relationship between the culture and the writer to be studied. On a more practical level, the range and number of essays indicate Deland's commitment to her literary career.

The fourth chapter of this examination will be an evaluation of Deland's literary career in a modern context. Using available contemporary critical comment and modern feminist reevaluations of nineteenth century women's writing, this study will build the case for continued examination of Deland as a valuable voice of turn of the century experience and response. Deland's records of a changing culture and an individual's place in that world give the modern reader and critic a closer look into a very complex period in American life. Because her voice is rooted so closely in its time, Deland's novels and essays can help clarify that period's sense of itself,

and help give modern examiners a deeper appreciation for the difficulties all people face. More importantly, Deland, in her life and work, offers valuable insight into the pressures the woman writer faced, clues to the factors that contributed to an author's success, ideas about the writer's own attitudes to her work, and suggestions toward understanding such writers' eventual exclusion from the standard canon of American literature.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Outlook 60 (17 December 1898): 972. Review of Old Chester Tales.

<sup>2</sup> Harper's 98 (May 1899): 648-49. Review of Old Chester Tales.

<sup>3</sup> William Payne, review of The Iron Woman, Dial 51 (1 December 1911): 473.

<sup>4</sup> Saturday Review (London) 97 (27 August 1904): 21. Review of Dr. Lavendar's People.

<sup>5</sup> Outlook 60 (17 December 1898): 972.

<sup>6</sup> Nina Baym's Woman's Fiction: A Guide to Novels By and About Women in America, 1820-1870 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978) and Mary Kelley's Private Woman, Public Stage: Literary Domesticity in Nineteenth-Century America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984) are two of a large number of studies of the period that conclude with the 1870s. Two new anthologies, Judith Fetterley, ed., Provisions: A Reader from 19th-Century American Women (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985) and Lucy Friebeft and Barbara White, eds., Hidden Hands: An Anthology of American Women Writers, 1790-1870 (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1985) also stop with the 1870s. Two new journals, Legacy, from Amherst, Mass. and Turn-of-the-Century Women, from Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. broaden this timeframe.

<sup>7</sup> Representations of the standard responses from male critics can be found in Herbert Ross Brown, The Sentimental Novel in America, 1790-1860 (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940); Frank L. Mott, Golden Multitudes: The Study of the Bestsellers in the United States (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1947); Fred Lewis Pattee's The Feminine Fifties (New York: D. Appleton, 1942). More recent views appear in Morris Dickstein, "Popular Fiction and Critical Values: The Novel as Challenge to Literary History," in Reconstructing American Literary History, Sacvan Bercovitch, ed. (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1986) and Henry Nash Smith, Democracy and the Novel: Popular Resistance to Classic American Writers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

<sup>8</sup> Margaret Deland, Golden Yesterdays (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1941).

<sup>9</sup> A small sample of these studies is: Grant Overton, The Women Who Make Our Novels (New York: Moffat, Yard, and Co., 1918); E.F. Harkins and C.H.L. Johnston, Little Pilgrimages Among the Women Who Have Written Famous Books (Boston: L.C. Page, 1902); Blanche Colton Williams, Our Short Story Writers 1922, rpt. (Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1969).



#### NOTORIETY

I fancy that I am the same sort of Heathen that you are --  
(I only wish I were so good!) a heathen who insists that  
the spiritual instinct be left free to express itself in  
its own way -- but who yet honours the expression which  
may not be one's own --:

Margaret Deland to Mr. Prang  
25 December 188\*

Margaret Deland immediately captured the reading public's notice with the appearance of her first novel, John Ward, Preacher (1888). The work received frequent, and often extreme, responses: some critics were appalled at the subject matter, and even more disturbed that a woman had written it.<sup>1</sup> Other reviews found that the book presented a valuable and truthful portrait of religious doubt.<sup>2</sup> Between these poles, Deland's novel garnered critical comment from a wide range of magazines and newspapers. Responses to John Ward, Preacher could be found in Boston, New York, Chicago, and other major markets. The work's notoriety spread even to London: the Saturday Review, Athenaeum, Longman's and other English journals commented on the book. All of this attention centered around a writer whose previous creative efforts had been poetry. John Ward, Preacher was Deland's first extensive fictional effort, undertaken, as she would later tell it, at the instigation of a friend who insisted that "You are to write a novel"<sup>3</sup> (emphasis Deland's). Given this ultimatum, which she claimed was "preposterous," Deland wrote. Eighteen months later the novel was finished. The furor that surrounded the book's appearance forced Deland into public notice, where the author and her subsequent writing remained. Her portrayal of the break-up of John and Helen Ward's marriage because of

irreconcilable religious ideals and behaviors tapped a powerful feeling of social unease. Many readers felt their once unshakable faith falling before the advances of new scientific thought and discovery. Deland's fiction made concrete the dilemma for her audience, and since the book presented an unflattering picture of orthodox belief, Deland faced not only extreme critical response, but often highly charged popular reaction as well.

Why did a first novel, which dealt with a well-discussed issue of the period, cause such wide and conflicting reactions? Deland's book clearly touched a nerve in late nineteenth century American social experience, exacerbating tensions already stretched to their limits. Religious controversies had been played out in the public's view during much of the century's second half, and a more immediate atmosphere of discussion was raised by Mrs. Ward's book, Robert Elsmere, which was published in the same year. Yet John Ward, Preacher seemed to galvanize popular and critical reaction. Paul Carter emphasizes the novel's impact on its contemporary audience:

Mrs. Deland put the conflict between the old religion and the new into a sharper and more anguished form, focusing in upon fictional characters who could not escape its demands by

thinking of something else; she made it an issue between a husband and wife.<sup>4</sup>

That she put the drama into a marital framework does not fully explain the impact of Deland's novel; other writers had used the intimacy of a romantic relationship to highlight doctrinal differences. Questions surrounding Deland's life and experience may provide solutions to the burst of notoriety that greeted author and book on their first appearance. What lay in Deland's own personal history that contributed to the work's impact? How did her social environment and contacts influence the story? What in the actual telling caught the reader's emotional and intellectual response? However, it is not enough simply to recognize what contemporary factors helped establish a writer's popularity; Deland's entrance onto the public stage was surrounded by controversy. At one time in her early publishing career Deland was accused of combining "the blasphemy of Ingersoll and the obscenity of Zola" (GY:224-225). Yet she managed throughout her long writing career to maintain a secure reputation with her audience. The development of such public approval must have been an essential component in the analysis of Deland's literary career because by the end of the century the public image had been realigned. Deland was no longer viewed as a menace to established religion, but as a



respected author certain of a place in American literature.

John Ward, Preacher appeared when Margaret Deland was 31. In 1886, two years before John Ward, Preacher, she had published The Old Garden and Other Poems, the only collection she would ever produce. It was extremely popular with readers, and was reprinted often during the last decade of the nineteenth century. Deland's poetry represents the mainstream poetic focus and shape of much female poetry that Cheryl Walker describes as common to those years:

[W]omen poets of this period were still more fully engaged in the drama of life's disappointments than were their male counterparts. Not completely at home with their recent past, they were not quite attuned to their future. Femininity seemed too fragile, masculinity too alien to them. Their work dramatized the development of preoccupations traditionally feminine into lyric expressions surprisingly modern. They were poets of the transition, wearing new fashion to do traditional work.<sup>5</sup>

Deland's poems range from nature studies to

meditations on love, faith, and sorrow; it is these last themes that link the early novels to the poetry. Several poems, "Love and Death," "Love's Wisdom," "When Love and Sorrow Meet," among others, point out that love without sorrow is incomplete, that death is the beginning of one's joy, not the end, and that the possibility for some knowledge of divinity exists. Perhaps the most important poem for the purpose of this study is "Doubt." It clearly presents themes that Deland's first novel will develop more fully. The poem's speaker asks for some hint of a divine presence:

O distant Christ, the crowded, darkening years  
Drift slow between thy gracious face and me;  
My hungry heart leans back to look for thee,  
But finds the way set with doubts and fears.

My groping hands would touch thy garment's hem,  
Would find some token thou art walking near;  
Instead, they grasp but empty darkness drear,  
And no diviner hands reach out to them.

Thou, all unseen, dost hear my tired cry,  
As I, in darkness of a half-belief,  
Grove for thy heart, in love and doubt and  
grief;

O Lord! speak soon to me -- "Lo, here am I!"

As the title indicates, the speaker questions the existence of God: a crowded life has blocked the easy acceptance of a childhood faith, and adult experience -- "love and doubt and grief" -- makes the search more difficult. The speaker is at a crisis point, and the last prayer can be read as a desperate plea. In the poem the crisis is resolved by the Lord's reply. Many of the characters in Deland's early novels face this same crisis. Each must find the answer to the questions "Does God exist?" and "How do I know this?" Unlike the poem's speaker, the novels' characters do not have God's reassurances. They are trapped in the "half-belief" of the poem and must test their convictions against the world around them. The novels present these struggles in great detail, and the final discoveries these characters make do not come as easily as for the poem's speaker.

Surprisingly, not until Deland began writing John Ward, Preacher did she experience doubts concerning her own beliefs. Her religious training and practice had been shaped by her family -- a relaxed combination of Presbyterian and Episcopalian influences: "So far as I can remember now, the word 'Religion,' ... was a set of doctrines that I swallowed whole..." (GY:112). Her two autobiographical volumes, Golden Yesterdays and If This Be



I as I Suppose It Be, tell of a young girl's typical religious training. Deland studied her catechism, memorized Biblical verses as punishment, heard conflicting stories and descriptions of God and heaven, and made sometimes embarrassing demands of God: "Please, please God!" she said, "Please pull down the shade."<sup>6</sup> However, neither volume mentions intense religious experience: Deland does not speak of any conversion episode, still commonly expected into the middle of the nineteenth century. Perhaps the best description of Deland's religious feeling is complacency. Her husband's Unitarianism did not prevent their marrying despite negative comments from both families. Deland's religious history before John Ward, Preacher reflected a dominant trend among the conservative middle class of the 1880s.

While still considering herself a religious person, Deland did not take serious interest in theological debate. This does not mean she was unaware of such differences; in many important ways, religious issues and questions seemed to touch late nineteenth century life more intimately. Churches were still filled, especially when the minister had established a reputation. One's religious affiliation was still enough to influence social standing. Religious publications, books, journals, sermons, were still a dominant presence. Many social



reforms and reformers maintained close contacts with established religions. Personal and public behaviors were still closely tied to an individual's religious beliefs. The pervasiveness of religion to Deland's and others' lives during these years must be acknowledged and accepted as part of daily experience. Given her social, economic, and intellectual environment, Deland could not be uninvolved. In fact, in the Boston society in which she and her husband moved, religious concern and action could not be avoided. The Delands knew and were deeply influenced by the Reverend Philip Brooks, who was one of the most respected and popular religious leaders in Boston. Together and independently the Delands became involved in social causes such as finding jobs for unmarried mothers, and became acquainted with many respected figures concerned with these issues -- Brooks, Dr. E. Everett Hale, Lucy Darby, and others. Yet, while Deland speaks of growing problems with the practices and contradictions of her faith in Golden Yesterdays, she took no conspicuous steps towards a new affiliation or rejection until she focused her own doubts through fiction.

What began as a creative and intellectual exercise -- "we speculated as to what would happen if a husband and wife differed theologically" (GY:187) -- became a personal

search for truth and belief:

I don't just know when it was, in that year and a half of constant thought of "unbelief" in fiction, that I began gradually to analyze my own belief in what was called fact, and in the process, I discovered that some "articles of faith" were, to me, just words. (GY:200)

Deland's reevaluation of her own beliefs, as she presented what would happen in the novel when conflicting beliefs undermined a marriage, became more and more serious. How deeply the discovery of her own unbelief affected Deland can only be assumed.<sup>7</sup> A real sense of fear and loss came through, however, as Deland began to doubt her right to participate in the forms when the substance was repudiated: "To draw down one article of Faith is like pulling a chain stitch out of a seam -- the unraveling thread may run across the whole fabric! Suddenly I was apprehensive as to how far that unraveling might go -- not only in creed, but conduct" (GY:201). Deland's autobiography unfortunately offers no clear discussion of how she eventually reconciled the loss of certain tenets of her religious background with the ideals she would keep and personalize: Deland did not throw religion out of her life with the discovery that she no longer believed some doctrines. Rather she seemed to have

refocused her private faith on those areas of deepest concern -- the possibility and importance of love, the value of suffering to life, the relation of death to living, and reconciling one's duty and desires to the needs of one's community.

It can be argued that these concepts are religiously based, but Deland, particularly in her fiction, removed them from any specific doctrinal framework. Instead, she placed these issues within an individual's moral territory. The individual developed this by reconciling private and public behavior and expectations. How a character rejects or develops such private and public responsibility became the starting point for many stories and the novels. In an article written in 1901, Deland encapsulated this relationship:

The realization on the part of the individual of his importance to civilization is a high experience; when it comes to him he is content to forego so small a thing as personal happiness if the happiness of the world may be thereby increased -- if only by the measure of his own sacrifice!<sup>8</sup>

Before the individual comes to see the role he or she must play in the community, one must discover that the individual is incomplete until the communal life is



acknowledged and accepted. This relation has moved far away from any one theological basis, and Deland pushed her representation beyond rigid doctrinal limits as she continued to elaborate this social connection. The development of Deland's philosophy, however, is clearly outlined in the religious configurations of the first novels. By examining how the quality of the characters' religious scruples affect their lives and relations in John Ward, Preacher, one can discover the direction and growth of Deland's thought -- a thought that underlies every other important piece of writing, fiction and non-fiction, she produced.

Even the barest retelling of the novel reveals Deland's complete reliance on various religious outlooks to supply the controversy and thematic content. From the beginning, the wide gulf in religious adherence between John Ward and Helen Jeffrey is made clear, even though the novel opens on the evening before their wedding. Ward's rigid belief comes through clearly in one of the earliest descriptions of him:

John Ward's was an intellect which could not hold a belief subject to the mutations of time or circumstances. Once acknowledged by his soul, its growth was ended; it hardened into a creed, in which he rested in complete



satisfaction. ...It was not that he did not desire more light; it was that he could not conceive that there might be more light.<sup>9</sup>

Helen's faith is more flexible and less bound by rigid doctrines: "Love of good was really love of God, in her mind. Heaven meant righteousness, and hell an absence from what was best and true..." (JWP:42). In spite of this seemingly insurmountable clash of ideals, John and Helen hold each other in deep and sincere affection. Over the objections of Reverend Howe, Helen's uncle, her cousin Lois, and the Draytons, Helen looks forward to her marriage. The reader discovers that both John and Helen hope to change the other's way of thinking as they grow closer. This incompletely expressed aim on each side and the eventual impossibility of affecting any change of belief underlies the novel's emotional impact, and John's failure to bring Helen to accept his religious position adds to the shock effect of the novel.

Soon after the wedding, the Wards return to Lockhaven, John's parish, and for a brief while their life develops a smooth rhythm. John keeps putting off Helen's conversion; in fact, he finds his own stern applications of his faith softening under her influence. This new aspect in Ward's preaching is quickly picked up by the church elders, and they call John to task about his laxity

in declaiming the faith. The elders, particularly Elder Dean, even threaten to discipline Helen for her failure to join the church. They are afraid of her influence on the other women of Lockhaven, and, in fact, Helen has tried to explain her own views of God and punishment and hell to some in the village. A fire in a lumberyard and the unnecessary death of Tom Davis, the village drunk, bring the increasingly tenuous peace to an end. Davis' widow goes to Helen for comfort instead of to the elders or Ward, and this defection becomes for Dean the last straw. He and the others confront Ward and demand the public correction of Helen if Ward will not work for her conversion. Faced with this ultimatum, Ward begins a process of soul-searching and prayer which leads him to conclude that he has failed his God and his faith in allowing Helen to remain unconverted. Throughout this period Helen senses John's withdrawal, but finds that she has no influence over him. All she can do is hold on to her unarticulated but strongly felt beliefs: "I must believe what my own soul asserts, or I am untrue to myself" (JWP:99). When she finally realizes that John is as steadfast in his creed as she, Helen concurs in his decision to separate.

Once the separation becomes a fact, both John and Helen undergo extreme moments of spiritual and physical

agony. Helen, particularly, returning to her uncle's home, must face the anger and confusion of her family and friends. Ward, once Helen leaves, confronts his loss alone. Surprisingly, Helen and John do not waver from their positions, although the pain of separation is terrible for them. John has placed his trust in his God to "save her, and my love will be the human instrument" (JWP:424). As the novel comes to its conclusion, Ward increasingly withdraws into an almost ecstatic state; he recommits himself to the closest possible interpretation of his faith and distances himself from all human contact. Helen also removes herself from the ordinary affairs of life and turns her energies inward. Unlike Ward, she becomes absorbed in the emotional factors of their relation. Ward believes that doctrine must be accepted intellectually as well as on faith; Helen divorces the intellectual commitment from the personal one, and contends that a loving God does not punish his creation needlessly. The person's suffering allows him or her to overcome the limitations of specific doctrines. Ultimately, one learns that one's pain becomes a means of discovering the true meaning and depth of another's love. Once Helen accepts the pain their religious differences have caused, she can then be reconciled to his sacrifice of their marriage, and even to his eventual death. The



novel ends when Helen has achieved this insight and is poised on the brink of a new life. Deland portrays Helen as hopeful and contented.

It is this unconventional finish that upset many of the novel's contemporary critics and readers; typical comments asserted that "It is impossible to take the situation seriously."<sup>10</sup> Others found the characters "unreal" and the religious questions "erroneous and unnatural."<sup>11</sup> Deland took a well-established literary form and reworked its configurations. While religion is the cornerstone of John Ward, Preacher, the novel focuses on a series of love stories, from the doomed marriage of John and Helen Ward to the hopeful engagement of Lois Howe and Gifford Woodhouse. Through these intimate relations, Deland examines the confrontation of doctrine and personal belief. This plot situation is not innovative; many religious novels use a romantic involvement to highlight the clash of difference. What Deland changes in the novel is the resolution of the story line.

Typical religious romances center most commonly on courtship; religious differences threaten the outcome. Deland removes courtship from the novel's center, making it the concern of secondary characters. Deland also multiplies the romance story; Lois Howe, Helen's cousin,



and Mr. Denner, a family friend, both pursue love, and provide the necessary moments of relief from the intense emotional impact of the Wards' story. Interestingly, Deland keeps religious debate out of these courtships. Lois is too innocent and uneducated to understand the implications of Ward's faith or Helen's new vision. Mr. Denner looks more for solace in his old age and would consider any discussion of religion as ungentlemanly. Many popular novels, like Evans' St. Elmo and E.R. Roe's Barriers Burned Away, present opposing viewpoints in a series of set pieces; the characters often simply espouse a particular theology; it is not an integral part of their personality as is John's or Helen's. Theological soundness remains more important than credible characterizations. Depending on the outcome, conversion or rejection, these novels end happily or tragically, and that outcome illustrates the righteousness of a specific religious position.

Death becomes a preferred method of showing the erring partner the consequences of unbelief. Even in happy novels someone, usually a minor figure who acts as an example for the hero or heroine, must die. Often, the heroine performs this ultimate sacrifice. If she does not die, she falls gravely ill and is miraculously brought back to health with her lover's repentance. The hero may

experience a fall, including physical and moral degradations, before seeing the light and becoming worthy of the heroine.<sup>12</sup> Whatever the variations presented in such novels, the stories, characters, and outcomes had become highly stereotyped and predictable by the time Deland began her novel.

The actions and beliefs of her main characters widen the gap between John Ward, Preacher and other novels. Neither Helen nor John fit the outlines of the typical players in religious fiction. Helen survives and remains unconvinced, even by John's death, of the truth or value of his creed. She makes no concession in her religious ideals; and despite her very real pain and fear during their separation, Helen continues to hold John's views in abhorrence. Even her understanding that all of John's actions stem from his love does not weaken Helen's resolve. Ward, himself, retains many positive qualities, even when he is caught up in the rigid structures demanded by his faith. Although John loses a great part of his compassion as he struggles between his devotion to God and his love for Helen, he truly believes that his sacrifice of her company will bring her to the truth. Compared to the novels of E. R. Roe, the Warner sisters, Elizabeth Phelps, and many authors who used the religious plot, Deland's John Ward, Preacher clearly overturned some of

the most basic thematic and plot requirements.

The first major alteration of the popular formula is Deland's making the religious dilemma part of the Wards' marriage. Contextualizing their crisis in this way adds to the emotional impact of their decision. Neither John nor Helen is able to distance him or herself from the issues and their effects on their lives. In the more typical stories, marriage closes and resolves the theological conflicts. In some novels that take religious disputes into marriage, the crisis often helps to bring the couple together. Should the confrontation cause the couple to separate, the partners often work to resolve their differences. Most importantly, the marriage bond remains. The husband is the character who most often questions the value of his faith; the wife tends to be pushed into the background of his struggle, frequently suffering in silence or praying for his spiritual recovery. Here, too, death can become the reconciling factor or the impetus to continue the deceased partner's spiritual search. Like the courtship novels, these stories rapidly develop formulaic and conventional presentations. Deland, however, uses marriage not only as the means for presenting doctrinal differences, but as the source of the Wards' tragedy.



Helen and John are truly devoted to one another. Each acts from the most unselfish and loving motives once the collision of the faiths occurs. Deland takes great care to illustrate the sincerity and depth of their commitment throughout the novel: John's protection of Helen even when he faces his congregation's censure; Helen's vehement defense of John's actions during her separation. Deland also takes pains to establish a more complete relationship between the couple. Both John and Helen experience physical, as well as spiritual, passion, unlike many other couples in popular religious fiction. John, particularly, is strongly aware of and dependent on Helen's physical presence: "He lifted a bit of lace upon her dressing table and smoothed it between his fingers, noting the faint scent of orris which it held. Again the strange unreasonable fear of her absence seized him" (JWP:319). Helen, too, relies on John's physical presence to keep her ideas of God from overpowering daily life: "Oh. You are not going to work to-night!" Helen cried. "Don't leave me alone again" (JWP:238). Together the concrete needs and actions of their lives help to contain the potential disaster. It is important for the novel's development that Ward, in Helen's presence, continually puts off his plans for her conversion. Apart, Ward and Helen turn more to the abstract qualities of their beliefs. As they become



more rigidly reliant on theology, the Wards lose their sense of balance and judgment. As their separation lengthens, the ideas and ideals of their faiths dominate and finally debilitate the touching and human dependence each had for the other.

Deland further upsets the conventions by describing a variety of religious possibilities in the novel. Unlike many typical works, Deland shows orthodox belief to be incapable of answering the most important issues in a person's life -- how can a benevolent God allow suffering in either this world or an afterlife, and how can one be certain that such a realm even exists? Perhaps Helen's most offending statement is not her assertion that religion continually changes as circumstances do, but her denial of the concept of an afterlife where an individual's complete self resides waiting for the final judgment: "...I must just wait my life out, Gifford. I cannot hope; I dare not. I could not go on living if I thought he were living somewhere, and needing me. No, it is ended" (JWP:457). While she can accept John's sending her away in order to make her realize the truth of his faith, Helen does not accept the concept of John's personality existing beyond his death. In the first separation Helen sees John's underlying motive. His actions stem from his real and intense love for her, and

the physical separation becomes for him the only way to bring Helen to see the truth of his creed. In the second separation, which is spiritual, Helen has no security of such a motive. John's love is tangible; God's love is remote and unknowable, particularly such a vengeful God as portrayed by John's faith.

This issue of an individual trying to comprehend what lies beyond death is given important emphasis in Mr. Denner's death. Mr. Denner has been fatally injured by a runaway carriage, and, knowing that he is dying, Denner has asked Rev. Howe what he will face when he dies: 'And where shall I be? Knowing -- or perhaps fallen on an eternal sleep. How does it seem to you, Doctor? That was what I wanted to ask you; do you feel sure of anything afterwards?' Unfortunately, Dr. Howe can only stammer, 'I don't know -- I can't tell. I -- I don't know, Denner!' (JWP:336-337) Since Dr. Howe represents the religious mainstream, his inability to offer Mr. Denner any comfort illustrates Deland's criticism of religious complacency.

When traditional doctrines fail to provide an individual with resolutions, the person is left to devise his or her own salvation. For Helen, redemption lies simply in waiting, hoping for some indication that faith is possible. Without John, Helen cannot go beyond such a tenuous statement. Deland offers, through Gifford

Woodhouse, one other statement on faith and the possibility of belief. Woodhouse articulates a middle ground among Ward's rigid creed, Howe's complacent acceptance, and Helen's unfocused hope. '[F]aith,' Woodhouse claims, 'is not the holding of certain dogmas, it is simply openness and readiness of heart to believe any truth which God may show' (JWP:459). Throughout the novel Woodhouse acts as a mediator, weighing others' views and distilling from them a less dogmatic approach to questions of belief and religious duty. Woodhouse's and Deland's arguments for this middle way overwhelmed the novel's contemporary audience. Deland deliberately set established doctrine against a more radical view, and by placing the defense of orthodoxy in Ward's and Howe's hands, she shifted the balance in favor of her own religious expression.

In spite of its controversial theme, John Ward, Preacher shows a competent control of literary techniques. Deland's presentation and development of the story are straightforward and clearly detailed. The novel begins on the eve of the Wards' wedding and follows their relationship through the breakdown and John's death. This strict control, perhaps, is Deland's most noticeable weakness; Deland carefully parallels the Wards' story with numerous subplots involving the minor characters. This



duplication of themes sometimes dominates the more dramatic portrayal of the novel's events. Another weakness in John Ward, Preacher is Deland's frequent interruption of the narrative to insert long passages of explanation and debate about the religious topics. Several characters, frequently John Ward himself, engage in extended discussions of theological matters or personal beliefs. Despite these faults, Deland's novel reveals a firm sense of character and dramatic confrontation. Deland's characterizations were praised, from the first critical responses, for their fidelity to human experience and actions: the Woodhouse sisters' delicate jealousy of one another for Mr. Denner's affections, the tenderness of the Wards' early married life, the rough defense of Helen by Alferetta Dean when Helen is censured by the Lockhaven elders are just a few of the novel's finely sketched scenes. Present here too is Deland's balancing of deep emotion with humorous touches that becomes a common feature in her later fiction. As a whole, John Ward, Preacher reveals Deland's ability to craft a compelling story and indicates a promising continuation of her literary career.

The need or value of belief itself was not Deland's target in the novel. What Deland seemed more concerned with was the individual who refuses to compromise the



structures of faith in the face of changing circumstances. In one of the few letters dating from the time John Ward, Preacher's publication, Deland wrote:

I thank you with all my heart for so entirely understanding my Preacher, and seeing that it was not my object to attack any denomination especially -- but merely to draw that rare being, a consistent man, that very consistency proving the absurdity of his belief.<sup>13</sup>

For Deland, and for the book's readers and critics, Ward's inflexibility was the central issue of the story; his fanatical adherence to his creed set into motion the marriage's collapse. His strict interpretation prevented any chance for reconciliation, and this affected all who knew and cared for the Wards. John Ward, Preacher was Deland's first extended presentation and analysis of a personality that became fanatic, and as she continued to examine the development of and effects such a character could produce for his or her self and environment, Deland came more and more to affirm that "the most essential thing in this world is a sense of proportion."<sup>14</sup>

Deland's next novel would amplify this theme by multiplying the number of obsessed characters and elaborating the nature of their fanaticism. In John Ward, Preacher Deland's mind was strongly set towards a "growing

realization of the significance of Love and Death in the same world" (GY:221). Her second novel, Sydney (1891), was conceived to illustrate the interplay of these great events in human experience. Deland attempted to explain how one's awareness of love, death, and their connections forced the mind to reconcile one's response to these great events in human life, and to find, finally, comfort in the knowledge of their intimate relation to each other. Sometime during its composition Deland wrote an outline of the novel for Richard Gilder, editor of Century:

A man, who has lost his wife, loses faith in Life & God, & believes Love to be the root of all the misery in Life. He educates his daughter with the idea that she must shun Love, to escape unhappiness. Negation is the most comfortable sort of living in his mind; his one idea is avoid pain. The girl grows up serenely selfish, and, of course, with no religious belief. It is in the presence of Death that she first begins to feel after the Eternal; there Love stirs her. She resists it for fear of misery. But accepts Love & Sorrow together when she realizes that the man who loves her is going to die. By this deliberate choice of pain, made

possible because of a confidence in the Eternal Purpose of Life, her soul is regenerated -- 15

In the novel Deland presents a series of relationships, thwarted and successful, which illustrate various aspects of the influence of love, death, and sorrow in the characters' lives. The discovery of such influence will enrich, confuse, disgust, and embarrass. Some characters will benefit from, others reject the lessons this process contains. Deland takes care to show that one's reactions need not be static; the individual must realize that understanding the connections of love, pain, and death will bring a fuller life. To reject such knowledge is to deny oneself the comfort of what Deland calls the Eternal Presence. Sydney Lee and Alan Crossan, John Paul and Katherine Townsend, Sally Lee and Robert Steele represent differing but complementary versions of the chain of relations which lies at the novel's center. All of them will suffer losses of some type; each must work through a private response to that grief. The characters are forced to put aside the personal and selfish emotions that limit their eventual reconciliation to all which this connection of love and sorrow offers. Not all of the characters make this discovery, and Deland uses the novel to illustrate the factors that determine whether one accepts or rejects such a revelation.



The novel presents in great detail the intersecting lives of the Lee and Paul households. The families have known each other for many years; Mrs. Paul, particularly, feels a proprietary interest in the Lees. She sees herself, in some ways, as their protector and guide because she finds the Major's rejection of the world incomprehensible and thus feels compelled to direct his daughter Sydney's and sister Sally's affairs. This imposed relationship gives Mrs. Paul the opportunity to interfere in the family, to comment on their actions, and to criticize when the Lees fail to match her standards of behavior. Sally Lee becomes Mrs. Paul's particular target. Mrs. Paul teases and bosses and belittles Sally's small charities and feelings. Demeaning Sally provides Mrs. Paul an opportunity to present her own cynical and distrustful view of the world. Mrs. Paul regards Major Lee as a sentimental fool for his complete withdrawal from the world after his wife's death, although in many ways she is as isolated as he. Like the Major, Mrs. Paul has dissociated herself from practically every social and personal connection. While the Major's decision rises from his intense response to his wife's death, the motives for Mrs. Paul's retreat are left unclear. Deland hints in the novel at Mrs. Paul's having at one time held romantic feelings for the Major, but these are very tenuously



suggested. Her increasing age and ill health do not fully explain Mrs. Paul's intense disgust with the world and most of its inhabitants. In many ways, Mrs. Paul simply embodies a limited point of view which Deland uses to highlight certain ideas important to the plot and theme.

The Lees do not manipulate other lives the way Mrs. Paul does. The Major's negative view of the world and human relationships have shaped his, Sally's, and Sydney's world completely. Their world is severely restricted; contact with the outside is never actively sought, and, when it must be met, is endured. The Major still sees his wife's death as desertion, and he has raised Sydney to believe that any human contact promises nothing but pain. And, since all such ties lead to death and sorrow, the Major teaches Sydney that she must not seek companionship with others. The Major has excised all the basic needs from Sydney's life, and has determined the direction of her growth. Having no other examples than her father's life, Sydney is presented as incapable of feeling or committing herself to another person. During the novel's development Sydney will be forced to confront these vacancies in her spiritual and moral make-up.

Alan Crossan, a doctor, and Robert Steele, a distant relative of Mrs. Paul, return to Mercer and set Sydney's reeducation into motion. Steele is pictured as morally

and spiritually weak; before the novel's beginning he had lost his fortune through his misplaced sense of honor. Since that time, Steele has drifted to Europe, sampling various pursuits and interests; his opium addiction represents his loss of self-control and direction. Content to let others decide for him, Steele lacks the desire or ability to alter his circumstances. Illness forces him to come back to Mercer, accompanied by his friend and physician, Crossan. A recurrence of his illness makes Steele a guest of the Lees. Mrs. Paul has connived this arrangement, seeing Steele as an acceptable match for Sydney. Sally Lee takes on Steele's convalescence because Sydney has no sickroom experience and detests illness of any kind. Sally mistakes Steele's gratitude for love, and Steele allows himself to accept her interpretation, although he plans to correct Sally's misconception. He is unable to do so, however, and Sally tentatively experiences the happiness of love. The suicide of a young woman, which Steele has witnessed but done nothing to prevent, brings home to him his inability to form human connections. He finally confesses to Sally his weaknesses and the dishonor he does to her, not really aware of or caring for the pain he causes Sally. Steele leaves Mercer soon after, and last mention of him is the narrator's announcement of his embracing Catholicism as a

final retreat from the world.

Crossan shares some of Steele's characteristics; he describes himself as a dilettante, a dabbler in music, scientific experimentation, literature, and other artistic pursuits. Nevertheless, he practices medicine, and is truly concerned about breaking Steele's opium habit. It is Crossan's encounters with Sydney that give him a firm sense of direction and purpose. These meetings also help him to clarify his own beliefs and moral views. He sees life and human relations completely oppositely from Sydney and the Major. He believes in the individual's ability to love and, more importantly, the necessity of people to love. Much of his time with Sydney is spent in debating their separate philosophies, and Crossan falls in love with Sydney. In the rest of the novel, he tries to convince Sydney of his love and of the possibility that love may survive. Crossan's views eventually help Sydney to accept his love, and they marry. Their married life is short, however, because Crossan suffers from a heart condition; in fact, he insists on their marriage even after Sydney learns of his ailment, using his own condition to reaffirm his ideals. Crossan's convictions enable Sydney to accept his death and her own suffering. At the novel's end Sydney has moved completely away from the Major's position.



Sydney's spiritual and moral awakening forms the novel's thematic core. She has spent her entire life surrounded by people who have responded to the world either by denying the possibility of human contact (like her father) or by degrading whatever connections two people might form (like Mrs. Paul). Thus Sydney's only response to most potential relationships is negative. When John Paul defies his mother and decides to marry Katherine Townsend, Sydney can only wonder that they believe they can be happy: 'Does he forget death' she thought. ...'he can forget it; he never thinks of anything but happiness. Perhaps that is because it is all new; perhaps as soon as he gets used to it he will begin to be afraid.'<sup>16</sup> She regards her aunt's romance with bemused affection, and until she becomes aware of her own feeling towards him, looks on Crossan's views as her chance to explain her own and defend her father's.

The crisis which compels Sydney to reevaluate her positions is Sally's sickness and death. Forced to take care of her aunt, and thus facing the reality of dying for the first time, Sydney comes to realize not only her own affection for Sally, but Sally's individuality as well. Most importantly, Sydney, in the vigil at Sally's deathbed, experiences a sense of divinity. Sydney senses the reality of an Eternal Purpose that orders and shapes



the universe. She suddenly gains a full insight into the relation of all life and death, of sorrow and happiness. These insights open to her the whole range of human emotion and one's need for connection. This understanding gives Sydney the strength to confront her father; despite his hostile reaction, Sydney tells him that she loves Alan Crossan and will marry him even though she knows he is ill. This new knowledge also gives her the ability to accept Crossan's death and to anticipate his relation to that Eternal Purpose. Sydney gains, too, the knowledge of the value of suffering, of its importance in reconciling herself to Alan's loss, and her sorrow and her joy at his release. The novel ends with this acceptance; Sydney, here, is described as an awakened soul whose former selfish life has given way to a concern for others.

Even this fairly straightforward summary of Sydney indicates the complex intertwining of relationships and ideas on which the novel rests. The book also deals with John Paul's romance with Katherine Townsend and his relations with his mother. There is even another subplot of Eliza, a tollkeeper's daughter, and her thwarted romantic feelings for John Paul. Within Deland's severely restricted fictional environment, the characters must constantly explain, defend, and interpret their particular beliefs and ideals. Unfortunately, Deland fails to make

these characters' struggles attractive or compelling for the reader, and the novel's stylistic and technical failures overshadow Deland's serious thematic intentions. Because Deland cannot convincingly combine her story and theme, the importance of the relationship of love, suffering, and death loses much of its impact; yet without this theme, the novel merely reproduces the typical religious romances of the period.

In the novel a character's ability to suffer marks his or her humanity. One comes to this knowledge through the experience of love, and through accepting not only the possibility of loss, but the loss of love itself. When Sydney realizes that Alan's death will not compromise or belittle her affection, she has moved from the sterile environment created by her father into a less secure but more rewarding world. The pain associated with love assures the individual that love is real; it also reveals that the person is capable of growing beyond the intensity of that pain. Loss can take on many shapes -- renunciation, acceptance, and physical death itself. This discovery and response, according to Deland, are delicately balanced between private and public action. Grief can easily become a stultifying force for some; Major Lee's refusal to see beyond his own anger at his wife's dying illustrates this debilitating power in one's

sorrow. The Major is trapped within a web of ultimately selfish responses. Feeling that she has abandoned him, Major Lee creates a philosophy that "demonstrated that morality and expediency were synonymous" (S:55). Forgetting that love includes forgiveness, even the forgiving of dying, Major Lee inhabits an extremely restricted world. He attempts to deny the natural progression of life through his philosophy, and by doing so, cuts himself off from any redemption. Even when his daughter finds the solace she desperately needs in her conception of the Eternal Purpose, the Major refuses to accept Sydney's discovery or the hope it offers.

Other characters illustrate varying types of sorrow and response. Deland provides the reader, and Sydney, a choice in the form her response will take. There is Mrs. Paul's bitterness towards life and human experience. Expecting the worst from people, she is always proved right when others fail to meet her self-imposed standards. Her view of the most intimate of personal relationships is twisted by her own failures with love, for her husband and for her son. Mrs. Paul constantly berates John for being weak and undirected, yet, when he attempts to take control of his life, she refuses to accept his efforts. There is Robert Steele's moral cowardice that allows him to justify his failures to act, and his inability to accept



responsibility for the consequences of his inaction. He breaks Sally's illusionary romance not by acknowledging their mistaken feelings, but by claiming to act from the position of saving Sally's own honor. Through a convoluted rationalizing process, Steele manages to have others make his decision for him and to shed himself of its results. There are Katherine Townsend's small compromises with her sense of duty to herself and those she loves. Katherine's sense of lost integrity is particularly strong in her encounters with Mrs. Paul; in order to have Mrs. Paul accept her, Katherine takes on strong and cynical opinions that mirror Mrs. Paul's. However, Katherine actually feels Mrs. Paul's ideas about people and their actions to be repugnant, and it is only her love for John Paul that forces Katherine to adopt them, even temporarily.

Sorrow is not to be wallowed in; such behavior Deland sees as another form of fanaticism. Those characters who remain caught up in the immediacy of pain pay a terrible price for their continued dependence. The Major continually recreates the most painful moment of his life, refusing to grow beyond it. Pain (Deland most often means spiritual pain) must become a source of strength and purpose:

Let us take, then, ...the pain of regret of an



unreached ideal; and with that pain a new and deep impulse to live and love and serve; and let us call this impulse, thankfully, another gift from the beloved, ...the gift of a serious consciousness of the richness and the purpose of life.<sup>17</sup>

To suffer is to live, and to live means taking the memory of the pain and turning it into positive action; it is to know, in a sense, one's self and one's past connections. The recognition of this chain of relations and involvement in it marks one's purpose, acknowledges one's right to the pain and to the living.

This is the understanding that Sydney must come to, and through a series of contrived situations, Deland sets out this reeducation. Perhaps because of the extremely abstract nature of the issue, Deland's attempts in the novel to embody these ideals falls short of her intentions. As one reviewer commented:

The first impression produced by "Sydney" is of the distinctness of the individual characters that figure in its pages. ...The second impression is of the moral or intellectual weakness of nearly all of these characters, for all but two or three of them are studies in mental or spiritual pathology; so that we are

confronted in every chapter with abnormal situations, and the story is given a generally morbid tone.<sup>18</sup>

The majority of criticism about the book focused on these same concerns -- overdrawn situations, excessive discussion about religious ideals, lifeless characterizations. Practically every personal relationship rests on extreme philosophies, and all characters in the novel react in excessive ways to what are fairly common occurrences: Mrs. Paul is either haughty or disdainful of everyone; the Major sees every other view of the world as false and a challenge to his influence over Sydney; Crossan can only be a dilettante or crusader. No one seems able to achieve a balanced view in the novel, and Sydney's character is the most unstable of all.

