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Frances Eliza Hodgson Burnett (24 November 1849 – 29 October 1924) was an English playwright and author. She is best known for her children's stories, in particular [*The Secret Garden*](#), [*A Little Princess*](#), and [*Little Lord Fauntleroy*](#).

Born Frances Eliza Hodgson, she lived in Cheetham Hill, Manchester. After the death of her father the family was forced to sell their home, and suffered economic hardship. Until she was sixteen she lived in Salford, and when she was sixteen the family emigrated to Knoxville, Tennessee. There Burnett turned to writing to help earn money for the family, publishing stories in magazines by the time she was nineteen. In 1872 she married Swan Burnett. They lived in Paris for two years where their two sons were born, before returning to the United States to live in Washington D.C. There she began to write novels, the first of which *That Lass o' Lowries*, was published to good reviews. The publication of *Little Lord Fauntleroy* in 1886 made her a popular writer of children's fiction, although her romantic adult novels written in the 1890s were also popular. She wrote and helped to produce stage versions of *Little Lord Fauntleroy* and *The Little Princess*.

Burnett enjoyed socializing and lived a lavish lifestyle. Beginning in the 1880s she began to travel to England frequently and bought a home there in the 1890s. Her oldest son, Lionel, died of tuberculosis in 1892, which caused a relapse of the depression she struggled with for much of her life. She divorced Swan Burnett in 1898 and remarried in 1900, although her second marriage only lasted for a year. At the end of her life she settled in Long Island, where she died in 1924

Great Maytham Hall

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Great Maytham Hall, near Rolvenden, Kent, England, is a Grade II listed country house. The gardens are famous for providing the inspiration for *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett.

The house



Great Maytham Hall.

The original name of the Manor here was **Great Maytham**. In 1721 James Monypenny built a house here which he called **Maytham Hall**. This was completed by his son Robert Monypenny in 1760 but was largely burned down in 1893. This house consisted of a main block of 2 storeys and basement and 2 pavilions containing the laundry and stables. These eighteenth century wings largely survive, but the main building was rebuilt two storeys higher by Sir Edwin Lutyens in 1909-12 for the Right Honourable H. J. Tennant, a prominent Liberal Member of Parliament, who reverted to the use of the original name, **Great Maytham**.

The house briefly became the home of the Royal Normal College for the Blind after the college was advised to move from its London site at the outbreak of World War II. However, because of the threat of a German invasion, the authorities soon advised another move, and this time, with 24 hours notice and the help of the London Society for the Blind, a temporary home was found for the college in Dorton, near Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire. The college's London campus was bombed during the Blitz and it is now located in Hereford.

The house and grounds fell into decline after World War II. In 1965 Great Maytham Hall was purchased and restored by the Mutual Households Association, later the Country Houses Association, a charity dedicated to saving and preserving historic stately homes. The house was converted into fifteen flats, with residents sharing the reception rooms, entrance hall and drawing room; its first residents then set about restoring the gardens and grounds. In December 2003 the Country Houses Association announced that it was closing down its residential business and selling the eight Grade I and II listed buildings it owned.

The gardens



Great Maytham Hall Garden.

The walled garden of Great Maytham Hall provided the inspiration for one of the most famous of all books for children, [*The Secret Garden*](#). Its author, Frances Hodgson Burnett, lived at Great Maytham Hall from 1898 to 1907, where she found the old walled garden dating from 1721 sadly overgrown and neglected. Aided by a robin, Burnett discovered the door hidden amongst the ivy, and began the restoration of the garden, which she planted with hundreds of roses. She set up a table and chair in the gazebo, and dressed always in a white dress and large hat, she wrote a number of books in the peace and tranquility of her scented secret garden.

