THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

Self-representation and Respectability as Instruments of Empire in the Life and Works of Ellen Augusta Chads (E.A.C.)

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M.A. (Research) Thesis

University of Sydney

November 2012

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[Note: 30,261 words]

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Introduction

In 1891 a book of romantic short stories was published in Melbourne by George Robertson and Company. Its title was *Tracked by Bushrangers and Other Stories*, and it was bound together with *Work for the Master; a Series of Papers for Women*. The stories comprised a collection of twenty-nine brief floral legends and four romances set in Australia, Mauritius, and England. The papers for women were a series of homilies intended to instruct women and girls on Christian conduct in relation to their duties towards their husbands and homes. The stories have little literary merit and most readers would find the devotional papers tediously didactic. At the end of its 95 pages one of several advertisements encourages readers to purchase books and family Bibles at the lowest prices from A.J Smith in Swanston Street Melbourne.

The author of this little book of stories and papers is given as 'Mrs Chads (E. A. C.), Author of 'The Snowdrops' Message,' 'Tried as Pure Gold,' etc.' The prospective book buyer is immediately made aware of what kind of book this was, since the title page has an inscription 'Life is to do the will of God —S. Wetherall.' The verso is inscribed 'To the Memory of my Husband. Ellen Augusta Chads, Glenferrie, October, 1891.'

In a brief preface to the book the author takes pains to distance herself from a previous publication, *Dora's Repentance*, which some of her readers had suggested was autobiographical. She declares this to be a 'curious mistake' apart from the fact that the character of the virtuous male protagonist of the book, Captain Keith Grosvenor, VC, was

'taken from that of my husband.' This unusual autobiographical disavowal and its concomitant marital claim are a clumsy attempt to hide a distressing truth in the life of Ellen Augusta Chads. The public record shows that the plot of *Dora's Repentance* does in fact have remarkable parallels to the author's own life, and all the available evidence indicates that her husband was the very antithesis of the impeccable Keith Grosvenor. The factors that led her to make this disavowal reveal a great deal about the meaning of respectability for women in late Victorian Melbourne and the role it could play in their attempts to cope with the unfortunate marriages they sometimes contracted.

For some women unfortunate marriages were symptoms of a problem with the institution itself and they became critical of it. Blatant abuse of wives by intemperate husbands and the lack of redress for women led them to seek various reforms to correct inherent power imbalances and the sexual exploitation of women. Temperance campaigns and woman suffrage organisations were ways in which some women sought to change the behaviour of men and improve the lot of women. Not all women, however, supported such action. Ellen Chads, despite having made what seems a very bad marriage, opposed woman suffrage outright, and displayed little enthusiasm for temperance. Many of those women we now call first wave feminists took up their pens to promulgate their views about changes that needed to be made. Ellen Chads took up her pen too, but she was no campaigner. Her dual motives seem to have been economic survival and self-representation as a respectable Victorian woman. She was not a feminist, but her life presents an alternative but no less heroic response to an unfortunate marriage, one that must have been adopted by the thousands of women who suffered their bad marriages in silence.

Little is known about these silent sufferers, simply because silence was an integral part of their response. Viewed as 'non' first wave feminists, we might characterise them negatively

as being in a state of acquiescence and self-abnegation.[1] Ellen Chads' life and works, however, reveal the resourcefulness, resilience and determination of many of these silent sufferers. She represents herself in positive terms. She might be the victim of a marriage trap but she nevertheless values marriage and finds a way to survive in it with dignity.