Because of her training Sydney's distorted beliefs have some credibility. She has been raised by her father to believe that love is futile because the loved one will eventually die, thereby causing pain. However, the implied desire to prevent such pain by ignoring the inevitable fact that all things die prevents the reader from sympathizing with Sydney's position. Her extreme self-absorption in this metaphysical conundrum appears from the opening of the novel. While talking of her aunt's visits to the poor, Sydney bursts out: 'Oh, I am

glad my garden walls are high, and shut sad things out' (S:25). Although the novel hopes to show Sydney's transformation from this selfish view to a woman opened by grief to the love of God and man, Deland overdevelops the story and the theme with too many parallels. Deland uses each subplot to amplify and explain Sydney's upbringing or to provide a moral example for her to emulate. Sally's charities among the poor and Crossan's profession offer tangible evidence of love's reality in the public and private sphere. The Major and Mrs. Paul represent its denial, while John Paul's escape from his mother's influence indicates the path for Sydney to follow. Until Sally's death breaks through Sydney's self-involvement, however, these positive influences have little chance, and the reader is not enlightened by her travails. In fact, the reader comes away bored by the many qualifications and elaborations of the story's plot.

That Sydney's reaction to every human connection is to deny its very possibility does not surprise the reader. Throughout the book the reader finds numerous examples of her absorption of these lessons. Whenever she is faced with pain or joy, Sydney stands apart, and even refuses to accept that others can experience such feelings. She prefers her father's version of human relations, and like him, Sydney lacks humanity. While the reader is asked to



excuse her because of her ignorance, Sydney's wooden personality and behavior make this difficult; as many contemporary reviews pointed out:

...Sydney is too abnormal to seem human and we feel a little as if she had been created to be a mouthpiece for certain views which the writer wished to bring before the public. ...Sydney's character seems to develop according to purely artificial laws and by too rapid and abrupt strides. <sup>19</sup>

Sydney is completely involved in her father's philosophy until Alan Crossan falls in love with her; their conversations are too abstract and idealized to effect the stunning reversal of her opinions and beliefs. And her conversion to love and spirituality, unfortunately, is presented in a rather overblown scene that Deland called "the most important chapter in the book."<sup>20</sup> Using the cliché of insight coming with the dawn, Deland has Sydney arguing for the existence of God and the purpose of the universe in language that becomes more and more strained. As Sydney approaches her moment of insight, Deland's narrative becomes vague, and the tone seems inappropriate for the intense personal discovery:

Each smallest leaf obeyed in beauty the same law that orders star systems, scattered thick as

dust in the vast silences of space. How all things are only one thing! ...They would be part of a plan, then; there would be meaning somewhere. It wouldn't matter whether the meaning were understood. ...one which needed men's pain, nay, men's sin for its perfection... to feel that would make up, perhaps, for grief and death; one's own death... conduct, and the perception of right, and pain of sin, and the mystery of love, and that demand of the soul for Something...It made it worth living, if it were lived, struggling for oneness with the Eternal Purpose, of which sorrow was as much a part as joy, death as life. ...That I want a Meaning proves it -- it is the want (S:348-54).

Sydney's new life is as incredible as her previous one. The speed and certainty with which she grasps not only an understanding of how one should live, but of the impetus behind the universe -- her Eternal Purpose -- is astounding. Just as she was totally committed to avoiding love and pain, Sydney now is completely submerged in her new vision. Once accepting this insight, Sydney absolutely rejects her father's influence. Deland even has Sydney attempt to convert the Major, but her arguments rest on vague and awkwardly expressed concepts. Sydney's

old and new philosophies were the subject of frequent critical comment:

Sydney's peace comes solely from the abiding sense that there is an Intelligence to which all that baffles man is plain. It does not include faith in Christ...It neither hopes for immortality nor rejects the possibility of it, but simply "does not think it matters." Only the Sydneys of fiction, it may be observed, rest calmly on that slenderest of foundations for either happiness or peace.<sup>21</sup>

Unlike Helen or John Ward, Sydney undergoes no coherent development in her change of heart. From one day to the next, she literally experiences and accepts a radical shift in her perceptions. Part of the difficulty a reader has in accepting this turnaround is the rigidly structured background Deland provides for Sydney: her entire life has been spent in the company of her father and his teaching. She has never stepped beyond the extraordinarily circumscribed environment of her father's and Mrs. Paul's houses.

Adding to the confusion is the proliferation of romantic attachments provided as examples for Sydney. Deland creates an overabundance of negative, even hostile courtships that offer neither Sydney nor the reader a



sense of hope and pleasure in such relationships. Even the romance of John Paul and Katherine Townsend is subject to the temptations of self-pity and denial. What characters fear is the permanence of commitment and all it entails. Alan Crossan, too, at first shuns the idea of committing himself to anything or anyone: "He was at heart a dilettante, he told himself; but this reflection did not disturb him; for he declared that he was no more responsible for his disposition than the color of his eyes..." (S:3). That love and honesty exist at all in the claustrophobic atmosphere does little to overcome the weight of Deland's storytelling.

The overpowering seriousness and the fact that there are no scenes or actors similar to Mr. Denner or the Woodhouse sisters in John Ward, Preacher to lighten the novel's moral are only two of several weaknesses in Sydney. Characters are extremely wooden; compared to Helen Ward, Sydney is little more than an automated figure. The reader can easily apprehend and understand Helen's motives for her actions, even if the reader does not agree with her religious view. Helen's emotional life and commitments compel the reader's interest and concern. Sydney, on the other hand, is lifeless, even at those moments of intense confrontation. Sydney never seems to act from a believable impetus; every move appears

calculated or incredible. Lacking this continuity in characterization, Sydney repels the sympathetic reader.

Deland's narrative development is the second most noticeable failing in the novel. While John Ward, Preacher clearly breaks into three distinct storylines, each does reflect, comment on, or amplify major themes in the story. Sydney lacks this clear reflective aspect; the various storylines merely clutter and confuse the novel's major issues, rather than adding emphasis. Steele's abortive courting of Sally provides no insight for Sydney and has little influence for John Paul and Katherine Townsend. It simply provides Mrs. Paul the opportunity to belittle Sally further. Despite the restricted arena, Deland is unable to create a credible stage for her actors. In the first novel, Deland devised two distinct and realistic settings for her characters; Ashurst and Lockhaven are individual places and are drawn with sufficient detail to allow the reader to keep them separate, while they provide acceptable backdrops for the novel's action.

Surprisingly, the critics, for the most part, applauded Deland's purpose in the novel: "It is true that back of this is the great doctrine of the impossibility of keeping love from a human heart..."<sup>22</sup> However, the majority of the reviews quickly focused their comments on

Sydney's failings. Deland herself came to regard the novel as a flawed effort; almost sixty years after writing the book, she declared that "[t]he story was rather artificial and quite unconvincing" (GY:221). Such hindsight judgments are not uncommon in writers, but even after the novel's first appearance Deland seemed aware of the work's problems:

I was especially interested in what you said of the abnormal in Sydney -- every word seemed to me most discriminating and just; yes -- my people are cranks. I wish they were not, but they insist upon it; I hope they will have more healthy minds in my next novel.<sup>23</sup>

Deland herself expressed the theme of Sydney more simply and convincingly outside the confines of the novel:

I used to think, too, that happiness was a form of selfishness, of indifference to the anguish of the great human life that beats about us, but I think I see more clearly now; and it seems to me that the recognition of the unity of things, the knowledge that the life of the star, and the blade of grass and the human soul is one, and that it exists for some purpose infiniely beyond our comprehending, but which surely we can apprehend, is enough to make one full of a



certain serious joy, that is not happiness, perhaps, in its individual sense...but which is peace.<sup>24</sup>

Deland's affirmation here had taken much longer to achieve than Sydney's, although the author and her character shared the same general development and conclusions. As Deland relates in her autobiography, Golden Yesterdays, several important events in her life shook her previous religious complacency -- a minister's rebuke of her uncle during the funeral service for his daughter, the sudden death of Lorin's father and the reawakened memory of her cousin's early death, the easily paraded religious prejudices shared by differing faiths, the intensity of her growing doubts, and the fear of their consequences. The autobiography presents Deland's eventual conclusion as a natural and reasoned decision; Sydney's "conversion" occurs too quickly and so completely that the reader is thrown off balance. In fact, everything in the novel happens at fever pitch, and the reader has no opportunity to consider the meaning behind any character's protestations or actions. There is no middle ground here, and this lack of a focusing position pulls the novel apart.

Deland began to undertake an examination of what lies behind fiction and particular belief in these novels. She

searched for the impetus behind the behavior. Deland continually looked back for causes, what she called the Eternal Purpose in Sydney. Placed together, John Ward, Preacher and Sydney offered opposite views -- the first rejecting that such knowledge was possible, the second allowing the individual the ability to approach such insight. Deland did not attempt to repudiate the idea of a supreme being or the expression of trust in that distant impulse. What she aimed for was the recognition that only the individual could come to know and accept that concept:

...the idea of personal liberty demands that each individual receive his God for himself; every individual evolve his own ideal of righteousness. Never more may authority stand for truth. Never any more can the human creature take his spiritual law second or third hand. The Soul and God are standing face to face.<sup>25</sup>

The major shift that appeared in Deland's writing was the refocusing of her fictional themes and their representation. Where specific doctrinal issues were key to the first novels, Deland centered later works around a broader moral rationale. Rather than set particular dogmatic arguments against one another, Deland

moved toward considering the ethical components of the problems faced by her characters. Instead of searching for first causes, Deland was able to limit her examination to more realistic and manageable concerns; discovering God was no longer the major focus of her work. Deland decided to concentrate on human behavior and need, and the effects when personal and public worlds intersected. Having discovered a personal credo, Deland incorporated her views into the fiction, and this new moral atmosphere allowed Deland greater freedom in devising her storylines and characters. Many of the technical criticisms aimed at Sydney were corrected when she devised situations that influenced the creation of actors and actions, instead of forcing them to fit within very specific thematic expectations. Deland continued to deal with problems and situations that touched a person's spiritual and emotional core, but the decisions these characters make now rested on a complex of personal and communal interactions. These actions also had an effect beyond a limited circle of acquaintance or family. One's behavior would influence the entire social fabric, so one's sense of responsibility to that wider range of connection became a vital component of Deland's later fiction.

Deland's increasing confidence with and ability to devise and manipulate her stories along these



new lines resulted from continued writing and publication. The years 1888 to 1894 were very full ones for Deland's literary career. Besides the two novels already discussed, she continued to produce poetry and saw The Old Garden and Other Verses through several editions. She published a book of travel impressions, Florida Days, in 1889. She also produced her first collection of short stories, Mr. Tommy Dove and Other Stories (1893). This collection reflected Deland's refocused thematic concerns. The five tales in this collection center on characters who are forced to make moral decisions regarding private or public behavior. Often these two worlds collide, as the choices one makes reverberate between both environments. Amelia Gedge, in "A Fourth-Class Appointment," must accept a marriage proposal rather than face public embarrassment when she loses her position as postmistress. Tommy Dove leaves his home rather than confront his personal feelings for Jane Temple and the village's contempt for his social presumption. The collection is important, too, because the title story, "Mr. Tommy Dove," introduced Old Chester, the small village which became Deland's preferred setting for the majority of her later fiction.

"Mr. Tommy Dove" presents other important departures

for Deland. The previous fictions dealt with serious and complex situations; in this story she directed her attention to simpler people and their more ordinary lives, hopes, and losses. Because of this new focus, Deland reshaped her narrative structure and voice to represent a more accurate picture of small town experience. The narrative becomes less abstract and offers less reporting; incidents are presented more vividly; characters' dialogues sound more realistic and the people talk of ordinary things. Deland also found in "Mr. Tommy Dove" a format that would become a favorite structure for her subsequent stories. It opens with an extended description of the scene and major characters; allusions to past events and people are made, often interrupting the main storyline; several other figures enter the story to comment on or reflect the tale's major theme; a resolution occurs, but frequently minor characters or the narrator will make comments undercutting or extending the obvious conclusion. The narrator begins to develop a distinct personality that the later Old Chester stories will continue to develop. In fact, this narrator becomes an integral part of Old Chester and an important factor in the stories' success. Although these features seem fully realized in "Mr. Tommy Dove," Deland continued to refine these structural factors so that her later stories achieve

a seamless presentation.

The Story of a Child (1893) illustrated a technique that Deland would use extensively throughout the Old Chester stories. Like "Mr. Tommy Dove," this novel takes up the Old Chester setting and continues the story of Tommy Dove's and Jane Temple's romance. This habit of cross-referencing characters and incidents became a common feature of her work, and by returning to the same place and people, Deland built a dense and completely realized community. Families, their occupations, their houses, their dreams and realities were fully depicted and described. The reality of Old Chester would extend beyond the physical. The community's moral, political, and religious frameworks began to be clearly drawn in The Story of a Child. This novel was also Deland's first completely popular and critical success. Every contemporary review praised Deland for her finely detailed portraiture and development: "--not a touch of excess in the treatment of the extremely delicate and complex situation."<sup>26</sup>

The novel was important as well for Deland's creation of a believable child character. Ellen Dale, unlike many children who appeared in popular fiction, is not an idealized child who leads adults to the truth. Neither is she an unbelievable character. Ellen pictures



herself dying of some horrible disease, of course, but also hopes to recover just long enough to enjoy everyone's sorrow at her passing. She plays heathen with her friends, makes dolls out of flowers, examines the adults around her with a sometimes sophisticated eye. Ellen becomes a means for Deland to set up contrasts of behavior, perception, and response among the novel's characters. In later fictions, Deland would create several more children to serve the same role. Her concern with the blending of technique and purpose was evident in these works, and she continued to reveal a growing sense of confidence and accomplishment in handling them. From this point on in her literary career and standing, Deland increasingly gained the recognition and support of the critics and reading public alike.

Deland's next novel combined the flexibility of the Old Chester setting with an emphasis on the ethical and social consequences of several characters' action. Sometime during this novel's composition Deland wrote to her cousin:

It was very pleasant to hear from you and to know that you liked Sydney. I wonder what you will say to her successor! It is to deal with very vital things, and may perhaps be less conservative than Sydney -- but at least you

will believe that the intention is reverent!<sup>27</sup>

Deland's intentions are fully revealed in the headnote which she chose for Philip and His Wife (1894): "Marriage is not a result, but a process."<sup>28</sup> Marriages of all kinds dominate the lives of the major and secondary characters; the possibility of marriage also comes under Deland's scrutiny as she presents two very different romances in the story. Deland contends that a marriage's success or failure rests on the couple's ability to deal with the constantly changing circumstances of life. The author makes no judgments on how her characters manipulate the situations of their relationships, although certain social and religious positions are given voice by various characters. The novel presents the backgrounds of the couples, their hopes for marriage and reasons for marrying, but Deland refuses to comment on these choices. The novel balances personal desires and social conventions as it examines the intricate web of influence and behavior these relationships create.

The novel begins as Alicia Drayton completes preparations to open her sister's house. The Shores are returning to Old Chester for the summer after several years' absence. Deland immediately introduces the issue of marital uncertainty and conflict by relating the history of William Drayton's two marriages. His first

wife, who was rich and beautiful, died soon after Cecil's birth. To find a home and mother for his daughter, Drayton marries Frances Dacie, whose character makes quite a contrast to his first wife. The second Mrs. Drayton revels in invalidism and religiosity, and she wields these tools effectively to achieve her ends. One particular goal is to delay Alicia's wedding once she discovers how Alicia's leaving will affect her. Mr. Drayton also responds to his wife's symptoms by suddenly realizing that travel will benefit his health. At the story's beginning he has been away almost twenty-five years. This arrangement suits Mrs. Drayton very well. Not having expected ever to marry, she pays lip service to the forms and conventions of marriage. When Mr. Drayton's return is mentioned at the novel's conclusion, Mrs. Drayton loses much of her self-assurance. Until then, she assumes and enjoys the role of long-suffering wife and mother, knowing that she has the community's outward support. During the course of the story several Old Chester inhabitants clearly show that they understand the real situation in Mrs. Drayton's household.

Deland reinforces the novel's questioning of marital success with the situation of Eliza Todd, one of the villagers. Eliza is married to an abusive husband, and her large family and current pregnancy only add to the



tension. No one, however, offers any solution to the Todds' situation. Most of Old Chester scolds Eliza for her husband's behavior and rejects any suggestion of even temporary separation. Against this background the Shores' own marriage is detailed.

Cecil and Philip Shore, from their first appearance, are diametrically opposed. Cecil is very aware of her personal needs and comforts. She measures every experience against how it affects her. She is frequently described with images of full blown and heavily scented flowers, and Cecil is often seen reclining on chairs or sofas that are heaped with cushions. More important is the effect Cecil has on others as Deland's first fully realized woman character. A very strong component of her personality is her sexuality, a physical and emotional force that attracts every other character. Roger Carey, the Shores' summer guest, is shown responding to Cecil's presence early in the novel:

He saw the exquisite curves unmarred by any ornament; he saw the faint color of her relaxed palm, and it came into his mind, with that primitive ferocity which lurks below the product of civilization which is named a gentleman, that a man might grasp the satin smoothness of the round flesh above and below the elbow, and kiss

the blue vein on the warm curve of the inner  
arm, -- kiss it and kiss it, until -- (PHW:133)

Cecil judges every connection, even the most intimate, from this perspective. Her husband and daughter rarely break through her self-absorption. Molly, for example, is neglected or spoiled, depending on Cecil's moods, and Cecil regards Philip as an encumbrance or amusement. Deland rarely gives Cecil a middle ground in the novel. She constantly moves between these wide swings of emotion and response. In spite of these flaws, she ends up the most attractive character in the novel because she is capable of standing back and examining her motives and behavior. However, this pragmatic self-examination does not prevent Cecil from becoming the novel's moral villain.

Philip Shore upholds a completely different moral viewpoint. Where Cecil is selfish, he constantly puts social claims before personal ones. Where she claims no responsibility or allegiance to others, Philip frequently tortures himself with discovering every possible private and public connection. Where Cecil cares for public opinion, he is committed to the greater idea of the abstract truth. These oppositions can be seen in their decisions regarding an artist whom Philip has been supporting. After he has supplied funds for the artist's

training (the money is actually Cecil's), Philip feels that the artist has not fulfilled his talent and decides to end the support. Once Cecil learns the reasons for the withdrawal, she intends to continue it, more to spite Philip than to encourage the artist. Deland describes Philip early in the novel as a "man capable of sustained ecstasy; a man who lived not upon those occasional sunlit peaks of emotion which most of us touch now and then, but upon a high plateau of noble idealism" (PHW:76). Unfortunately, as the Shores struggle, Philip's idealism becomes tarnished. From the novel's beginning he is convinced that the marriage must end, and while he couches his desires in moral and social justifications, Philip's real motives are based on a selfishness that rivals Cecil's. Although his position is vindicated at the novel's conclusion, Philip has little personal satisfaction. He will still be dependent on Cecil's fortune to support him, and will have to deal with the public's reaction to his decision.

The novel traces the Shores' marital collapse not through highly wrought scenes or great tragic confrontations but through a summer of small incidents. The Shores have come to Old Chester, carrying with them a marriage on the verge of collapse. This new environment emphasizes the tensions and dissatisfactions



already present in their relationship; and, importantly for Deland's purpose, neither Cecil nor Philip can remember the causes of their antagonisms. They are, perhaps most tragically, two people who no longer have anything to keep them together; even their daughter, Molly, is more often a source of argument than unity. Both Philip and Cecil use Molly as a weapon against the other, and the child becomes a way for each parent to validate his or her actions.

If there is any catalyst that impels the eventual collapse of the Shores' marriage it is the presence of Roger Carey. Carey has come as the Shores' guest, and Deland uses him to underscore the false premises of romance. In typical romantic fashion Carey falls in love with Alicia, and much of his time is spent gaining her affection and trust. However, compared to Cecil, Alicia is a pale copy; Alicia is less assured, less demanding, and more innocent than her sister. Carey is honestly attracted by these qualities, but he also feels strongly the pull of Cecil's mature sensuality and experience. Caught between these types of feminine appeal, Carey consciously fights his growing feelings for Cecil. Unfortunately, a dispute with Alicia over her fears of abandoning her mother opens Carey's susceptibility to Cecil's attractions. In a highly emotionally charged

scene, when Cecil first announces her intention to separate from Philip, Carey finally gives way to his desire. Ultimately Carey pulls back from all involvement with Cecil, but the awareness of his own weakness colors his relationship with Alicia. Although the novel ends with Carey and Alicia's engagement reaffirmed, the knowledge that no love is safe from other influences denies the conventional belief in total commitment and absolute pure love.

To balance the serious focus of the novel, Deland includes the mistaken romance of Susan Carr and Joseph Lavendar. The eventual marriage is a mistake because neither Carr nor Lavendar intends to marry the other. In a series of misdirected conversations and interpretations, Lavendar discovers Susan has misread him. Lavendar actually hopes to marry Mrs. Pendleton, a rich widow, but because marriage is a subject too delicate to be approached directly, he turns to Susan for advice and help in his efforts. When he realizes that Susan believes she is the one he wishes to marry, Lavendar does nothing to correct her assumption. Despite such a beginning, of all the relations presented in the novel, this marriage has the best chance of happiness. Both Joseph and Susan uphold their society's ideas of marriage. In fact, both are rather old-fashioned in their beliefs, not only in

their expectations for marriage, but in their acceptance or responsibility for their behavior. Unlike Cecil or Philip, or even Carey, Susan Carr and Joseph Lavendar are able to put selfish desires out of their relationship. While both have compromised their hopes, Deland implies that such adjustments are the best method to insure marital stability and happiness.

Throughout the novel, characters, female and male, must come to recognize the true and false qualities surrounding their preconceptions about marriage. In the varied relationships that Deland pictures none can be regarded as completely successful; even Susan and Alicia begin from a flawed basis. There is no deliberate falsity in any of the relations; what sets any breakdown in motion lies with the wishes and actions of the partners. Marriages in Philip and His Wife are not made in heaven; rather they result from the matching of one human need against another. Love, of course, remains an integral factor in these arrangements, but it is not a rigid set of images and responses. Like every other emotion involved in marriage, romantic passion gives way to less intense expression. Characters must recognize the fluid quality of any connection and be willing to accommodate the individual against the pair.

The insular nature of marriage is also treated



against the wider community, and such tensions influence the partner's personal relations as well. In a finely crafted scene in Chapter 27, Deland incorporates this broader community response when she has the Old Chester Sewing Society meet at Mrs. Drayton's. Alicia's engagement is one topic of interest, and so is the Shores' stay and the obvious problems in their home; "It was not until nearly a fortnight later that Old Chester woke to its privileges in the way of gossip: two great and exciting events to discuss, -- a broken engagement and a divorce" (PHW:349). The conversation moves among the current marital problems and past ones; Mrs. Drayton's protestations of marital duty are met with knowing smiles among the group. Causes and consequences are discussed until Alicia, who is thought too innocent to hear such things, enters the room.

Marriage is not entered into lightly in this novel; more than the couple's feelings are at issue -- family, position, duty, and character are perhaps even more important considerations. And when the connections can no longer hold, these same factors must enter into the negotiations; Cecil is always aware of what others will say and how she will meet public comment or censure. Philip counters Cecil's view with eloquent arguments for personal freedom and responsibility. Roger Carey,

however, is given the position that Deland herself would affirm over and over in later essays:

"...that the individual has got to be subservient to the race. Divorce seems to me like suicide, not inherently or specifically wrong, but socially vicious; both lower just a little the moral tone of society. Besides, our progress is in direct proportion to our idea of the sacredness of marriage; and even the innocent must not tamper with that ideal sacredness" (PHW:229).

Religious and social customs demand that nothing disturb the smooth running of everyday life. That such duty may be hollow and that living such a life jeopardizes one's sense of personal worth lies at the center of the novel. Which concern, individual or communal, should take precedence in the person's involvement with life? Deland presents convincing arguments for both sides as Philip and Cecil fight for their own resolutions; however, Deland refuses to give a clear-cut judgment for either side. Instead she leaves decisions on the characters' motives and behavior to the reader.

Deland's novel was chiefly concerned with the when, why, and how of a marriage's dissolution. Her focus and conclusions surprisingly brought little condemnation from

the critics; the most common reaction to the novel's subject indicated public familiarity, and even over-familiarity, with it:

The motto of this book shows that it is written with the purpose of adding more human documents to those which have already been contributed, on one side or the other, to the discussion as to whether marriage is or is not a failure. Among Americans who write, Mrs. Deland has probably the most serious position, and to those who do not regard novels as primarily meant to be amusing, her work is always interesting, as she is herself intensely in earnest.<sup>29</sup>

By the last decades of the century divorce had become a common fictional plot device; many authors treated this situation, and those treatments ranged from Howell's Modern Instance to the melodramatic and sensational popular versions.<sup>30</sup> While the subject matter of Philip and His Wife did not startle contemporary readers, Deland's refusal to assert one specific moral position did. In a letter written soon after the work's publication she mentioned adverse reaction to the novel:

I am most grateful for your kind letter about Philip and his Wife, the more so as people are saying that it is immoral -- and I hear that



girls are forbidden to read it. I must admit that it was not written for the jeune fille -- but its moral purpose was always clearly before me.<sup>31</sup>

The series of contrasts that make up the story offered no assurances that some ideal marital harmony could be achieved, and when the marriage had lost any sort of trust or affection between the partners, Deland suggested in the novel that perhaps divorce was the only way to resolve the situation. This deliberate action of Deland's not to uphold one view infuriated some reviewers while others applauded it.<sup>32</sup> However, Deland herself believed that the purpose and value of a novel lay in its suggestions that the writer aimed toward the reader:

The ideal novel has the defects of its virtues. Its entertainment arouses the moral imagination; but, then, perforce, it leaves us -- it does not take us by the shoulders and send us out into the world to act upon the emotions it has aroused.<sup>33</sup>

Clearly Deland had specific aims in her various fictional presentations; in the novels and stories preceding Philip and His Wife, she presented a consistent moral and religious view. Helen Ward and Sydney Lee were seekers after some coherent religious belief that suited

their individual needs. That their needs moved outside traditional structures should in no way demean their search or their solution, in Deland's view. From the beginning Deland had given her readers a choice by building her fictions around some complex of ideas or beliefs. Deland continually sought and detailed a middle way, a balancing of desire and possibility, a setting of the personal against the community. More and more Deland sided with the success of the group over the individual: "No one of us may do that, which, if done by all, would destroy Society ---"<sup>34</sup>

This concern became evident as the communal background was enlarged in each successive work. In John Ward, Preacher, for example, the circle of characters affected is quite small, and the particular villages are ultimately untouched by events. Sydney is practically claustrophobic in the extreme constrictions placed on the characters' movements. The action of Philip and His Wife takes place in a carefully constructed society whose members continually intrude into the Shore and Drayton households. Enlarging the physical and social environment of the story gives Deland the opportunity to add a realistic texture to the working of her theme. Old Chester also allows Deland to be more subtle in her presentations. Stepping away from the main characters lets

the reader take in a particular scene more completely. And the stories that are juxtaposed with the main narrative encourage the reader to compare a greater variety of action and reaction.

Philip and His Wife also retained the reader's interest because with each new work Deland's character portraits became more vivid and assured. This latest book offered several effective characterizations which captured reader and critical attention. Characterization was Deland's strongest quality. From the first book commentators always managed to find attractive characters, even when the reviewer severely disapproved of the work's theme. This novel received proportionally more praise for its characters than for any other aspect:

Mrs. Deland's characters are usually divided into two classes. Those in one class, with which she works out her ethical study; are typical and sharply drawn; others seem to be, indeed, living persons, human, uncertain, touched with the tenderness that we see when speaking of those near to us, and holding their own by virtue of those natural graces and weakness common to most of us...<sup>35</sup>

Although the major characters in the novel do represent specific sides in the divorce question, they are



also given distinct personalities that often manage to camouflage their thematic purpose very effectively. Cecil Shore, particularly, overcomes the limitations that convention places on her. She is clearly intended to be seen as shallow and unfeeling. Her selfishness is meant to distance the reader's sympathy. However, coupled with her self-centered nature are a sense of humor and, more importantly, a real understanding of herself and her position in her community. She can readily accept Carey's response to her sexuality. She coldly calculates how the community will judge her actions and has the strength of character to accept that judgment. Likewise Roger Carey outstrips the role of romantic hero by his attempts to reconcile his feelings for Alicia and Cecil. Both are believable emotional responses, and Carey's reactions stem from his confusion and his anger that he should have such feelings. Many of the minor figures, as well, are delineated with sharp, effective strokes. This brief scene illustrates Deland's ability to capture a personality:

"After the first reality of it [Alicia has just announced her engagement], Mrs. Drayton could not help glancing over Lyssie's head into the mirror. It was a pretty picture; the frail mother, with her delicate, pallid face; the girl kneeling at her feet; the flood of soft lamplight shining on the open pages of the Bible on the table" (PHW:164).

With Philip and His Wife Deland found the method and setting that would become her hallmarks. For the rest of her writing career, she shaped her fictions around individuals' moral and ethical dilemmas. Instead of confronting the cosmos, as Helen Ward and Sydney Lee did, the people in this novel must face themselves and their environment. Theoretical debates on religion, duty, and responsibility become grounded in the concrete experiences of Deland's characters because they must function in that public world. One cannot expect the greater community to direct its attention totally and continually toward the individual. As Philip Shore illustrates, idealism can remove the person from life. Because he is so concerned with proving that his right to divorce extends beyond social requirements, Philip loses even the people who sympathize with him. By the novel's end he has become even more selfish than Cecil as he wraps his decisions in moral certainty and truth.

Deland, in her fiction and non-fiction, constantly asserted that one must stay engaged with the everyday world: "For the fact is, feeling, unless it takes shape in action, is a pretty dangerous thing."<sup>36</sup> The Wards and Sydney Lee refused that engagement. They isolated themselves from all but minimum contact with others. Their self-sufficiency was compromised by that movement

toward martyrdom. Saints do not function well in the ordinary world, but not everyone can live at an extraordinary level. As Deland came into her literary maturity, she focused more often on the commonplace beauty and the unwittingly tragic experiences of her characters' lives, and in capturing this quality in her fiction Deland moved into the period of her greatest contemporary fame.



## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Independent 40 (18 August 1888): 10.
- <sup>2</sup> Catholic World 47 (July, 1888): 559-61.
- <sup>3</sup> Margaret Deland, Golden Yesterdays (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1941): 188. Subsequent references will be noted in the text.
- <sup>4</sup> Paul A. Carter, The Spiritual Crisis of the Gilded Age (Northern Illinois University Press, 1971) 81.
- <sup>5</sup> Cheryl Walker, The Nightingale's Burden: Women Poets and American Culture before 1900 (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1982) 120.
- <sup>6</sup> Margaret Deland, If This Be I as I Suppose It Be (New York: Appleton-Century, 1935) 193.
- <sup>7</sup> It is important to understand in the autobiographical volumes that Deland is recreating those moments of religious crisis. Her presentation is, of course, influenced by her already established ideas. There is little in-depth discussion of her search for something to fill the hole created by her repudiation of former belief. Most of the primary material gathered for this study, letters and articles, date from a time after Deland's experience and speak of religious issues from a fully developed view.
- <sup>8</sup> Margaret Deland, "Individualism and Social Responsibility," Independent 53 (23 May 1901): 1172-74.
- <sup>9</sup> Margaret Deland, John Ward, Preacher (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1888) 4. Subsequent references will be noted in text.
- <sup>10</sup> Literary News 9 (12 May 1888): 153.
- <sup>11</sup> Droch, review of John Ward, Preacher, Life 11 (3 May 1888): 250-52.
- <sup>12</sup> This composite is drawn from Herbert Ross Brown's The Sentimental Novel in America, 1790-1860 (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940); Margaret Maison, The Victorian Vision: Studies in the Religious Novel (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961); Frank L. Mott, Golden Multitudes: The

Study of the Bestsellers in the United States (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947).

<sup>13</sup> Margaret Deland, letter to Louise Chandler Moulton, 3 July 1888. Louise Chandler Moulton Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>14</sup> Margaret Deland, letter to Madelaine Poindexter, 7 July 1899. Romaine Poindexter Family Letters, Huntingdon Library, California.

<sup>15</sup> Margaret Deland, outline of Sydney, undated. Margaret Deland Letters, University of Virginia.

<sup>16</sup> Margaret Deland, Sydney (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1890) 248. Subsequent references will be noted in text.

<sup>17</sup> Margaret Deland, "Acquaintance with Grief," in The Common Way (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1904) 151.

<sup>18</sup> William Payne, review of Sydney, Dial 11 (December 1890): 240.

<sup>19</sup> Literary World 21 (8 November 1890): 394.

<sup>20</sup> Margaret Deland, letter to Mr. Gilder, undated. Margaret Deland Letters, University of Virginia.

<sup>21</sup> Catholic World 52 (December 1890): 443-446.

<sup>22</sup> Overland Monthly, second series 17 (June 1891): 662.

<sup>23</sup> Margaret Deland, letter to Louise Chandler Moulton, 15 December 1890.

<sup>24</sup> Margaret Deland, letter to Madelaine Poindexter, 5 December 1892.

<sup>25</sup> Margaret Deland, "Concerning Church-Going," in The Common Way 122.

<sup>26</sup> Saturday Review (London), review of The Story of a Child 75 (25 February 1893): 211.

<sup>27</sup> Margaret Deland, letter to Madelaine Poindexter, undated.

<sup>28</sup> Margaret Deland, Philip and His Wife (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1894) title page. Subsequent references will be noted in text.

- 29 Critic 25 (17 November 1894): 325.
- 30 A dated survey of this specialized fiction can be found in James Harewood Bennett, Divorce and the American Divorce Novel, 1858-1937: A Study in Literary Reflections of Social Influences (New York: Russell and Russell, 1939).
- 31 Margaret Deland, letter to Louise Chandler Moulton, 11 December 1894.
- 32 Nation 61 (3 October 1894): 243 presents a typical negative response; Dial 18 (1 May 1895): 272 a typical positive response.
- 33 Margaret Deland, "The Novel with a Purpose," Independent 51 (20 April 1899): 1067.
- 34 This statement appears on the front endpaper of a special edition of Deland's The Awakening of Helena Richie (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1906) written in Deland's own hand and dated 4 March 1910.
- 35 Literary World 25 (15 December 1894): 445.
- 36 Margaret Deland, letter to Madelaine Poindexter, 25 January 1904.



## FAME

No; I don't believe that it is good art, or true humanity, to portray nothing but wickedness, for, thank the Lord, we are none of us wholly wicked! -- any more than we are wholly good.

Margaret Deland to Madelaine Poindexter  
13 January 1906

John Ward, Freacher made Margaret Deland infamous; Old Chester Tales made her famous. Old Chester and its environs helped establish Deland's reputation with critics and readers. She moved from the position of being "tormented with philanthropy" to "hav[ing] a permanent place in our literature."<sup>1</sup> During the next eighteen years Deland's standing was further enhanced as she became the subject of greater critical study beyond the reviews of her fiction. To understand the reasons this village had such an appeal for her audience, it is necessary to place Deland's creation within its social and emotional contexts. Simple nostalgia does not fully explain the attraction Old Chester had for its readers. By examining Deland's use of this particular setting and the characters with which she filled it, one can reach a better sense of Old Chester's strong hold on popular and critical enjoyment and approval.

The village first emerged as a setting already fairly well-established in Deland's short story, "Mr. Tommy Dove." Deland's model for this favorite setting came from her own background:

The setting of all these stories was a Pennsylvania village, which somehow made me think of Manchester, a place near Maple Grove [Deland's childhood home]. But I couldn't use

that name because some of the characters might suggest people I had known. So I dropped the "Man" and used "old" instead.<sup>2</sup>

While Old Chester seemed to have emerged fully developed from Deland's imagination, the little village underwent several small but important adaptations that added greater detail and credibility to its make-up. Also important for the village's hold on the public's interest was Deland's incorporation and elaboration of a clearly developed moral philosophy and vision. Both these factors, physical believability and explicit ethical standards, insured Old Chester's continued appeal for the early twentieth century audience.

With each successive work placed in Old Chester, Deland put increasing emphasis on the background of the action. The main characters and their concerns were no longer isolated from the scene. Less time was devoted to long sections of introspection by one or more characters, such as was found in Philip and His Wife or Sydney. Rather, Deland returned the main action to its social context -- so much so that it became difficult to talk of a story or character without treating Old Chester itself as well. Each new presentation of Old Chester filled in the personal and public histories of the town and its people. Old events were referred to and became the town's



markers of time and change, while new details gave recurring characters more fully developed personalities. The most dramatic quality Deland gave her village was the establishment of its real physical presence. Old Chester made a claim on the reader's imagination through Deland's portraiture and scene painting. As the number of Old Chester stories increased, more and more people were attracted by the overall serenity and continuity the village offered.

The genesis of Old Chester is easy to trace in Deland's writing. From the first, Deland chose a small and insular community in which to work out her thematic focus. In John Ward, Preacher this setting, named Ashurst, was situated in western Pennsylvania. Many reviewers, despite Deland's explicit placement of her story, categorized her characters and scene as typically New England, and only when several articles discussed Deland's own background was the mistake corrected.<sup>3</sup> Ashurst is described on the novel's first page as a place that

prided itself upon being half asleep. The rush and life of newer places had a certain vulgarity; haste was undignified; it was almost ill-bred, and the most striking thing about the village, resting at the feet of its low green

hills, was its atmosphere of leisure and  
repose.<sup>4</sup>

The pattern for Old Chester is already firmly set. Very few modifications of the basic make-up of Old Chester appeared as it became Deland's preferred setting.

From these few lines a clear sense of Ashurst society comes through. The characters inhabit a carefully defined social environment -- conservative, cultivated, genteel. The Howes, the Draytons, the Dales, the Woodhouses, and the Denners share an outlook and way of responding to the world. Their professions -- rectors, lawyers, unspecified but acceptable business dealings -- allow them the income and leisure to pursue other interests. No Ashurst inhabitants work seriously at their professions, for their incomes are sufficient to satisfy their particular needs. Social custom and sanctions govern how Ashurst conducts itself in its relations among its people and with the world. When intrusions, whether of people or ideas, enter this sphere, they are tested against these traditions. When Helen returns to Ashurst after having been repudiated by Ward, her family and friends react with horror at the breach of manners and propriety (JWP:402-05). Outsiders are treated suspiciously until they show themselves as products and adherents of the same social background: the Forsythes, who have visited Ashurst for

the past fifteen years, still do not belong because of seemingly slight deviations from these rigid standards. Mrs. Forsythe makes a little too much show of her wealth and exhibits small exaggerations of behavior not quite suitable to Ashurst, and her son's manners have also been harmed by exposure to outside influences. The world of Ashurst is set against Lockhaven in the novel. The latter is a village of laborers and excesses. Life and the people are rough and unmannered. Deland draws both villages in rather extreme detail to emphasize thematic and character contrasts. Both pictures, as a result, become unbalanced: Ashurst, the picture of refinement and gentility; Lockhaven, more elemental and passionate. As Deland turned to Old Chester, these conflicting portraits merged and a more credible image resulted.

What facilitated Deland's reworking of Ashurst seemed to be a change in the scope of her stories. The first novels dealt with complex religious issues, including discussions on the existence of God, the purpose of belief, how mankind could reconcile doubt and faith, what happens to the individual at the point of death. Such topics easily pulled the narrative into a dissertation, the characters into abstractions. Comments like these constantly appeared in the reviews of the novels. Whatever the overall opinion of the review, however, a



recurring notice of the secondary characters and their concerns appeared. For many critics these minor figures alleviated the complicated struggles of the dominant story.<sup>5</sup> The more personal stories of Lois Howe and Gifford Woodhouse, John Paul and Katherine Townsend, Susan Carr and Alicia Drayton contrasted with and complemented the Wards', Sydney and Alan's, and the Shores' tragedies. What reviewers praised in the subplots was the simplicity of Deland's treatment. Over and over they applauded the believable characterizations and situations. Deland's strength was her "gentle observation of everyday life."<sup>6</sup> Without her new concentration on this aspect of her fiction, Deland's subsequent work might not have garnered the consistent public and critical approval that it did.