When Lutyens rebuilt Great Maytham Hall he retained the old walled garden as an adjunct to the grand new brick house in the manner of Sir Christopher Wren, but landscaped the terraced lawns and surrounding parkland in his signature style, in partnership with Gertrude Jekyll, who planted his design. The gardens and grounds were well cared for by the Tennants until the outbreak of the Second World War, when the house was requisitioned by the army. As part of the "Dig for Victory" campaign, Frances Hodgson Burnett's beautiful roses were replaced with cabbages and leeks, and the manicured lawns were patriotically planted with potatoes and carrots. A jettisoned German bomb in the middle of the former lawn did not help to improve matters, and after the war the house stood empty for many years, and the gardens were left to decline.

What was life like in England when Frances Hodgson Burnett wrote

The Secret Garden ?

Nearly a quarter of all boys and girls aged 10 to 14 were already working rather than attending school. Some of their jobs included selling flowers in the street, sweeping chimneys, and many were street beggars.

Young children did not have many toys, so often they created their own outdoor games. 'Hopscotch' and 'British bulldog' were particularly popular, and still are today!

Before 1918 boys often wore dresses until they were 8 years old! After reaching this age an occasion known as 'breeching' would take place and they then wore trousers.

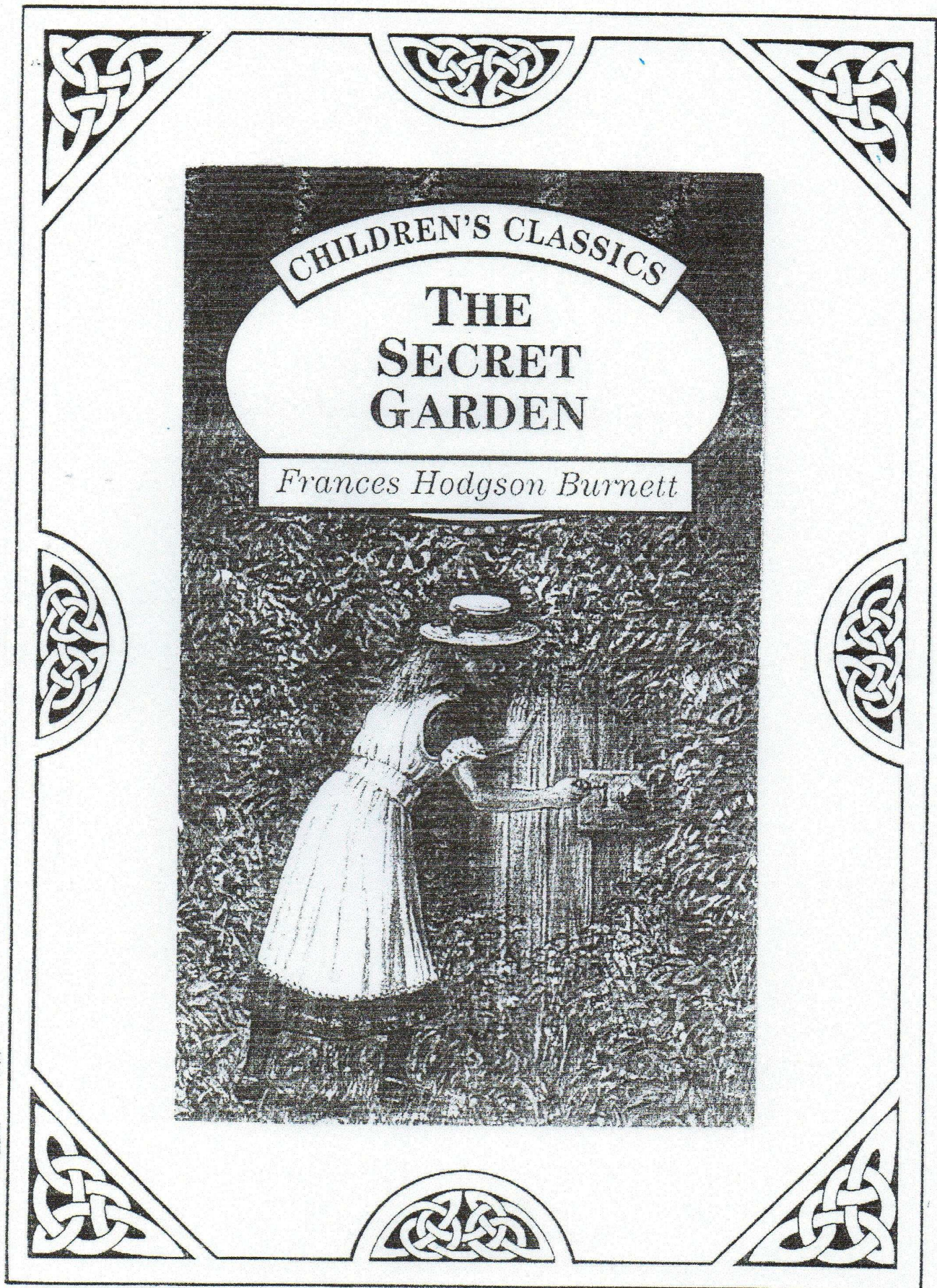
Doctors still had very little knowledge compared to all that we know today. Many diseases that do not trouble us now would be a very serious threat, and would sometimes kill many people. Doctors would treat patients in the best way they knew how, but would often not give the correct treatment.