Her published writing, when read in the light of what the public record has captured about her life, reveals a great deal about her background, her interests and passions, and the issues with which she struggled daily. A remarkably complete portrait emerges from this dual focus of investigation. It is one that has lain dormant since her death in 1923, with very little attention paid to her writing, and even less to her life. Bruce Bennett in his history of Australian short fiction summarises the state of current research:

> Like Tasma, Ellen Augusta Chads wrote largely in the romance mode, but without Tasma's subtlety or wit. More research remains to be done on Chads' life and writings, but the fact that her books . . . were published by George Robertson in Melbourne suggests that she was from that city . . . In general, Chads seems to have used the romance form to address a female readership on issues of moral and religious concern, thus placing her in the tradition of Mary Vidal.[2]

The strange little preface of *Tracked by Bushrangers and Other Stories* is a key that unlocks not only the door to her own life, but to the nineteenth century forces that shaped her attitudes and actions. Her story is much more than the biography of a forgotten writer of the late Victorian era in Australia. Due to the nature of the 'evidence' it is also a portal into historical and cultural influences that constrained and shaped the way that many females experienced life and responded to its challenges during the very years that saw the birth of the feminist movement in Australia.

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[1] So, for example, Susan Magarey, *Passions of the First Wave Feminists* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2001), p. 31.

[2] Bruce Bennett, *Australian Short Fiction: A History* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 2002), pp. 30-31.

The lack of any literary quality in Chads' stories accounts for the merely passing mentions they receive in the annals of Australian literature. *The Ghost of Wanganilla,* one of the stories in *Tracked by Bushrangers*, has twice been anthologised,[3] and has received some attention in a doctoral dissertation about Atlantic modernism.[4] A brief discussion of it also introduces Susan K. Martin's study of nationalism and nature.[5] Chads also receives passing mentions in several other studies of Australian literature.[6] Female Australian writers of the 1880s and 1890s have received a great deal of attention in recent scholarship, because these were the decades that saw the birth of Australian feminism, but the overtly non-feminist Chads has for that reason received almost no attention at all.

Ellen Chads' life has never been written. She left no life writings such as diaries or letters, but there are a number of primary sources that enable us to reconstruct her life. These sources begin with the only letter known to exist, a semi-personal letter to Margaret Ward Cole, the daughter of Victorian businessman and MLC George Ward Cole (1793-1879), written in 1894. The letter indicates that she lived in the Melbourne suburb of Caulfield, was a published writer of serial stories and that she considered herself to be on formal but friendly terms with the Ward Cole family. It is just a single page of postal stationery, and admittedly tells us very little.[7]

The current complete lack of knowledge about Chads' life coupled with the absence of any substantial life writing present what would appear to be almost insurmountable problems in reconstructing the life of this Victorian writer of didactic romances in any meaningful or

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[3] Fiona Giles, ed., *From the Verandah*, (Ringwood: Penguin, 1987), and Ken Gelder, ed., *The Oxford book of Australian Ghost Stories*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[4] Simon John Hay, *Society of the Specter; a Spectropoetics of Atlantic Modernism*. Ph.D dissertation in Department of English in the Graduate School of Duke University, 2004.

[5] Susan K. Martin, 'National Dress or National Trousers?' in Bruce Bennett and J Strauss, *Oxford Literary History of Australia*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 89.

[6] See for example, Marion Amies, 'The Victorian Governess and Colonial Ideals of Womanhood' in *Victorian Studies* 31:4, (Summer, 1988) p. 540, and Debra Adelaide, *A Bright and Fiery Troop*, (Ringwood: Penguin, 1988).

[7] This letter is in the collection of the author

profitable way. Yet the lives of obscure and unpromising subjects have been written and have proved to enable valuable insights into the world in which they lived. Most famous among these is perhaps Carlo Ginzburg's *The Cheese and the Worms*, which uses inquisition records to reveal the sources of the cosmology of an otherwise obscure Sixteenth-Century miller and to indicate that the Inquisition was concerned not only about the Reformation, but also oral traditions which predated Luther.[8]

In the case of Ellen Chads, we are able to use clues from her fiction writing, her art and music criticism and her campaigns for animal welfare to show that articulate women of the late nineteenth century were able to use strategies that pre-dated feminism to cope with the unexpected vicissitudes of life.