In each of the previous novels the secondary stories are free from the all-encompassing concerns of the main plots; minor characters do not immerse themselves so completely in the great debates of belief, God, or death. Their attention stays in the everyday world of personal relations and experience. It is not that they are ignorant of the greater issues, but that they do not see how such ideas influence daily behavior. The minor actors deal with the ordinary problems of the here and now. Social responsibility and community approbation dominate their private concerns and public behavior. Every social

event -- engagements, parties, sewing circles -- is directed according to very particular notions of propriety. When the Ladies Sewing Society meets at Mrs. Drayton's, for example, certain topics are discussed only when Alicia is out of hearing. Engagements become public as well as private events, with family and friends balancing chaperoning and allowing the couple private time. The critical praise of these secondary stories could not have gone unnoticed by Deland; in fact, the first short stories illustrated Deland's growing awareness of the potential of such refocused environments. "Mr. Tommy Dove" and "A Fourth-Class Appointment" emphasize the impact of the enclosed space on its inhabitants. Because they are integral parts of Old Chester and Pennyville, Tommy Dove and Amanda Gedge resolve their dilemmas in the ways they do. In a short autobiographical article written during the period these stories and The Story of a Child were composed, Deland articulated the impetus for her best known fictions:

Not the prominent events; not the catastrophes nor the very great pleasures, not the journeys nor the deprivations, but the commonplace of everyday life determine what a child shall do--; and still more positively determine what a child shall be.<sup>7</sup>

Although these words are focused on Ellen Dale's experiences, Deland applied this source of story and character to her Old Chester narratives, and their success indicated the marketability of Deland's creative decision.

Altering the range of her fictional worlds did not limit Deland's choice or treatment of characters and their concerns. The primary advantage of a narrower field lay in the opportunities it created for a more careful examination of personality and events. Individual actors received fuller presentation. Mentioned in passing in one story, they became the major focus in later ones. Incidents mentioned briefly were more fully told in successive episodes. This interweaving of past and present history actually allowed Deland a better chance to develop her particular thematic intentions. The village acquired a complex web of relationships that changed as new circumstances entered the situation. This compression also enabled Deland to build characters who revealed deep connections to the village and to one another. While they were confined by their time and place, many of Old Chester's inhabitants were not prisoners to them. When circumstances warranted, most were capable of accepting differing views, within reasonable limits. Not everyone in Old Chester, of course, was able or willing to compromise his or her standards to new situations.



Deland incorporated this rigidity into many plots, for such figures added to Old Chester's reality. In such a place there would be a similar antagonism between tradition and change.

Deland recognized that the world changes, irrevocably altering the values and morals from one generation to the next:

How dreadfully complex life is, and yet I suppose that is why it is so interesting. Indeed, I have never found it more interesting to be alive than now. I think with advancing years I appreciate beauty more, so that all of this living world is a joy to me; and I think I love character better with each year...<sup>8</sup>

Confrontations between custom and modern ideas constantly formed the action of the Old Chester stories. Frequently, but not always, the conflict centered on generational clashes -- sons against fathers, daughters against mothers. Deland's comments on such generational differences appeared in non-fictional form as well as in the stories. Conflicts were inevitable because one generation's "ideals are not in harmony with the methods and manners and moods of the day."<sup>9</sup> However, Deland refused to see tragedy as the only result of such confrontations. Children will always disagree and nothing

can change that relation. But Deland believed that one must hold on to a core of moral value and behavior because:

if honest with ourselves and our young people, the changes about which we worry ourselves are superficial; the real and fundamental things, the things that mean character, are eternal. It is only their expression which has altered ... Admit! We differ upon a hundred points -- but they are all minor points; in essentials we can meet the children if we will take the trouble to do so.<sup>10</sup>

In *Old Chester* the generations met and strained but rarely broke. The stories assured the reader that there did exist a basic set of standards by which one could judge one's self and others. While it was possible to see this fiction supporting what Henry May calls a "Maginot psychology," the overwhelming contemporary popular response to Deland's affirmation of the ideal American vision offered a credible gauge of how deeply entrenched this image was at the turn of the century.<sup>11</sup>

With *Old Chester* Deland discovered a way to embody this ideal, and she also found an audience receptive to her belief in a novel's power to influence behavior. The public's response to the early novels had been

predominantly negative. While she gained readers and increased sales, Deland was viewed as exerting a harmful influence. Her books advocated extreme and radical models of behavior. She had denied the value of established religion, refused to accept the sanctity of marriage, scorned the idea of redemption and heaven. However, the attraction of Old Chester was powerful enough to overcome the public's previous antagonisms. What Deland achieved in the Old Chester stories was a reworking of the ideas found in the first novels. The individual, who was the dominant focus of the first books, must accommodate the self to the community's standards. Deland did not deny the importance of personal ideals or actions, but contended that when an individual sacrificed the greater society for private gratification, only tragedy could result.

Deland advocated through Old Chester and its people the striking of a balance between public and private needs, traditional and modern standards. Compromise did not weaken the person who must make the required adjustments. Instead one discovered what was valuable in opposing forms and created a new course of action. Often those characters who refused to believe in or accept the opportunity and value in choice found their lives further confined. To be locked in the past or future diminished a



person's ability to confront the problems of daily living. Stasis, whether emotional or social, was something to be shunned whenever possible. Deland, however, was not criticizing stability.

A firm ethical base, one that was influenced by internal and external beliefs, remained a vital factor in Deland's scheme of things. She also accepted and encouraged the challenging of traditional views by newer ones. Without such testing, Deland implied in the Old Chester stories the basic concepts of life could become lost or invalidated. Confrontation would not lessen the worth of a social core of ideas and actions, and, as the stories about Old Chester's inhabitants revealed, these basic virtues, if maintained through faith and honesty, continued despite the constant shifting in the wider society. This was the tension lying beneath Old Chester, and this helped explain the intensity of the public's response to Deland's little town and its vision of the way the world worked.

Old Chester's people and their lives were chronicled in four short story collections: Old Chester Tales (1899), Dr. Lavendar's People (1903), Around Old Chester (1915), and New Friends in Old Chester (1923). Deland utilized Old Chester as the setting for two novels as well -- The Awakening of Helena Richie (1906) and The Keys (1923).

As the publication dates clearly indicate, Deland gave her full attention to the delineation of the lives and affairs of her small town for the largest portion of her active literary career. While the last novel shares this setting, The Keys will be treated more fully in the next chapter because its thematic emphasis is more closely related to issues discussed there. However, Deland did not restrict her creativity only to Old Chester. In the decade before the First World War Deland produced another volume of stories, R.J.'s Mother and Some Other People (1908), plus two novelettes, The Way to Peace (1910) and The Hands of Esau (1914). In addition to this extensive body of fiction, Deland wrote a substantial number of non-fictional pieces on a variety of topics. Many of these occasional pieces elaborated certain of her ideas about the need to achieve a sense of proportion when confronted by a changing world. A large number presented Deland's comments and responses to women's changing position in society; some pieces dealt specifically with issues like suffrage and work; others addressed broader and often moral aspects of women's new place and their accompanying ethical responsibilities. Even her passion for flowers and gardening found expression in print during the years before the First World War. When one considers the demands made by Deland's social life and charitable

obligations, the extent of her literary production is incredible. Given her revision practices as well, the consistent level of artistry and craft strikes one as even more impressive.

Deland's convictions and her adherence to them appeared in fictional and non-fictional forms. In fact, the essays and stories reflected, supported, and amplified one another.<sup>12</sup> Such reinforcement appeared frequently throughout Deland's non-fictional work in these years. The core message remained unchanged -- we are responsible not only to ourselves but to our world, and she used the fiction to illustrate its application in all areas of an individual's life. Her reiteration of key themes in the essays gave an additional impact to the fiction. Deland carefully controlled the public image projected by these pieces as she controlled what was published of her private life. One could easily dismiss such manipulation as a way of protecting her market value, but her sincere belief in the impact a novel had on its reader motivated her attempts to help her audience direct that response into positive actions:

I have a theory that skepticism, which is so characteristic of our day, gives much pain to those who do not share it, and have an idea that it might be well to point out the hope that



there is behind the pain of transition.<sup>13</sup>

Whatever the intention behind the composing of the essays, however, Deland focused her considerable creative power on stories and novels. The essays were "fleeting, evanescent, ethical suggestion; that was all. But there was no art about them, and no possibility of permanence."<sup>14</sup> Understanding Old Chester, then, becomes the best means to discover how Deland reconciled her ethical standards and literary demands. Understanding Old Chester also allows a modern reader to discover why Deland's contemporary audience reacted so strongly to her creation.

Ashurst, although similar in make-up and outlook to Old Chester, failed somehow to satisfy Deland's particular fictional requirements, perhaps because the small village was too insular, the characters too firmly drawn. Deland chose to develop a new setting. Deland's explicit reasons for discarding the one locale for the other are so far undiscovered, but that the villages were separate entities is clear from references to Ashurst in Sydney, which is set in Mercer, and Philip and His Wife, which is set in Old Chester.<sup>15</sup> It was during the two years before the latter novel's 1894 publication that Deland firmly established Old Chester's basic outline. Between 1892 and 1894 she produced "Mr. Tommy Dove" and The Story of a

Child, as well as Philip and His Wife, all sharing the same scene.<sup>16</sup> Whatever memories Deland brought into play while working on these three pieces, she found in them a setting flexible enough to provide a credible backdrop to her thematic interests.

The development of Old Chester from its first mention to a full-scale environment can be easily traced. In "Mr. Tommy Dove" Old Chester is simply the name of the setting. There is little time given to descriptions of the village or its people. The sense of the village's individual and concrete reality has not been established. Old Chester is, in this story, more a generic backdrop. Deland keeps the action focused on a small group of characters, Tommy Dove and the Temples. She does not break the narrative with reminiscences of other people and events, as she does in later Old Chester stories. These intrusions, in fact, become a hallmark of the Old Chester tales, and their presence adds to the village's credibility by creating a complex web of familial and situational relationships. The third person omniscient narrative voice in "Mr. Tommy Dove" reflects the straightforward and closed plot situation. In later stories this narrative voice changes dramatically, taking on a complete identity that becomes an integral part of the situation. This Old Chester could have easily been discarded in its turn, but

there are hints and possibilities present in "Mr. Tommy Dove" that indicate the town's potential for becoming Deland's preferred setting.

"Mr. Tommy Dove" introduces several important features of Old Chester's environment. These aspects, however, reflect matters of atmosphere and emotional currents rather than any physical quality. From the first, Deland removes her village from too close a contact with the world of progress and industry. Old Chester's most conspicuous feature is its sense of seclusion and harmony:

The apothecary shop in Old Chester stood a little back from the street. There was a garden in front of it, but the fence which inclosed it was broken in places, so that an envious hand, had any such been known in Old Chester, could easily have broken off a cluster of cinnamon roses, or grasped a stately stem of tall white lilies.<sup>17</sup>

Habit and tradition govern the thought and actions of the little town's inhabitants, and the pace of living is leisurely and comfortable. Change, when it intrudes, occurs so slowly that the effect is settled even before anyone notices a difference.

Deland illustrates this gradual process by detailing



the small physical alterations in Old Chester houses, images that recur frequently in later stories. Houses and rooms also reflect a character's emotional or psychological state. Using the details of a room, Deland indicates a character's response to events and provides clues to that person's eventual decisions. Tommy Dove, after being shunned by Henry Temple for presuming to address his affections to Jane Temple, opens the long closed parlor in his house:

The furniture was stiff and clumsy. There were engravings upon the walls of celebrated persons in their libraries and a print of Henry Clay's deathbed, suitably framed in a wiry imitation of crape. A yellowing cast of little Samuel knelt in one corner, and some faded family photographs of not attractive people hung in a high row above the black mantel, on which was a large conchshell, whose curving red lips held a bunch of dried grass and certain silky white seed-pods ... How had he dared to dream that he might ask Henry Temple's sister to come to such a home.

(MTD:43-44)

The difference between this house and "the great house at the other end of the village" helps explain Mr. Tommy's retreat from his home and Old Chester itself.

Like Tommy Dove, Jane Temple's environment shapes her character and determines her response. The Temple home reflects an entirely separate social class with its accompanying codes of behavior and expectations for its members:

The library was such a pleasant room. ...The window on the south side had a broad, leather-cushioned seat. ...The windows were open and the soft June air and the climbing roses came in together from the moonlit night. The walls were lined with books, and in the corners were racks for fishing-rods; a pair of spurs had been thrown down upon a table littered with papers and letters and bits of unfinished fancywork.

(MTD:14)

Shaped by such contrasting environments, neither Jane Temple nor Tommy Dove can step far from these boundaries, although both wish to. Given this wide gulf Tommy Dove sees no choice but to leave Old Chester.

Other facets of Old Chester's atmosphere appear in "Mr. Tommy Dove" for the first time. Clear class distinctions are made in this story. There are those with the proper background and financial security to pursue other activities and those without such benefits. These social distinctions will be used in humorous and serious

situations in later Old Chester stories. Deland will play one social set against another and assert the notion that class cannot always determine character. Often in the later Old Chester stories Deland downplays the class differences among the inhabitants. Recurring characters share attitudes and beliefs which become a more important factor in judging their actions.

While the story is named after the main male character, "Mr. Tommy Dove" describes Jane Temple's situation as fully as Tommy Dove's. The influences on women's lives is a central issue in Deland's Old Chester stories. Many of them concentrate on female characters and experience. In this first story Jane Temple is regarded as little more than a family convenience: "...really Janey is a great help, you have no idea how much, in a small way, she relieves me." (MTD:15) Since the running of the entire household is in Jane's control, these words, spoken by her sister-in-law, are ironic. Jane's brother condescends to her, hardly paying her any attention until she makes modest efforts to satisfy her own desires: "...Janey hasn't any mind, particularly, but she is a very good sort of person to depend upon." A shy and feeling woman, Jane Temple cannot easily break out of this restricting household. Playing on her sense of family, the other Temples prevent Jane from developing any independent



life. In later Old Chester tales, Deland will create female characters who are capable of breaking such bonds if necessary and women who compromise their desires with these external definitions to maintain their lives. The changing social position of women appears regularly in the Old Chester stories, as younger women characters must put new realities against Old Chester traditions.

Finally, Tommy Dove is the first of a long line of characters who come to some understanding that they have reached a crisis point in their lives: "He did not understand the pang of regret for an unfelt sorrow, the human claim for the human experience; he only knew vaguely that there was missing some richness in his life, and there was always the effort to drive his thoughts back to his own loneliness" (MTD:3). These characters will respond to this feeling with hope or despair, strength or weakness, success or failure, according to the personality Deland has shaped for them.

Deland's handling of the technical aspects of these stories improved as she continued to focus her writing skills on them. Certain mechanical features found in "Mr. Tommy Dove" established a basic pattern for later stories. This is only one of a surprisingly few stories that ends unhappily: Tommy Dove and Jane Temple cannot overcome their shyness and other constraints, and they are

separated at the tale's ending. The majority of the Old Chester stories close with an affirmative resolution of the main characters' dilemmas. Because the narrative voice here remains omniscient, the humor in "Mr. Tommy Dove" is very quiet. The story's tone is more bittersweet and distant. Later stories, where the narrator assumes a distinct personality, exhibit a broader, more clearly played sense of humor. The humor is also more often incorporated into the story itself, particularly through the personality of Dr. Lavendar. Deland's humor also takes various forms. She points out amusing contrasts of character and situation, offers sharp ironic comments on the various factors influencing an event, includes satiric portraits of changing social customs. The community becomes more and more a vital component of the later stories. Other townspeople, their comments and reactions, are as necessary to a tale's impact as the main storyline itself. In "Mr. Tommy Dove" Deland keeps the reader's attention firmly fixed on Tommy Dove and the Temples. Although Deland's main interest in the Old Chester stories is the delineation of her moral vision, in "Mr. Tommy Dove" she keeps the story straightforward. No deeper purpose underlies the thwarted romance of the main characters. Later stories will often blend narrative and thematic strands and intensify the emotional impact.

The one technical aspect that Deland does not alter in any major way is the structuring of her stories. The basic development of "Mr. Tommy Dove" is duplicated in most of the succeeding Old Chester stories. Since these are fairly long pieces (the average story length is fifty pages), Deland breaks their development into sections. Each section highlights one of the characters, focuses on a narrow moment or event, or relates events simultaneous to those in the previous section. In this first Old Chester story the chronology of events is kept strictly under control, and the focus is always on the major actors. Eventually Deland will interrupt this pattern, interjecting the comments of secondary characters, filling in the background to some brief episode, or the like. Usually the opening and closing sections act as the frame for particular events portrayed in the later stories. The narrator often steps forward boldly to set the stage by contrasting current with past situations or providing some background context for the action. In the final section the narrator again takes control to summarize events beyond the scope of the story and to relate comments from the whole community. The one conspicuously absent factor in "Mr. Tommy Dove" is a specific sense of time. No clue is provided to date events. What time references do appear -- Tommy Dove's mother has been dead a year, eight



years have passed since the Temples' last visit to Old Chester -- give no hint as to the historical time. The later Old Chester stories have a clear time frame. Deland accomplishes this through constant references to other stories and characters, having the narrator comment on the changes evident in Old Chester since her childhood there, and using major actual events like the Civil War as reference points. These clues enable the reader to contain the tales within roughly a fifteen-year period during the last half of the nineteenth century. Although slight discrepancies occur among the stories, the general time frame remains secure.

Deland obviously found great dramatic possibilities in such a setting and limited set of characters, and discovered a style of development and presentation that offered form and freedom. Clearly, too, the straightforward issues and treatments in the Old Chester stories helped attract a large and approving public: "...because the story was entirely 'ladylike' Papa had approved of it. It was published in the Atlantic, and people said it was 'pretty' -- so for the first time, nobody called me names" (GY:315).<sup>18</sup> Deland later took what "Mr. Tommy Dove" intimated and expanded it into a fully realized community that offered early twentieth century readers a lingering vision and experience of the

idealized American past. To establish this image Deland turned the generic background of this story into a believable, practical environment. Beginning with The Story of a Child and carrying through every other Old Chester story, Deland carefully erected the village that one review affirmed was "as real as many more favored communities."<sup>19</sup>

Deland's first move in enhancing Old Chester's value was to create the community's shared physical and emotional climate:

Old Chester is a hundred years behind the times; so, at least, it is assured by its sons and daughters, who have left it to live in the great world, but who come back, sometimes, for condescending visits to old homes. The town lies among the rolling hills of western Pennsylvania; -- hills which have never echoed with the screams of the locomotive, but are folded in a beautiful green silence, broken only by the silken ripple of little streams which run across the meadows or through the dappled shadows of the woods.<sup>20</sup>

This description suggests Old Chester's connection to those versions of the American landscape and past which Leo Marx calls "a society of the middle landscape, a rural

nation exhibiting a happy balance of art and nature."<sup>21</sup> However, Deland avoided the contradictions contained within this landscape, its tenuous pause between stagnation and progress, by refusing to admit the trappings of modern life into Old Chester's environs. When they must be allowed, Old Chester carefully controls how much to admit and how far their intrusion will extend:

There is not much variety in Old Chester. The houses are built in very much the same way...The people are as much alike as their houses; they read the same books, go to the same church, train their children by the same rules, and are equally polite, reserved and gently critical of one another. (TSC:11-12)

Old Chester is a closed community, admitting only those who adhere to a pattern of feeling and action rooted in long-standing tradition. By providing Old Chester with such a moral and social history, Deland enables its people to exist in the changing world. When confronted by new methods or ideas, Old Chester judges them against an already tested set of criteria. Deland further protects the integrity of her village by placing the stories far enough in the past so that its values are able to battle these intrusions successfully. Deland, however, keeps the stories' situations and people close enough to her



contemporary readers so that the audience can still find points of similarity between the characters and their behavior. Old Chester may be quaint and charming, but it also confronts important ideas and actions. Because it is protected by time and place, the village offers its audience a glimpse of an idealized memory. Even contemporary reviews commented on these implications:

Old Chester in its completeness stands for the leisurely, dignified, self-respecting life of the country town as it used to be. It stands for the old school of manners and of thought. We have changed all that and perhaps improved it, but we have not yet succeeded in forming characters which have, even for ourselves, the sweetness and attractiveness of those produced under the old regime.<sup>22</sup>

In The Story of a Child Deland began to intertwine past and present stories, a technique that she continued to utilize throughout the Old Chester tales. While this novel focused on Ellen Dale, the romance of Tommy Dove and Jane Temple was picked up and completed. In fact, through the friendship of Ellen and Effie Temple, Deland brings the two stories into constant contact. Where "Mr. Tommy Dove" dealt with a very limited area and cast of characters, Deland opens this story to include the entire

village. In the first chapter the reader is introduced to several figures who will become recurring characters in the Old Chester stories -- the Dales, the Wrights, the Kings, the Draytons. Deland also allows these people to speak, and their sentiments embody the basic Old Chester beliefs and act as the measure for the major actors' current behavior:

"Her life in her brother's family can't be very happy," said Mrs. Wright; "her sister-in-law is such a wretched invalid that she, poor dear, has to give herself up to the housekeeping and to those two children. She ought to have a home of her own; of course she would be lonely, but an unmarried woman must expect to be lonely." ...  
"Yes," Mrs. Dale admitted briefly, and then added, "but it is better to be lonely than to wish to be alone. If she had married a man so different from herself, she might have come to that." (TSC:4-5)

The social fabric of Old Chester expands to include a full sense of a working self-sufficient village, Servants, tradespeople, and the other necessary figures that supply Old Chester's services and links to Mercer and beyond first appear in The Story of a Child. This more complete range of communal and social interaction marks a great

leap from Deland's Ashurst, which seems more like a fairy tale setting. Ashurst contains none of these secondary factors. The people move within tightly confined circles, isolated from any outside influence. Such isolation rarely appears in Old Chester. Characters and their stories continually intersect, influencing events beyond any original intention. Few things happen in Old Chester that fail to become common knowledge. The entire village knows of Tommy Dove's previous attentions to Jane Temple, and the Temples' return to Old Chester naturally brings the story back into community discussion. Even though Jane and Tommy have become a center of interest, they are never treated viciously by Old Chester. Mrs. Wright, Mrs. Dale, and others gossip about the event, but they show curiosity, surprise, and concern for both. Old Chester does not repudiate them because Tommy and Jane are products of the same heritage that shaped Old Chester itself. Even Ellen Dale knows the story of Jane Temple's romance, and she becomes the unknowing link to Tommy Dove's second and successful claim on Jane's affections.

The soundness of its beliefs and habits is unquestioned by Old Chester: "It being a peculiarity of Old Chester to believe that an overruling Providence agreed with it in questions of desert" (TSC:13). A certain smugness clearly comes through such an attitude, yet the characters who



have been shaped by its ideas offer proof that Old Chester was right to adhere to these tried methods. The child Ellen and the adult Jane receive encouragements, advice, and admonitions that are very similar. Products of the same environment, Ellen and Jane represent, in many ways, the raw material and finished product of Old Chester rearing:

In Old Chester young persons are supposed to be seen, and not heard; they are taught that when they have the privilege of being in the company of their elders and betters it is to profit by example, and be grateful for advice. (TSC:12)

Such a regime does seem restrictive and cold, and Ellen, feeling unwanted by her grandmother, runs away. However, outside Old Chester is a world of strangers, barking dogs, and unknown places. Although Mrs. Dale insists that Ellen curb her enthusiasms, the latter enjoys a vivid imaginative life -- devising ceremonies for a Chinese figurine, conjuring scenes of daring rescues, digging for Indian tomahawks and treasure. Ellen is surrounded by a large circle of friends who share her games and rules and also by concerned and feeling adults who protect as well as punish, respect as well as reprimand.

Jane Temple carries this heritage of criticism and care into adulthood. This does not make her naive: "She knew

more of the great, indifferent, vulgar world than Mrs. Dale ever dreamed of, but she cast down her eyes unaffectedly when the older woman apologized for speaking of the misconduct of a village girl" (TSC:18). However, such an upbringing does influence Jane Temple's way of responding to the world. While Old Chester is proud of its firm hand in shaping its children, that shaping is difficult to alter. Often one's private desires are thwarted because of allegiance to this code of behavior. Jane Temple appears caught in this tension in The Story of a Child. She manages to overcome this negative influence when she discovers, through a series of brief sudden insights that "I have a right to my own life" (TSC:116). This realization enables Jane to realign the impact of Old Chester expectations on her life. Once she decides for her own happiness, Jane Temple reconciles her past and future. Her act is not one of desperation, as Ellen's running away is; rather it is one of discovery: "She was defending him; how sweet it was to defend him! Never mind if she would not see him again, if he never knew that she cared. She did care, and that was happiness enough" (TSC:116). Not surprisingly Jane Temple must come back to Old Chester to challenge its influence; it is only when faced with the rigid complacency of Old Chester expectations that she realizes her own strengths. Having

proved her right to a personal identity and happiness, Jane Temple will require a new recognition from Old Chester, and as later stories tell, Mrs. Dove is readily welcomed into the community.

Having developed a fully realized community, Deland clearly took advantage of her creation during the writing of Philip and His Wife. With the two novels appearing in print so close together (1893/1894), Deland must have presumed enough audience familiarity to leave Old Chester firmly in the background of the second book. The ethical and moral problems of Philip and His Wife overshadow the inhabitants' own concerns. Old Chester here is used by Deland to highlight the contrasts of personality and experience the Shores represent. Although both Philip and Cecil Shore were born and raised in Old Chester, they have moved far beyond the confines of its views. This great disparity in experience transforms Old Chester from an influence into a simple commentator on the Shores' actions:

In spite of Mrs. Drayton's cautious confidences, by the Thursday that the Sewing Society met, everybody looked pitifully or critically at Lyssie, as chanced to be their disposition; and sighed or shook their heads, and said, "Isn't it dreadful about Cecil? Oh, it is a great grief



to us all!"

But Old Chester went to the Sewing Society with an eagerness which the preparation of the wardrobe of a missionary's wife had never aroused.<sup>23</sup>

Cecil and Philip regard Old Chester as a backward community. They take no comfort in their brief return. Unlike Jane Temple, the Shores' return brings the problems in their married life to their crisis point. Old Chester does not, and perhaps cannot, heal the deep rift in their relationship.

Relegated firmly to a secondary position, Old Chester is used to reflect the novel's major theme of marriage and separation. Two Old Chester women, Alicia Drayton and Susan Carr, move through very different courtships into marriage, and only in Alicia's affair is Old Chester able to participate, mainly because of her age and inexperience in handling such intrusions:

Old Chester grew quite wide awake over Alicia Drayton's engagement. There had been no such sensation since Miss Jane Temple married beneath her and found happiness and content in the home of the village apothecary. Of course Lyssie's romance could not compare in interest to Miss Temple's; it did not have in it anything of

which Old Chester could disapprove... (PHW:116)

Such instances of narrative comment appear infrequently in the novel, as Deland concentrates her energy on the main issues which the story presents. In later stories Old Chester's reactions to the major events are more intimately connected to the development and outcome of particular situations.

What Philip and His Wife added to the history of Old Chester were small details that further elaborated its social context. As the above quotation shows, Deland created a link between the previous Old Chester stories and the present one by the reference to Jane Temple. Not only does her story offer another contrast to the Shores' failing marriage, but it also becomes one of the village's key indicators of time or of changing attitudes. Several later Old Chester stories use the Dove marriage as a starting reference to place the events related in the particular tale. Deland eventually created several such markers that confine the entire Old Chester opus within clear-cut time limits. She further linked Philip and His Wife to past works by using characters and places presented in earlier books -- the Ashurst Draytons and Gifford Woodhouse from John Ward, Preacher are mentioned; Eliza and Job Todd have come to Old Chester from Mercer and are the same Todds from Sydney; Sydney is also

represented by Mrs. Fendleton's connection to the Townsends, recalling Katherine Townsend from the second novel. Deland drew this circle of acquaintance and relationship very close in this novel, and this web of connection spread into subsequent Old Chester stories. Old Chester's physical reality was also reinforced by the references to Ashurst and Mercer. Deland filled in details of space and place. Several stagecoach journeys, including accurate scenic details are described in Philip and His Wife. By affirming the village's geographic reality, Deland's Old Chester exerted a stronger hold on the reader's imagination. The most important addition to Old Chester was the introduction of a new character -- Dr. James Lavendar, the village pastor. His creation indicated a change in the emphasis Deland incorporated in her Old Chester stories. As Deland's moral purpose deepened, Dr. Lavendar became the spokesman through which her ideas were articulated.

Old Chester was not Deland's only creative focus during the 1890s. She worked concurrently on other short stories completely removed from the Old Chester setting and moral vision. Deland continued to present her particular ethical ideas in these stories, which appeared in the same collection as "Mr. Tommy Dove" and in a second



collection, The Wisdom of Fools (1897), but the emphasis differed. The critical response to these stories completely indicated the public's preference for the message to be more carefully worked into the fiction:

Glimpses of suggestive surroundings and descriptions of limp scenery serve to heighten the bad taste of the whole book ... The craving for the "problem" is insatiable. Mrs. Deland has learned that. She has, on that account, taken advantage almost cruel of the innocent public. ...She sees these tangles with appalling vividness, almost with a flippant triviality that suggests familiarity, but she goes no further.<sup>24</sup>

The hostility to Deland's refusal to provide a positive resolution in these stories must have helped push her to concentrate on Old Chester. For the next twenty years she placed her work exclusively there, and in doing so earned nothing but praise from critics and readers alike for being "one of that small band of American authors gifted with very considerable power as writers of fiction and more especially of fiction as exemplified in the short story."<sup>25</sup>

With the public's approval Deland produced an extensive body of twenty-four stories. In them she

continued to illustrate and defend her belief that

as we get a true sense of proportion of what is essential and what we can do without, we reach further and deeper into the peace of things that are eternal; -- because with this sense of proportion the small and temporary matters cease to bother or shake us.<sup>26</sup>

This spirit could be found throughout the Old Chester stories. Characters usually appeared at a point in their lives when this balance had been disturbed by external or internal forces. Circumstances required a person to compromise tradition with unforeseen possibilities, and through the direct and indirect influence of Dr. Lavendar the character reached a satisfying resolution. Old Chester may have become an image of harmony and success for its public, but Deland took care to reveal the injurious influences at work there as well. Such attitudes generally stayed in the background exerting harmful pressure only for a brief time. These influences often appeared as rigid ideas or rules laid down by fathers or mothers in the stories. As a story worked to its conclusion, the older ways gave in to the new situation and its specific demands. However, these factors remained as much a part of Old Chester's make-up as the more positive habits. Old Chester was not to be

just another Edenic retreat. Deland was careful to show that everyone was capable of extreme and potentially dangerous behavior. The negative factors could be banished from a certain situation, but the expulsion was only temporary. Not even Dr. Lavendar had the power or the desire to remove evil from Old Chester's environment, because without it there was no way to discover the truth or to correct the balance. To achieve this more rounded picture of Old Chester, Deland took the basic patterns of the village already developed in the earlier works and enlarged the portraits of people and community.

The first step Deland took was to reacquaint the reader of Old Chester Tales (1899) with the shared vision of the community. The collection's first story, "The Promises of Dorothea," sets out the ethos of Old Chester in its most detailed presentation to date. The hints and statements from previous works are given a more emphatic focus and clarity of expression:

Old Chester was always very satisfied with itself. Not that that implies conceit; Old Chester merely felt that satisfaction with the conditions as well as the station into which it had pleased God to call it which is said to be a sign of grace. Such satisfaction is said also to be at variance with progress, but it cannot



be denied that it is comfortable; as for progress, everybody knows it is accompanied by growing-pains. Besides, if people choose to burn lamps and candles instead of gas; if they prefer to jog along the turnpike in stagecoaches instead of whizzing past in a cloud of dust and cinders in a railroad car; if they like to hear the old parson who married them -- or baptized some of them, for that matter -- mumbling and droning through his old, old sermons; if they like to have him rejoice with them, and advise them, and weep with them beside their open graves -- if people deliberately choose this sort of thing, the outside world may wonder, but it has no right to condemn. And if it had condemned, Old Chester would not have cared in the very least. It looked down upon the outside world. Not unkindly, indeed, but pityingly; and it pursued its contented way, without restlessness, and without aspirations. <sup>27</sup>

For the first time Old Chester asserts its place and its reputation in the greater world, and deliberately turns away from too close contact with it. For the first time, too, Dr. Lavendar is given a central position in the lives of Old Chester's people. Deland's introduction of

the community includes a naming of the residents, and among familiar names -- Dales, Wrights, Temples, Doves, Carrs -- new ones appear -- Barkley, Jay, Ferris, the old Smiths, and the new Smiths. Every character mentioned becomes a major actor in the tales that follow and reappear in the later collections. The narrator, in fact, whets the reader's appetite for these stories by speaking about the people and events as if the reader already knows the reference:

It was that year that Old Chester -- the real Old Chester -- had such deep disturbances: There was Miss Maria Welwood's financial catastrophe; and the distressing behavior of young Robert Smith (he was one of the "real" Smiths); and the elder Miss Ferris' illness, and the younger Miss Ferris' recovery. ("The Promises of Dorothea," OCT:8)

This assumption encourages the reader to feel a part of village affairs. The narrator's matter-of-fact tone includes rather than distances the reader's involvement in the following stories.

Deland retained this formula of mentioning later events and characters in the first story of a collection. In "The Apotheosis of the Reverend Mr. Spangler" in Dr. Lavendar's People, these past and future references are

made part of the gossip told to a newcomer to Old Chester: "Wild horses would not have drawn from her that she had heard Annie Shields that was, say that..."<sup>28</sup> The stories she has heard go back to those in Deland's first Old Chester collection. In this way Deland enlarged the reader's connection to Old Chester. The references to earlier stories brought back the reader's pleasure and interest, as well as keeping Deland and her works in the reading public's mind. Each new collection also increased the village's population. Dr. Lavendar's People introduced Lydia Sampson, Harriet and Annie Hutchinson, the Gordons, the Baileys, the Grays, and the Dilworths. Around Old Chester and New Friends in Old Chester continued this habit. When Deland used Old Chester as a setting for novel-length treatment of themes, this entire set of actors and community relations became an important factor in her handling of the greater issues. Unlike Philip and His Wife, Old Chester could no longer be relegated to the background or treated separately from the main story. The Awakening of Helena Richie and The Kays incorporated the totality of Old Chester into the main story. Without this inclusion, the novels lose much of their impact because by the time of these novels' publication Deland's town had become firmly established in public and critical regard. To have altered the make-up of Old Chester drastically or



to have abandoned it altogether could have cost Deland much in terms of her popular appeal.

Once Deland set the physical and social limits of Old Chester, she turned her attention to defining its moral code. The majority of these stories deal with characters who face some moral dilemma. These crises vary in their severity and their potential for long-lasting effects, and every trial is successfully passed. However, such resolutions do not diminish the impact of particular characters' problems. Despite a positive conclusion, the issues Deland raises in these stories carry their implications beyond the frame of the tale. Most of these stories center on the responsibility of the individual to his or her own needs and desires and those of the community. This situation appears in stories from the first Old Chester collection -- "Good for the Soul," "The Child's Mother," and "Sally" -- to the last collection -- "An Old Chester Secret" and "How Could She?" This balance of private and public expectation had appeared in Deland's work from the beginning, but in the Old Chester stories she began to assert the public need over the personal, a position that she more and more held in her private view as well, as her correspondence from this period shows:

I think it is really a wicked book, because it implies that an individual can do what he

chooses if he is willing to take the consequences. I don't think that any of us has the right to live to ourselves, or even sin to ourselves. ...Those who can give up individual happiness, or cultivation, or welfare for the sake of others, will really become more individual than anybody else.<sup>29</sup>

Deland echoed this view throughout the fiction, as characters strove to achieve a view of the world and one's place in it that recalled Lydia Sampson's:

What difference does it make in this world of life and death and joy and sorrow, if things are shabby? The fact is the secret of happiness is the sense of proportion; eliminate, by means of that sense trouble about the unimportant...

[emphasis Deland's] ("The Grasshopper and the Ant," DLP:134)

Not everyone can reach this position. Many of the characters struggle against the private wanting and hurting in order to find some compromise. In "The Harvest of Fear" the Halsey sisters, whose lives have been stunted by a domineering father, find the courage to destroy his will. This action is motivated by fear of the dead father and public knowledge of his treatment of his son's family, but out of these strong emotions comes the decision to do

the right thing:

"What do we care for his 'displeasure'? But, Sarah, don't you understand? Before we can get at the income, to give it to Gertrude, the will must go to probate; and then everybody will know what he said -- know this dreadful lie about Nick's wife, about the little boys' mother -- our sister!"

Miss Sarah was dumb.

"There is only one thing to do," Sylvia said loudly.

Sarah Halsey nodded.

"We had better go down to the library," Sylvia said in a low voice; "there's a fireplace there."<sup>30</sup>

Their father's injustice and willingness to ruin the reputation of his son's wife overcomes the Halsey sisters' fear of his influence.

This split between legal right and moral right becomes the crucial moment in many Old Chester stories. Dr. Lavendar burns a promissory note rather than let the heir ruin the moral recovery of the man who owes the money. Alice Gray refuses the legacy that would allow her to marry rather than have her deceased mother's indiscretion become known; Rachel King is given custody of



a child whose biological mother remains morally unstable. In every example the ethical demands of mercy, honor, and trust supersede what social custom and usage mandate. Each character who takes such a stand finds that the assertion demands great sacrifice; the resolution must be kept private. Those who accept these responsibilities cannot air either the act or the result, since the public world would disapprove of such repudiations of its standards. Yet, despite this seeming undercutting of the social order, those characters who accept the burden of their actions or decisions actually help strengthen the whole social fabric: Rachel King will raise the child in the community's standards; Alice Gray's refusal will deepen her commitment to her family and future husband. Over and over characters are charged to "take your suffering; bear it, sanctify it, lift it up; let it bring you nearer to your Savior. But do not, do not, put it on shoulders where it does not belong" ("Good for the Soul," OCT:84). Once this charge is given and accepted, the stories end, and although certain desires have been denied or postponed, what is gained offers the person a better recompense.

These ethical views appeared in a number of non-fictional pieces written during the tales' composition period. Deland used these occasional essays to expound on

her key themes of accepting difference, balancing traditional ways of thinking and acting with more modern ones, understanding the often selfish motives behind one's behavior and working to alter them. Deland developed many of these views in a series of articles written for Harper's Bazar (sic) between 1903 and 1904. Throughout these pieces Deland urged her readers to acknowledge that times and attitudes change, and that one can still live a full life. She admonished, gently, that it was necessary to cultivate those virtues that enabled the individual to achieve such understanding. The essays asked the reader to look for the better self Deland felt resided in everyone. This effort meant giving up the large and, more importantly, small indulgences which blinded the individual to that more ideal self: "Without effort we should be animals, and without failure we should be gods. Effort means an ideal; and failure means advancement -- to a degree."<sup>31</sup>

The essays exhibited many features similar to the Old Chester stories. Deland presented her viewpoint in a lightly humorous tone, creating brief scenes to illustrate her particular topic. In "Concerning the Saints," for example, Deland pictured a long-suffering wife who is always willing to put others' pleasures and needs before her own. Her style here, as in the fiction, pulled the

reader into the discussion by establishing a sense of the commonplace and familiar. Deland did not antagonize the reader. To do so would undercut the impact of her presentation. By creating generalized portraits and by constantly including herself as one of those who, on occasion, had fallen victim to the same tendencies, Deland encouraged the reader to recognize his or her own personal weaknesses. Where the stories came to a firm sense of conclusion, the articles often ended stressing the possibilities for changes in outlook, in action, that accompanied a renewed commitment to such moral ideals:

It means honesty, and truth, and reverence;  
with it, we dare to be honest with money, or  
with effort; we dare to tell the truth and shame  
the devil of affectation! We dare to trust  
Life, with reverence.<sup>32</sup>

Deland constantly asserted that acquiring this insight necessary for developing a moral consciousness entailed a lifelong effort. Moral complacency must be avoided because in many ways it was a greater weakness than someone deliberately refusing to examine one's ethical standing. Merely accepting what one's self and one's society are was to Deland a kind of moral cowardice.<sup>33</sup> The essays pointed out that each person must be responsible for effecting such a change of conscience. Old Chester was



more fortunate in having Dr. Lavendar as its spiritual and moral advisor.