Many local villagers would take the role of servants, working for the really wealthy in their large country estates. Some of these servants would live on the estate throughout the year, often in really cramped conditions.

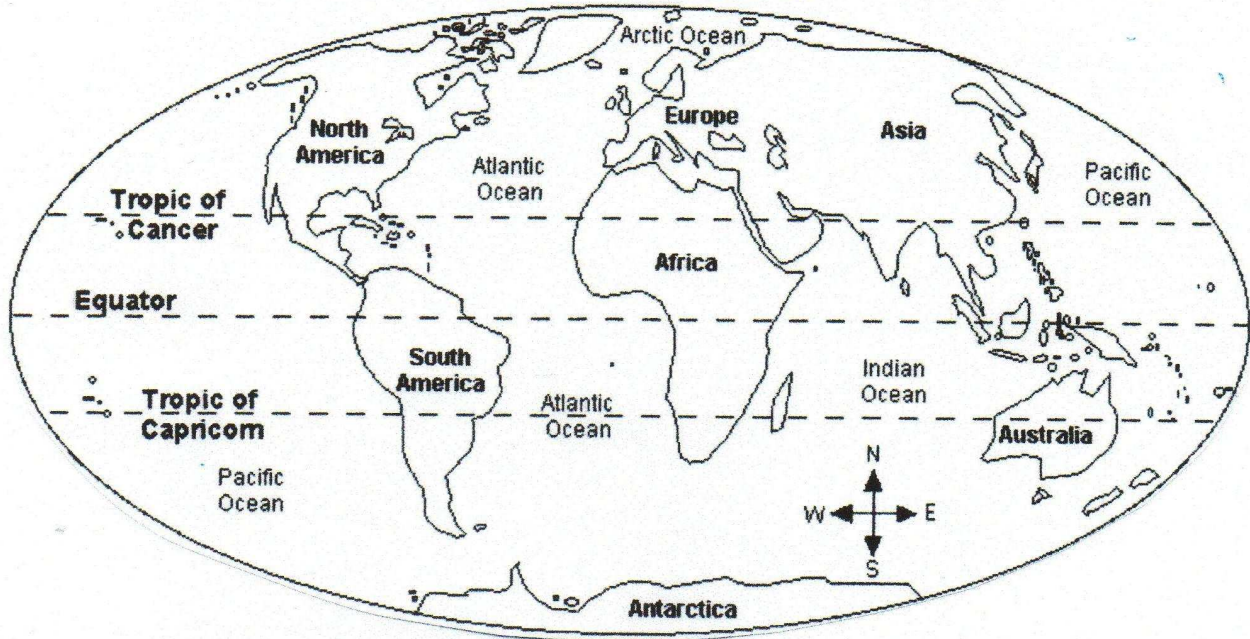
Bread, cheese, porridge and potatoes were the main foods for the poorer working class. If there was enough money, families may have enjoyed a piece of bacon two or three times a week to eat with these other foods.