A dearth of life writings may hinder the biographer from getting 'inside' a subject, but this is not necessarily a hindrance in recovering a meaningful life story. The life story it has been possible to recuperate is not one of which Chads herself would approve. She seeks to represent herself in a certain way in her fiction and criticism, but when we place this self-representation alongside the facts buried in the public record we discover a degree of disjuncture which enables us to draw conclusions that run counter to the implied claims in her work. This is not yet another exposure of what is often derided as Victorian hypocrisy, but an attempt to reconcile a bifurcation of perceptions. Ellen Chads may have written no surviving diaries or autobiographical material, but she nevertheless constructs and represents herself as a 'Respectable'[9] despite her marriage to a far from respectable husband with a literally disgraceful past and quite public continuing recidivism. Her work and her life, taken together, present us with the challenge of finding a coherent interpretation that makes sense of her

[8] Carlo Ginzburg *The Cheese and the Worms ; the Cosmos of a Sixteenth Century Miller* trans. John and Anne Tedeschi, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1980).

[9] I have followed Alan Horstman's practice of capitalising Respectables, as they seem to me to be a category of people similar to Evangelicals. See Alan Horstman *Victorian Divorce* (London: Croom Helm, 1985).

public self-representation as a Respectable and the more private disgrace of her husband's past and continuing misdemeanours. The search for such an interpretation illuminates the context in which she lived.

The goal of recuperating Ellen Augusta Chads' life and work therefore becomes less a biographical task and more an explanation of the culture in which it was lived, and the keys to this are the Victorian notions of marriage and Empire, bridged by the vital concept of Respectability. Doing 'biography' in this way turns the usual process on its head. The context becomes the focus while the 'subject' becomes to some extent the background. This is the challenge set by Alice Kessler-Harris when she reflected on E. P. Thompson's biography of William Blake:

> Suppose that we could . . . take as our task that of 'placing' the individual whom we wish to study. Our effort would then lead us to search for what Thompson calls 'the nodal points of conflict': the tension between our subject and the social/political world, the world of ideas that he or she encountered.

This approach, she promises, 'is capable of illuminating the past in new and exciting ways.'[10]

What sort of picture will emerge from this forensic approach? One might expect a murky, blurred picture, but it is surprisingly, even startlingly clear. Ellen Chads' history ranges across three continents, encompasses war, romance, tragedy, treachery, deception, endurance and virtue, and reveals much about how conservative, non-radical Victorian women coped with disappointment in marriage and loss of status in society. Her life is a portal to the real lives of late nineteenth century educated women and the vagaries dealt them by fate, and illustrates how such vagaries were handled by those who believed they could not subscribe to the movement for women's rights.

[10] Alice Kessler-Harris, 'Why Biography?' in *The American Historical Review* 113:3 (June, 2009), pp. 625-630.

It also delineates the boundaries of the private and public realms in the Victorian era. A key to this distinction in the life of Ellen Chads is the issue of disclosure. In her didactic fiction certain kinds of knowledge and information should be disclosed in a private domestic context but could be legitimately withheld or even concealed from the public gaze. We gain new insights into Victorian living because of significant discontinuities between Chads' self-representation as an educated, respectable woman of the upper middle class and her recoverable life story and its associations, through her husband, with very unrespectable debt, fraud and dishonour.

Ellen Chads left no private papers in which she imposed her own interpretation on her story, but in her published work she nevertheless represents herself as a certain kind of person. Because her self-representation is public, not private, it is clear for all to see. What was not clear for all to see was the apparent discrepancy between this public self-representation and the circumstances of her domestic life. Her locus in the Victorian era, however, means that there are public records that can reveal the business of her life, exposing facts that she herself would never have wanted made public. The Victorian obsession for record keeping ensures that even simple records such as birth, death and marriage details are revealing. Shipping records and military service records add to the skeleton of her life. A picture begins to emerge.

The Victorian era left a wealth of official and public records and witnessed its own version of the 'information superhighway' in the form of a proliferation of readily available newspapers, journals and illustrated magazines. Recent advances in technology make vast portions of these resources accessible to the historian through digitisation and sophisticated search engines. Genealogical tools like births deaths and marriages records, passenger lists, shipping records, town and city directories, census results, and military and other government records have been scanned, digitised and indexed for on-line use. Millions of pages of old

newspapers, books and magazines have been similarly scanned and digitised and are searchable online, enabling researchers to achieve detailed results which would have been impossible a few short years ago. It is these records, combined with a close reading of her journalistic and literary output, that make the recuperation of Ellen Chads' life possible.