In Dr. Edward Lavendar, Deland created a figure who became the embodiment of all that Old Chester represented. He sat at the center of the village's web of relationships, advising, admonishing, and abetting as circumstances required. He was the spiritual and moral core in Old Chester affairs, pulling parents and children, strangers and neighbors into a unified community. From his first appearance in the stories, Dr. Lavendar received critical acclaim. Some critics even considered him a masterful character, capable of becoming one of America's literary heroes:

He's a lovable and admirable old rector, wise as a serpent and (when necessary) as stinging; an irretrievable old fogey in the administration of parish matters, unblushingly bold in freeing love matches that have caught on snags... . Dr. Lavendar is a fine old figure, sturdy, human, real.<sup>34</sup>

Like the village to which he ministers, Dr. Lavendar undergoes a transformation between his earliest and subsequent appearances. Deland introduced this character in Philip and His Wife as James Lavendar. The reason for later name change is unclear. In the novel Dr. Lavendar

plays a minor role as the story concentrates on the Shores. Deland uses him to provide the traditional religious ideas of marriage that Philip Shore hopes to escape:

"Well, upon my word!" said Dr. Lavendar ...  
And you're a fool, sir; you forget your Bible;  
'Children are from the Lord, happy is the man  
that hath his quiver full of 'em': and as for  
breaking up marriages, 'Those whom God hath  
joined together let no man put asunder.' I  
never heard such sentiments in my life. You  
grieve me Philip, I tell you; yes, you grieve  
me, sir." (PHW:210)

He becomes the sounding board for Philip Shore's arguments in favor of divorce; every modern justification Philip offers, Dr. Lavendar counters with either conservative religious dogma or conventional social practice: "'Where does duty come it? Do you think we can get along without duty in this civilization you talk so much about? ...you belong to this ungodly time of rooting up and casting out the things that were sacred to your fathers!'" (PHW:212-213). The novel contains only this one confrontation between religious duty and personal need; as the Shores' marriage deteriorates, Dr. Lavendar has no influence or effect. In the inadvertent romance between Susan Carr and

his brother Joseph, Dr. Lavendar's role is also circumscribed; he misinterprets both Susan's and Joseph's actions and words, drawing the wrong conclusions and unintentionally causing them pain. When he discovers the truth, Dr. Lavendar retreats from direct involvement. The romance ends successfully despite Dr. Lavendar's attempt to speed its progress.

Dr. Lavendar's personality presented in the novel contained several aspects that Deland highlighted in the succeeding stories. Deland stated in her autobiography that, from the first, she conceived of this character as an amalgam of several influential male figures in her life:

A clergyman...whom I thought of looking like Old Dr. Preston, of St. Andrew's Church in Pittsburgh. ...he displayed traits of Uncle William Campbell, the old Dutch Reformed minister...who had approved of John Ward, Preacher. Occasionally I borrowed a little of Lorin's salt-and-pepper wit. ...he [also] made me think of Phillips Brooks... (GY:315-16)

Much of this personality evolved as Deland made him the central character in Old Chester. The person who appeared in Philip and His Wife is much more dogmatic and unbending; he strikes the reader as a garrulous old man,



easily distracted and irritated, more interested, at times, in his great work, The History of Precious Stones, than in ordinary affairs.<sup>35</sup> Deland did provide Dr. Lavendar with some attractive qualities in the novel; he is a tender-hearted and caring man, committed to his calling and its demands, and he reveals these characteristics in quiet ways:

He sat on the edge of his chair, his knees together to make a lap for a dropping tool or stone, his gaitered feet wide apart to afford room for Danny [his dog]. His sermon was written; he had made three parish calls ... he had seen a little blind horse -- bought because it was blind and ill-treated -- installed in his stable... (PHW:142).

Towards the end of the novel Dr. Lavendar speaks to Roger Carey, hoping to reconcile Carey's quarrel with Alicia; here Dr. Lavendar's words and actions presage his later involvement in his parishioners' lives. Using his own experience, Dr. Lavendar tries to convince Carey to make up the disagreement, reminding him that only pain and the chance of losing Alicia can come from refusing to apologize. However, he does not force his view on the younger man. Carey must make his own decision. Although he considers Carey a fool for not apologizing to Alicia,

Dr. Lavendar does not intrude into their affair again.

In the later Old Chester stories and novels, Dr. Lavendar moves into the limelight. Practically every story hinges on Dr. Lavendar's actions or advice. The less attractive aspects of his character are sloughed off as he becomes the village's source of comfort and support. Although in a number of stories Dr. Lavendar plays no direct role, he is often instrumental to its outcome. Most often this participation takes the form of a chance remark; in "The Promises of Dorothea" a passing comment on Dorothea Ferris' circumstances sets Oscar King to take action:

"[S]he's a good child, and she lives with the Ferris girls. They are sucking the life out of her. She has no more will of her own than a wet string. I wish somebody could run off with her!"

"I will," said Oscar King promptly. (OCT:12)

Even though he applauds King's act, before he agrees to marry Oscar and Dorothea Dr. Lavendar insists on assuring himself that she is not being coerced in any way: "'I must be sure, my dear, that you realize what you are doing, and that you love Oscar with all your heart, and that is why you want to marry him. Not merely to get away from conditions which are, I know, hard and unnatural.'" (OCT:35-36) If Dorothea had answered negatively, Dr.

Lavendar would have refused to perform the ceremony. This concern for Dorothea's entire well-being typifies Dr. Lavendar's response to his people's problems.

Particularly in the Old Chester Tales collection, Dr. Lavendar responds to different situations in much the same way. He gives help when requested but does not become more actively involved in the situation. Even when he knows that the participants would rather suffer and sacrifice than allow themselves any happiness, as in "Sally," Dr. Lavendar's involvement remains indirect. In the few instances where he takes a more active role, Dr. Lavendar puts his efforts into bringing the other characters to see the weaknesses in their behavior. This concern that his people acknowledge and understand their moral failings underscores Dr. Lavendar's ethical standards. The individual must come to terms with his or her own sin in order to achieve redemption. Dr. Lavendar insists that the person experience a change of heart that later behavior will validate. In "The Child's Mother" Dr. Lavendar must decide whether to return young Anna to the woman who abandoned her on his doorstep ten years ago. His decision comes when he discovers that the woman, in spite of her protestations, has not reached that point where she is willing to accept the responsibility and consequences of her failings:



"Mary, let me put it to your husband. He is kind, as you say, to be willing to take her, but let me tell him --"

"No." She went and stood in front of the door with a frightened look. "No!"

"Let me tell him how it is," he insisted. ...

Mary caught him by the wrist. "No, you -- you mustn't. He -- I told him it was my sister's child. He -- don't know."

Dr. Lavendar fell back, but his face cleared. "A lie!" he said. "Mary, you're not worthy of her." (OCT:170)

Actions like these cause a great deal of talk in Old Chester about Dr. Lavendar, but because the spirit of the law, religious and social, has been upheld, Dr. Lavendar sees no contradiction in his position and his actions. However much the community wonders at his behavior, it still prefers Dr. Lavendar's assistance whenever its problems become too heavy to support alone.

Deland gives Dr. Lavendar a greater role in the stories contained in the second collection, Dr. Lavendar's People. Here he is much more actively engaged in the situations presented: burning a promissory note and repaying the estate from his own funds in "The Note"; writing letters and pulling strings to facilitate the

departure of his replacement in "The Apotheosis of the Reverend Mr. Spangler"; protecting the mentally retarded Annie Hutchinson after she gives her sister chloroform to help ease the sister's pain in "At the Stuffed-Animal House." Dr. Lavendar justifies his actions first in his belief that moral duty takes precedence over every other consideration and second because he knows that he is carrying out the intentions of one of the parties involved:

"[S]uppose Johnny didn't want, for reasons of his own, to have anybody -- say, even his executor -- see that account book, suppose it might be put to some bad purpose; -- used to injure some third person...if he had asked me last week to destroy it do you mean to say, Ezra, I couldn't destroy it to-day? -- just because he happened to die this morning?" ("The Note," DLP:116)

Such actions reveal Dr. Lavendar's intimate knowledge of his village and its people. Even when breaking the law, Dr. Lavendar retains the reader's liking and support. This approval stems from Dr. Lavendar's integrity; every secret he learns, every problem he helps solve, remains private. If his role in some situation becomes public knowledge, someone other than Dr. Lavendar has spoken of

it.

Dr. Lavendar's commitment to his ethical ideals also encourages the reader's respect. Every action rests on his clear and uncompromising adherence to the moral standards his religion and society offer, provided that, in a specific situation, his conscience does not challenge their value. Dr. Lavendar's trust in the rightness of his belief and his actions even allow him to accept other religious and ethical systems. As long as the individual upholds the worthiness of them, Dr. Lavendar makes no attempt to force the person to change allegiance:

"William, listening for the Voice of God isn't necessarily a sign of poor health; and provided a man doesn't set himself up to think he is the only person his heavenly Father is willing to speak to, listening won't do him any harm."

("The Voice," ADC:120)

Dr. Lavendar is a voice of moderation in a world willing to jump to extremes. He advises restraint to a younger generation waiting to overthrow the habits of the past, and he counsels their elders to have patience and acceptance.

Dr. Lavendar's generosity and compassion do not mean he is without strength. The decisions he helps people to make force them to find strength of purpose and character.



He refuses, for example, to look into the fireplace where the Halsey sisters have just burnt their father's will. He refrains from asking questions of Elizabeth Day when she indicates a terrible sin in her past. Dr. Lavendar is also capable of refusing to accommodate Old Chester's desires if to do so ruins the chance for an individual to develop a personal moral sense. He does not advance Paul's admission to a theological college because Paul "know[s] what is best worth knowing in the world: you know your Master." He's put you to do a work for Him which most of His ministers are not capable of doing" ("Where Laborers Are Few," OCT:61). Jane Jay, who has urged Paul to ask Dr. Lavendar's support, has built a fantasy around Paul's acceptance to a school and eventual assumption of Dr. Lavendar's pulpit. Hidden in these hopes for Paul is an unacknowledged romantic attachment which Dr. Lavendar unknowingly thwarts. But for Paul to stay in Old Chester would have deprived him and his mission. Having helped Dorothea find a life of her own, Dr. Lavendar finds Clara Ferris' sudden illness more a symptom of frustrated power than a legitimate physical sickness, and while the rest of the village condemns Oscar King's behavior, Dr. Lavendar heartily approves. Still the reader sympathizes with Dr. Lavendar because even these actions stem from the same concern for his village as his encouragement and

assistance.

In the later volumes about Old Chester, Dr. Lavender's activity decreases, and he returns to the role of advisor and commentator. Other characters become his surrogates, gathering information, visiting people's homes. The character who most often fills this position is Dr. William King, Old Chester's physician. He is more practical in many ways than Dr. Lavendar, tending to view the world in hard and fast terms. Often Dr. Lavendar's bending of the rules shocks and confuses Dr. King, but like him, William King regards the village and its people in much the same way. In fact, Dr. King is sometimes at a disadvantage because many of his patients knew him as a young boy, and even after taking over his father's practice, King is still regarded as a foolish young man by many of Old Chester's older inhabitants. However, he shares the same heritage and attitudes as the rest of Old Chester, and he is quick to overlook a patient's fee if the person cannot afford his service or to travel far into the country to answer a call for his aid. Later he may grumble about the strains on his time, but when needed Dr. King responds quickly. Dr. King has appeared in the Old Chester stories since The Story of a Child, although Deland does not develop his character until "The Unexpectedness of Mr. Horace Shields" in Old Chester

Tales. In the later collections Dr. King's role increases markedly, particularly where mention is made of Dr. Lavendar's frail health, and in The Awakening of Helena Richie Dr. King becomes a major actor in the story.

Deland gives the role of conscience to other characters beside Dr. King. Mrs. Barkley in "Miss Maria" constantly chides Maria Welwood's assuming of responsibility for her nephew's family at the expense of her own well-being. Rose Knight survives the village's condemnation as a flirt in order to keep Lyman Holden from making a disastrous marriage. Lydia Sampson accepts the community's belief that she is really the mother of the young man whom she has raised in order to protect his reputation. The most important, and vivid commentator that Deland adds to the Old Chester community is the narrator. Over the course of Old Chester's development, this voice acquires a distinct personality and style of presentation that strongly influences the reader's approach to Old Chester.

At first Deland constructed the Old Chester stories using the third person omniscient narrative voice. "Mr. Tommy Dove," The Story of a Child and Philip and His Wife are told from this perspective. The omniscient stance allows Deland to present the varying attitudes of her characters and provides the opportunity for comments on



their beliefs and behavior; typically the narrator breaks into the development of the story to evaluate a character's actions or thoughts. In Sydney, especially, these interruptions are used in attempts to explain or clarify Sydney's behavior or beliefs. Eventually Deland begins to connect this voice more closely to Old Chester views and ideas; in the first Old Chester settings the narrator becomes the spokesperson for its standards and judgments. Such statements most frequently appear in chapter openings where they are used to set the stage for the characters' actions and specific aspects of the plot.

This citation from Philip and His Wife is typical:

Of course the tussle in the hayfield was discussed in Old Chester and it brought up the question of Eliza's possible danger in remaining with Job. Her possible degradation had been long ago dismissed, or never thought of. ...The indignity done to marriage by urging the continuance of a relation from which love and respect and tenderness had fled, leaving in their place brutality and lust, had never been considered. But when it came to the chance of physical injury to Eliza, then indeed Old Chester was aroused and perplexed. (PHW:187)

While this voice presents the majority opinion, the

narrator's involvement with the community seems superficial, knowledgeable but unconcerned. The narrator reports Old Chester's reactions but feels no tie to either the place or its people.

With the publication of Old Chester Tales, Deland's treatment of the narrator changes. For the first time the narrator acknowledges her connection to the community; a change from third to first person signifies this new relation. The narrator, by identifying herself with Old Chester, takes on the attitudes and responses of the village more completely:

Men don't fall in love with women for considerations of reason. The ability to sew on buttons, and nurse husbands through attacks of indigestion, and give good wholesome advice does not attract the male mind; these evidences of good sense are respected, but when it comes to a question of adoration -- that is different; a man prefers a fool everytime. Well -- well; one of these days we may understand it: meantime we are all ready to sew on buttons, and keep house, and give advice... ("The Promises of Dorothea,"

OCT:12)

As the stories increase, so does the narrator's relation to Old Chester. The reader learns that the narrator has

attended Miss Bailey's school ("The Apotheosis of the Reverend Mr. Spangler"), was once a member of Dr. Lavendar's Collect class ("The Child's Mother"), has heard the story of the great friendship of Clara Hale and Fanny Morrison ("Miss Clara's Perseus"), and has been privy to Old Chester gossip and shares its responses. Sharing in Old Chester's heritage, the narrator speaks with authority when she relates these stories of her neighbors and friends; these ties to the community give her words impact. The reader, once aware of the narrator's relation to Old Chester, more readily accepts her versions of its attitudes and her judgments of its behavior.

Deland also gives her narrator an additional trait that emphasizes the evaluative fact of the narrator's personality. The narrator is not a contemporary of the people whose stories she tells; she is a member of the younger generation and an inhabitant who has experienced the world beyond Old Chester's boundaries. Throughout the stories appear references to this difference: "Just here the question arises; what would Miss Ellen (now in heaven) say if she could hear Lydia's Lydia, just home from college, remark -- But no; Miss Ellen's precepts shall protect these pages" ("An Encore," AOC:174). The narrator and the reader are contemporaries, and sometimes she provides a more concrete time reference to help place a



particular tale and explain the attitudes it contains:  
"... (this was in the '70's, when girls didn't talk  
obstetrics to young men)."<sup>36</sup> This distance allows the  
narrator to play on the contrasts of the attitudes of past  
and present, and Deland makes effective use of humor to  
highlight the differences. The narrator, however, refuses  
to condemn the past for what it believed or the reasons  
behind such beliefs; she encourages the reader to compare  
and enjoy the changes. She also points out to the modern  
reader what has been lost. While not advocating a return  
to Old Chester, the narrator feels strongly that there is  
much a contemporary can learn from this simpler time and  
people:

"Ah, well, one may smile. Compared to what  
girls know nowadays, it is, of course, very  
absurd. But, all the same, Miss Ellen's girls  
knew some things of which our girls are  
ignorant: reverence was one, humility was  
another; obedience was a third." ("The  
Apotheosis of the Reverend Mr. Spangler," DLP:8)

The sense of something valuable lost comes through in many  
of these stories, and in the act of retelling the narrator  
captures the experience of such a place for her  
contemporary audience.

This new narrative stance is Deland's most notable

literary achievement during the years of her greatest creative output; whenever Old Chester appears, the narrator and her personality immediately become a vital part of a story's appeal. Deland also refines other stylistic qualities within the Old Chester framework; never an innovator, she constantly sharpens the development of the plot, the use of scene, the delineation of character, and the incorporation of thematic emphasis in these tales. Each story is a completely individual and realized piece as well as part of a greater whole, and the stories move smoothly, bringing the reader gently but thoroughly into the cares and hopes of the village's people. This fine interweaving can be clearly seen in all of Deland's best Old Chester stories. Even a broad examination of "The Promises of Dorothea" indicates Deland's mastery of her technique.

It is because the story is set in Old Chester that Clara Ferris' hostility to Oscar King's courtship is understood; that Mary Ferris' recovery astonishes everyone but Dr. Lavendar; that the community's dismay at Oscar's choice is subtly undercut by the narrator's comments. Even before Dorothea appears in the story, Deland provides the reader with a clear picture of her life and character. Because she lives in a house which "looked like a pale face, its shuttered windows, the closed eyelids, weighted

down in decent death," Dorothea's weaknesses can be clearly understood (8). When she eventually agrees to an elopement, the reader applauds this effort to control her own life and hopes that she will succeed. No wonder then that Deland characterizes Oscar King's courtship as "a torch among dead leaves," (10). Dorothea's growing discontent with her past is indicated by her movement from garden to church to carriage. It is necessary that Oscar first see Dorothea outside of the Ferris home, and that all of his wooing takes place in the garden. The opposition of dead house and flowering garden is clear and traditional, but well used. Dorothea is frequently compared to flowers, not surprisingly, delicate and quickly blooming ones -- "a tall, white lily," (15). Other characters receive the same quick strokes of personality: Oscar King, Mary Ferris, who is always called crushed by her being abandoned at the altar over thirty years ago. Contrasts of sound (the deathly quiet of the Ferris house and Oscar's loud voice and steps), size (Oscar's sheer physical presence and the Ferris women's daintiness), and response to the eventual elopement are used effectively to move the story and develop the story's humor and effect.

Deland's gentle irony which also appears in the story is carefully handled so that it does not overpower the



action. Oscar calls Dorothea a "Botticelli Madonna" but she is "not [even] a pretty girl" (12-13). Oscar sees himself as the romantic hero, rescuing a princess, but he balances the situation in his favor by strategically stopping the carriage in a large, muddy ditch when he asks Dorothea to make her decision. Nor is Oscar a young, handsome cavalier, but a fifty-year-old man looking for a bride. Closely intertwined with Dorothea's romance is the recovery of Mary Ferris. Cowed by her sister Clara's refusal to let her lead a normal life, Mary has become an invalid because of her unhappy romantic experience. Confined by Clara to her bed (except for Saturday when the sheets are changed), Mary follows Dorothea's courtship and finds the strength to defy Clara and encourage her niece. When Mary recovers, Clara collapses, and their roles are reversed. Deland's adroit balancing of the two stories, the judicious incorporation of narrative comment and descriptive detail, the blending of humor and serious conflicts, indicate an artistry that matches Jewett's, Wharton's and other contemporaries.

Extensive praise for the Old Chester stories appeared from the publication of Old Chester Tales and was carried through with each succeeding book. The reviews showed Deland that she not only had the public's approval but critical support as well. More and more, reviewers

applauded Deland's characterizations and thematic treatments. She gathered commendation for her storytelling, and several critics began to anticipate her continuing literary efforts and maintained success:

She has never shown so perfect and supreme a mastery of her art as she does in this new book [Dr. Lavendar's People], and she bids us instinctively look for a work that will combine the variety and range of her ripened gifts with the sustained and more elaborate proportions of the novel.<sup>37</sup>

As if aware of these requests, Deland almost immediately began to work on a novel using the Old Chester setting. Clearly the positive reaction to Dr. Lavendar helped Deland focus the thematic and narrative frame of her next literary effort, The Awakening of Helena Richie (1906):

I have been struggling for more than a year on a novel of Old Chester life. In it my peaceful community, with Dr. Lavendar as its exponent, meet, in their innocence and unsophisticatedness, with the world, the flesh and the devil; but the effect upon Sin of this righteousness is the psychology of the novel: the awakening of a human soul first to sin, and then to

righteousness, and after that to a realization  
of the beneficence of judgement...<sup>38</sup>

Because of Old Chester's physical and emotional influence, Helena Richie will be redeemed. Because Dr. Lavendar embodies the best that Old Chester is and that it can offer to others, he will be the means through which Helena comes to understand her faults and weaknesses. Like Helena, the reader will see the impact of Old Chester on a personality shaped and deeply attached to the wider world of progress and change.

Deland's novel tells the story of Helena Richie, who has recently moved to Old Chester and set up her household at the Hutchinson's old home. She has not, however, become a part of the community or even shown any interest in the village at all. This isolation makes her a source of gossip and speculation for the people, especially since Helena's lifestyle is so very different from the rest of Old Chester. She becomes, because of this difference, the embodiment of various characters' dreams. For young Sam Wright, Helena is the pure romantic heroine, the only person who really understands him. For Dr. King, she represents the finest picture of feminine charm -- frail, beautiful, innocent. As the novel develops, these two views of Helena will prove false. She sees Sam only as a means of escaping her boredom, and when he fails to



relieve her ennui, Helena quickly dismisses him. Helena's reaction to Dr. King is less severe but still unfriendly. She looks on King as rather provincial and old-fashioned. Other characters impose on Helena as well, using her as a source of trouble or discontent. Even Dr. Lavendar is at first wary of Helena's possible influence on the town. The arrival of David Allison, a young orphan, sets Helena's reawakening into motion.

Dr. Lavendar, who has been given charge of David, asks William King for suggestions about placing the child in a good home. Dr. King suggests Helena Richie, and although Dr. Lavendar is unsure of her, he does place David with Helena for a trial period. Once part of Helena Richie's household, David becomes the catalyst for many of the novel's key events. His presence in her home forces Helena to be concerned with others. Her own child's death because of her husband's drunkenness had turned Helena completely inward. Her only desires are personal happiness and satisfaction, but David demands her attention and care. At first determined to remain distant, Helena becomes increasingly attached to him, and soon David has blocked every other person from Helena's interest. Helena wants to smother David in her affection. David, however, is unwilling to let her. His independence initially upsets Helena. She assumes that the child will

take to her immediately and lavish his attention on her. As the story continues, Helena begins to see and understand the importance of earning David's love. She must answer his hundreds of questions, put up with his small disobediences, take care of him when he is ill, as well as enjoy his expressions of love. At the novel's major crisis, when Helena must confront her own moral and spiritual weakness, Deland has Dr. Lavendar remove David from her care. Helena's redemption begins when she acknowledges that these failings disqualify her from keeping David. The separation forces her to realize that one's life is intimately connected to other lives and that one cannot abandon the social ties that order and maintain the community.

Helena's increasing interest in David also affects her relationship with Lloyd Proctor, whom Old Chester believes to be her brother-in-law. Proctor is actually Helena's lover of many years. When Helena's husband's abuse became intolerable, Proctor was present to comfort and, eventually, seduce Helena. Proctor has promised marriage, but for most of the novel, Helena's husband is still living. Even though he has begun to tire of their relation, Proctor has managed to dictate the affair to his advantage. David's appearance upsets the balance of Proctor's public image and private actions, and his visits

become in fact what he and Helena have pretended. David's claims on Helena's attention anger and frustrate Proctor because he is no longer her only concern. Eventually Proctor places an ultimatum before Helena: she must choose between David and himself. She does not make a decision until news of her husband's death reaches her. Then she tells Proctor that she can marry him and keep David. Proctor, however, refuses to accept Helena on these conditions, and he then tells her that they can continue the relation as before. This angers Helena, as Proctor intends, and she rejects him as either husband or lover. Proctor does not leave the novel in a positive position, however. Deland uses David as the unwitting cause of Proctor's loss of his daughter's complete trust. A chance meeting at a railroad station and an innocent conversation force Proctor to lie to his daughter, and as Proctor soon discovers, his daughter recognizes his attempts to hide the truth. Proctor's image has been irrevocably damaged, and his relations with his daughter will never be able to recover their earlier quality.

David's position in Helena's house affects her relations with young Sam Wright as well. As David takes up more and more of her time, Helena finds Sam's intrusions more tiresome, especially when he declares that he loves her. Helena quickly dismisses Sam when he makes



this announcement. Feeling rejected Sam accepts his grandfather's offer of financial help in finding a publisher for his dramatic efforts. Benjamin Wright has somehow intuited the actual relationship between Helena and Proctor, and he has let Helena know of his understanding. Using this knowledge as a means of protecting his grandson, Wright promises not to reveal the truth. However, Sam returns to Old Chester because he cannot get his work published and compounds his problems by claiming his inability to live without Helena. Incensed by Sam's words, Benjamin Wright tells Sam the real connection between Helena and Proctor. Refusing to believe his grandfather, Sam rushes to Helena's house and demands that she deny the accusation. When she does not, Sam's anger suddenly fades and he goes home. This change of mood worries Helena, and she eventually calls on Dr. King to accompany her, as she wishes to make sure that Sam is all right. As they approach the Wright house, Dr. King and Helena hear a gunshot. Sam has killed himself.

Faced with a sense of complicity in Sam's death and forced to accept Proctor's rejection, Helena turns to David for a sense of belonging, and she decides to fight for custody. Rumors about Sam's death and the end of Proctor's visits begin to influence Old Chester's judgment of Helena. Unable to face the town's censure, Helena

determines to take David and leave. Dr. Lavendar, however, has removed David from her care after Sam's suicide, and before he will let Helena have David, Dr. Lavendar forces her to acknowledge her failings. Dr. Lavendar challenges her with the question: "[C]an you do him any good?"<sup>39</sup> His questions carefully and deliberately demand that Helena step outside of her own desires and needs. Her care of David is directly and completely tied to social responsibility, and until Helena accepts that responsibility and all its consequences, she will not be given custody of David. After a long struggle and attempts to defend her actions, Helena comes to understand that she is, at present, unfit to raise David. Her acknowledgement of her own rejection of social responsibility, however, is the beginning of her salvation, and the novel ends with Dr. Lavendar returning David to Helen's care. Helena can now have a good influence on David because she has accepted her sin and accepted the consequences of redemption.

Deland's storyline offers no serious departure from the basic patterns established in the previous stories or earlier novels. As in them, the main character must come to terms with the consequences and responsibility of private acts when confronted by the wider community. In this new novel Helena Richie comes to accept that her

failings rest in her own character, however desperately she wishes to place them elsewhere. Until the novel's last chapters Helena has managed to blame her upbringing, her marriage, her society, for her private weaknesses. This new understanding forces her to acknowledge the connections that tie her avoidance of suffering to her continued sense of dissatisfaction. When she can break through this emotionally and spiritually restrictive circle, she begins the restoration of self-esteem that will enable her to face the seriousness of her actions, and she will eventually be able to accept the community's evaluation of that behavior. Deland insists on the social factors involved in any personal decision. No private act is performed in a vacuum. A whole range of communal relations surround every behavior, even those a person considers the most intimate. This is the revelation Helena receives at the novel's climax: "'But nobody knew; so I never did any harm.' -- then she quailed; 'at least, I never meant to do any harm.' However, Dr. Lavendar replies: 'It was at everybody's expense.'" (AHR:338)

Deland's early novels, while presenting the individual's struggle to recognize his or her place within a broader world, concentrated more on the search for a private recognition or experience of some divine force. Helen Ward, Sydney Lee, and Philip Shore all ultimately eluded



any social commitment. Their desires were directed beyond the ordinary world. Unlike these three, Helena Richie has no intention of understanding any greater force. She comes to Old Chester to escape society's interference in her affairs. She eventually discovers that such an escape is impossible. Society, like Old Chester neighbors, will always drop in.

The most distinctive feature of The Awakening of Helena Richie is Deland's handling of the Old Chester setting. The short stories illustrated her ability to incorporate the complexities of community life into the plot without harming the specific characters' development or the thematic impulse. This same skill is evidenced in the presentation of the village here. As one review of the novel stated, "...the accustomed fine inlay that marks all her dealings with Old Chester and its inhabitants is here peerlessly present."<sup>40</sup> The texture of Old Chester present in the novel is as full and rich as in the stories. Helena Richie enters a self-contained and complete community. Her assumption that she can live in this place without attracting notice or that she can block out every other person from her life is false. Even though no one visits her, Helena's daily routines and household expenditures are rapidly known. The network of servants and tradespeople and visitors reveals a great deal of

information for the curious. Old Chester's response to Helena Richie is given through the observations of Martha King, William King's wife. Interestingly Deland does not utilize the narrative technique of the short stories in this novel. Rarely does the narrator step into the text as a distinct personality, and the chorus of town voices commenting and evaluating a person's behavior are also missing.

However, the contrasts of Helena's actions and Old Chester's must have a voice in the text, and Martha King provides that voice because she is, in the most concrete ways, the embodiment of the Old Chester viewpoint. Martha is an extremely practical woman; she manages to stretch her husband's income to the utmost; she maintains a spotlessly kept and run home; she looks at the doings of others with a careful eye, measuring their actions against her own standards. Martha also reveals the weaknesses of such a personality; often judgmental of people, her efficiency tends to discourage William's desires for ease. Basically, though, Martha King is a good woman, for at the core of her character lies a firmly developed and believed-in set of moral, social, and religious ideals. These beliefs will not only give her a sense of the rightness of her opinions, but they also prod Martha's conscience when she oversteps those limits. For much of

the novel Martha finds little to like in Helena Richie's behavior, but when William has provided some insight into Helena's background, Martha is quick to forgive what can be forgiven.

With Martha King's role as commentator fully developed, Deland allows the reader's familiarity with Old Chester to help set the novel's situational and thematic frame. Deland does not take time from the story's movement to relate extraneous information about the town. Instead she concentrates on the story of Helena's moral regeneration. Helena enters the novel determined to remain separate, and her desire to be left alone insults Old Chester because the community cannot understand how or why a person would function without its network of support. Helena, consciously and unconsciously, acts contrary to Old Chester ways: "...she has her breakfast in bed every morning. I'd like to know how my housekeeping would go on if I had breakfast in bed, though dear knows I'm very tired and it would be pleasant enough" (AHR:9). Helena prefers to keep these differences because they reinforce her self-image. She frequently looks down on Old Chester as a backward little town. Her attitude and her refusal of the town's overtures compound Helena's isolation. When she finally must turn to Old Chester for help, she finds that Old Chester offers only grudging



assistance. The Sam Wright subplot illustrates this difference in the town's reactions. After Sam's death all of Old Chester is touched and the people extend every kind of help to the Wright family. Helena is conspicuously absent from this outpouring of feeling, not because she is seen as the cause of Sam's death, but because she has shown no real interest in Sam or his family.

Yet Old Chester will force its way into Helena's life in spite of her attempts to block it out. Dr. King will continue to drop by to find out how she and David are and to introduce himself to Lloyd Proctor on a visit to Philadelphia. The conversations of her servants will bring Old Chester concerns into Helena's house. Dr. Lavendar will call to check on David. All of these intrusions will force Helena to come to terms with the community's expectations and evaluations of her. As one contemporary reviewer stated:

If she had lived in a crowded city the opportunity for self-comparison would have been less, because people in cities are so close together they must keep shut tight against each others' psychologically marauding instincts, but in Old Chester they live far enough apart to be open books, read aloud in the neighborhood. So Mrs. Richie could not escape translation.<sup>41</sup>

However, Deland has Helena leave Old Chester at the novel's end. She cannot stay although Old Chester has saved her. To remain might jeopardize her continued progress, and as Deland's next novel demonstrated, Old Chester and its influence could extend far beyond its physical borders. The lessons of Old Chester, once accepted, can continue to shape one's actions and one's response to the world.

The critical reception to The Awakening of Helena Richie was resoundingly positive. Deland received high praise for her "plain naturalness in the irresistible logic of its events, in the subtlety and realism of its motives."<sup>42</sup> Her continued development of Dr. Lavendar and Old Chester brought more assertions of their lasting hold on later generations of readers. One of the most frequently praised qualities of this novel was Deland's emphasis on its moral themes and purpose. This facet of the work received the greatest amount of space, as review after review applauded Deland's deep moral convictions. This, as one critic affirmed, "needs often to be told anew, and more than ever in such an age as this, marked by moral flabbiness."<sup>43</sup> Such acknowledgements marked a clear shift in the critical appraisals of Deland's particular moral vision. Her early novels were severely disapproved of because the moral impetus so often appeared in the

abstract theological discussion among unrealistic characters. No one, it was asserted, could hope to follow Deland's prescriptions for reform. Old Chester, however, gave her a much more acceptable stage for her ethical concerns: "Mrs. Deland has before this made laborious solutions to impossible problems. But her problem here though tangled is not unthinkable, and she has solved it in terms of high philosophy, deep religion, and broad common sense."<sup>44</sup> Helena Richie's personal history is convincingly developed and believably portrayed, and her relations and behavior stem from a recognized series of stresses and fears. Even her final choices, although harsh ones to a modern reader, indicated their value to the novel's contemporary audience. Deland considered this recognition and acceptance of her moral outlook an essential part of the reader's enjoyment:

I am so glad you like the Awakening; I wanted to tell that story, because I know that kind of woman, not wicked, but unmoral ... to show that the spirit of God is within us -- good or bad, -- if the sleeping soul will but awake to its own divinity --<sup>45</sup>

Deland found the reader's identification with Old Chester satisfying. Like Howells, she saw authorship carrying with it the burden of moral influence. She



carefully constructed her plots to reach widely and deeply. When readers informed Deland that her characters and their struggles had affected them, she held that identification as her greatest reward:

Yes, of course I am immensely pleased with the reception that has been given to "The Awakening." I have had some letters that have made me feel that to write a book is at once a sobering and an inspiring responsibility: but I am deeply gratified for the expressions that have come to me of gratitude for help that the book has given.<sup>46</sup>

Clearly Helena's spiritual recovery touched a strong chord of desire in the early twentieth century audience. Perhaps, like Helena, the reader sought relief from a society and world changing too rapidly to be understood. Dr. Lavendar's admonishments of Helena rested on sound ideals that the reader could remember and claim, and Old Chester itself assured the reader that such values could still direct the lives of a thriving community. Despite Deland's placement of the story at least a generation removed from its audience, The Awakening of Helena Richie touched a basic need for forgiveness and new beginnings.

After the success of The Awakening of Helena Richie, Deland turned to other themes and subjects in her fiction,

but the implications of Helena's story clearly stayed in her mind because in January 1909 she wrote to her cousin: "I began a novel sometime ago...You may be interested to know that David appears in this book that I am working on now, and Helena, too, but she only very briefly. David is more important, being now a young man."<sup>47</sup> Although she brought back familiar characters, Deland did not return them to Old Chester or to the care of Dr. Lavendar; instead she placed the novel in Mercer. While the careful reader would recall past references to the city from earlier novels and stories, Deland's purpose was to extend the influence of the village and its minister. In fact, mention is made in this new novel of Dr. Lavendar's death, and Dr. King is spoken of as an old man. Deland also took care to place the story's action in a more contemporary period, giving the main characters modern careers and ideas. Old Chester was not totally forgotten, however. Although its memory is tenuous, existing only in Helena's past and her use of the experience, Old Chester's impact will affect the moral outcome of this new novel. The Helena Richie who appears in this work has been strengthened by the past, and her maturity and spritual serenity play a major role in Deland's dominant theme. Without the first novel, Helena's actions here seem incredible, but because of Old Chester her part in this

novel's resolution seems natural.

The Iron Woman concentrates on the lives of four children -- David Richie, Elizabeth Ferguson, and Blair and Nannie Maitland. Through carefully plotted events and fully detailed scenes, Deland traces the children's growth into adulthood. The novel is built on a complex series of small and dramatic situations, and Deland intends that the reader acknowledge and understand how intimately connected each person is to his or her society. The key actors in The Iron Woman often feel themselves better than or separate from others; however, as the story develops, they come to realize that they are part of a greater community and that private actions have public implications. Helena Richie's role in the novel is to embody these lessons; at the book's climactic scene, she reveals her past to David and Elizabeth, and the impact of her revelation will influence the direction of the couple's life beyond the immediate moment.

To reach this scene Deland examines the public and private influences that shape the children's lives. The four share certain physical and environmental qualities; all of the children are in some sense orphans -- David and Elizabeth in actuality, Blair and Nannie in a psychological sense. Mrs. Maitland is more concerned with running her iron mill than in raising her children. All



of the children are intelligent and imaginative, expressive and responsive. The early chapters of the novel, which present them as young children, are full of brief instances of their flights of imagination and activity. Deland, however, takes care to differentiate the abilities and achievements of each character. David, for example, has a very close and loving relationship with his mother that lasts into his adulthood, but Deland carefully shows how that relationship changes as David's interests and career take him out of Helena's constant influence. He is quick to defend Elizabeth and Nannie from real and imagined threats, and is often the only one of the four to remember and include the shy Nannie in the group's activities. David's eventual choice of a medical career has clear roots in this sympathetic personality, but Deland does not make him a paragon. His desire for self-sufficiency becomes obsessive and leads him to refuse all offers of assistance in his schooling or professional advancement. This characteristic eventually becomes David's greatest handicap as it blocks him from a full participation in the public sphere.

The other major actors reveal the same fully presented personalities, a mixing of admirable and negative beliefs and actions. For much of the novel these characters are completely wound up in themselves and their

personal desires, and this view of the world and one's place in it becomes the source for the tragedies the novel presents. Blair and Elizabeth show how debilitating this restrictive viewpoint can be. Blair, as the heir to the Maitland Iron Works, has no need or desire to work. His energies are directed to a love of beauty and a longing to escape his home; these feelings cause a rift between Blair and his mother that deepens as the novel progresses. As he grows older, Blair deliberately chooses friends and interests that anger his mother, and she finally decides to cut him off financially and eventually disinherit him. Yet Blair will go through the novel unwilling to accept his own role in his mother's actions. Having avoided responsibility for himself and others throughout the book, Blair cannot accept it even when circumstances demand that he take control of his situation. Elizabeth is given a passionate and headstrong character that brings joy and sorrow to the other major actors; she is the romantic focus for David's and Blair's changing emotional awareness. As the boys grow into men, their progress is measured in their response to Elizabeth's own development, and her growing understanding of how to use these feelings plays an important role in the novel's outcome, as she will use one man's actions and declarations against the other. The various confrontations of these characters'

desires and their results bring about the clash of personal fulfillment and social responsibility.

The early chapters present the children as just entering adolescence. Deland creates a series of small scenes -- playing in a garden, a dinner at the Maitland house, buying ice cream at the toll-house -- to set out their basic characters. As the novel continues, Deland gives more time to each of the four and traces the growth of their separate personalities. Blair's dislike of arguments, for example, is his way of avoiding responding to his mother's demands and anger. This habit hardens into a chronic method of response. Faced with his mother's death and the loss of Elizabeth's affection, Blair simply retreats from any active part in resolving the situation. This passivity affects his relations with the other characters, especially David and Elizabeth. David, who has recently become a medical student, becomes engaged to Elizabeth, but he decides to delay their marriage until he is capable of supporting them. He will not even accept Elizabeth's small inheritance, and this infuriates her. Believing that David does not really care for her, Elizabeth agrees to elope with Blair as the best way to get back at David. Blair's own motives for eloping also include revenge against David, because Blair has felt that David has taken Elizabeth away from him. Both Blair and



Elizabeth react without thinking of the consequences -- for David, Mrs. Maitland, Helena Richie, or themselves. This one action precipitates the unraveling of ideals and lives that Helena's sacrifice can begin to restore.

Blair and Elizabeth's elopement pushes David into an emotional exile. He directs all his attention to his studies and cuts himself off from practically every social contact. Even his relationship with his mother suffers. Sarah Maitland cuts her son out of her life completely, refusing to provide for him in any way and forbidding Nannie from offering Blair any kind of aid. Mrs. Maitland's harshness toward Blair will push Nannie into forging her mother's signature on a codicil of her will. This was to leave money to David to fund a hospital for the workers at the Maitland Iron Works. Instead Blair receives the money, and when the forgery is revealed, he refuses to return the funds either to David or the estate. Elizabeth, when she learns Blair's decision, determines to leave him, and runs to David. Her own impulsive action encourages David to believe that he has the right to keep Elizabeth, and they go to the Richies' summer cottage to plan their next step. Learning of Elizabeth's action, Helena follows her and then the couple to the cottage. Once there Helena reveals her past sin and its effects on her life:

"Suppose," Helena Richie was saying -- "suppose that Blair does not give you a divorce." ...

"And," his mother said, "when David gets tired of you -- what then?" ... "Men do tire of such women, Elizabeth. What then?"