An orange would often be the only gift that many children would receive at Christmas.

From The West Yorkshire Playhouse Resource Pack



The World





Victorian Child Labour & Education Timeline

- **1837** – Victoria becomes queen
- **1842** – Mines Act stopped women and children under 10 working in mines (this was prompted by the Huskar Pit disaster in 1838)
- **1844** – Factory Act stopped children between 8-12 from working more than 6½ hours a day, women and children 13-18 couldn't work more than 12 hours a day!
- **1847** – Factory Act limited women and children under 18 to a 58-hour working week (N.B. most pupils today only spend c. 30 hours at school!)
- **1864** – Boys under 10 were banned from being chimney sweeps
- **1870** – Education Act set up school boards to provide schooling for 5-11 year olds
- **1874** – Ten Hour Factory Act meant that people could not be made to work for more than 10 hours a day and children under 14 could not be employed fulltime
- **1878** – Factory and Workshop Act banned the employment of children under 10
- **1880** – Education Act made it compulsory for children up to 12 to go to school, but most children had to pay
- **1891** – Education is free and compulsory for all 5-13 year olds
- **1901** – Queen Victoria dies



« Where you tend a rose, my lad,
A thistle cannot grow. »

The Secret Garden, written by Frances Hodgson Burnett a hundred years ago, has delighted generations of children. It is a timeless novel that has not lost its appeal. Since the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, the garden has been a recurrent theme in many a book. It is often a symbol of paradise, or a fairy-tale place where magic is at work.

When Mary Lennox, a ten-year-old sullen sickly child, arrives at Misselthwaite Manor in Yorkshire to live with her uncle after her parents' death in India, she is bad-tempered and selfish. So is her cousin, Colin Craven, whom everybody believes to be an invalid.

The two cousins, Mary and Colin, have been raised without their parents' love. Their life is like an untended garden, full of weeds and thorns. They are spoilt, bossy and self-centred and do not like or love anyone. How could they, since they have been deprived of their parents' love since birth?

Thanks to Martha, a housemaid, and her brother Dickon, Mary will gradually become more human and sociable. Martha and Dickon are simple country people. They often use the Yorkshire dialect – not always easy for foreign readers – but it is pleasing to see them use such a poetical term as 'daffydowndilly' for 'daffodil'. They live in a tiny cottage with ten brothers and sisters and are often hungry. Nevertheless their parents' love has made them gentle and thoughtful. They have a caring mother both Mary and Colin envy them for.

As Mary starts working in the secret garden, she regenerates herself and learns how to share and care about people. *The Secret Garden* thus depicts a fascinating journey into the characters' inner lives. As the garden comes to life, so do Mary and Colin. The curative power of love and nature is amazing. Both Mary and Colin believe 'magic' is responsible for their metamorphosis. We might also call it a 'miracle', or an 'epiphany' to use the term coined by James Joyce. But isn't it simply the will to live and be happy that may radically transform a person's life?

The garden truly has a healing power. As Colin starts gardening, he begins to evolve and become more human. With the help of Dickon, such an endearing character, 'an animal charmer' who walks around with a squirrel in one pocket, a bottle of milk to feed an orphaned baby lamb in the other, followed by a crow and a fox, the children manage to coax the garden back to life. And when Mr Craven – disconsolate since his wife died ten years before – returns home, he is touched and realises he is alive too. The children's joy and transformation are contagious.

I highly recommend this book. You might also enjoy other children's books dealing with gardens such as *Tom's Midnight Garden* by Philippa Pearce or *The Forgotten Garden* written more recently by Australian Kate Morton.