Chads' recoverable journalism[11] comprises mostly art and music columns in two popular magazines. Her remarks on paintings and exhibitions afford us quite a clear picture of her attitudes to a range of topics. She also attended many public meetings and her reports of these add to the catalogue of her values and opinions, as do the letters she wrote to the daily papers. Her journalism and public letter-writing have received no attention at all, and her championing of charitable causes and animal rights has been entirely lost to the historical record, apart from a brief mention in a locally published history of the North Melbourne Lost Dogs Home.[12]

Her fiction is peopled with characters drawn from the world she represents as her own. Such representation was not unfounded, since she was the daughter of Vice-Admiral Isaac Hawkins Morrison, and her brothers were Colonel William Lawtie Morrison of the Royal Engineers and Major George Powell Edwards Morrison of the Military Train. The young men of her romances are middle ranking army officers, bankers and lawyers, while the young women are almost invariably daughters of older versions of their lovers. As if to make sure her readers recognised her respectability, some of her fictional characters have very distinctive surnames, which 'knowledgeable' readers would have recognised as belonging to the class of people she describes. Her didactic work is a series of practical applications of

[11] Her work for the *Melbourne Herald and Weekly Times*, mentioned in an obituary published in that paper on her death, seems to have been unsigned and is therefore unrecoverable, even the dates of her employment being lost.

[12] Felicity Jack, *Faithful Friends; a History of Animal Welfare in North Melbourne* (North Melbourne: Hotham History Project, 2000).

evangelical religion addressed to women and girls. Her journalism and art criticism are vigorously conservative and have an almost evangelistic fervour for respectability.

Her life, however, from the moment that she married her husband in Mauritius, where she was helping care for her older brother's young family, and migrated to Australia with him, is peopled with disreputable characters. Captain John Henry Chads had a respectable pedigree. His father was Colonel John Cornell Chads, Governor of the British Virgin Islands. His uncle was Admiral Sir Henry Ducie Chads, twice knighted. His extended family included numerous high ranking naval and military officers and administrators. John Henry himself was a paymaster in the British Army, serving in India. He fought in the Indian Mutiny in 1856-7, but was cashiered in 1865 for embezzling funds. The record of his court martial declared him 'unworthy to serve Her Majesty in any capacity whatsoever'. Three weeks before his court martial he had married Ellen Augusta Morrison, and soon after the court martial the couple migrated to Melbourne, where he obtained a clerical position in the Civil Service but was continually before the courts for unpaid debts and fraud. His creditors were money lenders and pawnbrokers. Ellen herself became enmeshed in his distinctly disreputable ways by signing at least one promissory note that was later dishonoured. In fact, her first published collection of stories resulted in more unpaid debts for John Henry, and yet more court appearances. Not even a period of insolvency could cure his malaise.

Both John and Ellen were products of the Empire, counting well regarded naval and army officers among their respective families. Each of them had spent time in India and they married in Mauritius. The son of a Colonel and the daughter of an Admiral, they would each have identified uncritically with the practices and values of British nineteenth century imperialism, and their marriage, given their pedigrees and the social milieu in which they lived, would have seemed an entirely natural and respectable alliance. Though all her writings represent Ellen and her husband as conforming to the expectation of Victorian

Respectability, an examination of the 'clues' buried in the public record exposes a far from respectable tale of debt, fraud and insolvency. That Ellen clung tenaciously to the respectability she must have enjoyed before her marriage reveals just how important respectability was, particularly for women, in the Victorian era.