"I am not afraid of that," the girl said ... and David's mother, looking at him with ineffable compassion, said, very gently:

"I was not afraid of that, once, myself."

That was all. 48

David's and Elizabeth's stunned response enables Helena to begin their healing as her own sudden insight began hers. The novel ends with David, Elizabeth and Blair achieving a temporary reconciliation of their past and present. Deland, however, leaves their future unclear, because their lives and situations will continually change.

Taken out of context, the events presented above are melodramatic, but when they are placed within the dense texture of the novel, they become credible responses for the characters. Deland has given scrupulous attention to details of experience and behavior in The Iron Woman, and characters respond as they do because of her careful delineation of internal and external influences. The novel is not a story of fate or inevitability; every character has the ability to choose a course of action.

But David's, Elizabeth's, Blair's and Nannie's decisions are frequently based on selfish motives. The four, for most of the novel, evaluate their actions from this limited point of view; only the severest spiritual dilemmas can shake them from such complacency. This is the basic lesson of Helena's revelation; by forcing David and Elizabeth to include past and future in their lives, Helena manages to awaken their own moral conscience and sense of responsibility:

You ask what the book is about, and I find myself wondering exactly how I can answer that question. It doesn't seem to me to have any particular aim, but rather a slice out of human living. If it says anything, it says that all the privileges of life imply responsibilities, and anybody who accepts privileges and does not fulfill responsibilities is a parasite upon society. ...at the very end [Helena] emerges to strike a high note of responsibility and courage.<sup>49</sup>

When the characters recognize how history and self-control have worked in their lives, they have come to the beginning of salvation:

[Elizabeth's] mind went back over her engagement, her love, her happiness -- and her



tempers. Well nothing had come of them. ... And still further back: her careless, fiery girlhood -- when the knowledge of her mother's recreancy, undermining her sense of responsibility by the condoning suggestion of heredity, had made her quick to excuse her lack of self-control.

(IW:280-281)

Recognition is only the first step in this process; the person must accept the knowledge such periods of introspection bring. Only then will the individual be able to confront the wider community and its expectations. Elizabeth's moment of insight comes when she recognizes that her marriage to Blair has sprung from false feelings; her desire to hurt David blocked any understanding that she and Blair would be hurt. Elizabeth's resolution to maintain the appearance of marital success is short-lived, however, because she forgets to include Blair and his feelings into her decision. While her intentions are valid, Elizabeth cannot uphold them since she has omitted any consideration of another position. Not dealing with Blair prevents her from complete acceptance; her second elopement indicates the unfinished quality of her self-examination. After Helena's intervention, Elizabeth returns to Blair and takes on the responsibility for her behavior:

Effort was all before them; for the desision not to change conditions did not at the moment change character; and it never changed temperaments. ...There had to be many evenings of rebellion, many mornings of taking up her burden; the story of them began when she knew, without reasoning about it, that the hope of escape from them had ceased. (IW:469)

David and Blair must also accept the burden of denial and the burden of acceptance.

Deland maintained that "Elizabeth is the central figure," and that the various pairings of the young people embodied the novel's dominant issues. However, as she continued working on the novel, Deland's interest turned often to Sarah Maitland, the character whose occupation gives the novel its name: "Blair's mother is as striking in her way as Benjamin Wright was in his. ...In her tragic effort to make up for what she has done to him, she precipitates certain crucial situations on which the story rests."<sup>50</sup> Sarah Maitland's personality dominates the novel whenever she appears. Helena Richie may be the book's ethical center, but Sarah Maitland's thwarted motherhood, and her late recognition that she has ruined Blair's integrity, compel the reader's attention and sympathy.

As soon as she enters the novel, Sarah Maitland extends Deland's previous portraits of domineering women. Mrs. Paul, Mrs. Drayton (from John Ward, Preacher), Mrs. Barkley and other like characters exercise their control over people because of their social position and family relations. Each commands, either through a husband, or his will, sufficient income to be able to concentrate on outside affairs. These women, too, rely heavily on their age and its experience when they attempt to direct others' lives. All of these figures are middle-aged or older and are members of their environment's upper social strata. Their advice and presence, for the most part, border on interference rather than valuable assistance, but certain of these characters, like Mrs. Barkley or Mrs. Dale, act from good intentions. Often these women's involvement arises from the sincere desire to help. More harmful characters, like Mrs. Paul, attempt to control the lives of the people around them through a variety of manipulative strategies. Sarah Maitland shares many of these women's character traits; she is "a silent, plain woman, of devastating common sense" (IW:7). Like all these women Sarah Maitland has a dominant personality and presence. She is intelligent, alert, and capable. Like most of these figures she is a widow who commands a great fortune. Sarah Maitland's differences from her



predecessors, however, mark her as a distinct personality.

Where the other dominant women in Deland's fiction spend the majority of the time involved in other lives, Sarah Maitland throws herself into the Maitland Iron Works, and in work she reveals a clear-cut sense of purpose and vision that the earlier women lack. She works herself tirelessly, giving all of her attention to the Works, and this dedication earns her the respect of her workers, from the puddlers to managers, and her business colleagues. Besides this sheer driving energy, Sarah differs from Deland's earlier characters in her neglect of social niceties. She refuses to move from her house although the mill has moved up to its very doors and the area is blanketed by smoke and ashes. She maintains an office in the dining room of the house and only clears the papers when meals are served. The furniture has not been changed for many years. Her clothing is serviceable rather than fashionable. She remains unconcerned with image, judging people on their work and its quality. This failure to uphold social customs means her life outside of the mill is severely restricted, but she feels no loss to herself or her needs. She is completely self-sufficient in her environment and her dealings and her influence extends far because of her complete absorption. However, for all her strength of character and presence, Sarah

lacks qualities that allow the sensitive side of her personality to appear, and this inability to step down from her role as mill owner makes her the novel's most tragic figure: "The psychology of the Iron Woman has interested me immensely, and contains a good deal of pathos, and perhaps tragedy, too."<sup>84</sup>

Sarah Maitland's strengths become her weaknesses because she is unable to translate them to the private sphere. Her relationships with her children are formal and distanced. Only when it is too late does she turn her attentions and energies to them in an attempt to affect their lives positively. The force of her personality frightens the children when they are young, and the habit of avoidance becomes ingrained as Blair and Nannie reach adulthood. Deland examines in detail the maternal instinct in The Iron Woman. Throughout the novel Helena Richie's and Sarah Maitland's handling of their parental relations form an important thematic undercurrent. Helena's loving support and judicious distancing in her feelings towards David stand in strong contrast to Sarah Maitland's cold disengagement of her smothering presentations of money and gifts. The reader can easily condemn Sarah as an unconcerned parent, unwilling to take Robert Ferguson's advice about Blair because she refuses to give up control. However, Sarah's failure is not one

of love. Her concern and care for Blair are very real, especially when she understands her contributions to his moral weakness:

Then Sarah Maitland began her statement of the situation as she saw it; she told him just what sort of man he was: indolent, useless, helpless, selfish. ...Then she told him that his best, which had been harmlessness, and his worst, which they "would not go into" -- were both more her fault than his. It was her fault that he was such a poor creature; "a pitiless creature; I've made you so!" she said. (IW:289-90)

Her painful evaluation of her parenting reveals the intensity of her feelings for Blair. By taking all responsibility, by expecting too little, Sarah limits Blair's potential. Love is not her failure; rather it is her inability to express her feelings openly, particularly the most intimate emotions. Unlike Helena, Sarah does not invite confidences. She does not offer a soft or soothing exterior to her family or the world. She is also incapable of discarding business concerns when necessary. Unlike Helena, who can readily join in David's childhood games and cares, Sarah never steps out of her position as mill owner. Because of this she conducts her private relations as if they were business issues. Nannie takes on



the role of private secretary while Blair does little more than drain business resources. When she finally realizes the damage she has caused Blair and Nannie, Sarah dies. Her attempts to correct her mistakes, especially cutting Blair out of her will, prove ineffectual. These efforts fail because she is unable to allow Blair any chance to grow on his own. By trying to control Blair from the grave, Sarah returns to the pattern of her past. That Blair remains unchanged, even after his mother's death, is Deland's comment on Sarah's misguided hopes.

The Iron Woman won wide public approval for "presenting the subject clearly and thoughtfully, and the style has become a crystal medium through which we are enabled to watch living characters moving, unconscious of observation, through actual scenes."<sup>51</sup> Deland's attention to detail and her minute observation of characters struck a responsive note in the reading public. She was clearly pleased at the reception the novel received:

In less than three months it had sold 75,000 copies, and about ten days ago the publishers notified me that they had had the official figures from the booksellers all over this country, and found that it was the best selling novel in the United States. This for a book of sobriety and of nearly five hundred pages, is

really a very remarkable record.<sup>52</sup>

Deland's story and its moral impact received constant critical attention. Reviewers commended her fidelity to motivation and development. Not surprisingly, they were divided in their discussion of the novel's two major female characters. Some saw the continuation of Helena Richie's story as "one of the most remarkable studies in recent American fiction;" others contended that Sarah Maitland "dominates all the phases of the complication and has for us a deeper interest than any of the younger people."<sup>53</sup>

Perhaps the most impressive critical response to Deland's novel was the constant emphasis on her commitment to a realistic study of the connections among her characters and their moral struggles a Harper's examination of modern novels in late 1911 considered The Iron Woman a representative work of a new interpretation in realistic fiction:

But in the course of this fiction one line of advance is distinctly seen -- towards a new sense of life, through the release of imagination from traditional limitations imposed upon it by bigotry and sophistry. ... Our living experience is no more real to us than that of all peoples in all ages was to them, but our

sense of life is more immediately derived from it and more completely expels everything not directly pertinent to it.<sup>54</sup>

Deland was particularly applauded by one reviewer for bringing American fiction back to its original purpose. J. B. Kerfoot claimed that previous American literary efforts had turned in on themselves, producing works more full of artifice than "developing human lives."<sup>55</sup> Hardly any negative comments have been found concerning The Iron Woman. When the commentators did point out problems in the novel, they quickly dismissed them as inconsequential to its overall importance. For every reviewer Deland's book represented the finest of her career; her early works had led to this best crafted expression of her moral concerns, and the novel assured her a permanent place in American letters.

For her contemporary audience, these two novels illustrated Deland's firm command of her art and her full understanding of her culture. The focus on moral and social responsibility clearly touched a nerve in the early twentieth century American conscience. In a world changing so rapidly that what was learned today became obsolete tomorrow, Deland reaffirmed the permanence and worth of old values. Through Old Chester and Dr. Lavendar, Deland reminded her readers that the individual needs to



compromise with a larger community, but that compromise need not destroy the person's self-identity. Helena Richie learned this in her novel, and Deland showed that the discovery of self-worth demanded hard choices and sacrifices. However, the initial pain and continued adherence to those lessons brought its reward as Helena's past became the foundation for David's and Elizabeth's future. Once upbraided for refusing to conclude her fiction happily, Deland now received commendations for refusing to wrap her stories in false and contrived endings. Previously regarded as a temporary figure in literary circles, Deland was now guaranteed a position as one of American literature's leading practitioners. These novels made Deland's critical reputation and became the standard by which all her later works would be judged. Having broken free of Old Chester without damaging either her own standing or the village's hold on the public, Deland continued to expand her focus and intentions into other areas. As she prepared to build on this acclaim, however, severe personal losses prevented her from increasing and solidifying her place as a key turn-of-the-century literary figure. Deland's personal affairs caused her to withdraw from her long-standing involvement with current issues. The changes in literary methods and subjects compounded her loss of stature. More and more

she became an uninvolved observer of her environment, and the fiction and non-fiction she produced during the remainder of her life reflected this diminished response to her world.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The Chap Book 7 (June, 1897): 65; Outlook 60 (17 December 1898).

<sup>2</sup> Margaret Deland, Golden Yesterdays (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1941) 315. Subsequent references will be noted in text.

<sup>3</sup> The reviews of the early novels constantly referred to the New England qualities of characters and themes. The error comes partially from the fact that Deland resided in New England -- Boston and Kennebunkport, Maine -- from the early 1880s until her death, and partially from stylistic and thematic similarities between Deland's fiction and authors like Jewett, Freeman, Cooke, Spofford, and others.

<sup>4</sup> Margaret Deland, John Ward, Preacher (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1888) 1.

<sup>5</sup> See for example, Critic 18 (4 August 1888): 54, review of John Ward, Preacher; Literary News 11 (November 1890): 326, review of Sydney; Critic 25 (17 November 1894): 325, review of Philip and His Wife.

<sup>6</sup> Saturday Review (London) 75 (12 January 1895): 55-56, review of Philip and His Wife.

<sup>7</sup> Margaret Deland, "Looking Back on Girlhood," The Youth's Companion 65 (14 January 1892): 23.

<sup>8</sup> Margaret Deland to Madelaine Poindexter, 2 February 1900. Romaine Poindexter Family Letters. Huntington Library, California.

<sup>9</sup> Margaret Deland, "On the Shelf," in The Common Way (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1904) 9.

<sup>10</sup> "On the Shelf," 27-28.

<sup>11</sup> Henry May, The End of American Innocence: The First Years of Our Own Time (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959) 51.

<sup>12</sup> Just one example is Deland's "Dwarfs," Harper's Bazar 30 (January 1904): 20-24 which recommends that parents practice "a judicious letting alone" with their



children. These sentiments are duplicated in numerous Old Chester stories such as "An Old Chester Secret," "Sally," "The Child's Mother," and others. This duplication can be found in Deland's treatment of women's moral lives, women's response to war, the importance of work, etc.

<sup>13</sup> Margaret Deland, letter to Elizabeth Jordan, 22 March 1902. Elizabeth Jordan Letters, New York City Public Library.

<sup>14</sup> Margaret Deland, letter to Madelaine Poindexter, 3 January 1905.

<sup>15</sup> These references from Sydney can be found on pages 7, 22, and 299.

<sup>16</sup> Diana Reep in Margaret Deland (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1985) states that "Deland decided in 1897 to develop the world of Old Chester," (40); but Reep's date seems to discount the importance of the Old Chester setting to Philip and His Wife and The Story of a Child.

<sup>17</sup> Margaret Deland, "Mr. Tommy Dove," in Mr. Tommy Dove and Other Stories (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1893) 1. Subsequent references will be noted in text.

<sup>18</sup> Although Deland seems to downgrade the deeper moral purposes of her stories, she is responding from a distance of some fifty years. The rest of the chapter returns to comment on the real concern Deland had for the stories and what they presented.

<sup>19</sup> Harper's 98 (May 1899): 648.

<sup>20</sup> Margaret Deland, The Story of a Child (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1893) 11. Subsequent references will be noted in text.

<sup>21</sup> Marx, 226.

<sup>22</sup> Critic 34 (March 1899): 261.

<sup>23</sup> Margaret Deland, Philip and His Wife, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1894) 352. Subsequent references will be noted in text.

<sup>24</sup> The Chap Book 7 (June 1897): 65.

<sup>25</sup> Saturday Review (London) 97 (27 August 1904): 21.

<sup>26</sup> Margaret Deland, letter to Madelaine Poindexter,

28 April 1905.

27 Margaret Deland, Old Chester Tales, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1899) 3-4. Subsequent references will be noted in text.

28 Margaret Deland, Dr. Lavendar's People, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1903) 20-21. Subsequent references will be noted in text.

29 Margaret Deland, letter to Madelaine Poindexter, 11 February 1907.

30 Margaret Deland, Around Old Chester, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1915) 109-110. Subsequent references will be noted in text.

31 Margaret Deland, "Concerning Glass Houses," in The Common Way, 165.

32 Margaret Deland, "Concerning Sinners," Harper's Bazar 39 (June 1905): 599.

33 Margaret Deland, letter to Elizabeth Jordan, 13 January 1905.

34 Nation 68 (11 May 1899): 358.

35 See Philip and His Wife, 38-42.

36 Margaret Deland, "How Could She!" in New Friends in Old Chester, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1923) 206. Subsequent references will be noted in text.

37 "Margaret Deland," Harper's Weekly 47 (14 November 1903): 1840.

38 Margaret Deland, letter to Madelaine Poindexter, 28 April 1905.

39 Margaret Deland, The Awakening of Helena Richie (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1906) 339. Subsequent references will be noted in text.

40 Nation 83 (26 July 1903): 53.

41 Independent 61 (9 August 1906): 337-338.

42 Edith Baker Brown, "Margaret Deland's 'The Awakening of Helena Richie'," The Bookman (New York) 24

(September 1906): 58.

43 William Payne, review of The Awakening of Helena Richie, Dial 41 (1 September 1906): 115.

44 Nation 83 (26 July 1906): 53.

45 Margaret Deland, letter to Mary Jones 2nd, 21 August 1906. Margaret Deland Letters. Barrett Collection, University of Virginia.

46 Margaret Deland, letter to Madelaine Poindexter, 15 November 1906.

47 Margaret Deland, letter to Madelaine Poindexter, 13 January 1909.

48 Margaret Deland, The Iron Woman, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1911) 461-462. Subsequent references will be noted in text.

49 Margaret Deland, letter to Madelaine Poindexter, 18 December 1909.

50 Margaret Deland, letter to Madelaine Poindexter, 14 September 1910.

51 Margaret Deland, letter to Nathan Wallack, 16 April 1932.

52 Mary Tappan Wright, "The Iron Woman," North American Review 194 (11 December 1911) 921.

53 Margaret Deland, letter to Madelaine Poindexter, 11 December 1911.

54 Isa Carrington Cabell, review of The Iron Woman, The Bellman 11 (25 November 1911): 692; William Payne, review of The Iron Woman Dial 51 (1 December 1911): 473.

55 Life 58 (16 November 1911): 862.



#### DISENGAGEMENT

It seems to be my fate always to walk in the middle of the road, and consequently I am odious to the people who walk at the extreme sides of the road!

Margaret Deland to Madelaine Poindexter  
15 December 1919

Margaret Deland's best fiction upheld much of the preconceived consensus in American political, intellectual, and moral thought that dominated the years prior to the First World War. As historians of the period show, however, this idealized portrait of American stability was constantly challenged: "the forces of new and old, of experiment and resistance collide[d] with singular energy."<sup>1</sup> Struggling to reconcile these attacks with her hopes for continuity, Deland reaffirmed her assertion that the individual must relinquish all selfish claims in personal and social relations. Only this way could a person achieve a sense to connection to humanity and to the divine:

Your reference to the Belgian relief work makes me feel surer than ever of what I have been saying lately; that there is some good in this awful and world-shaking catastrophe that has fallen upon us. I mean the awakening of universal sympathy. It is a frightfully high cost to pay for it, but we are getting in return for the war a general awakening of humanity to the realization that we are one, and I suppose that if we ever realized that perfectly, we should be as the gods, knowing good from evil, and knowing that good would finally prevail.<sup>2</sup>

As Deland continued to assert this moral position, however, global, national, and personal circumstances appeared that began to push her particular vision into the background.

Generalizations about complex periods and movements invite censure for oversimplifying historical and cultural developments which were the result of multi-layered relationships and influences. However, the institutions, beliefs, and practices of post-World War I American society were so seriously, even radically, altered by that crisis and its aftermath that this study can only draw them in the broadest outline. Perhaps the most compelling description of the decades following the First World War was the sense of loss and alienation felt by all classes of people; the veneer of consensus, once felt to be the dominant characteristic of America, was shown to be illusionary. Issues once believed to have been corrected -- labor demands, social reforms, business and monetary controls, and other Progressive goals -- resurfaced and demanded new solutions. Previously unheard of issues and behaviors -- woman's suffrage, the threat of Communist infiltration of democratic nations, aggressively modern artistic production, and the increasingly negative reappraisals of the recent past -- created new tensions and required new approaches. The next twenty years in



America's history established a varied, often contradictory, range of solutions to address the alterations in its make-up.

Many intellectuals, politicians, and artists completely abandoned the ideals and practices of the past. New scientific discoveries and psychological theories redefined humanity and the individual's place in the world. Henri Bergson and others changed the idea of time itself, and in the wake of these theories memory, the present and future, and the artistic representations of them were drastically recast. The visual and literary arts were particularly sensitive to such ideas and their practitioners continually sought new forms of expression: the poetry of Eliot, Pound, and H. D., the narrative innovations of Stein, Woolf, and Joyce, the paintings of Picasso, Duchamp, and Matisse. Their works and others' pushed beyond the limits of traditional artistic practices. Technological advances also produced startling changes in American society. The automobile, assembly line, and cinema redefined how one worked and relaxed. These inventions also created new definitions of basic social values such as acceptance, consumption, and productivity. Increasingly, public and private institutions accepted and expanded them, and a new model of personal and social action began to dominate American

society -- the corporate world.

Not everyone willingly accepted the rush towards modernization and innovation; an extensive and powerful conservative reaction was also prominent in the years following the First World War. American political activity was especially influenced by traditional Republican policies and legislation. Woodrow Wilson, in fact, was the only Democratic president elected in the first third of the twentieth century. The Russian Revolution and increased socialist activity around the world contributed to America's Red Scare of the Twenties. The more liberal practices of Protestantism were challenged as well with a marked upsurge in fundamentalism; Billy Sunday was instrumental in the renewed attendance at revivals, and an increase in strict literal Biblical interpretation confronted modern education practices. The Scopes Trial was the most famous of this clash between science and religion. Racial tensions also intensified with the attendant backlash as the Ku Klux Klan gained enough political and public support to march on Washington, D.C. in the Twenties. Psychological theories of white superiority helped fuel the intensification of segregation in the United States and the imposition of restrictive immigration quotas. These opposing responses to new situations and behaviors

worked simultaneously in the years after World War I, neither viewpoint ever gaining complete dominance. Each position gathered supporters from every profession and class and attempted to imprint its particular program on the whole society, and while neither the innovators nor the reactionaries could claim complete victory, the shape of American society was irrevocably altered.

As American society continued to absorb and manipulate extensive changes in its structures Deland, more and more, retreated behind her former assertions and suggestions. Her few new statements on moral and social issues remained basically unchanged by new social influences. In fact, Deland began to restrict her involvement in the public world rather severely; her most prominent action was the organizing and running of a canteen in France during 1917-1918. Returning from France, Deland withdrew from any further strenuous activity, although she retained a keen interest in current affairs and reading. Deland still commented on contemporary events and people, but such expressions remained private, appearing only in her correspondence with the Poindexter family and Nathan Wallack, a collector who became an admirer of Deland and her work. Several factors contributed to Deland's increasing disengagement from an active public role. The first was age. By the



War's end Deland was 62 and had recently suffered several serious illnesses.<sup>3</sup> Secondly, she seemed ignorant of the wide-spread literary experiments and movements. Whether this position was deliberate or unintentional is unknown. However, references in letters to contemporary writers or comments on recent fiction are noticeably absent. The four fictional pieces that Deland produced in the last years of her career remained firmly committed to the conventional formats of the nineteenth century. Even Deland's non-fiction production dropped markedly after the War. Her few contributions centered on her war observations and on spiritualism and psychic research. The most important event in Deland's life that influenced her retreat was her husband's death.

The first mention of Lorin Deland's serious health problems appeared in 1913: "Five weeks ago last Monday he had a very serious and critical surgical operation performed...."<sup>4</sup> Deland did not name Lorin's exact disease, although from references in Golden Yesterdays and letters it may have been some form of cancer:

While the surgeons were congratulating themselves on the immediate success of the operation, it was Dr. Harrington who told me the truth -- which, he said, Lorin must not know. It was he who spoke of the possibilities

for the future -- who summoned me to courage,  
who put into my terrified keeping the only  
secret I ever had from Lorin in all our life  
together. And from that day, I walked with  
fear....<sup>5</sup>

By the close of 1916 his health deteriorated further, and  
in the early summer of 1917 Lorin Deland died.

Her husband's death devastated Deland. For the first  
time in thirty-seven years, she faced the world alone, and  
having no children or immediate family close by,  
discovered a frightening emptiness:

It is a curious thing, this business of living,  
when Life is really over. For, of course,  
personally, I am done. Lorin made me. ...Now I  
am like a dull child, in the dark. Useless, &  
frightened & taking up room in this poor tragic  
world: -- yet unable, apparently, to get out, &  
give my place to some one else. ...If I could be  
sure that Lorin is well, & happy, -- I could get  
along.<sup>6</sup>

Deland's war work can be seen as one means of coping with  
her extreme loss. Lorin's death forced her to confront the  
issue of belief that her early characters did. Like Helen  
Ward and Sydney Lee, Deland experienced perhaps the  
greatest fear possible: "I don't know where he is, or if

he is." Like her characters, Deland sought reassurances that her husband's personality had not disappeared, that some basic and vital quality survived even death. Rather than simply accepting the existence of a universal mind, Deland began an intensive and focused study of spiritualism and psychic phenomena.

Deland's initial research into spiritualism and psychic phenomena may ultimately stem from her sense of loss. Her correspondence with Lilian Whiting, a noted writer and spiritualist, opened with an apparent plea for a seance or reading:

...would [a medium Whiting knows] be willing to help a desperate soul groping in the darkness? Perhaps some word would come through to her? -- There seems to be no one else to whom I can turn!<sup>7</sup>

Later, in a speech presented at a Clark University symposium on psychic research, Deland revealed that some contact with her husband had been made. Deland used two examples of communication with an intelligence who identified itself with the initials L[orin] F[her husband's middle initial] D[eland]. Whether these instances were true or reflected Deland's intense need to believe is not at issue. The experience clearly gave Deland relief and hope, and more importantly, Deland



decided to continue her examination of spiritualism and its claims and achievements. She contributed a series of articles to the Woman's Home Companion discussing the possibility of successful communication, wrote the foreward for a translation on the subject, and was invited to participate in the symposium already mentioned.

As always, Deland did not advocate full participation without carefully weighing the evidence and reaching an intelligent decision: "To me, it is intuition, pillared and buttressed by Reason!"<sup>8</sup> While she clearly felt that the weight of the evidence was with her, Deland reaffirmed the need to balance supporting and opposing responses: "...but it takes a great deal of judgement to reach an opinion as to what the happenings mean. So these papers that I have written are all on the side of caution"<sup>9</sup> Interestingly, Deland kept her fiction completely free from any specific references to psychic research or spiritualism, and in spite of her growing commitment, Deland continued to use fiction as her major means of addressing issues she felt demanded serious and reasoned attention.

No careful observer of American life during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries could ignore the dramatic alteration in women's social, economic, and political positions. Women's changing lives and

opportunities reached into every facet of society, bringing with them the inevitable clash of support and antagonism. The history of the nineteenth century was the story of the deep-seated radical shift in women's understanding of their own value, its imposed limitations, its great potentials. The twentieth century reflected the various attempts taken to achieve those promises. Women's struggles throughout these years, of course, were countered by hostility, confusion, and denial. Because the progress of women touched every possible relationship, this study can only present general trends and outline issues in the broadest terms. Deland's interest in women's changing roles appeared throughout much of her most active years, culminating in the publication of The Rising Tide (1916), a novel which specifically dealt with the "New Woman." Before this fictional treatment, however, Deland focused a large proportion of her non-fictional work on discussions of women's issues.

Deland, from her first essays concerned with women's interests, presented a unified and explicitly conservative view regarding a woman's social position and function. A product herself of a conventional and cultured upbringing, Deland was taught and absorbed very specific ideals and expectations of womanly behavior -- an early marriage to an appropriate spouse, children, the proper maintenance of

a household, adherence to the dominant religious, cultural, and social norms, controlled participation in proper female activities. Underneath this traditional behavior and outlook, however, Deland exhibited a rebellious streak that the adult woman channeled into more accepted forms. The sixteen-year old Deland momentarily considered an elopement with an older neighbor, but her plan was discovered and squashed. More serious was Deland's announcement of her intention to earn her own living, and her eventual attainment of a teaching position at the Girls Normal College in New York (now Hunter College) over her uncle's and aunt's objections.<sup>10</sup> Deland's rebelliousness expressed itself in common mid-1870 forms. What made her actions important rested in the social position from which she acted. Deland's family enjoyed social position and financial ease. Their home was a large farm with indoor and outdoor servants. Deland's maternal relations were also members of the upper class involved in the early steel industry in Pittsburgh. Deland literally and figuratively abandoned this background when she determined to pursue a career. While not disowned by her family, Deland's later relations with her relatives were more formal and infrequent. None of her family visited Deland when she first married, and when John Ward, Preacher was being composed, Deland's uncle



offered to pay her not to publish it. Deland's marriage did not initially restore her to a secure financial position. She and Lorin devised numerous schemes and methods for saving and earning money. Even Deland's first poetic efforts reflected the need for additional income.

This early poverty became an important factor in Deland's later evaluations of marriage, particularly of the woman's role. Cecil Shore and Helena Richie, for example, are wealthy women materially, but spiritually and morally bankrupt. Physical comfort has stunted their sense of self and duty to others. Women like Lydia Sampson, Katherine Townsend, or Susan Carr express the positive side of poverty because they have managed to overcome the temptation of the physical world or never had it to worry about. Throughout many of the essays which deal with broader comments on women's changing position, Deland reiterates the value of being poor. The wife becomes a frequent target when she puts her own selfishness or desires to be like others above the care of home and family. When the wife abdicates others' comfort for her own, she jeopardizes the smooth running and emotional well-being of the household. Deland did claim that marital and familial happiness was everyone's responsibility, but she stressed the importance of the woman's position because, in many ways, the household took

its cues for proper behavior from her. As late as 1921 Deland contended:

When a girl hesitates to marry because of the smallness of her young man's salary it is generally because a mother...believes that money is more essential than love. It takes the blows of fate to knock such estimates of values to pieces and let the children see that the real essentials of life are spiritual -- see the difference between bread and a stone!<sup>11</sup>

Deland believed that the couple's early struggles would cement their commitment and create a deep bond able to overcome later problems. Such comparisons, in fact, were Deland's favorite method for developing her essays, and by setting this generational dispute most often between mothers and daughters, she was able to reinforce her assertion that although women have gained much, they have sacrificed certain vital qualities.

Before she specifically used the essays to address a more limited contrast of generations, Deland produced a series of "Studies of Great Women" for Harper's Bazar. The articles appeared from October, 1900 to July, 1901 and treated seven well-known historical figures. Deland's choices (and how the subjects were chosen is not known) covered a diverse range of periods and personalities.

Deland discussed rulers (Cleopatra and Elizabeth I), saints (Joan of Arc), artists (Angelica Kauffman and Madame Recamier), rebels (Charlotte Corday), a king's mistress (Madame de Maintenon), and a model of womanly virtue (Cornelia). In each portrait Deland highlighted one particular characteristic that each woman embodied -- Cornelia's sense of duty, Elizabeth's passion for living, for example. Typically, at the sketch's end Deland compared that quality to the modern woman's situation. Sometimes the modern world has advanced beyond the limits of Corday's lewdness or Cleopatra's superficial charm. Often, however, there is a wide gap between these earlier figures and modern women:

The change is good; we all believe that; but are we guarding against the dangers that come with it. ...There seems to be a curious arrogance in our tiny bustling haste to help the Eternal in improving his world. ...This new Feminine Ideal, divine as we believe it to be, must yet be bound close to our grim and weary world by a certain old-fashioned word -- duty.<sup>12</sup>

The phrase "feminine ideal" reappeared constantly in Deland's essays dealing with women's issues, and this concept soon became the measuring stick for her later discussions. Deland defined this ideal first as a sense



of duty -- a sense of responsibility that a woman cultivated in all her private and social relations. Deland foresaw the eventual breakdown of society without this intense commitment to one's self, one's family, and one's world. The second requirement needed for attaining this ideal was that the modern woman must retain a sense of femininity: "graciousness and love and honor, the delight of sweet reasonableness, makes the ideal woman; they are the combination of heart and head which is the perfect human life."<sup>13</sup> In addition to these personal attributes Deland asserted that the feminine ideal was best expressed in marriage and family. Through husband and children a woman found the finest means of expressing her ideal private self. Marriage encouraged, in fact, demanded that a woman cultivate a sense of responsibility and that her duties be performed with feminine grace and demeanor. To deny marriage was to destroy the basis of civilization, and no advance in personal freedom could compensate for such a loss.

Deland's explicit defense of marital and familial relations was clearly based in nineteenth century conventions and expectations. However, Deland realized that marriage could not, and must not, become a static relation. Indeed, in Philip and His Wife she explicitly demonstrated the results such stultifying definitions had

on this connection. Neither did Deland wish to see marriage abolished. Both The Awakening of Helena Richie and The Iron Woman illustrated Deland's strong defense of the institution despite sometimes difficult circumstances. Although she insisted that family and marriage must be preserved, Deland never aimed to halt or deny the progress women had made and would continue to make. This apparent paradox of viewpoints was typical for many turn of the century women who shared Deland's background and experience; this clash of positions enabled Deland to construct a new stance, one that balanced the best possibilities of both environments. As Barbara Epstein affirms:

Nineteenth-century women acted within a tension between the claims of domesticity and the pulls of a society unfolding beyond the borders of the family. ...For this reason many women were open to considering new ways of looking at family relations and the roles of women. This created the space in which it was possible for some women to sharpen the critical edge of values that women had long accepted as their own, to argue on the basis of those values for female social and political action.<sup>14</sup>

Even though her essays constantly pointed out the

pitfalls to women's advances, Deland presented her strictures as cautionary pieces. Spiritual arrogance, moral closedmindedness, these posed real dangers to the gains made. What Deland offered in these non-fictional pieces were prescriptions for assuring the success of change and the permanence of these advances: "How are we to meet them? Not by sending Woman back to the Home. We couldn't do that if we wanted to -- and we don't want to! So the first thing for us to do is to teach women..." (emphasis Deland's). Deland, in fact, saw no incongruity in her statements when referring to such advances. Nowhere in these pieces did she find it necessary to define or defend women's progress. Pointing out what she saw as dangers to modern women became essential because the temptation to go too far, too fast was very real for Deland. In the rush for social responsibility, economic opportunity, and political equality, she feared the modern woman would disregard the value of the past. However, Deland never advocated accepting the past unchallenged; the past had to be used carefully because it could not answer every new situation. This judicious appropriation was needed even when the modern woman confronted Deland's two criteria for womanly behavior -- duty and femininity.

A reapplication of these ideals had to occur if they were to fit modern requirements. The core demands,



personal and social responsibility, did not alter; rather their configurations shifted. For example, Deland called for increased educational opportunities, but not simply for the selfish pursuit of knowledge. She contended that women must put their education to use in the world. One surprising concern Deland hoped improved education would address was sex education; in a 1907 article she created a scenario of ignorance -- a fourteen year-old girl pregnant, the father sixteen -- and called for recognition and action. Still later, Deland criticized her generation's failure to teach its children about sex and yet expect them to know how to respond to sexual situations. These articles came from her own experience with unmarried, pregnant women in the 1880s and 90s. Just as one's duty needed to be adapted to a changing world, one's display of femininity also underwent alteration; Deland named reticence and gentleness the traits of a truly feminine woman. However, reticence did not mean ignorance, gentleness was not cowardice. The woman who was too dependent on a man for physical comfort and mental interest offered society nothing and failed her own potential. Deland asked modern women to recognize and appreciate their differences from men, and she hoped that they would use these to build an atmosphere of shared sexual definitions and expectations. This balancing of

past and present found a more personal expression in Deland's comments on a young cousin:

It was curious to see in her a mixture of the old and new regime. She has many of the qualities which were supposed to be part of girlhood in the days when we were girls, and yet the ferment of Life is going on behind that pure and candid brow; and with the old-fashionedness of her, is also the strenuous new fashion, which is to my way of thinking, going to make the world infinitely better.<sup>16</sup>

The ideal combination held the future's promise for women and for society, and Deland used her essays to point the way for modern women to acquire that blending of the best of both worlds.

Deland presented this same belief in the importance of balancing the best of past and present generations in her fiction, especially in *Old Chester*. The incorporation of new ideas had always been *Old Chester*'s hallmark, and by carefully blending traditional viewpoints and innovative ones, *Old Chester* managed to survive the turmoils of change. Many characters in the stories faced the dilemma of reconciling old and new, but Deland most often put the confrontation before female characters. Because a woman's position and role would be most affected

by change, Deland built many Old Chester stories on a woman's reactions. "Sally," a story from the first Old Chester collection, illustrates the importance of finding a middle way between family duty and personal happiness. Sally Smith constantly delays her marriage to Andrew Steele because of the demands made by her family; Mrs. Smith, and Sally's sisters and brother impose their own concerns -- emotional and financial -- on Sally's own wishes. Sally gives the money she has saved for the wedding once to cover Robert's college debt and a second time to pay for Esther's art classes. Nothing comes of these sacrifices. Robert gets into trouble again and Esther decides she needs further schooling. Only Sally's desires are postponed. As Dr. Lavendar points out: "This virtue of self-sacrifice has brought forth vice."<sup>17</sup> Every time another crisis comes, Sally willingly delays her wedding, and because she is convinced that she acts properly, Andrew agrees to the delay. Only when Dr. Lavendar practically forces Sally to think of herself and Andrew does she finally agree to get married. Deland underscores the potential destructive effect of such constant sacrifice of personal happiness by telling the reader that almost twenty years have passed between Andrew's first proposal and his and Sally's eventual marriage.



Marriage is a conventional method to represent a turning point in a woman's experience, and Deland handles courtships and marriages effectively in the Old Chester stories. Marriage offers the women who accept it a chance for growth; Ellen Bailey from "The Apotheosis of the Reverend Mr. Spangler," Lucy in "The Unexpectedness of Mr. Horace Shield," and Elizabeth Day in "Good for the Soul" are given new freedoms and possibilities. Deland, of course, defines these opportunities according to the character's personality; some women readily fall into the traditional patterns of behavior and response like Lucy or Dorothea Ferris. Others find in marriage moral strength or practical abilities that had been untested. Interestingly, Deland does not limit marriage to young women; many of the characters who marry in the Old Chester tales are older women, women who bring a wide experience into the relationship. Not every woman, however, accepts marriage; several women in the stories consciously refuse a proposal -- Lydia Sampson in "The Grasshopper and the Ant," Clara Hale in "Miss Clara's Perseus," and Rose Knight in "How Could She!" and Helena Richie. Marriages made from a position of honesty promise success; in these women's stories such trust is lacking, most often when something has occurred that reveals the man's real personality. Under such circumstances these relations

could not succeed; a false or insecure basis for marriage will only damage the relationship and both people. Jane Jay in "Where Laborers are Few" reveals the potential for harm; her half-recognized hope for a wedding with Paul is thwarted, but had they married, Deland suggests in the story, both would have been locked into self-images that would have crippled their lives together. Old Chester, of course, responds to these various courtships according to its evaluation of the people involved; some marriages are approved, some seen as mistakes. Old Chester, however, willingly compromises its own standards of propriety when necessary because the town knows that without accommodation nothing can survive.

Marriage is not the only strategy Deland uses in the Old Chester stories to illustrate the changing roles of women in society. Several female characters are given careers, although Deland tends to place them in traditional ones; both Ellen Bailey and Rose Knight are schoolteachers. However, she does allow a few women to pursue very unconventional lives. Susan Carr, from Philip and His Wife, runs a successful farm; Elizabeth Day, before her marriage, performed in a circus; Harriet Hutchinson, from "At the Stuffed-Animal House," is a taxidermist. Surprisingly, though, no woman character in Old Chester pursues a literary career. Only once does

Deland make a character a writer, but the story is not part of Old Chester nor is the writer a woman. Whatever career these women have chosen, they must accept the consequences of their choices, and Deland shows that if such a decision is made with this understanding, the characters enjoy full and happy lives. By reconciling traditional definitions of womanly behavior with modern demands and expectations, the women of Old Chester are able to confront a changing world and impose a sense of order on it.