Flowers are Red
by Harry Chapin

The little boy went first day of school
He got some crayons and started to draw
He put colors all over the paper
For colors was what he saw
And the teacher said.. What you doin' young man
I'm paintin' flowers he said
She said... It's not the time for art young man
And anyway flowers are green and red
There's a time for everything young man
And a way it should be done
You've got to show concern for everyone else
For you're not the only one

And she said...
Flowers are red young man
Green leaves are green
There's no need to see flowers any other way
Than they way they always have been seen

But the little boy said...
There are so many colors in the rainbow
So many colors in the morning sun
So many colors in the flower and I see every one

Well the teacher said.. You're sassy
There's ways that things should be
And you'll paint flowers the way they are
So repeat after me.....

And she said...
Flowers are red young man
Green leaves are green
There's no need to see flowers any other way
Than they way they always have been seen

But the little boy said...
There are so many colors in the rainbow
So many colors in the morning sun
So many colors in the flower and I see every one

The teacher put him in a corner
She said.. It's for your own good..
And you won't come out 'til you get it right
And are responding like you should
Well finally he got lonely
Frightened thoughts filled his head
And he went up to the teacher
And this is what he said... and he said

Flowers are red, green leaves are green
There's no need to see flowers any other way
Than the way they always have been seen

Time went by like it always does
And they moved to another town
And the little boy went to another school
And this is what he found
The teacher there was smilin'
She said... painting should be fun
And there are so many colors in a flower
So let's use every one

But that little boy painted flowers
In neat rows of green and red
And when the teacher asked him why
This is what he said.. and he said

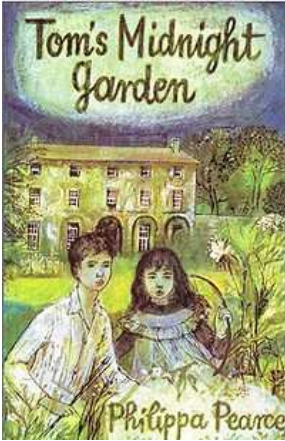
Flowers are red, green leaves are green
There's no need to see flowers any other way
Than the way they always have been seen.

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MARY, MARY, QUITE CONTRARY.

Mary, Mary, quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?
With silver bells and cockle shells,
And pretty maids all of a row.



Tom's Midnight Garden

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Tom's Midnight Garden is a children's novel by Philippa Pearce. It won the Carnegie Medal in 1958, the year of its publication. It has been adapted for radio, television, the cinema, and the stage.

Plot summary

When Tom Long's brother Peter gets measles, Tom is sent to stay with his Uncle Alan and Aunt Gwen in a flat with no garden and an elderly and reclusive landlady, Mrs Bartholomew, living upstairs. Because he may be infectious he is not allowed out to play, and feels lonely. Without exercise he is less sleepy at night and when he hears the communal grandfather clock strangely strike 13, he investigates and finds the small back yard is now a large sunlit garden. Here he meets another lonely child called Hatty, who seems to be the only one who can see him. They have adventures which he gradually realises are taking place in the 19th century. And each night when Tom visits, Hatty is a different age, chronologically out of sequence.

Allusions

The historical part of the book is set in the grounds of a mansion, which in many details resembles the real house in which the author grew up: the Mill House in Great Shelford, near Cambridge, England. Cambridge is represented in fictional form as Castleford throughout the book. At the time she was writing the book, the author was again living in Great Shelford, just across the road from the Mill House. The Kitsons' house is thought to be based on a house in Cambridge, near where Pearce studied during her time at university.

The book is regarded as classic, but it also has overtones that permeate other areas of her work. We remain in doubt for a while as to who exactly is the ghost; there are questions over the nature of time and reality; and we end up believing that the midnight garden is in fact a projection from the mind of an old lady. These time/space questions occur in other of her books, especially those dealing with ghosts. The final reconciliation between Tom, still a child, and the elderly Hatty is, many have argued, one of the most moving moments in children's fiction.

The theories of time of which the novel makes use derive in part from J. W. Dunne's influential 1927 work *An Experiment with Time*, which also inspired others, including J. B. Priestley.