During Deland's lifetime women won, finally, the right to the vote, and her responses to suffrage encapsulated the double-edged quality of Deland's feelings on women's issues. The movement's history has been detailed in the studies of Eleanor Flexnor and Aileen Kraditor and others, and since Deland never formally joined with the pro- or anti-suffrage campaigns, her reactions must be taken as immediate responses to particular situations. Before 1910 she made no public statement concerning women's suffrage; her essays focused on social issues and changing mores. A strong, unified push for the vote itself had dissipated in the first years of the twentieth century. Inside the movement factional clashes interrupted the organization and operation of campaigns, and the first leaders, Susan B. Anthony, Carrie



Chapman Cott, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, were retiring from their active roles, leaving a gap in momentum.<sup>18</sup>

Also contributing to this slowdown were the growing numbers of other outlets for concerned women's energies and participation:

Women's clubs proliferated, women college graduates were almost being accepted as normal, women factory workers increased enormously in number and were beginning to organize, and middle-class women were finding that recent household inventions and changes in living patterns gave them more time for outside activities, while their training was making them dissatisfied with traditional middle-class women's activities.<sup>19</sup>

Specific federal legislative efforts to obtain the vote halted, although localized state efforts kept suffrage an active issue. Between 1910 and 1914 national attention began to center again on suffrage; the exact circumstances behind this renewed interest were complex ones, pulling in widely separate strands of efforts and activity. William Chafe points to the increasing Progressive influence in national politics as a focusing point. Women had long been associated with Progressive reforms, such as child labor reform, factory conditions, and standards in the food

industry, and he asserts that a "common denominator which united most of these groups was the belief that the vote for women represented an essential step toward a better society."<sup>20</sup> Other historians of the movement point to Illinois granting a limited suffrage in 1913 because "it manage[d] to satisfy both sides while still offering encouragement for a wider acceptance."<sup>21</sup> Others credit the introduction by Alice Paul and other younger campaigners of the radical tactics used in Great Britain.<sup>22</sup> Taking its impetus from these many sources, the suffrage campaign regained its prominence in American society and remained a dominant issue until the Nineteenth Amendment's final ratification in 1920.

Deland's first extensive comment on woman's suffrage appeared in her long article, "The Change in the Feminine Ideal" (1910). Here she constructed her argument's basic features and, in subsequent pieces and letters, rarely deviated from them. She did not oppose the idea of suffrage; she, here and elsewhere, considered it "perhaps the most delicate spiritual possession of the human creature." Because of the vital nature of the vote in relation to social continuity, Deland admonished women (and men) to take this privilege seriously. Women, she feared, would at best ignore the real purpose of the ballot and at worst treat it as a panacea. Unreasonable

expectations of what the vote can accomplish appeared to Deland as a potentially tragic waste; to attack results without acknowledging causes was only cosmetic. Enacting laws against prostitution, for example, would only force those who provide and who enjoy the system to find new ways of circumventing the new laws. Deland refused to accept that morality, and spirituality, could be legislated.

Deland's analysis remained pointed towards the spiritual effects contained in the idea of suffrage, which removed her responses from the practical or legislative issues: "We are so eager to make people good that we forget that the consequences of wrong-doing -- suffering, pain, failure, and even death -- may be the angels of god, those angels who are given charge over us, to keep us in all our ways." Deland's clearest discussion of women's suffrage in this article concerned the granting of universal suffrage to women. Extending the vote she contended would bring in thousands of ignorant, easily swayed voters. Clearly her class biases entered into her contempt for such potential voters: "We have suffered many things at the hands of Patrick; the New Woman would add Bridget also. And graver danger -- to the vote of that fierce, silly, amiable creature, the uneducated Negro, she would add (if logical) the vote of his sillier baser



female."<sup>23</sup> Deland's attitudes reflected a strong current of contemporary reaction, and their influence on her views cannot be overlooked.

In a later essay, written in 1913 during the first wave of renewed suffrage activity, Deland expressed these objections more carefully, and surprisingly, criticized the idea of universal male suffrage as well: "Male suffrage in this country, limited as it is only by very easy qualifications, has not yet proved itself an entirely satisfactory mechanism for producing government."<sup>24</sup> She then pointed out how party bosses easily buy votes through bribes or intimidation and how party leaders guarantee an election's outcome. Throughout this article Deland stressed the importance of an educated voter; she even supported the development of some method to determine which voters would be most qualified. Although she incorporated possible objections to her proposition, Deland's responses offered few practical solutions, except perhaps for improving civics education in the public schools. Her objections demanded radical solutions that would overturn the status quo and require a complete alteration in social attitudes.

Deland's response remained strongly connected to her philosophical idealism, but the hopefulness underlying her third choice for suffrage, a qualified suffrage based on

education and testing for men and women, was eventually replaced, not so much by cynicism, as resignation that society would insist on maintaining a flawed system as long as it worked.

The thing that puzzles me about the election is what strikes me as the lack of thought on the part of the American people. ...When I saw how the nation had moved, as a sort of glacier or landslide, and elected the shallow, but doubtless well-meaning [Franklin] Roosevelt and his exceedingly dangerous, (and also well-meaning) gang, I thought to myself, "This nation thinks it thinks. But it doesn't!"<sup>25</sup>

Deland's private views mirrored these public expressions of hope and fear. While against the idea of universal female suffrage, she did not ally herself with the anti-suffrage movement. She found many of their arguments silly and unrealistic in the face of the advances women had made:

...there are vast numbers of women who are neither wives nor mothers, and whose relation to society is as entirely industrial as that of any male wage-earner; no one can say that these persons, whose vote might regulate or protect their own industries, would find the ballot a

tax, merely because they are women.<sup>26</sup>

Deland considered such anti-suffrage contentions that women can influence best at home, that the "hand that rocks the cradle" is unfit for the vote, that women will be coarsened by political contact, as obstructions to women's continued social achievements. However, Deland did not deny that the criticisms of the anti-suffrage camp were invalid. Underneath the superficial concerns rested a real fear for a loss of status. Women could not and must not abdicate their position in the home; a woman's influence, based on knowledge and experience of the ballot, had a more potent effect than the anti-suffrage formulation. The educated wife and mother, by example and discussion, exerted a more powerful influence for affecting legislative action and political change. Deland's attempts to reconcile both sides forced her to confess that "it [is] impossible for me to call myself either a Suffragist or an Anti-Suffragist."<sup>27</sup> She abruptly dropped the suffrage issue just as it came to its climax because of her husband's death. Later correspondence presented no specific evaluation or comment on the Nineteenth Amendment's passing. Deland's only other extended treatment of suffrage and related women's issues appeared in her novel, The Rising Tide (1916), written during these years of intense agitation.



The Rising Tide traces the changes in outlook and expectations of Frederica (Fred) Payton, an avid supporter of women's rights and suffrage. From her first appearance Fred dominates the other characters. Her enthusiasm and arguments overwhelm the objections of family and friends. Deland very obviously pits one generation against another, as Fred's mother and grandmother continually condemn her actions and opinions. Both Mrs. Payton and Mrs. Holmes represent the very conservative position regarding a woman's abilities and behavior. Arthur Weston, a family friend and later Fred's husband, illustrates the conservative male view of the New Woman. Throughout the novel he provides a commentary on Fred's desires and the ways in which she succeeds or fails in attaining them. Interestingly, Weston has more sympathy for Fred's position than either her mother or grandmother because he can see the value in much of Frederica's opinions as well as the flaws in her arguments. For most of the novel Weston acts as a restraining influence on Fred, but he is always willing to let Fred have the experience. Fred's mother would prefer that she remain at home, behaving according to her own outdated ideas of proper womanly behavior. Neither Mrs. Payton nor Weston, though, offers Fred a consistent source of emotional or spiritual comfort; Mrs. Payton is unable to break out of her own

selfishness and fear of change. Weston's most common response to Fred is to treat her as a child, and even his moments of understanding are countered by periods where he thinks only of her immaturity and its effect on him: "She amused him, and provoked him, and interested him; but, most of all, the pain of her passionate futilities roused him to a pity that made him really suffer. ...Briefly, she gave him something to think about."<sup>28</sup> Despite his eventual deepening of feelings, Weston's initial bemused tolerance dominates the story's ending.

Fred's contemporaries -- Laura Childs, her cousin, and Howard Maitland -- are also supporters of women's advancement, but they do not have the same passionate commitment that Fred does. In fact, their involvement in the women's movement stems from their connections to Fred; her intensity pulls them into her activities. For most of the novel Laura and Howard parrot Fred's ideas and arguments; outside the range of Fred's influence both characters quickly fall into fairly conventional thinking. Maitland, for example, when confronted by the opinions of an older man on woman's suffrage, readily accepts his point of view. Fred's position, as presented by Maitland, seems inadequate to combat this man's arguments. Where he once found Fred's independence commendable, Maitland by the novel's conclusion sees it as dangerous. Where he

once thought Fred's flaunting of social conventions -- public smoking, riding with him, working -- exciting, Maitland later views them as demeaning actions. Deland emphasizes his change of heart by having Maitland marry Laura, although in the first part of The Rising Tide he found Fred more attractive.

Laura Childs is, in many ways, the continuation of feminine development represented by Mrs. Payton. Although Laura does not share Mrs. Payton's faults, she retains characteristics that link the two. Laura is conscious of the social influences on one's behavior; When she and Fred join a labor strike in the novel's last chapters, Laura's participation is determined by how others will react to her presence. When the situation turns hostile and Fred and Laura are arrested with the strikers, Laura drops all pretense of self-sufficiency:

"Oh, when will Howard come?! said Laura, with a sobbing breath. She was not sorry she had stood by Fred when all the rest of them "took to their heels," only -- "I'll die if he doesn't come soon!" she thought, shaking very much. Once she glanced over her shoulder at Frederica ... and she felt a faint thrill of admiration. Imagine, making notes at such a moment! (RT:267-68)



Laura enjoys the results of a changing world, and her allegiance to the gains women have made is real. However, when faced with situations that test that commitment, Laura waivers and falls into the traditional mold. At the novel's conclusion she is happily married to Howard and happily a mother to a daughter.

Deland builds The Rising Tide on various contrasts of expectations and behavior. Frederica faces several different definitions of a woman's experience and is made to choose one on which she will model the rest of her own life. Since the Payton name is a respected one in the community, Fred's mother feels obligated to uphold certain standards of propriety. A woman engages in genteel activities -- visiting, good works (but done from a distance), supervision of one's home. Fred's disregard of these accepted outlets for a woman's energy deeply upsets Mrs. Payton; she doesn't understand Fred's commitment to suffrage or fair labor practices and retreats to her parlor. Fred's relation with her mother clearly suffers because neither is willing to cross the generational gap. Deland takes care to point out that Fred's rejection of her mother's beliefs includes her rejection of her mother as well. Completely wrapped up in her campaigns, Fred neglects her duty to her mother, and this omission must be corrected if Fred is to grow.

Fred's other examples of feminine behavior are also limiting. Mrs. Childs belongs to clubs and pokes fun at her husband, but she shows no real interest in her children's lives. As long as they conduct themselves properly, Mrs. Childs has no desire to concern herself with them. Flora, the Payton's servant, provides a negative version of Fred's life. Flora all through the novel is concerned only with finding a husband. She is unable, however, to maintain any kind of relationship and, in the book's most dramatic scene, commits suicide. The doctor and everyone else attribute Flora's depressed state of mind to her age (she is in her forties) and her singleness. Surprisingly, the doctor who attends to Flora is a woman, yet the doctor states that Flora should have turned her thwarted hopes into more acceptable avenues for a woman her age -- specifically religion.

The only positive model present in the novel is Eliza Graham, an older single woman. Unlike Flora, Miss Graham has had no desire to marry and has developed a full and successful life. Unlike Mrs. Payton or Mrs. Childs, she is capable of accepting the relaxing of some habits of behavior, but Miss Graham does not condone abandoning the idea of civility. Unlike Weston, Miss Graham finds great hope and value in women's agitation for reforms, and is willing to tolerate the exaggerations that must accompany

any change. Unfortunately, Fred has no extended meetings with Miss Graham. Fred must learn to make the sacrifices and compromises that Miss Graham has. The means by which this compromise will take place is marriage; Deland has Miss Graham affirm that:

"All you can do is to fall back on the thing that hasn't changed and never can change, and never will change. Give girls that and they will get sober!"

[Weston] looked puzzled.

"My dear boy, let them be women, be wives, be mothers! Then being suffragists, or real-estate agents, or anything else, won't do them the slightest harm. Marry them, Arthur, marry them!" (RT:177)

How well marriage will enable Fred to refocus her energies and ideals is left open at the novel's end. Although she and Weston will marry, Fred is a markedly diminished character at the story's conclusion. Flora's death has forced Fred to examine her motivations, and she discovers that selfishness has been the impetus behind many of her actions. Maitland's rejection of her proposal shows Fred that conventional social norms cannot be overturned with impunity. These discoveries echo the insights of other of Deland's major women characters; like



Helena Richie, Elizabeth Ferguson, and Sydney Lee, Fred painfully recognizes the source for her behavior and accepts the consequences of such knowledge: "It is only when Truth speaks to us ... that the human creature knows he is ashamed. Not to feel Shame is to be deaf to that Voice." (RT:236) Shame and the suffering it brings force Fred to re-evaluate her beliefs and offer her the chance for growth; unlike the earlier characters, however, Fred's redemption is unclear. Where the other women had some firm moral or spiritual sense to build on, Fred lacks any system to replace her previous hopes for suffrage and other women's issues. This diminished future is signaled when Fred admits to Weston: "I don't see that the vote will do much" (RT:280). Fred's acquiescence in this new relationship is, perhaps, the most disturbing note in the novel. Fred assures Weston that she is satisfied with things as they are; she denies the possibility of any improvement in her life. Weston's assertion that he will break through Fred's apathy rings hollow, since he has very little to offer in place of her former convictions.

Critical comment on The Rising Tide was not as varied or as numerous as for Deland's previous novels and stories. The feminist context was not ignored by the critics, as one reviewer pointed out the novel's use of women's issues: "'The Rising Tide' is a graphic study of a

movement active throughout the world and full of possibilities of good and evil."<sup>29</sup> However, the review gave little space to an examination of Deland's specific views or to any detailed study of Frederica's actions. What the reviewer applauded was "Mrs. Deland's extraordinary sanity. ...She knows that human relations are deeper than legal contracts, and that to disregard the instincts is to isolate the sanctity of the soul itself." A second response to the novel also focused more on Deland's particular concern with Fred's developing sense of duty than on the feminist positions presented. This reviewer found Fred an unsatisfying example of the modern woman compared to Laura Childs and referred to Fred's having been "disciplined" by events.<sup>30</sup> Deland, herself, in the available correspondence, has little to say about either the novel's composition or reception; this is unusual, especially when placed against her former immersion in the writing and publishing process. The only comment on the novel is a disparaging one:

I should frankly advise you not to see [The Rising Tide]. For some reason which I can't explain -- but I think it must have some psychological basis -- my stories seem to be colored by my knowledge of the audience which they will reach.

"The Rising Tide" was published by the Woman's Home Companion -- an excellent periodical of its kind, which tells you how to make your underclothes and give debutante luncheons ... an audience which I think, reads superficially.<sup>31</sup>

Personal worries may have contributed to Deland's disinterest in this novel. During its composition both she and her husband experienced several illnesses: "It has been annoying to lose so much time from my work." "I have not written anything for the last six months, owing to my preoccupation and worry about Lorin."<sup>32</sup>

The First World War represented for many the heights and depths of American possibility. American involvement either saved the world for democracy or produced a lost generation. Deland's response to the War stood between these extremes; while she supported the Allied cause, she was not as "unabashedly patriotic" as Diana Reep, in her study of Deland, suggests.<sup>33</sup> Deland hoped to reconcile her experiences of the War, as she attempted in every response to her world, with her private ideal of salvation. Before the American commitment of troops, Deland viewed the war with great concern but rather objectively. Letters dating from the War's beginning indicated her reactions to stories from Belgium and mentioned her own war work. These letters also pointed



out that Deland's idealism faced several challenges. Believing that the suffering of Europe called up an identical desire to help in everyone, she was shocked to learn of thefts from shipments of aid: "Nobody knows just how much was taken, but I think we were all of us more shaken by the fact that the drivers could do such a thing, than by the actual loss of supplies."<sup>34</sup> This same letter briefly hinted at the greater, Deland might call it divine, purpose or achievement the war could effect: "Perhaps this great war will be a peace propaganda far ahead of any appeal of reason to the heart of man could possibly be."

Coupled with this idea of a value rising from the War's horrors was Deland's contention that the individual must understand the greater issues impelling one's action. A brief editorial written in 1916 contained several surprising statements by Deland. Attempting to define patriotism, she insists that there exists a loyalty to one's country that supersedes traditional concepts: "Country, then, is not the land nor the people who live in it. ...And if patriotism does not mean love and service of the people of the nation, it cannot mean love and service of the nation of people..."<sup>35</sup> Having negated these normal standards, Deland substitutes her new criteria; nations are embodiments of ideas, ideas that "prompt to deeds."

It is one's allegiance to these ideas, and Deland asks for the individual's total commitment, that determines what patriotism is. If the individual feels that this basic, intangible quality has been violated, one's patriotism may have to take the form of refusal. Her essay contains a number of examples and defenses of the person who refuses to condone "cheap Fourth-of-July militarism." Such national feeling, Deland contends, is the source of the present conflict: "It is the kind of loyalty -- the small conception of patriotism -- which has wrought evil and suffering in the world and is the deep cause and root of the awful irrationality called war." This underlying theme ran through much of Deland's non-fictional writing on the war, and this belief in the ultimate triumph of goodness supported Deland through her personal experience of the war.

Deland's most concentrated war work was her help in the establishment of an American Authors' Relief Fund. Early in 1917 she wrote to a contributor of the Fund's efforts to date:

...the authors have contributed nearly \$6,000. The money has been distributed among the English, French, Italian, and Serbian hospitals, Miss Winifred Hall's "Light House" in Paris for blinded soldiers, and the Special American

Hospital in Paris for Wounds of the Face and Jaw. We have also sent \$600 to Mrs. Edith Wharton in Paris to endow a bed in one of the hospitals for tubercular soldiers...<sup>36</sup>

During this work Lorin Deland died and Deland faced the most devastating event in her life. Whether she would have gone to France if her husband had lived is unknown. By November 1917, Deland had organized a canteen sponsored by the American Authors' Fund, and under the auspices of the Young Men's Christian Association the small group sailed at the year's end. She received commissions from the Woman's Home Companion and Harper's for articles detailing her first-hand experiences and comments on the war.<sup>37</sup> Most of these pieces were eventually published in a collection titled Small Things (1919).

Deland's immediate confrontation with the brutality of fighting clearly affected her idealistic expectations of what this conflict could accomplish. Faced with the physical and spiritual devastation, her partisanship readily asserted itself: "As I have learned more of the German mentality as expressed by Germany's methods of making war, I have come to feel something strangely terrifying in the abnormality of its viciousness."<sup>38</sup> Throughout the pieces appeared examples of German atrocities -- the rapes, mutilations, and terrors which



accompany battle. Deland, as Reep states, constantly pointed out the need to destroy the mentality capable of devising such tortures. The essays offered dramatic, sometimes melodramatic, contrasts of French stoicism and German rapacity, of American decency and German cowardice. Yet over and over Deland reaffirmed that this war was only a symptom of a universal loss of idealism:

Which was another way of saying that all Humanity would be purified and saved by the cleansing fire of War. But there wasn't any doubt in our minds that Germany, who betrayed humanity to the flames, would herself be pretty thoroughly consumed in the conflagration. ...by the light of those flames we read the meaning of Materialism. For it is Materialism which has brought Germany to her downfall. ...the world will be a cleaner place. It will be lighted, not by incendiary fires, but by the torch of an Idealism which among other things, has sent two million of our men across the ocean...<sup>39</sup>

This ideal of democracy, of morality, was the compelling force behind the determination of the American soldiers who Deland introduced in these essays. She portrayed a somewhat romantic picture of the soldiers whose vision was always aimed toward the great principles

of honor, decency, restraint; however, Deland's emphasis on these idealistic hopes received a negative kind of support if one considers the number of works describing the disillusionment experienced by many survivors of the war. Hemingway, Fitzgerald, the early Faulkner, Pound, Eliot, and others expressed an overwhelming sense of hopes betrayed. Deland did not concede that the chance for renewal was lost:

It is a Hope. Very far off, perhaps, but a Hope. The hope of the upward curve of the spiral after it has dipped into the primeval. Back again, these people say, to the beginnings of things, must go our miserable little civilization. Back to some bath of realities, to wash us clean of an unreality which has mistaken geographical boundaries for spiritual boundaries, and mechanics for God. ... "We will find God," the crystal beads declare. Not in our time, perhaps; perhaps not even in the time of our children; but sometime.<sup>40</sup>

Deland returned to America in July 1918 and seemed to drop the war from her memory. Reconciling her life without Lorin's influence and her increasing solace and research in psychic phenomena pushed her War experiences into the background. She, however, returned to this

subject twice more publicly, and privately in letters during the late 1930s. The first public statement appeared in a 1923 article which presented Deland's response to an idea for the prevention of war. "The Great Determination" discussed a person's need and responsibility to band together if one desired to influence governmental policy: "Individually, our thought is so small. Made collective, its voice would be heard on every Throne, in every Parliament and Senate Chamber, and College and Church, and Laboratory and Press-Room."<sup>41</sup> Deland expanded this notion that the private voice alone cannot bring about results in her 1926 novel, The Kays.

The Kays was Deland's second novel written after Lorin's death, but the first undertaken without his suggestions and criticism. The first 1920s novel, The Vehement Flame, is unrelated to either of the dominant social issues already discussed and will be treated later. Deland picked up the questions of war and patriotism in The Kays and traced their impact on the lives and relationships of one family. However Deland did not use a contemporary setting. Instead she returned to Old Chester. Placing her story in this familiar setting seemed to contradict the village's value as a focus for cultural dreams of peace. Deland pushed the time frame further back from the years and characters whom her



audience found so comfortable. The novel's action occurs before and during the Civil War, which allowed Deland to treat the specific themes of nation and duty. This new chronology also enabled Deland to introduce new characters who had no connection to the people presented in the earlier stories. This way Deland protected the integrity of these actors, and their lives retained their impact on the broader moral and social issues on which she built their stories. Dr. Lavendar and Dr. King to appear in The Keys, but their roles are limited to brief comments on the major figures. The only other familiar character is Benjamin Wright; here his role is to act as a goad to conscience, pointing out to the fervid patriots, who consider Agnes Kay at least a hypocrite and at worst a traitor, the true religious basis of her actions:

"That woman has the impudence, Lavendar, to say War is wrong, when the example of the Church in sitting on both sides of the fence, indicates that War is right! But the Church always knows which side its bread's buttered. She doesn't. Its Founder didn't. But then He didn't understand business! ...That female, Lavendar, wouldn't compromise any more than your Founder would."<sup>42</sup>

This somewhat unfamiliar Old Chester includes the

Kays, Clarks, and Buttricks, families that disappear at the novel's conclusion. The cause of their disappearances ties in with the novel's major theme; Mrs. Clark's two sons die in battle, Bobby Buttrick, a coward, runs from war and Old Chester. One important Old Chester characteristic Deland retains is the community's role as social reflector. Old Chester's opinions on the Kays appear constantly and, as in the earlier stories, this community voice echoes a conservative, easily affronted viewpoint. Throughout the novel Agnes Kay continually upsets the community's shared beliefs: "This, too, displeased Old Chester, for custom demanded that a woman must not only endure and hide marital infelicity, she must also never imply that her husband could err" (K:25). Deland also returns to the third person narrative voice that she used in Philip and His Wife and the earliest Old Chester stories.

The most noticeable omission is the absence of Deland's comic touches that characterize most of the former stories. The novel's serious issues preclude her introduction of humorous comments. When characters' shortcomings are revealed, Deland underscores the waste and the pretensions that prevent people from compromising expectations and real circumstances. The narrator seems less forgiving when characters see only the glory of war

and none of its tragedy:

Perhaps, underneath, Old Chester would have been a little disappointed to have too much Christian civilization. For one thing, it would put a damper on conversation, and everybody wanted to talk! ...In Old Chester -- except for a handful of people who could think -- everybody talked. Everybody had an opinion, either personal or national, which must be expressed. (K:81)

When the horrors of war intrude upon expectations of easy victory, Deland softens her criticism and refrains from drawing pointed morals about pride; war's brutality demands shared grief, and even the vehemently patriotic Mrs. Clark must be given solace.

In The Kays Deland sets up an array of characters who embody particular opinions and responses to war. Mrs. Clark typifies the majority opinion; when the war is announced, she rushes to break the news and declares: "My sons are ready" (K:85). Major Kay, a soldier in the Mexican-American War, also unconditionally supports the conflict, but his past experience gives him a clearer understanding of its reality: "War is awful as it is splendid. It means hardship, and sacrifice, and obedience, and danger. It just isn't flags flying and drums beating -- my God, no!" (K:94). Bobby Buttrick



appropriates the trappings of patriotism to hide his cowardice; he calls for vengeance and longs to kill Johnny Reb. Yet he continually defers volunteering because of his delicate stomach. The draft finally compels Buttrick's participation, and he survives to spread rumors of Arthur Kay's wartime service.

Agnes Kay and her son represent the minority response. Their antagonism is built on strict religious and moral grounds. Agnes Kay, especially, hopes to convince her neighbors of war's foolishness and inherent evil; she tries to compel any hearer to take the gospel at face value and challenges the community to live up to its religious principles:

"Dr. Lavendar says it is righteous to fight the South. Yet if we lived in South Carolina, wouldn't we think it righteous to fight the North? What is righteousness? ...The War against the Seminoles helped the slave owners," she said; "this war will hinder them. Can both wars be righteous? ...Thus saith the Lord: 'Thou shalt not kill.'" (K:86-87)

These sentiments earn Mrs. Kay the community's hostility, and she and her son become the victims of vicious tricks and outright harm. Because of such incidents, mother and son develop extremely insular attitudes; neither allows

the opinions or actions of outsiders to influence their behavior. Having been spurned by the community, Agnes and Arthur Kay repudiate Old Chester, and until they both realize the importance of belonging to some community, however that group is defined, neither finds real peace.

The Civil War becomes, in the novel, a means of chastisement and an impetus to renewed spirituality. Through its inherent manipulation of truth, decency, and morality, war forces the people involved to reevaluate their sense of purpose and value: "Of course, in wartime one believes anything of the enemy -- that is what war does to common sense. In fact, there couldn't be war unless lies were believed. War has to be nourished by lies" (K:208). Ideally, such disregard of basic virtues will be prevented when combatants and supporters discover the threads of humanity that hold society together. This understanding, however, does not come readily; Deland realizes that people cling to concepts of valor and pride. In spite of her personal loss Mrs. Clark remains a firm patriot, although her militancy has been tempered by her suffering. All of Old Chester is touched by the War in some way -- sons and husbands die or come back wounded; calls for the South's annihilation lessen as the town assimilates the entire spectrum of the war. Yet for many the experiences of War serve to harden their prejudices

and hatred. To discover that one's sons have died for lies would make one's sacrifice unnecessary; a community requires a scapegoat to prevent such knowledge from becoming known. Arthur Kay serves this purpose in the novel.

Arthur's emotional and moral recovery are Deland's major concern, but to understand Arthur's actions, the reader must also confront his mother's. As the Major says throughout the book: "She was right," he said; "he is her son. I want no part of him" (K:41). Agnes Kay has never enjoyed Old Chester's respect or been a part of the community. From her first days in the village she has been considered

...a born rebel. When she was a young woman she refused to bear children to a man she believed to be bad. ...she had publicly and prayerfully denounced the trade of selling liquor. ...She had recognized the evil of her husband's business [he runs a lottery] and refused to eat his bread. ... she denounced the glory of war... (K:72-73).

Agnes Kay is an undemonstrative, pragmatic woman who teaches her son to see both sides of an issue, to take arguments to their sources and reason them through. She cares little for public opinion and discards those social



behaviors she feels are detrimental to her spiritual purpose. Unlike many people in Old Chester who accommodate their beliefs and actions to their own comfort or community pressure, Agnes Kay lives her creed fully. She feeds and clothes herself and Arthur from her own money, and she cares for a madwoman whom she knows was once her husband's mistress. Deland, interestingly, makes Agnes a New Englander and extremely rigid in her religious outlook and then places her among people who prefer a more leisurely lifestyle and response. Old Chester recognizes her virtue, but "nobody like[s] her" (K:26).

Agnes Kay's virtues easily become her failings. Strict adherence too readily turns into intolerance; unconcern for others' opinions is quickly transformed into insularity; self-sacrifice becomes self-immolation. Mrs. Kay's character is set when she discovers her husband's true personality early in their married life. The Major is an easy-going man in his behavior and beliefs. He conducts his life in a completely amoral manner, taking every pleasure -- food, drink, women -- to its limits. Major Kay, however, is not a complete reprobate. He is a brave man, and when he decides to sponsor Old Chester's volunteers, he abstains from indulgences. His concern for Arthur's upbringing and reputation are real, even though he does not know how to make his affection tangible.

However, for most of the novel, the Major makes no effort to find common ground with his son. Between these opposing personalities stands Arthur, who must face his father's and the town's ridicule before he can gain their respect.

Agnes Kay's impact on her son is quite strong. He refuses to sit at his father's table or accept any luxury the Major's income provides. Arthur joins his mother's sect and takes a pledge of non-violence. Rather than take money for a new coat, Arthur knits socks for his schoolmates to earn the needed cash. Instead of volunteering at the war's outbreak, Arthur finds a clerk's position in Mercer. These decisions are not made automatically; Arthur's choices come at the expense of his social reputation and deepest longings. As a young boy he wants to handle his father's sword and gets into scrapes like every Old Chester boy. Once he makes his decisions Arthur holds to them even though his acquaintances tease him for his difference. Like his mother, Arthur develops the habit of reticence; he rarely explains his reasons or answers even unjust accusations: "I don't care a hoot about other people" becomes his inevitable response (K:99). The outbreak of war, of course, highlights Arthur's exclusion from the community; his refusal to fight now makes him a traitor. He eventually enters the

war in a non-combative capacity, and becomes a figure of ridicule. When Bobby Buttrick spreads rumors that he has sold provisions intended for Union soldiers Arthur becomes the target of even greater antagonism. Arthur answers these charges by doing nothing; knowing that no basis exists to the rumors, he is content to let Old Chester gossip. His pragmatic acceptance of the village's disdain is broken only when he discovers that Lois Clark, the only person he confides in, has misinterpreted his explanations and believes he is guilty. This discovery comes after these two have eloped, and the novel's final pages deal with Agnes Kay's and the Major's discovery of a common bond as they try to reconcile the younger couple.

Until that point, however, Deland uses Arthur as an embodiment of the dilemma of war. Desperately wanting to prove his bravery, Arthur learns that "the hardest thing a brave man can do [is] keeping out of a fight!" (K:125). The irony is that Major Kay says this about Dr. King's having to give up his hopes of joining the Union Army. Arthur's positive qualities, like his mother's can also become disabilities; his refusal to confront the charges of cowardice and fraud force him deeper into isolation, and he quickly severs practically all connections to others. His pride slips easily into vanity, as Dr. Lavendar points out. His love for Lois shatters quickly



once he feels that she has betrayed his trust. Only his parents' efforts prevent Arthur from repudiating Lois, and the novel ends with a reconciliation. Deland's final assertion is that while war threatens one's sense of self and community, love will redeem and protect. The most terrible struggles are overcome when the individual acknowledges the possibility of hope; it is assured for Arthur and Lois, and the chance for renewed affection is given to the Major and Agnes as well.

Critical response to The Kays was not as numerous as for her earlier works. Few reviews have been found, which seems an indication of Deland's dwindling reputation for the post-war audience. Diana Reep quotes one reviewer who praised this novel but found it outdated.<sup>43</sup> Another found The Kays "an extremely able dramatization of the emotional irrelevancies and contradictions of the cruelties of war psychology," but noted the problems in Agnes Kay's personality being so completely attached to Deland's thematic intention.<sup>44</sup> Deland herself, at least in the available correspondence, never mentioned The Kays, not even in a negative sense as she did with The Rising Tide. Deland's withdrawal from the public arena has already been touched on; her private world increasingly took precedence as Deland reduced the extent of her outside contacts and commitments.

After her husband's death Deland closed off some accesses to the past. She moved to a smaller house and began "the heart-destroying task of sorting out old things, destroying some, and putting others away again."<sup>45</sup> Deland also limited her social contacts, centering her activities around family, health, and the annual summer move to Maine. Even her correspondence, which during the 1890s and pre-war years was extensive, was further reduced to a smaller circle. Deland seemed to be drawing in her energies and her concerns. While she remained an alert observer of her world, she appeared content to sit on the periphery; clearly her age and declining health contributed to this posture. During the 1930s Deland sharply criticized national politics and expressed deep concern for the world situation, but she did not present these views in any public forum.<sup>46</sup> Deland's withdrawal from the public eye was abetted by her retention of a traditional literary style and insistence on selected themes that no longer fit the contemporary critical preferences or reading public's taste.

Deland's last two fictional works illustrated how firmly rooted she was in the techniques and thematic treatments of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Vehement Flame (1921) and Captain Archer's Daughter (1932) were written in the same style as her most

famous novels. Deland concentrated on the development of character and theme to the exclusion of any literary innovations. She retained the habit of richly described scenes and incident to reveal character, and interrupted the story's progress to have the narrative voice comment on a character's behavior or motivation. She continued to build the story around her basic moral and world viewpoints and maintained conventional techniques of plot development, such as a straightforward chronological movement, a firm sense of cause and effect in events, and a clearcut resolution to the novel's situation. Deland continued to use the traditions that seemed to have nothing more to offer the modern writer. The stylistic innovations of Stein and Faulkner, the working class characters and situations of Smedley and Steinbeck, and the sometimes amoral outcomes of Hemingway and Fitzgerald were alien to her literary heritage. Yet Deland's presentations of her characters' spiritual and moral crises were still able to affect a reading public; The Vehement Flame produced a spate of letters calling Deland to task for writing fiction that was "corrupting, debasing, [and] demoralizing."<sup>47</sup>

Deland undertook The Vehement Flame more from a sense of duty to her husband's memory than any other motive: "The first chapters had the help of your criticism...then,



I had to go on alone, urged by the memory of your interest." 48

The actual composition became a struggle for Deland between finishing the story and feeling creatively drained, and this fluctuation of moods was discussed in Deland's letters to Madelaine Poindexter. Early in 1919, Deland wrote: "Of late I have awakened up enough to try a little writing; but it comes hard, and progresses slowly, and very likely I shall never accomplish anything."<sup>49</sup> By the end of the year Deland stated another, more pressing, reason for continuing the project:

For the first time since I began to write books, I feel a certain pressure of necessity in doing so. Heretofore the money that I have made from writing has been very desirable, but I didn't write for that purpose. Now, however, under the assault of taxes and the high cost of living, I have got to write or else give up this little house, which I should be very reluctant to do.<sup>50</sup>

This new concern, coupled with her sense of having little success, exerted pressure on Deland to return to situations and themes that had proven successful. Both novels do just this; in each the main characters come to recognize and understand the individual's ultimate relation to and dependence on divinity. The source and

impetus for such discoveries rest in one's acceptance of love, whatever form this emotion takes. This theme had dominated all of Deland's fiction from John Ward, Preacher through Old Chester and the recent works; the earlier fiction, however, had an impact that these latest works lack.

Popular and critical reactions to Deland's previous works found a strength and sincerity of purpose in them; here Deland seems distanced from her characters and the dramatic focus of the stories. Writing of The Vehement Flame, Deland stated: "The story turns on jealousy, and is awfully hard for me to write, because jealousy is, to me, a perfectly unthinkable emotion; which is, of course, natural but it is so profoundly irrational that I find myself lacking in both patience and sympathy when I try to put it into a novel."<sup>51</sup> Deland finished this novel and continued writing although her output was greatly reduced.

The last novels are not often successful in overcoming their weaknesses. In both, the thematic core dominates the novel to the detriment of characterization. This is especially evident in The Vehement Flame. Deland's intention lies in revealing the tragic consequences of a jealous personality. To illustrate her point she creates one of her more contrived situations; Maurice Curtis, caught up in his first romantic encounter,

marries Eleanor, a woman twenty years older than he. The situation guarantees Maurice's eventual disillusionment with his wife, and his longing to escape the marriage. Deland exacerbates this breakdown by devising a personality for Eleanor that is so limited yet exaggerated that the reader quickly sympathizes with Maurice. Maurice falls into a relationship with Lily, a prostitute, who eventually has his child. Maurice must juggle his guilt, Eleanor's continued ignorance, and trying to support two households on one salary. Deland also adds Edith Houghton, the daughter of Maurice's previous guardians and firm friends, and further complicates the novel's themes of jealousy, individual and social responsibility, and the right to happiness. Not since Sydney has Deland thrown together such a tangle of motives and personalities, and like that earlier novel, The Vehement Flame suffers from being overburdened.

The major characters tend to be flat; Eleanor is described as living "a negative sort of life" full of silence and jealousy (VF:6). Frequent mention is made of Eleanor's stupidity and her inability to control the one emotional response she has. Lily is simply a whore with a heart of gold who also desires respectability; Lily cooks where Eleanor can't, jokes where Eleanor is clumsy, wants nothing where Eleanor demands constant attention. Maurice



is the novel's most well-developed character; his growing feelings of being trapped and his increasing sense of guilt and excuses are convincingly portrayed. However his relation with Edith is less believable. Edith has nursed strong romantic feelings for Maurice ever since she was a child, and has never relinquished that attachment. She is always ready to defend and forgive Maurice, and Maurice looks to Edith for forgiveness and release from his emotional burdens. That Edith, when she learns of the illegitimate child, should forgive Maurice is credible, but that she accepts his proposal after Eleanor's death is not. Edith's character is also badly drawn because Deland gives her no other focus for her own romantic longings than Maurice. Throughout the novel Edith, who is ten years younger than Maurice, has had no experience with men besides him, and that she is willing to reject any other romantic connection is unlikely.

Besides such weakly drawn characters, Deland's heavy reliance on coincidence harms the novel. Maurice rescues Lily when her boat overturns, and he happens to become her rescuer again. Edith, who is 12 or 13 when this first incident occurs, recognizes Lily six years later. Eleanor, coming back from a visit, just happens to see Maurice talking to Lily, and this one scene sets in motion her eventual discovery of Maurice's infidelity. Even

Deland's presentation of the characters' spiritual awakening is strained; Eleanor's insight comes as she is dying, her illness the result of an unsuccessful suicide attempt: "She believed ... that it was because of her that I went to the river ... I didn't do it because she made me angry; I did it to make Maurice happy" (VF:357-58).

Maurice and Edith run through a whole range of emotional upheavals before they come to their conclusions that it is for the best that they marry, and in the end the reader comes away frustrated because the conclusion is not satisfying. Maurice has done little to merit his happiness; in effect he has all the pleasure, marriage to Edith and a role in raising his child, but none of the responsibility these achievements entail.

Captain Archer's Daughter (1932) suffers from Deland's reliance on conventional characters and plots. This last fictional effort is situated in very familiar territory; Mattie Archer at 29 is swept into passion and marriage by a stranger to Bowport and its mores. The novel's first half describes her growing infatuation with her husband and his eventual abandonment of her. Surprisingly, it is Mattie's pregnancy which drives Isadore away, and Mattie denies her son any emotional contact because she blames him for her husband's desertion: "She told herself that when Isadore came

back...that she would board it somewhere. She knew, though she would never tell him so, that she would be glad to get rid of it because it had made him unkind to her."<sup>42</sup> The child does not become Mattie's salvation as David was for Helena Richie, or Annie for Rachel King. He is merely a reminder of loss; after Robert is born, Mattie deliberately retreats from all emotional contact with the present. She is so enthralled by her brief passionate attachment to Isadore that friends and neighbors consider her mentally unbalanced. Mattie only acknowledges the present and her son's welfare when his own romance is threatened. Mattie helps him elope, repeating her own experience of twenty years ago. Until this moment, however, Mattie practically disappears from the novel's second half; she merely moves in the background, hardly responding to the people or events around her.

This structural split -- Mattie's romance in the first half, Robert's in the second -- is echoed in Deland's manipulation of characters and situation. The second romance falls into a conventional love triangle; Robert imagines himself in love with a summer resident, only to discover his true feelings for the lobsterman's daughter. Deland makes use of set pieces and character drawing: Jane Richards, the summer resident, is frivolous, spirited, and selfish; Bess Casey, on the other hand, is



serious, caring, and honest. Class snobbery obviously comes into play as the story develops, and Robert drops Jane when he discovers her patronizing attitudes about the Caseys, who have given him the love and affection his mother doesn't.

And now, since you are giving me so much information, [Jane says], I am going to tell you something: If you marry me, you sha'n't drag me into the society of your Caseys. I have not been brought up in a kitchen, and I do not allow persons of their class to call me by my first name." (CAD:249)

True gentility is expressed when Joe Casey confronts Captain Archer and Mr. Richards after the elopement; it is Casey who reminds the others of their shared feelings of betrayal and embarrassment, and who brings the others to a tentative resolution: "We three, under our clothes, is just alike, we're men! We feel the same way about this business... But we've got to stand by the little fools an'not let Bowport make small of 'em...." (CAD:310). These oppositions are played out strictly on the social level. Deland does not delve into any character's spiritual or emotional development in great detail. Mattie's inner turmoil, for example, never encourages the insights that a Helen Ward, Helena Richie, or Sarah Maitland experience.

Captain Archer's Daughter is, perhaps, Deland's most straightforward novel, keeping most closely to the basic romances that make up its story. As one reviewer put it: "the net result is one of the pleasantest novels of the season."<sup>53</sup> Deland and her fiction had become innocuous.

The critical response to these novels highlighted the dilemma Deland faced in the post-war literary world. Having been labeled a representative American voice, a position ratified by her election to the National Institute of Arts and Letters in 1926, she suffered the fate of others who become literary icons. With a style and purpose culturally sanctioned, Deland and her work became the targets of newer literary visions and practices. Alfred Kazin summarizes this mood:

It was this sense of release that came to American writers after the war, the exhilaration of the sudden freedoms they had won... It was as if the writers themselves, like so many representative classes in American society, were for the first time creeping out of the old parochial shelters and ambitions; and with their release there came a carefree gaiety that gave comic undertones to their growling dissatisfactions with American society. ... Fundamentally, of course, they were in their

different ways all enemies of the conventional middle-class order, enemies of convention and Puritanism....<sup>54</sup>

Deland, in many basic ways, epitomized that "conventional middle-class order," and her assertions that one must look beyond the material world and recapture the ideal of suffering as the way to knowledge and salvation no longer found a sympathetic audience. Although she specifically is not named by Kazin or others, she represented the form and content that the younger writers discarded. For those readers who still found value in Deland's special focus, her subject matter and treatment tended to be taken for granted; controversy, when it came, centered around plot contrivances.<sup>55</sup> It was in this area of technique that Deland received very specific censure, and especially for these last novels.

As with any author who had produced a substantial body of work, Deland's later works were judged against the earlier ones. For Deland the comparisons showed many critics a loss of creative power: "[The Vehement Flame] has not the strength or unity to be found in [The Awakening of Helena Richie or the Iron Woman] nor the humorous twinkle of [Old Chester Tales or Dr. Lavendar's People] -- it would be hard to name four more worthy pieces of fiction."<sup>56</sup> Deland's best work, for several



critics, clearly lay behind her. Once considered a master of carefully developed plot and characters, Deland was criticized for "[f]aulty construction and a plethora of material [which] are accountable for the surprising fact that, in this instance, Mrs. Deland has obscured her intention almost beyond identification."<sup>57</sup> Even when the novels were praised, critical focus rested on Deland's "graceful polished competence [that] makes the telling true to romance."<sup>58</sup> Such criticism no longer held Deland in the highest literary regard, and this bland response partially explained Deland's eventual disappearance from continued study.

Deland's last literary efforts were her two autobiographical volumes, If This Be I as I Suppose It Be (1935) and Golden Yesterdays (1941). The first volume recalls Deland's early Pennsylvania childhood, which she centers around a young child's coming to understand certain abstract concepts. Each section of the book focuses on sometimes related ideals, like "Law, Justice, and Compassion," or unrelated ones, "Honor, Death, and Truth." The book is filled with Deland's vivid recollections of the people and events that deeply impressed the child: Deland's scenes are presented with full and detailed descriptions of places, people, and events. The book, in many ways, reads like one of

Deland's best Old Chester stories. In fact, many of the incidents portrayed here have appeared in the fiction: the young Deland hanging grasshoppers in a tree can be found in "Justice and the Judge; a servant burying the silver during the Civil War is duplicated in The Keys; a young Deland holding catechism classes is seen in John Ward, Preacher and several later works. These examples are multiplied many times throughout the fiction.

Interestingly, Deland doesn't take her reminiscences beyond the child's; she stops when Maggie reaches adolescence. Just as intriguing is her use of the third person; from the beginning Deland writes of Maggie and Maggie's actions and memories. Deland implies it is the great distance in time and experience between the woman and the little girl that demands the formal narrative stance.<sup>59</sup> The strategy, however, is very effective, because by this distancing she is able to conjure the physical and emotional world of a mid-nineteenth century child.

Deland's second autobiographical work is a conventional chronological detailing of her marriage. She deliberately frames this volume around her marriage, and she underscores the closeness of the relationship by closing the book with her husband's death. Throughout this book Deland credits much of her literary success to

Lorin's influence; his criticism and advice gave her plots and characters. She often implies that without Lorin's push, she might not have carried through with a literary career. While her husband's influence played an important role, Deland's career was not totally dependent on him. As many letters reveal, she gave great care and attention to the creation of a novel or story, and her obvious enjoyment in writing itself and its rewards suggest her continuing in the field even without Lorin's full support. Deland's long career came to its end with the autobiographies. She continued her correspondence with Nathan Wallack and kept current with the affairs of a world she found increasingly unfamiliar: "It seems to me I had at least a grip upon the Eternal Verities, but now sometimes my hold on them slips..."<sup>60</sup> However, even feeling separate, she still hoped to be able to come to terms with this world, to continue balancing old and new, suffering and hope, negation and salvation.

Although Deland's late output appeared as extensive as her earlier production, the amount was actually very reduced. All of her non-fictional writings on women's issues dated from the first fifteen years of the twentieth century; The Rising Tide, Deland's fictional treatment of the modern woman, was published in 1916. These works actually belong with the Old Chester stories and The



Awakening of Helena Richie and The Iron Woman. A

comparison of the number of works indicates how greatly Deland reduced her literary efforts after the First World War; from 1899 to 1916 she wrote three novels, three Old Chester collections, one other story collection, three novelettes, a collection of essays and produced over thirty non-fictional pieces. Deland also maintained an extensive correspondence with family and various editors, and added to this were her constant revision practices. After Lorin's death and the first World War, her published work included three novels, one Old Chester collection, a collection of war essays, and two autobiographical volumes. Deland's correspondence was greatly curtailed, and the number of magazine pieces was also markedly reduced, no more than fifteen articles. There were longer periods between publications, so much in fact that reviews made note of the gaps.<sup>61</sup>

Several reasons for Deland's withdrawal from a continued active involvement have been suggested: the impact of her husband's death and her turn to psychic research, the changing literary methods of the 20s that threw over her traditional methods, her advancing age and weakening health. A strain of pessimism also seemed to contribute to Deland's retreat; she saw the country moving towards another world conflict, and viewed national and

local political maneuverings with mistrust. The modern world seemed "upside down" to Deland, and a note of sadness often appeared in her late correspondence.<sup>62</sup> To speculate on her feelings is risky, but perhaps she sensed that she no longer could reach this modern audience: "Time spins more rapidly away."<sup>63</sup> Deland began to evaluate her past and her present in view of her ideals and hopes, and she discovered how far the outside world had diverged from them. Realizing that she could no longer influence the public to a sense of duty and responsibility for their world and relationships, Deland turned inward, setting her private affairs in order, waiting to discover the final truth and redemption.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Peter Conn, The Divided Mind: Ideology and Imagination in America, 1898-1917, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983) 5.
- <sup>2</sup> Margaret Deland, letter to Madelaine Poindexter, 4 January 1914. Romaine Poindexter Family Letters. Huntington Library, California.
- <sup>3</sup> See for example, Deland to Madelaine Poindexter, 6 May 1914; 17 December 1915; 14 January 1914.
- <sup>4</sup> Margaret Deland to Madelaine Poindexter, 14 May 1913.
- <sup>5</sup> Margaret Deland, Golden Yesterdays, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1941) 346. Subsequent references will be noted in text.
- <sup>6</sup> Margaret Deland to Madelaine Poindexter, 6 July 1917.
- <sup>7</sup> Margaret Deland to Lilian Whiting, 9 July 1917. Lilian Whiting Letters, Boston Public Library.
- <sup>8</sup> Margaret Deland, "Though Inland Far We Be --," (Hampton, Virginia: Hampton Institute Press, 1932) 42.
- <sup>9</sup> Margaret Deland to Madelaine Poindexter, 6 October 1919.
- <sup>10</sup> These incidents are discussed at length in Chapters 2 through 5 in Golden Yesterdays.
- <sup>11</sup> Margaret Deland, "The Tight Rope of Pretense," Ladies Home Journal 38 (June 1921): 150.
- <sup>12</sup> Margaret Deland, "Studies of Great Women III -- Cornelia," Harper's Bazar 51 (22 December 1900): 2156.
- <sup>13</sup> Margaret Deland, "The Passing of Dora," in The Common Way (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1904) 71.
- <sup>14</sup> The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism, and Temperance in Nineteenth-Century America, (Wesleyan University Press, 1981) 149.



- 15 Margaret Deland, "Women in the Market Place," Independent 86 (22 May 1916): 288.
- 16 Margaret Deland to Madelaine Poindexter, 19 September 1917.
- 17 Margaret Deland, "Sally," in Old Chester Tales, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1899) 296.
- 18 See Flexnor, A Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States, revised edition, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1975) 235-47.
- 19 Aileen Kraditor, The Idea of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1965) 4.
- 20 Chafe, 17.
- 21 Kraditor, 17.
- 22 Flexnor, 272.
- 23 Margaret Deland, "The Change in the Feminine Ideal," Atlantic Monthly 105 (March 1910):289-302.
- 24 Margaret Deland, "The Third Way in Woman Suffrage," Ladies Home Journal 30 (January 1913): 11.
- 25 Margaret Deland to Nathan Wallack, 14 November 1936. Nathan Wallack Collection, Colby College, Waterville, Maine.
- 26 "The Third Way in Woman Suffrage," 11.
- 27 Margaret Deland to Madelaine Poindexter, 16 October 1912.
- 28 Margaret Deland, The Rising Tide, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1916) 90. Subsequent references will be noted in text.
- 29 Outlook 114 (1 November 1916): 521.
- 30 Kathleen Norris, "A Visit to Margaret Deland," woman's Home Companion 42 (November 1915): 5.
- 31 Margaret Deland to Lilian Whiting, 13 May 1921.

- 32 Margaret Deland to Madelaine Poindexter, 6 May 1914 and 17 December 1915.
- 33 Margaret Deland, (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1985) 97.
- 34 Margaret Deland to Madelaine Poindexter, 10 February 1915.
- 35 Margaret Deland, "What, Really, is Patriotism?" Ladies Home Journal 33 (July 1916): 9.
- 36 Margaret Deland to Charles Nathan Elliot, 22 March 1917. Margaret Deland Letters, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.
- 37 See Margaret Deland to Madelaine Poindexter, 5 November and 28 November 1917.
- 38 Margaret Deland, "We'll Stamp the Beast Out," in Small Things (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1919) 217.
- 39 "We Decide the Kaiser's Fate," in Small Things, 305-306.
- 40 "Beads -- Paris -- January, 1918," in Small Things, 123.
- 41 Woman's Home Companion 50 (November, 1923): 136.
- 42 Margaret Deland, The Keys, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1926) 202-203. Subsequent references will be noted in text.
- 43 Reep, 105.
- 44 Alice Beal Parsons, "The Keys," Nation 124 (23 February 1927): 214.
- 45 Margaret Deland to Madelaine Poindexter, 5 April 1923.
- 46 See Margaret Deland to Nathan Wallack, 13 January 1938; 21 November 1940; 29 June 1943.
- 47 Margaret Deland to William Allen White, 29 August 1922. Margaret Deland Letters, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.
- 48 Margaret Deland, The Vehement Flame (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1922) n.p. This line appears in

Deland's dedication. Subsequent references will be noted in text.

49 Margaret Deland to Madelaine Poindexter, 3 February 1919.

50 Margaret Deland to Madelaine Poindexter, 29 November 1919.

51 Margaret Deland to Madelaine Poindexter, 5 July 1921.

52 Margaret Deland, Captain Archer's Daughter, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1932) 91. Subsequent references will be noted in text.

53 Katherine Bregy, review of Captain Archer's Daughter, Catholic World 135 (September 1932): 152.

54 On Native Grounds: An Interpretation of Modern American Prose Literature, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1942) 149.

55 See Theodocia Walton, "The Veiled Confession of Margaret Deland," New York Times Book Review and Magazine, 17 September 1922: 6+

56 R. D. Townsend, Outlook 131 (21 June 1922): 351-352.

57 Catholic World 116 (October 1922): 115-116.

58 Time 9 (May 1932): 55.

59 Margaret Deland, If This Be I as I Suppose It Be, (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1935) 6.

60 Margaret Deland to Nathan Wallack, 17 January 1944.

61 See the Time review of Captain Archer's Daughter.

62 Margaret Deland to Nathan Wallack, 9 January 1933.

63 Margaret Deland to Madelaine Poindexter, 4 April 1925.



#### EVALUATION

I like to read books that are of a sufficient value to suggest a re-reading.

Margaret Deland to Nathan Wallack  
13 October 1936

As this study has shown, Margaret Deland's long literary career paralleled and diverged from major issues and concerns that dominated turn of the century American society. These points of intersection and separation provide the modern reader and critic with the opportunity to reevaluate not only the work, but Deland's place in popular regard. Deland's contemporary reputation underwent a surprising transformation; from a radical advocate of religious freedom and opponent of orthodox theology, she rapidly earned acclaim and attention as a representative voice and upholder of traditional values. The final novels found Deland's position something of a sinecure, the past achievements protecting her from savage criticism or ridicule. As Deland's position in the popular world changed, so did the critical response; her fiction was variously the target of critical outrage, praise, and neglect. It is this moving in and out of fashion that becomes the crux of Deland's past and present literary standing, and brings the issues of what determines a writer's literary reputation into the foreground.

Although Morris Dickstein contends that much popular fiction is "of little interest to anyone," he does affirm that various economic and critical processes have worked against the inclusion of the popular writer in serious

study.<sup>1</sup> These factors are clearly apparent in the rise and fall of Deland's public support. Like many popular authors, she adheres to a small range of themes and characters. Once the moral imperative was determined, Deland maintained its basic definition and application throughout her fictional works. As this study has discussed, the underlying thematic and technical frames altered very little. However, this consistency is the very factor that encourages such a writer's notice and keeps that writer in the public's attention. The importance of repetition to the popular work has been constantly stressed by critics of popular genres: "Popular forms are frequently repetitive...becoming part of what might be called a diet of reality that returns again and again to the same few motifs so that they might not slip away."<sup>2</sup> What the popular writer and the fiction offer is a sense of familiarity and security for the reader. It is usually those authors who are considered innovators and valuable artists who threaten the status quo. Where the popular author utilizes conventional writing methods and appeals to the broadest possible readership, the writers who challenge these forms deliberately disregard the methods and the readers. The narrative experiments of Joyce and Woolf, Faulkner and Stein, for example, broke down the traditional chronological framework and erased



the line between formal presentation and subjective response. Once these lines were crossed, the reader's apprehension of outer world and private self was weakened. Such innovations garner extensive critical praise and encourage imitation. The popular writer who retains traditional narrative structures and developments is regarded as technically backward and somehow less of a writer.

How then reconcile the critical and popular uproar that accompanied John Ward, Preacher? What happened between the publication of this novel and The Awakening of Helena Richie and The Iron Woman that enabled the reader and the critic to push the hostility into the background and concentrate on Deland's new status as spokesperson for spiritual honesty and personal values? Several factors can be listed that provide answers to these questions: in a period of extreme changes and challenges, traditional religion seems the one unchanging value; yet Darwinism, and other popular and intellectual reexaminations revealed the weaknesses of the established churches. Deland's first novel was seen as one more threat. By the appearance of the later novels, several circumstances had altered the public's perception of Deland's intentions: the rise and spread of the Social Gospel, an increasing acceptance of the individual's right to conscience, and

new philosophic inquiry realigned the impact of Deland's fiction. Another influence on this changed response could be found in the audience's growing recognition of Deland's purpose and familiarity with her methods, so much, in fact, that she was comfortable enough to recommend using the old hostility to promote new work.<sup>3</sup> A third component was Deland's own technical and stylistic improvement, which allowed her better control of her subject and its shaping. Despite such critical and popular favor, Deland disappeared from serious modern presentations and examination. This study's final purpose is to examine the process of Deland's fall from grace and to suggest areas in which the inclusion of her work may expand a reader's understanding and appreciation.

By the post-war period Deland's reputation seemed secure even though she had reduced the amount of work and public contact. Critical attention, while not as constant, continued and began to broaden its focus; before, most discussions of the fiction were contained in reviews of individual works. Newer studies focused on a greater range of work and began to evaluate specific aspects of Deland's material. Grant Overton, a well-known popular commentator, included Deland in his survey of modern women writers, and Blanche Colton Williams placed her among representative American storytellers.<sup>4</sup> A 1919

re-issue of Old Chester Tales, with an introductory essay by Vida Scudder, a professor of literature at Wellesley, seemed to reaffirm Deland's status; yet the essay contains several statements that indicate a shift in her critical standing.

Scudder praises Deland's strong moral purpose and holds that "[t]hese stories will, it is to be hoped, be read a long time, because they stand a great test of literature -- they increase our power of loving our fellow-man."<sup>5</sup> At the same time Scudder characterizes Deland's stories as being "not quite the world of the twentieth century," and throughout the introduction, Scudder describes the stories as "unworldly," "leisurely," "pastel portraits." Scudder's analysis emphasizes these stories' quaintness over the moral dilemmas which the characters face. Deland's constant assertion that an individual must continually confront the world and make hard choices is overlooked, as Scudder points out Old Chester's pastoral qualities. While Old Chester does provide a haven from a changing world, Deland does not allow her characters to become cardboard figurines representing unattainable ideals. Mrs. King, William King, Dr. Lavendar, Jane Jay, the Misses Ferris, Mr. Wright, and the others are very human, and their successes and failures point out the value of Old Chester. No one,



after all, is fully and freely accepted. Newcomers like Elizabeth Day or Helena Richie must earn the right to become part of the community. Yet Scudder downplays these moral and spritual crises of the characters, claiming that Old Chester is a place where "modern asperities vanish in the tender light of memory." In a period when literature described the cruelties of war, the disillusionment of the younger generation, the failure of society, and similar themes, Deland's gentler fiction was overpowered by more strident voices and images.

Deland's work, however, continued to be used to exemplify her particular time's responses and opinions in several critical studies. These treatments centered on specific thematic and descriptive aspects of American literature. Old Chester was included in a study of the small town as it appeared in American literature; Philip and His Wife was used to illustrate late nineteenth century attitudes towards divorce; Deland's characters were mentioned throughout an examination of the single female in literature.<sup>6</sup> As a well-known and respected author, Deland also came under the scrutiny of graduate students; her fiction and her techniques were treated in several master theses. The range of schools, Pittsburgh to Kentucky to Oklahoma, indicated the extent of Deland's recognition.<sup>7</sup> These studies were concentrated in the

twenty-year period between 1930 and 1950. What such treatments did was begin the process of isolation, which in one sense is a legitimate evaluative method; however, such treatment served to reduce the reader's understanding of Deland's variety and complexity. The imposition of a hard and fast time frame also abetted the reduction of Deland's accessibility by locking her and the fiction into only one possible manner of interpretation. The same technique continues today, highlighting one work of an author over the rest; writers like Louisa May Alcott, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Sarah Orne Jewett, and others have suffered the same reduction.

Restricting access to the author's entire output was the first stage in Deland's gradual disappearance; these studies also tended to reinforce Scudder's consignment of Deland to the genteel literary school. Classification like this established a negative context for the reader who approached the fiction. With the connotations of sentimentalism, conventionality, and unrealistic treatments, the genteel writer was relegated to the periphery, often not considered serious enough for careful study. When contemporary reviews of the novels are examined, Deland's assignment to this literary method becomes questionable; review after review asserted Deland's moral vigor, commended her vivid character

painting, praised her realistic motivations and developments, accepted the challenges she presented in the storylines. In addition to restricting access to the work and mistakenly labeling the style, these examinations often pushed Deland into an even more limited position by the deliberate choosing of other writers and texts that were seen as truer to the American experience. The process of developing canons was already well begun at the end of Deland's active career.<sup>8</sup> The new images of American literary expression were at odds with Deland's strict, sometimes harsh, view of self-control and social responsibility. The American Adam or alienated war veteran or supra-conscious, self-exiled American had little in common with Deland's figures who strove to balance their personal needs with the greater world, who came to understand that one could not, and should not, retreat from living as fully as possible in the greater society. As the number of writers and works considered important became increasingly restricted, the exclusion of those authors who did not reflect modern culturally determined standards became mandatory.

Deland had vanished from the literary and critical mainstream by the 1950s, but she does make brief, specialized appearances in more recent critical studies and surveys. As modern critical attention has been



increasingly focused on the wide and diverse forms of expression in nineteenth century America, Deland becomes a recurring representation of these studies' particular theses. John Ward, Preacher is used in several examinations of the religious novel or religious controversies in nineteenth century literature.<sup>9</sup> These studies give Deland's novel only cursory attention, mentioning simply its basic subject matter. The book is usually linked with Mrs. Ward's Robert Elsmere, and some mention is made of their shared public response. These surveys tend to overlook Deland's differences from many of the female religious writers she is grouped with; Deland is mistakenly placed among New England writers and is said to have been "nurtured in the traditions of New England."<sup>10</sup> Often these studies include Deland among those writers who offer sentimental panaceas for preserving basic morality in a changing world.<sup>11</sup> Such misinterpretations can be explained by the nature of these texts; because they cover a wide span of time and material, the space allotted to writers and novels must be limited. However, given the extensive contemporary reaction caused by John Ward, Preacher, the number of reviews its defenders and opponents generated, the later fairly quick treatment and dismissal of Deland seems inappropriate to the novel's impact. Carter's more

focused study of late nineteenth century religious controversy does give more room to Deland's novel, and has the opportunity to develop the religious context which the novel is built on and responds to. Not surprisingly then, Carter explores the novel's impact on its time and Deland's ability to capture "the emotional stakes of the religious debate in the Gilded Age."<sup>12</sup>

John Ward, Preacher is Deland's only work to receive critical attention in recent years, and the specialized applications of the novel exacerbate the process of isolation and marginality previously begun. Surprisingly, among the various feminist reappraisals and recoveries of nineteenth century women writers Deland and her work are missing. Because many scholars' efforts are centered on early and mid-century writers -- the work of Nina Baym, Judith Fetterly, Annette Kolodny, and others -- Deland naturally becomes excluded. So far, at least for American literature, no survey or studies of popular turn of the century writers has been undertaken; individual authors of this period have received scholarly attention and renewed scrutiny. New biographies of Edith Wharton and Willa Cather have appeared in recent years, and a new biography of Kate Chopin is being undertaken. The works of these and other writers have also garnered varied critical reappraisals and concentrated study. Jewett, Freeman,

Glasgow, and many other authors once considered minor have been brought back to mainstream recognition and debate. Not only are these writers' best known works studied, but their lesser known works are also being rescued. Again Deland's omission from extensive study appears serious, for by deleting any reference to her or her work, a judgment on them is made. The only modern full-length examination of Deland is Diana Reep's contribution to the Twayne United States Authors Series published in 1985. Reep's analysis covers most of Deland's literary work and summarizes the key ethical and social issues that Deland addressed. Although Reep's study places Deland and her work within a social context, the necessarily short length of Reep's book prevents much detailed discussion of specific texts. Plot summaries are very brief, sketching in the barest mention of action and characters. Hardly any space is given to Deland's non-fiction. The study is important, however, since it shows that Deland offers the potential for serious study and provides a sound basis for further examination.

Deland's public standing at the turn of the century as writer and as social commentator makes her fiction valuable as a record and reflector of popular opinion. That the public responded to her fiction is clearly indicated by the extensive numbers of reviews that



appeared from the first novels. Responses appeared in an astonishingly broad range of contemporary journals and newspapers, and these periodicals represented a diverse sampling of the American reading public. Reviews appeared in many of the journals that catered to middle-class tastes and outlook -- the Atlantic Monthly, Harper's, the Nation, the Independent, Woman's Home Companion. However, Deland's works were also reviewed by journals which claimed a more refined literary readership, the Chap-Book and the Bellman, for example. Deland's own non-fiction appeared in these same journals, and she expected a careful reader to respond to the arguments presented in these essays. Her many public appearances also give some indication of her public appeal. The novels and stories clearly offered their contemporary audience a sense of assurance that virtue would, and must, be tested if it was to effect a person's salvation and, more importantly, that virtue would survive the kaleidoscopic social changes confronting her readers. Old Chester obviously elicited strong memories of an idealized past for many readers and encouraged a temporary suspension of the pressures and tensions of the modern world. What Jane Tompkins says of Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin can be readily applied to Deland's most important works:

For the novel functions both as a means of

describing the social world and as a means of changing it. It not only offers an interpretive framework for understanding the culture, and, through the reinforcement of a particular code of values, recommends a strategy for dealing with cultural conflict, but is itself an agent of that strategy, putting into practice the measures it prescribes. <sup>13</sup>

In the years separating Stowe and Deland, the definitions of value and conflict changed as did the prescriptions for their maintenance. Deland's correctives aimed for the transformation of the individual's spiritual and moral desires. Once such a renewal was accomplished, the greater society could be affected for good. The critical dismissal of an author who felt, justifiably, that she spoke to and for her readers should not continue. Perhaps the most valuable aspect that Deland's recovery offers the modern reader is her role as cultural mirror. However, Deland's works provide a rich source for standard literary analyses and particularly for feminist examination. The suggestions which follow can only be drawn in broad outline, but the range and possibilities for critical reappraisal will indicate Deland's importance for the modern reader.

Conventional literary examinations of Deland's

fiction have an extensive body of material with which to work, and much work needs to be done in this basic area. Deland's development as an author has received no previous discussion; contemporary commentaries did point to her growing maturity in creating situation and establishing character, but they gave little indication of the means she utilized to realize such growth. Most reviews simply mentioned her sure touch in portraying small town life and the accuracy of her character drawing. Deland's own writing practices clearly must be considered in this area. That she carefully worked and reworked her manuscripts before submitting them for publication has been noted in the preceding sections. Where manuscripts are available for close examination, her constant corrections and refining are abundantly evident. Even before she sent the text to be printed, Deland continually reworked a sometimes massive amount of raw material until she had reduced it to a manageable and focused subject: "I work over my manuscript so incessantly, that, when a novel is finished, its mere bulk is out of all proportion to the matter which appears in print."<sup>14</sup>

One of the few books available in manuscript is If This Be I as I Suppose It Be, a gift of Nathan Wallack to the Library of Congress. Even a cursory examination illustrates Deland's extraordinary attention to the work's



shaping. A sketch titled "WHEN GRANDMOTHER BOXED MY EARS" (the capitals are Deland's) is dated 2/24/33, and in pencil Deland has indicated that this reminiscence may be included in the chapter of the autobiography dealing with gossip. Two years later Deland decided to make portions of this section the opening of her volume, and by 2/13/35 retitled the section "INTRODUCING Maggie." A comparison of the two versions reveals that Deland took the opening of the 1933 sketch and made it a more general introduction to the sense of the past and its importance in shaping her present. The rest of the incidents were incorporated into the chapter dealing with gossip. The 1935 typescript version has notations of areas to be cut and mentions the editing suggestions of a Mr. Williams. By 2/27/35 Deland rewrote the opening making use of the suggested corrections, but she still refined that version, finding the most effective way to tell her story. Throughout this latest version Deland scratched out words and sentences and written revisions of lines in pencil. Sometimes there were so many emendations and corrections that a page is almost unreadable.<sup>15</sup>

Deland's own public statements about the craft of writing were few: an 1899 series of articles dealing with the novel's ethical purpose, and two brief articles, appearing in 1904 and 1919, addressed specifically to

hopeful women writers. Her insistence that the novel aim for some clear moral goal is the most important quality any writer should attempt; without such a commitment the writer merely produces sensational or vapid prose that offers little of value to the reader. A book must impel its audience to thought and even to action if it is to succeed. On the practical, technical level, Deland emphasizes basic qualities of style and focus that still hold:

You will find this same power of arousing emotion by the portrayal of small and simple things; in all the really great fiction -- Tourguenoff [sic], Jane Austen, Galsworthy, Guy de Maupassant -- all of these writers can make us feel: the event may be only the scratching of a match, or the loss of a penny from a child's grimy hand, or the blinking of a dog's beautiful, anxious eyes.<sup>16</sup>

Attention to detail, clarity of expression, focused examination of situation and response, a knowledge of one's literary predecessors are qualities which the beginning writer needs to cultivate. Deland is most particular when her advice is addressed to young women. She stresses the importance of experience, not only in expression, but in response; without an understanding of

people, situation, and motive a writer's efforts suffer: "Wait until the glamour of creation settles and clears and you can judge of the quality of your work. Wait until living has taught you what life means..."<sup>17</sup> She admonishes the beginning writer to avoid "fine writing," and as her constant revision indicates, "[t]he simplest language is sometimes the highest art."<sup>18</sup> Deland tells the new writer to keep close to ordinary people and their concerns because in them is the greatest potential for drama.

The modern reader must judge Deland's preachments and practices according to the literary standards of the late nineteenth century. For many modern tastes Deland's language and constructions seem overly complex and excessive, but in the best work, her writing evokes vivid scenes and effective confrontation: Roger Carey's physical desire for Cecil Shore ("a man might grasp the satin smoothness of the round flesh...and kiss it, and kiss it, until --"); Ellen Dale's deliciously horrible imagination ("[S]uppose that all of a sudden grandmother's head and Mrs. Wright's head were to roll off, and roll down the steps, right here, beside me!"); Sarah Maitland's tragic realization of her complicity in Blair's moral weakness ("Don't you understand?...I disinherit you to make a man of you, so that your father won't be ashamed of you -- as



I am.") These and many such scenes reveal a masterful control of language and style which are still capable of affecting the reader.

Deland's manipulation of plot, character, and imagery are clearly tied to her style. Practically every text illustrates her ability in handling the mechanics of composition. Her capabilities strengthen as she becomes more adept at placing characters and describing setting, and in her best fiction she achieves a fine blending of action and comment and description. Deland's characters have always been noted as her best creations and indicate her growing confidence and maturity. Her finest characters are fully realized, emotionally complex individuals who act and think in understandable ways. Helen Ward, Cecil Shore, Helena Richie, Lloyd Proctor, Dr. Lavendar, Frederica Payton, William King and many more move through their stories with ease and assurance. Deland takes care to provide acceptable frames for their action and opinions, and rarely do they step beyond these limits. The reader accepts these characters because Deland has not made them more than the stories describe them to be. There are failures, of course -- Sydney Lee, John Ward, Eleanor Curtis -- but these figures are meant to represent a specific emotional response or spiritual ideal, and their personalities are one-dimensional and

abstract. When Deland succeeds, the characters acquire a startling reality. Her adroit handling of small idiosyncracies adds depth and individuality to these creations: Cecil Shore's habitual semi-reclining position, Sarah Maitland's Sunday knitting for the poor, Helena Richie's occasional childish gestures, Dr. Lavendar's polishing of his jewels. Such examples are multiplied many times throughout Deland's fiction.

Scene painting is another of Deland's finest technical skills. Even as early as John Ward, Preacher she proved an efficient manipulator of physical detail to reinforce theme and a careful delineator of descriptions to create a realistic setting for her actions. Comparison of places is a common method to highlight differences in a character's emotional state, and each is given a full physical rendition: Ashurst and Lockhaven in the first novel, Tommy Dove's parlor and the Temple's library in "Mr. Tommy Dove," the Casey's cottage and Captain Archer's house. Deland also makes effective use of physical detail to describe a character's personality; Jane Jay's sterile life is underscored by the dusty, unnaturally quiet scene that introduces her to the reader in "Where Laborers are Few." Deland pays loving attention to houses in all of her fiction, and the characters' personalities reflect these environments: Martha King, who dusts behind picture

frames, Harriet Hutchinson, who lives among stuffed alligators and birds, Judge Morrison, whose front door has warped shut. Gardens, too, play an important part in Deland's physical world. Characters who tend successful gardens have found the peace and moral strength to continue like Elizabeth Day, or characters who move out of stifling environments discover freedom like Dorothea Ferris. Neglected gardens reflect the closed spirit of other characters. These are just some examples of Deland's ability to construct stories and actors who are as important to the fiction as the thematic intentions that fostered their creation.

Such basic work is a first and necessary step for Deland's restoration to public notice. However, her fiction is also capable of sustaining closer and more focused critical scrutiny. Much of Deland's work can stand, and benefit from, the various newer critical approaches. As a woman author whose body of work describes and concentrates on women's conditions, feminist examinations of Deland will clearly open her novels and stories in important ways. The large amount of material provides a consistent set of ideals and expectations that are situated around the major issues of female experience, and although Deland never considered herself a feminist, she does present a broad canvas of female characters and



actions that break through the conventional.

The feminist analysis represented by Nina Baym, Mary Kelley, and others who examine women's texts for their overt and subversive context would have in Deland a rich source of material. Like the earlier novelists, who dominate much of this criticism, Deland's fiction operates within an accepted set of social values and conventions. Many of her stories rely on conventional romantic plots, although the romance must always be considered in broad terms. While some works hinge on the search for a marriage -- The Iron Woman, Sydney, The Awakening of Helena Richie -- others downplay the romance to emphasize more pressing themes -- John Ward, Preacher, The Story of a Child, The Keys. Like her predecessors Deland directs her fiction towards specific ideas of woman's possibility and achievements, and like them, many of Deland's women manage to retain their allegiance to the dominant social view while offering the reader a redefinition of those norms. Practically every major female character faces, or is forced to confront, situations that will dramatically alter her life. Their decisions will liberate or confine these women, but for Deland the choice becomes the climactic episode in the novels. When Helen Ward refuses to accept John's religious vision, when Elizabeth Ferguson recognizes her culpability, when Helena Richie

acknowledges her moral failings, when Cecil Shore realizes her lack of sympathy, each must then deal with the consequences of those moments and take responsibility for them. Nina Baym stresses that "these authors interpreted experience within models of personal relations, rather than classes, castes, or other institutional structures."<sup>19</sup> Deland accepts and reemphasizes this close web of relation, but unlike the earlier works, demands that her characters and readers acknowledge the connections that tie the private and public realms together.

Much of Deland's fiction offers a strategy for female survival, tied as it is to conservative definitions of female action. The important fact is that these women survive, and within certain limits, prosper. Success is presented in conventional terms. None of Deland's women work outside the home except as teachers, shop assistants, and servants. None discard the social roles that have shaped them. Yet Helen, Sydney, Cecil, Susan Carr, Rachel King, and many others achieve a sense of self-worth and self-awareness. They may still move along traditional paths, but they have attained an intellectual and spiritual independence that, for Deland, far outweighs the more concrete achievements. Some characters do deliberately step beyond traditional limits, Frederica

Payton and Sarah Maitland the most notable, and they do survive and succeed. Deland, however, qualifies their success by making them less fulfilled, and she would use this term in its conventional sense. Fred and Sarah have, in many ways, gone too far from what is socially acceptable, and their stories end with a diminishment of their achievements. For the modern reader, though, these last two characters may seem more attractive and compelling, and by examining how Deland reconstructs their possibilities against her other characters, and why these women differ, they may offer a rich source for new analyses of Deland's fiction.

Modern readers would not be likely to consider Deland's women characters heroic, but feminist criticism has revised the definitions of heroism. The dominant focus of this critical view is mythic. Pearson and Pope's The Female Hero in American and British Literature describes the search for knowledge, the forces that impel the woman's journey, the trials she faces, the conclusions reached, and their impact. This study depends heavily on reading the character's quest according to fairly traditional mythic schematics. What has changed is the application of earlier, male-focused definitions of heroic action. Lee Edwards has extended this redefinition beyond the mythical framework and places heroism in its cultural



context as well. Few of Deland's characters can be considered heroic in either the conventional or mythic sense; Deland deliberately roots her women's strengths in a clearly pictured social world. Often her characters are more notable for having no extraordinary abilities at all; their very ordinariness is the only source for their development. These characters, however, seriously contend against restrictions and ideals that are harmful, and the outcomes are frequently full of dramatic confrontations and resolutions. But these women must always conform, at their stories' conclusions, to conventional norms, and because of this, Deland's female actors fit Edward's category of proto-hero -- individuals who contain the potential for heroism but who are

...coerced into voluntary surrender, are transformed into heroines; otherwise they suffer for their intellectual and sensuous desires. The very qualities -- curiosity, eagerness, wit, passion -- that seize the imagination of author and reader alike, are annihilated, sublimated to serve the needs of social order and fictive stability...<sup>20</sup>

Clearly Deland's characters exhibit various combinations of this definition. Cecil Shore defies her punishment and leaves her novel unrepentant and

unconfined. Other of Deland's women closely adhere to Edward's description; Frederica Payton perhaps most resembles the thwarted heroic possibility. Heroism, of course, takes many forms, and Deland's characters express their bravery in many ways, some so quietly that the courage is often overlooked. For many, in Deland's stories heroism is simply the discovery that they can and may disagree with other's opinions. Dorothea Ferris, Jane Jay, Jane Temple, Lydia Sampson learn that they have the right to object when others attempt to control their thoughts and actions. For some, heroism is revealed when, like Amelia Dilworth or Sally Smith or Rebecca Gray, a husband's or family's beliefs are maintained despite their knowledge of the truth. These examples of the quietly or dramatically heroic can be found throughout Deland's writing, and studying what impels such women to act, how this behavior changes their own and others' perceptions, and the long reaching effects of this heroism can reintroduce Deland to a modern audience.

Deland's creation of believable characters and credible motivation has always been her most applauded literary faculty. Feminist theories of women's psychological and ethical development are afforded rich opportunities for closer study in her work. Familial relations, particularly, provide an extensive range of

characters and situations for examination. The majority of Deland's female characters are either orphans or semi-orphans. Every novel centers around a woman who has lost one or both parents, if not through death then neglect. Helen Ward, Helena Richie, Elizabeth Ferguson, Eleanor Curtis -- each has been orphaned at a young age and raised by relations. Their upbringing is frequently severely circumscribed because of thwarted ambitions or hopes, although Deland shows that such denials can be imposed by the caretaker or the woman herself. Where some parental influence is present, for Sydney Lee, Frederica Payton, Cecil Shore, Alicia Drayton, that influence damages the character's sense of self and connection to a community either through neglect of emotional needs or by direct interference.

Mothers, or mother substitutes, and mother-daughter relationships contain the most potentially harmful consequences. Most mothers, Mrs. Drayton, Mrs. Payton, Mrs. Paul, give little nurturing to their daughters. There is a sense of rivalry, mostly unconscious, which prevents them from achieving a fruitful relationship. This unexpressed hostility appears more openly when mother and daughter are both adults, when the daughter begins to desire release from the mother's influence. The forms this battle take vary according to the personalities of



the combatants. The few positive relationships exist between young children, like Ellen Dale or Anna King, and the adult, before any expression of the daughter's independence reveals itself. Mothers and sons, interestingly, develop a more accepting connection, and whatever tensions do appear result from natural differences in expectations and achievements. Helena Richie and David enjoy one of the fullest and most intimate relationships in all of Deland's fiction. Fathers and daughters develop a seemingly less harmful relation; Sydney Lee and Mattie Archer feel deep and close affection for their fathers. However, the father's influence, while well intentioned, often produces disastrous outcomes; Major Lee's thwarted passion turns Sydney into a completely self-centered person; Captain Archer seems unable to recognize that Mattie is an adult and is content to rely on his old jokes and hopes to guide her.

Given such emotionally starved backgrounds, the frequent self-absorption which many characters develop becomes understandable. These women can only be shaken out of their complacencies by the most highly charged events. For Deland these moments center on romantic passion; the recognition that love is possible, that one is loved, that one can love beyond the personal are the

driving force to change. As noted in Section Three, Deland insists that marriage and family, because they are society's cornerstones, must be preserved. Surprisingly, though, few families in her fiction are successful. Most are incomplete or suffer some kind of breakdown; even those that appear whole maintain that unity in the face of great odds. Ellen must run away before her grandmother realizes the child's need for affection; Katherine Townsend must compromise her standards in order to placate Mrs. Paul.

Marriage, too, is rarely portrayed as a satisfying relationship. Death has ended many marriages; widows and widowers are common in the fiction. Where the couple is complete, often the connection has lost any sense of its original commitment. Mr. Drayton, for example, married to give Cecil a mother. Once his duty is accomplished, he leaves the household for an extended European visit; he provides absolutely no support, other than financial, and in fact, has married a woman guaranteed to drive him away. Many marriages must confront internal and external pressures which threaten to break the relationship; Philip and His Wife details such a disintegration. Temptation, particularly sexual tension, is one of Deland's dominant challenges to marriages that seem complete; Thomas Dilworth, Cecil Shore, Maurice Curtis, Roger Carey are all

confronted by persons markedly different from their partners. Temptation overcome marks a positive resolution, but such conclusions appear mainly in the Old Chester stories. Tragedy is the more frequent result; the lives of the couple and everyone they touch are affected as the breakdown occurs. While Deland prefers marriage as her characters' conclusion, several women refuse the opportunity when it is offered. Lydia Sampson and Rose Knight are among the few who discover the ability and desire to remain single.

Despite the overwhelmingly negative portraits of married life present in Deland's fiction, some characters do achieve a balanced, loving connection. The Houghtons from The Vehement Flame and Martha and William King offer hope that marital harmony can grow. As always, though, Deland shows that such a relation results from constant effort and care; to expect romantic bliss to survive is unrealistic. Only by dropping such unattainable desires can marriage become a real partnership. Deland's focus on the family and the attacks it faces reflected a deep-seated concern of turn of the century America; the women's movement, especially, was seen as a major threat to the stability of married life. Women who worked outside of the home would lose their control over the family, and its moral, spiritual, and economic health would suffer.<sup>21</sup>



Deland's fiction did not offer easy resolutions to this dilemma, and while she herself believed that the solvency of marriage was vital to a healthy society, she was capable of acknowledging that the institution was in the midst of far-reaching changes. Further examination of the dynamics of family and marital relations can only broaden the modern reader's interest in Deland's fiction.

Studies of popular culture have focused heavily on the novel and particularly on the female author as its dominant practitioner. Feminist analyses of women's popular literature concentrate their attention on the texts themselves, and the value the repetitions of plot and character have for the reader.<sup>22</sup> Much of this criticism holds that mass-produced texts exert a subtle and surprisingly powerful influence over their reader's lives: "The narrative strategies which have evolved for smoothing over these tensions can tell us much about how women have managed not only to live in oppressive circumstances but to invest their situations with some degree of dignity."<sup>23</sup> Popular fiction attracts because it helps resolve points of crisis in women's daily experience; it encourages the reader to create fantasies of power and submission simultaneously and allows hostile emotions to dissipate. Janice Radway's Reading the Romance reverses this power relation by focusing on the

"complex social event of reading where a woman actively attributes sense to lexical signs in a silent process carried on in the context of her ordinary life."<sup>24</sup> Here, the reader takes deliberate steps in the solution, enjoyment, and recommendation of a novel. She is not simply at the mercy of convention. Instead, the reader participates in and understands how conventional factors contribute to her pleasure. Such examinations of popular fiction and culture open rich and suggestive ideas to develop, especially in light of their discussions of the romance plot -- its development and resolution and effect for the reader.

Applying these theories to Deland requires some adjustment since romantic action is not always the dominant factor in a novel's plot. Passion without control or proportion can only harm the woman who seeks it; Cecil Shore typifies such a consequence. Because she stays rooted in the material world and aims only for physical satisfaction, Cecil is doomed to moral failure. Helena Richie and Elizabeth Ferguson seem committed to similar consequences until circumstances force them to recognize their potential danger. The romance functions as a conduit to self-knowledge. Those passionate relations that succeed bring the couple to a more solid base, although few couples manage to achieve or maintain this

balance in the novels. The Wards experience this bond until theological differences split them. In the strictest sense, then, Deland's novels do not fall into the romance category, but the romances cannot be ignored either. Deland's concept of romance, its demands and outcomes, needs a more careful definition.

Deland creates romantic situations that deviate widely from the stereotypes mentioned in much of this feminist theory. Some of the most touching relations are pictured between unlikely partners; Mr. Denner and the Woodhouse sisters, Joseph Lavendar and Susan Carr, Ellen Bailey and the Reverend Mr. Spangler are all the antithesis of a conventional couple. Indeed such pairs seem to be gentle thrusts at the traditional romantic struggle, as though Deland knows what a reader expected from such a situation. "How Could She!" clearly utilizes sentimental set pieces and overturns them; mistaken declarations of love, misinterpreted actions by the partners, sexual daring expressed by unlikely characters appear in the story but are manipulated by Rose Knight to produce a specific desire. Deland even further upsets conventional norms when, having saved her fiancé from a potentially unhappy marriage, she does not have Rose fall into her lover's arms. Having saved him, Rose refuses him. Placing Deland's fiction against feminist critiques



of romance and popular culture offers the modern reader the opportunity to redefine categories and frameworks.

Other theories of popular culture can also be applied to Deland, especially as she considers the writer's public role to be the most important. It is not the writer's popularity that Deland feels is the main concern, but rather the creator's ability to present a clear moral purpose and effect: "A book to be true, must be true, not only to this or that phase of living, but to the whole of life -- that is to say its facts must be in proportion to life. ...Facts may be pitch, and may defile; but truth is something far higher and deeper than a statement of facts... ." The shaping of the work, according to the mainstream critical view, often rests on the writer's understanding of and participation in the dominant culture.<sup>26</sup> Popular literature perhaps more closely mirrors and captures public opinions and expectations because it continually replays the stories that embody an audience's shared desires. Reader response criticism supports this view of the fictional work as a vehicle by which the audience contains its fears and hopes of the world: "We want the text to be the kind of world we know how to deal with. ...We shape and change the text until, to the degree we need that certainty, it is the kind of setting in which we can gratify our wishes and defeat our

fears."<sup>27</sup> In a world filled with challenge and uncertain outcomes, the security offered by the happy ending becomes necessary. Popular fiction's black and white world insures the permanence of moral value and action. The ability of the popular writer to portray this stability ranges from the hackneyed to the compelling; competence in arranging plot and character must only be seen as the starting point for the author's message. Many critics of popular literature fail to look beyond the techniques of this type of writing, and all too frequently the work and writer are discarded when they fail to meet sometimes arbitrary standards of judgment. These rigid codes of judgment, however, have been shown to be just as arbitrarily devised and enforced, and once removed, popular literature can enjoy a more balanced reappraisal.

Deland's own work exhibits strong links to its specific cultural place and time. The issues she chose to discuss, the characters she created to embody them, the resolutions she devised, all reveal how closely tied the novels and stories were to their environment. Deland was not an escapist writer, offering her reader smooth surfaces and easy solutions; she saw that the society she lived in demanded full participation if its wrongs were to be corrected. Deland, then, carefully shaped her fiction to illustrate how the committed individual could survive

the changes occurring around him or her. She constantly asked the reader to confront difficult questions about one's place in and responsibility to the world. These questions push at the limits of popular literature because they tend to undercut the positive resolutions the genre demands. Deland was an able enough writer to understand how far these boundaries could be stretched before they broke. Whatever tragedy strikes the major characters in her fiction, she always holds out the possibility of redemption. Many characters still have much to learn and achieve, but like Helena Richie, Sydney Lee, Maurice Curtis, and Helen Ward, they have attained the ability to make a choice. Even the characters who die before they can bring something positive out of their suffering and growth have the same insights into the source of their pain.

Deland's associations of individual power and control are the novels' bedrock. This deep-seated belief and possibility helps explain why some characters' endings seem unsatisfactory; both Cecil Shore and Frederica Payton undergo the painful self-examination that Deland mandates for their thematic outcomes. Yet both women make decisions that seem repudiations of their expected end; Cecil is not allowed to take her new self-knowledge and use it in any positive way. She is forced off the stage



in a highly melodramatic way, cursing Philip. She relinquishes Molly, her reputation, even her home to satisfy the conventions. Cecil, however, is not simply the seductive temptress who must be punished, but the most vibrant and compelling character in Philip and His Wife. Likewise, Frederica's marriage does not satisfy the reader although the heroine's romance must be successfully completed in conventional terms. Frederica's moment of insight destroys her self-confidence and denies hope rather than supporting continued spiritual growth. Deland seems to have contradicted her own purpose in The Rising Tide. By taking conventional forms and expectations to their limits, Deland achieved a skillful balance of stereotype and innovation. In light of such an achievement Deland's disappearance from public and critical notice becomes less acceptable.

Margaret Deland, at the peak of her career, was considered a major and representative American voice. Modern critical theory and reader demands have altered the definition of what comprises an American spokesperson, and Deland has been considered unable to address the issues that concern the majority. Her time, class, race, and experience in many ways seem insurmountable obstacles to a renewed study or appreciation of her work. However these very factors give Deland's life and her fiction compelling

interest for the modern reader. The contradictions of her life and art reflected the upheavals of turn of the century American life and presented them in dramatic and approachable form. Like the rest of her society Deland questioned the headlong rush towards progress and felt a sense of loss when traditional values seemed unsuited to modern demands. She incorporated in her work the conflicting tensions common to this period and offered her audience clues and suggestions for reconciling those conflicts. Throughout the fiction Deland encouraged adaptation of past ideals and present realities and applauded the person's realization that growth is essential, yet she refused to abandon the personal and moral standards that shaped her generation, because without a firm spiritual base no real advance could be made. Nor did she condone those advocates of new philosophies or technologies who disregarded the values of the past. Advancement without basic moral and spiritual beliefs created shallow men and women, incapable of perfecting their society. Unfortunately, the world changed too fast for Deland's message to have a long-lasting effect. By the end of her writing career, Deland was regarded as a creator of nice romances, a writer of entertainments. Such a view, however, demeans not only Deland's intention and achievement, but the readers, past

and present, who found in her works the hope for continuity.

Sensitive observation and committed response characterized Deland's presentations of her actors' dilemmas. Her sympathy extended to parent and child, past and present, conventional and modern. The fiction hoped to indicate the possibility of some reconciliation between these oppositions as it detailed the developments of its characters' self-control. Extremes, whether of action, belief, or expectation, damaged not only the individual but one's society as well; Deland insisted that the individual must learn to achieve a sense of balance when dealing with the world and to cultivate a moral response that encouraged the person to confront the changing world. Deland wanted her readers to face this changing world bravely, to hope, and to work for a positive outcome. Most importantly, Deland asked that her audience understand the significance of change and its relation to permanence; she sought a solution to, perhaps, the greatest conundrum -- how to live wholly and fully in a fragmented world:

I suppose fear is probably the most hampering thing in the world. People who laugh are not afraid, while they are laughing. Therefore, the obvious thing to do is to get such a sense of



proportion; such a sense of our own relation to  
the universe, that we may laugh and be  
fearless!<sup>28</sup>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Morris Dickstein, "Popular Fiction and Critical Values: The Novel as a Challenge to Literary History," in Reconstructing American Literary History ed. Sacvan Bercovitch (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1986) 34.

<sup>2</sup> Philip Fisher, Hard Facts: Setting and Form in the American Novel (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985) 7.

<sup>3</sup> Margaret Deland to Elizabeth Jordan, n.d., Elizabeth Jordan Letters, New York Public Library.

<sup>4</sup> The Women Who Make Our Novels (New York: Moffat, Yard and Co., 1918); Our Short Story Writers 1922 rpt. (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1969)

<sup>5</sup> Vida Scudder, "Introduction," Old Chester Tales (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1919) xv.

<sup>6</sup> James Harewood Barrett, Divorce and the American Divorce Novel, 1858-1937: A Study in Literary Reflections of Social Influences (New York: Russell and Russell, 1939); Ima H. Herron, The Small Town in American Literature (Durham: Duke University Press, 1939); Dorothy Yost Deegan, The Stereotype of the Single Woman in American Novels: A Social Study with Implications for the Education of Woman, 1951, rpt. (New York: Octagon Books, 1981).

<sup>7</sup> Catherine Beard, "Margaret Deland's Use of the Deus ex Machina in the Old Chester Stories," Master's Thesis, University of Kentucky, 1948; Hattie McDougald Bell, "Margaret Deland's Old Chester and its People," Master's Thesis, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1931; Evelyn Mae Debenning, "The Literary Career of Margaret Deland," Master's Thesis, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1948; William McKenzie Harvey, "Didacticism in the Fiction of Mrs. Margaret Deland," Master's Thesis, University of Pittsburgh, 1930; Dale C. Hesser, "Preacher Characterizations in Harriet Beecher Stowe and Margaret Deland," Master's Thesis, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1950.

<sup>8</sup> See Paul Lauter, "Race and Gender in the Shaping of the American Literary Canon: A Case Study from the

Twenties," Feminist Studies 9 (1983): 435-463.

<sup>9</sup> Paul Carter, The Spiritual Crisis of the Gilded Age, (Northern Illinois University Press, 1971); J.R.K.Kantor, "The Damnation of Theron Ware and John Ward, Preacher," Serif 3 (1966): 16-21; Margaret Maison, The Victorian Vision: Studies in the Religious Novel (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961); Leo F. O'Connor, Religion in the American Novel: The Search for Belief, 1860-1920 (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1984); David Reynolds, Faith in Fiction: The Emergence of Religious Literature in America (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1981); Herbert F. Smith, The Popular American Novel, 1865-1920 (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1980); Barbara Welter, Dimity Convictions: The American Woman in the Nineteenth-Century (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1976).

<sup>10</sup> O'Connor, 17.

<sup>11</sup> Welter, 129.

<sup>12</sup> Carter, 82-83.

<sup>13</sup> Jane Tompkins, Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985) 135.

<sup>14</sup> Margaret Deland to Mr. Johnson, 16 January 1928. Margaret Deland Letters, Colby College, Waterville, Maine.

<sup>15</sup> See the manuscript of If This Be I as I Suppose It Be in the Library of Congress Manuscript Collection, Washington, D.C.

<sup>16</sup> Margaret Deland, "Shall I Try to Write Stories?" Woman's Home Companion 46 (March 1910): 26.

<sup>17</sup> Margaret Deland, "To the Girl Who Writes," in The Common Way (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1904) 198.

<sup>18</sup> Margaret Deland to Mr. Shiperd, 28 April 1925. Margaret Deland Letters, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia.

<sup>19</sup> Nina Baym, Woman's Fiction: A Guide to Novels by and about Women in America, 1820-1870 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978) 18.

<sup>20</sup> Lee R. Edwards, Psyche as Hero: Female Heroism and



Fictional Form (Middlebury, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1984) 28.

<sup>21</sup> See Carl N. Degler, At Odds: Women and the Family in America from the Revolution to the Present (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980).

<sup>22</sup> See Tania Modelski, Loving With a Vengeance: Mass-Produced Fantasies for Women (New York: Methuen Inc., 1982); Madonne M. Miner, Insatiable Appetites: Twentieth Century American Women's Bestsellers (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1984).

<sup>23</sup> Modelski, 14-15.

<sup>24</sup> Janice Radway, Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984) 8.

<sup>25</sup> Margaret Deland, "The Truth of the Novel," Independent 51 (6 April 1899): 951.

<sup>26</sup> John Cawelti, Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976) 27.

<sup>27</sup> Norman N. Holland and Lena F. Sherman, "Gothic Possibilities," in Gender and Reading: Essays on Readers, Texts and Contexts, eds. Elizabeth A. Flynn and Patrocínio R. Schweickart (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986) 216-217.

<sup>28</sup> Margaret Deland to Romaine Poindexter, 6 April 1927. Private letter in possession of Mr. Robert Poindexter.

## WORKS CONSULTED

### Primary Sources

Margaret Deland Letters. Colby College Library,  
Waterville, Maine.

Margaret Deland Letters. Library of Congress, Washington,  
D. C.

Margaret Deland Letters and Family Material. Private  
Collection. Mr. Robert Poindexter, Whittier,  
California.

Margaret Deland Letters. Barrett Collection. University  
of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia.

Margaret Deland Letters. Western Pennsylvania Historical  
Society. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Elizabeth Jordan Letters. New York City Public Library.  
New York, New York.

Louise Chandler Moulton Letters. Library of Congress,  
Washington, D.C.

The Poindexter Family Letters. Huntingdon Library,  
California.

Nathan Wallack Collection. Colby College Library,  
Waterville, Maine.

Lilian Whiting Letters. Boston Public Library, Boston,  
Massachusetts.

Margaret Deland. Golden Yesterdays. ts. Van Pelt  
Library, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia,  
Pennsylvania.

Margaret Deland. If This Be I as I Suppose It Be. ts.  
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

### Novels and Short Story Collections

Deland, Margaret. Around Old Chester. New York: Harper

and Brothers 1915.

- . The Awakening of Helena Richie. New York: Harper and Brothers 1906.
- . The Awakening of Helena Richie. Margaret Anglin Edition. New York: Harper and Brothers 1910.
- . Captain Archer's Daughter. New York: Harper and Brothers 1932.
- . The Common Way. New York: Harper and Brothers 1904.
- . Confession. Hampton, Virginia: Hampton Institute Press 1928.
- . Dr. Lavendar's People. New York: Harper and Brothers 1903.
- . Florida Days. Boston: Little, Brown 1889.
- . "Foreward" to The Vanished Friend: Evidence, Theoretical and Practical of the Survival of Human Identity After Death. Jules Thiebault. New York: E. P. Dutton. n.d.
- . Golden Yesterdays. New York: Harper and Brothers 1941.
- . The Hands of Esau. New York: Harper and Brothers 1914.
- . If This Be I As I Suppose It Be. New York: D. Appleton-Century 1935.
- . The Iron Woman. New York: Harper and Brothers 1911.
- . John Ward, Preacher. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin 1888.
- . The Keys. New York: Harper and Brothers 1926.
- . Mr. Tommy Dove and Other Stories. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin 1893.
- . New Friends in Old Chester. New York: Harper and Brothers 1924.
- . Old Chester Tales. New York: Harper and Brothers 1898.



- . Old Chester Tales. Harper's Modern Classics. With an introduction by Vida Scudder. New York: Harper and Brothers 1919.
- . The Old Garden and Other Verses. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin 1893.
- . Philip and His Wife. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin 1894.
- . The Promises of Alice. New York: Harper and Brothers 1919.
- . R. J.'s Mother and Some Other Stories. New York: Harper and Brothers 1908.
- . The Rising Tide. New York: Harper and Brothers 1916.
- . Small Things. New York: D. Appleton 1919.
- . The Story of a Child. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin 1892.
- . Sydney. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin 1890.
- . "Though Inland Far We Be -- ". In The Case For and Against Psychical Belief. Clark University 1927. rpt. Hampton, Virginia: Hampton Institute Press 1932.
- . The Vehement Flame. New York: Harper and Brothers 1922.
- . The Way to Peace. New York: Harper and Brothers 1910.
- . The Wisdom of Fools. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin 1897.

#### Articles

- Deland, Margaret. "The Badness of Good People." Ladies Home Journal 31 (April 1914): 7-8.
- . "The Change in the Feminine Ideal." Atlantic Monthly. 105 (March 1910): 298-302.

- . "Concerning Sinners." Harper's Bazar. 39 (July 1905): 595-599.
- . "Concerning the Saints." Harper's Bazar. 39 (June 1905): 499-503.
- . "A Deep-Seated Trouble." Good Housekeeping. 40 (February 1905): 159.
- . "The Doors of Silence: A Discussion of the Possibilities of Communication With Those Who Have Died." Woman's Home Companion. 46 (November 1919): 7+.
- . "The Doors of Silence: Are They Closed Forever When Those We Love Have Died?" Woman's Home Companion. 46 (December 1919): 16+.
- . "The Doors of Silence: The Hour's Communion." Woman's Home Companion. 47 (January 1920): 12+.
- . "The Doors of Silence: If the Cap Fits." Woman's Home Companion. 47 (February 1920): 16+.
- . "Dwarfs." Harper's Bazar. 38 (January 1904): 20-24.
- . "The Ethics of the Novel." Independent. 51 (13 April 1899): 1007-1009.
- . "A Family Panorama: Review of The Perennial Bachelor." The Saturday Review of Literature. 2 (24 October 1925): 235.
- . "Giving -- A Christmas Editorial." Woman's Home Companion. 43 (December 1916): 2.
- . "The Grace of Determination." Woman's Home Companion. 50 (November 1923): 15+.
- . "I Didn't Know -- " Ladies Home Journal. 24 (March 1907): 9.
- . "In the Long Run What Difference Does the Rain Make?" Ladies Home Journal. 30 (May 1913): 13-14.
- . "Individualism and Social Responsibility." Independent. 53 (23 May 1901): 1172-1174.
- . "Jonquils." Good Housekeeping. 39 (August 1904): 162-166.

- . "The Joys of Gardening." Country Life in America. 19 (1 March 1911): 337-340.
- . "The Light Which is Darkness." Harper's. 139 (June 1919): 34-35.
- . "Looking Back on Girlhood." The Youth's Companion. 65 (14 January 1892): 23.
- . "A Menace to Literature." North American Review. 158 (February 1894): 157-163.
- . "The New Women Who Do Things." Ladies Home Journal. 24 (September 1907): 17.
- . "The Novel With a Purpose." Independent. 51 (20 April 1899): 1067-1069.
- . "Phillips Brooks." Atlantic Monthly 166 (July 1940): 29-37.
- . "Save Christmas." Harper's Bazar. 44 (December 1912): 593.
- . "A Sense of Opportunity." Good Housekeeping. 51 (October 1910): 387.
- . "Shall I Try to Write Stories?" Woman's Home Companion. 46 (March 1919): 26.
- . "Snakes in Ireland." Harper's Bazar. 38 (November 1904): 1057-1061.
- . "Studies of Great Women I -- Cleopatra." Harper's Bazar. 51 (27 October 1900): 1007-1011.
- . "Studies of Great Women II -- Madame Recamier." Harpers Bazar. 51 (24 November 1900): 1885-1890.
- . "Studies of Great Women III -- Cornelia." Harper's Bazar. 51 (22 December 1900): 2153-2156.
- . "Studies of Great Women IV -- Elizabeth." Harper's Bazar. 52 (19 January 1901): 131-135.
- . "Studies of Great Women V -- Madame de Maintenon." Harper's Bazar. 52 (2 February 1901): 259-263.
- . "Studies of Great Women VI -- Joan of Arc."



Harper's Bazar 52 (23 February 1901): 467-472.

- . "Studies of Great Women VII -- Angelica Kauffman." Harper's Bazar. 52 (20 April 1901): 1011-1015.
- . "Studies of Great Women VIII -- Charlotte Corday." Harper's Bazar. 53 (July 1901): 203-209.
- . "The Third Way in Woman Suffrage." Ladies Home Journal. 30 (January 1913): 11-12.
- . "The Three S's." Woman's Home Companion. 45 (January 1918): 7.
- . "The Tight Rope of Pretense." Ladies Home Journal. 38 (June 1921): 11+.
- . "The Truth of the Novel." Independent. 51 (6 April 1899): 951-953.
- . "The Value of the Novel." Independent. 51 (30 March 1899): 876-877.
- . "We -- The Unimportant People." Ladies Home Journal. 37 (November 1920): 3-4.
- . "What Is A Novel?" Bookman (New York). 42 (February 1916): 655.
- . "What, Really, Is Patriotism?" Ladies Home Journal. 33 (July 1916): 9.
- . "When I Was Your Age." Good Housekeeping. 57 (December 1913): 751-758.
- . "The Wickedness of Growing Old." Harper's Bazar. 38 (February 1905): 99-103.
- . "Woman in the Market Place." Independent. 86 (22 May 1916): 286-288.

## Secondary Sources

### Reviews

#### The Awakening of Helena Richie

Brown, Edith Baker. Bookman (New York). 24 (September 1906): 57-59.

MacArthur, James. "Books and Bookman." Harper's Weekly. 50 (4 August 1906): 1110.

Moss, Mary. Atlantic Monthly. 89 (January 1907): 124-125.

Payne, William. Dial. 41 (1 September 1906): 115.

Wilcox, Louise Collier. North American Review. 183 (21 September 1906): 547-550.

Athanaeum. 4111 (11 August 1906): 153.

Harper's. 113 (November 1906): 801-802.

Independent. 61 (9 August 1906): 336-338.

Independent. 61 (15 November 1906): 1158-1161.

Nation. 83 (26 July 1906): 83.

Outlook. 84 (24 November 1906): 708.

Putnam's Monthly and Critic. 1 (October 1906): 109-110.

#### Captain Archer's Daughter.

Bregy, Katherine. Catholic World. 135 (September 1932): 152.

Time. 9 May, 1932: 55.

#### Dr. Lavendar's People.

Erle, Mary T. Critic. 44 (February 1904): 180.

Athanaeum. 3973 (19 December 1903): 823.

Dial. 36 (1 January 1904): 23.

Outlook. 75 (5 December 1903): 852.

Saturday Review (London). 97 (27 August 1904): 21.

#### Florida Days

Athanaeum. 3286 (18 October 1890): 510.

Literary World. 20 (November 1889): 416.

#### Golden Yesterdays

New York Herald Tribune Books. 16 November 1941, IX: 5.

#### If This Be I as I Suppose It Be

Saturday Review of Literature. 13 (11 January 1936): 18.

#### The Iron Woman

Cabell, Isa Carrington. Bellman. 11 (25 November 1911):  
697.

Kerfoot, J. B. Life. 58 (16 November 1911): 862.

Payne, William. Dial. 51 (1 December 1911): 473.

Wright, Mary Tappan. North American Review. 194  
(December 1911): 921-925.

Current Literature. 51 (December 1911): 694.

Harper's. 123 (November 1911): 962-964.

Independent. 71 (7 December 1911): 1269-1270.

Outlook. 99 (23 September 1911): 156-157.



John Ward, Preacher

Bemis, Edward. Andover Review. 10 (November 1888): 554-555.

Broch. Life. 11 (3 May 1888): 250-251.

Farrar, Archdeacon. Littell's Living Age. 179 (October 1888): 37-45.

Athanaeum. 3168 (14 July 1888): 61.

Catholic World. 47 (July 1888): 559-561.

Critic. 18 (4 August 1888): 54.

Dial. 9 (July 1888): 67.

Independent. 40 (18 August 1888): 10.

Literary News. 9 (June 1888): 168.

Literary World. 19 (12 May 1888): 153.

Nation. 46 (28 June 1888): 530.

Saturday Review (London). 66 (14 July 1888): 58.

"Theology in Fiction." Atlantic Monthly. 62 (November 1888): 699-706.

The Keys

Parsons, Alice Beal. Nation. 124 (23 February 1927): 214.

Mr. Tommy Dove and Other Stories

Athanaeum. 3432 (5 August 1893): 185.

Atlantic Monthly. 72 (November 1893): 698-699.

Bookman (London). 4 (July 1893): 123.

Critic. 23 (5 August 1893): 86-87.

Dial. 15 (16 August 1893): 94.

Literary World. 24 (3 June 1893): 178.

Nation. 56 (29 June 1893): 475-476.

Saturday Review (London). 76 (15 July 1893): 75-76.

#### Old Chester Tales

Atlantic Monthly. 83 (April 1899): 518-519.

Critic. 34 (March 1899): 261.

Harper's. 98 (May 1899): 648-649.

Independent. 51 (26 January 1899): 281.

Literary World. 29 (December 1898): 431.

Nation. 68 (11 May 1899): 358.

Outlook. 60 (17 December 1898): 972.

#### The Old Garden and Other Verses

Literary News. 14 (December 1893): 358.

Literary World. 24 (December 1893): 411.

#### Philip and His Wife

Athanaeum. 3504 (December 1894): 858.

Chatauguan. 21 (April 1895): 126.

Critic. 25 (17 November 1894): 325.

Dial. 18 (1 May 1895): 272.

Literary World. 25 (15 December 1894): 445.

Munsey's. 13 (April 1895): 98-99.

Nation. 61 (3 October 1895): 243.

Overland Monthly. Second Series. 25 (April 1895): 441.

Saturday Review (London). 75 (12 January 1895): 55-56.

R. J.'s Mother and Some Other Stories.

Bookman (London). 34 (July 1908): 155.

Bookman (New York). 27 (August 1908): 577-578.

Nation. 86 (25 June 1908): 580.

The Rising Tide.

Outlook. 114 (1 November 1916): 521.

Sydney

Droch. Life. 16 (11 December 1890): 336-337.

Payne, William. Dial. 11 (December 1890): 240.

Athanaeum. 3293 (December 1890): 773.

Atlantic Monthly. 67 (January 1891): 127.

Catholic World. 52 (December 1890): 443-446.

Chatauguan. 12 (December 1890): 421.

Critic. 14 (22 November 1890): 256.

Literary News. 11 (November 1890): 326.

Literary World. 21 (8 November 1890): 393-394.

Nation. 53 (6 August 1891): 107.

Overland Monthly. Second Series. 17 (June 1891): 662.

Saturday Review (London). 70 (6 December 1890): 651.



The Story of a Child.

Athanaeum. 3397 (3 December 1892): 774-775.

Bookman (London). 3 (December 1892): 91-92.

Critic. 22 (4 March 1893): 126-127.

Dial. 13 (December 1892): 396.

Literary News. 14 (January 1893): 11-12.

Literary World. 23 (December 1892): 497.

Nation. 56 (January 1893): 19.

Saturday Review (London). 75 (February 1893): 211.

The Vehement Flame.

Townsend, R. D. Outlook. 131 (21 June 1922): 351-352.

Walton, Theodocia. "The Veiled Confession of Margaret Deland." New York Times Book Review and Magazine. 17 September 1922: 6+.

Catholic World. 116 (October 1922): 115-116.

Wisdom of Fools.

Droch. Life. 29 (June 1897): 486-487.

Athanaeum. 3675 (April 1898): 434.

Bookman (New York). 5 (July 1897): 438.

Critic. 30 (June 1897): 422-423.

"The Modern Problem." Chap-Book. 7 (June 1897): 65.

Alden, Henry Mills. "The Author of 'The Iron Woman.'"

- Outlook. 99 (11 November 1911): 628-632.
- Barron, Leonard. "The Summer Home of Margaret Deland." Country Life in America. 15 (March 1909):463-466.
- Baym, Nina. "Melodramas of Beset Manhood: How Theories of American Fiction Exclude Women Authors." American Quarterly. 33 (1981): 123-139.
- . Novels, Readers, and Reviewers: Responses to Fiction in Antebellum America. Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1984.
- . "Rewriting the Scribbling Woman." Legacy. 2 (Fall 1985): 3-12.
- . Woman's Fiction: A Guide to Novels By and About Women in America, 1820-1870. Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1978.
- Beard, Catherine. "Margaret Deland's Use of the Deus ex Machina in the Old Chester Stories." Master's Thesis. University of Kentucky 1948.
- Bell, Hattie McDougald. "Margaret Deland's Old Chester and Its People." Master's Thesis. George Peabody College for Teachers 1931.
- Bennett, James Harewood. Divorce and the American Divorce Novel, 1858-1937: A Study in Literary Reflections of Social Influences. New York: Russell and Russell 1939.
- Berg, Barbara. The Remembered Gate: Origins of American Feminism, the Woman and the City, 1800-1860. New York: Oxford University Press 1978.
- Bledstein, Burton J. The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America. New York: W. W. Norton and Co. 1976.
- Boller, Jr., Paul. American Thought in Transition: The Impact of Evolutionary Naturalism, 1865-1900. Chicago: Rand McNally 1970.
- Branca, Patricia. Silent Sisterhood: Middle Class Women in the Victorian Home. Pittsburgh: Carnegie-Mellon University Press 1975.
- Brown, Herbert Ross. The Sentimental Novel in America.

- 1790-1860. Durham: Duke University Press 1940.
- Carter, Paul. The Spiritual Crisis of the Gilded Age. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press 1971.
- Cawelti, John. Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture. Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1976.
- Chafe, William. The American Woman: Her Changing Social, Economic, and Political Roles 1920-1970. New York: Oxford University Press 1972.
- Chapple, Joe Mitchell. "Margaret Deland." National Magazine(Boston). 9 (1899): 522-529.
- Clinton, Catherine. The Other Civil War: American Women in the Nineteenth Century. New York: Hill and Wang 1984.
- Commager, Henry Steele. The American Mind: An Interpretation of American Thought and Character Since the 1880s. New Haven: Yale University Press 1950.
- Conn, Peter. The Divided Mind: Ideology and Imagination in America, 1898-1917. New York: Cambridge University Press 1983.
- Debenning, Evelyn Mae. "The Literary Career of Margaret Deland." Master's Thesis. Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College 1948.
- Deegan, Dorothy Yost. The Stereotype of the Single Woman in American Novels: A Social Study with Implications for the Education of Women. 1951. rpt. New York: Octagon Books 1981.
- Deland, Lorin. At the Sign of the Dollar and Other Essays. New York: Harper and Brothers 1917.
- . Imagination in Business. New York: Harper and Brothers 1909.
- Dickstein, Morris. "Popular Fiction and Critical Values: The Novel as a Challenge to Literary History." in Reconstructing American Literary History. ed. Sacvan Bercovitch. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1986.



- Douglas, Ann. The Feminization of American Culture. New York: Alfred A. Knopf 1977.
- Edwards, Lee. Psyche as Hero: Female Heroism and Fictional Form. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press 1984.
- Epstein, Barbara. The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism, and Temperance in Nineteenth-Century America. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press 1981.
- Falk, Robert. The Victorian Mode in American Fiction, 1865-1885. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press 1965.
- Fisher, Philip. Hard Facts: Setting and Form in the American Novel. New York: Oxford University Press 1985.
- Flexnor, Eleanor. A Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States. Revised Edition. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1975.
- Ford, Mary. "Some Representative American Storytellers; IV -- Margaret Deland." Bookman (New York). 25 (1907): 511-519.
- G., J. L. "Mrs. Deland." Critic. 25 (17 November 1894): 334.
- Gould, Marjorie. "Of Margaret Deland and 'Old Chester.'" Colby College Library Quarterly. 2 (1944):167-170.
- Habegger, Alfred. Gender, Fantasy, and Realism in American Literature. New York: Columbia University Press 1982.
- Halsey, Frances. ed. Woman Authors of Our Day in Their Homes. New York: James Potts and Co. 1903.
- Halttunen, Karen. Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in America, 1820-1870. New Haven: Yale University Press 1982.
- Harkins, E. F. and C. H. L. Johnston. Little Pilgrimages Among the Women Who Have Written Famous Books. Boston: L. C. Page and Co. 1902.

- Haroutanian, Joseph. Piety vs. Moralism: The Passing of New England Theology. Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books 1964.
- Hart, James. The Popular Book: A History of America's Literary Taste. Berkeley: University of California Press 1950.
- Harvey, William McKenzie. "Didacticism in the Fiction of Mrs. Margaret Deland." Master's Thesis. University of Pittsburgh 1930.
- Henrici, Lois Oldham. Representative Women: Being a Little Gallery of Pen Portraits. Kansas City, Missouri: The Crafters Publishers 1913.
- Hesser, Dale C. "Preacher Characterizations in Harriet Beecher Stowe and Margaret Deland." Master's Thesis. Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College 1950.
- Hopkins, Charles Howard. The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism, 1865-1915. Yale Studies in Religious Education 14. New Haven: Yale University Press 1940.
- Howe, M. A. DeWolfe. "Margaret Deland: A Study in Influences." Outlook. 84 (24 November 1906): 730-734.
- Humphrey III, James. "The Works of Margaret Deland." Colby College Library Quarterly 2 (1944): 134-140.
- Jelinek, Estelle. The Tradition of Women's Autobiography: From Antiquity to the Present. Boston: G. K. Hall 1986.
- Kantor, J. R. K. "The Damnation of Theron Ware and John Ward, Preacher." Serif 3 (1966): 16-21.
- Kazin, Alfred. On Native Grounds: An Interpretation of Modern American Prose Literature. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co. 1942.
- Kelley, Mary. Private Woman, Public Stage: Literary Domesticity in Nineteenth-Century America. New York: Oxford University Press 1984.
- Kern, Stephen. The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918 Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1983.



Knight, Grant C. The Critical Period in American Literature. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 1951.

Kolodny, Annette. "Dancing Through the Minefield: Some Observations on the Theory, Practice, and Politics of a Feminist Literary Criticism." in The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, and Theory. Elaine Showalter, ed. New York: Pantheon Books 1985.

---. The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630-1860. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 1984.

---. The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 1975.

Kraditor, Aileen. The Idea of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co. 1965.

Lauter, Paul. "Race and Gender in the Shaping of the American Literary Canon: A Case Study from the Twenties." Feminist Studies. 9 (1983): 435-463.

Lear, Jackson. No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920. New York: Pantheon Books 1981.

Lewis, R. W. B. The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century. Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1955.

Maison, Margaret. The Victorian Vision: Studies in the Religious Novel. New York: Sheed and Ward 1961.

"Margaret Deland." Harper's Weekly. 47 (14 November 1903): 1839-1840.

Martin, Jay. Harvests of Change: American Literature, 1865-1914. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1967.

Marx, Leo. The Machine and the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Idea in America. New York: Oxford University Press 1964.



- May, Henry F. The End of American Innocence: The First Years of Our Own Time. New York: Oxford University Press 1959.
- Mayer, Stanley D. "Margaret Deland." Carnegie Magazine. 17 (November 1979): 2-9.
- McDonald, Donald. "Mrs. Deland's Childhood." Outlook. 64 (24 February 1900): 407-410.
- McIlvaine, Robert. "Two Awakenings: Edna Pontellier and Helena Richie." Regionalism and the Female Imagination. 4 (Winter 1979): 44-49.
- Meyer, D. H. "American Intellectuals and the Victorian Crisis of Faith." in Victorian America. David W. Howe, ed. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1976.
- Miner, Madonne. Insatiable Appetites: Twentieth-Century American Women Bestsellers. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press 1984.
- Modelski, Tania. Loving With a Vengeance: Mass-Produced Fantasies for Women. New York: Methuen Inc. 1982.
- Mott, Frank L. Golden Multitudes: The Study of the Bestseller in the United States. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1947.
- Mowry, George. The Urban Nation, 1920-1960. New York: Hill and Wang 1965.
- Nash, Roderick. The Nervous Generation: American Thought, 1917-1930. Chicago: Rand McNally 1970.
- Norris, Kathleen. "A Visit to Margaret Deland." Woman's Home Companion. 42 (November 1915): 5+.
- O'Connor, Leo. Religion in the American Novel: The Search for Belief, 1860-1920. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America 1984.
- Overton, Grant. The Women Who Make Our Novels. New York: Moffatt, Yard, and Co. 1918.
- Painter, Nell Irvin. Standing at Armageddon: The United States, 1877-1919. New York: W. W. Norton and Co. 1987.

- Pauling, Christopher. "Introduction: Popular Fiction: Ideology or Utopia." in Popular Fiction and Social Change. Christopher Pauling, ed. New York: St. Martin's Press 1984.
- Pearson, Carol and Katherine Pope. The Female Hero in American and British Literature. New York: R. R. Bowker Co. 1981.
- Purdy, Lucia. "Mrs. Deland at Home." Critic. (1898): 33-39.
- Radway, Janice. Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 1984.
- Reep, Diana. Margaret Deland. Boston: G. K. Hall 1985.
- . The Rescue and the Romance: Popular Novels Before World War I. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Press 1982.
- Reynolds, David. Faith in Fiction: The Emergence of Religious Literature in America. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1981.
- Roberts, Robert R. "Guilt, Gingerbread, and Realism: The Public and Its Taste." in The Gilded Age: A Reappraisal. H. Wayne Morgan, ed. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press 1965.
- Rhodes, Robert. Setting in the American Short Story of Local Color, 1865-1900. The Hague: Mouton and Co. 1975.
- Shuster, George N. "The Retreat of the American Novel." Catholic World 106 (November 1917): 166-174.
- Smith, Henry Nash. The Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth. New York: Vintage Books 1950.
- Smith, Herbert. The Popular American Novel, 1865-1920. Boston: G. K. Hall 1980.
- Tompkins, J. M. S. The Popular Novel in England, 1770-1800. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press 1932.
- Tompkins, Jane. Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860. New York: Oxford University Press 1985.

- Walker, Cheryl. The Nightingale's Burden: Women Poets and American Culture Before 1900. Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1982.
- Wasserstrom, William. Heiress of All the Ages: Sex and Sentiment in the Genteel Tradition. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1959.
- Weibe, Robert. The Search for Order, 1877-1921. New York: Hill and Wang 1967.
- Weisonburger, Francis. Ordeal of Faith: The Crisis of Church-going America, 1865-1900. New York: Philosophical Library, Inc. 1959.
- Welter, Barbara. Dimity Convictions: The American Woman in the Nineteenth-Century. Athens: Ohio University Press 1976.
- Williams, Blanche Colton. Our Short Story Writers. 1922. rpt. Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press 1969.
- Winslow, Helen. Little Journeys in Literature. Boston: L. Page and Co. 1902.
- Ziff, Lazar. The American 1890s: Life and Times of a Lost Generation. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press 1966.