Ellen Augusta Chads and her work present a fascinating opportunity to look at the late nineteenth century world of feminism through different eyes and see what life was like for the many who lived in the obscurity of history's background. A careful examination of her circumstances will uncover much about the world in which she lived, and by way of contrast, help us to understand the lives of radical women of the late nineteenth century in Australia. As Matti Peltonen states, 'Microhistorians are actually trying to discover very big things with their microscopes and magnifying glasses.'[13] Alice Kessler-Harris echoes this when she makes her 'grandiose' claim. 'Rather than offering history as background, or introducing it in order to locate an individual in time, I want to ask how the individual life helps us to make sense of a piece of the historical process. I want to see through the life.'[14]

A thorough search for the facts of Ellen Chads' life in the scattered public record draws together a number of clues from nineteenth century newspapers, official archives in Melbourne, Jersey, London, Mauritius, and India, cemeteries is Melbourne and Jersey, rarely opened books in the Mitchell Library, the National Library of Australia's Mauritius collection, data from the State Library of Victoria, census records in Jersey and England, electronic genealogical records, and information provided by descendants of extended family members. This has made possible the reconstruction of the complicated life that is presented in Chapter One.

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[13] Matti Peltonen 'Clues, Margins and Monads: The Micro-Macro Link in Historical Research' in *History and Theory* 40:3 (October, 2001), p. 350.
[14] Kessler-Harris, *Why Biography?* p. 626.

The era in which Chads wrote was one in which significant change had begun to occur. Late Victorian society was beginning to be challenged by new ideas and a fresh vision of reality. This is nowhere more apparent than in the realm of art, where an Impressionism of sorts had reached Australia through the work of Tom Roberts and the Heidelberg School, but this was merely symptomatic of other more widespread change. The world of mid-Victorian certainty and respectability in which Chads was so much at home was disintegrating. Much is known about the articulate and sometimes highly visible agents of this disintegration, but less is known of the almost invisible people who made up the context in which the agents of change operated. The articulate Chads is a portal into that context, engaging with and sometimes stridently opposing those in the vanguard of change. She attended and wrote about one of the very first meetings of the Victorian Women's Suffrage Society, dismissing woman suffrage as an amusing fad. In the same year that saw the birth of the Heidelberg school of Australian art she was aggressively extolling the virtues of the English School. In the divide between public and private life she unreservedly endorsed what later became known as Victorian hypocrisy, but her marriage reveals why such hypocrisy existed.

This reconstruction of Chads' life is not intended to analyse her motives or to investigate how she might have perceived herself in an existential manner. The focus is not Chads herself, but the world she lived in as seen through her eyes. The questions addressed are those which can be answered by recourse to her writings and to the randomly recorded facts of her life. What external circumstances made her the woman she was? How did she react to those circumstances? What do these reactions tell us about the world of women at the point at which everything was about to change? What does the tenacity with which she clung to respectability tell us about respectability in that world? These questions will be addressed through gathering all the available life facts until now hidden in the public record, an analysis

of her writing which examines the interplay between civilization and empire, and the importance of the way in which she uses art and literature to represent herself as a Respectable.

Respectability had become very much part of being a member of the Empire. Defying precise definition due to its shifting boundaries and its refusal to be confined to any one socio-economic class, its values and behaviours were nevertheless recognisable. It was a binding force, transcending even religion as a marker of civilization and membership of the Empire. It was how people from all classes of society were able to invest in the Empire. Horstman uses Thackeray's characterisation of Respectables as 'men who are striving on in the world' to argue that 'Respectables saw themselves as the pillars of a future Britain, whether as owners, managers or workers.'[15] The Empire, in other words, was not something external to which people happened to belong by virtue of being born British. Through Respectability the people *were* the Empire.

Ellen Chads' life spans three continents and has numerous connections with the far reaches of the British Empire. The three chapters of this thesis examine how she represented herself biographically as a citizen of the Empire, how her cultural self-representation tied her respectability to civilization, and how and why she presented her marriage as a qualification for respectability despite her husband's disgrace. The nineteenth century was an era of great expansion of the Empire, as it grew by four hundred million people inhabiting ten million square miles of new territory. Until her marriage in 1865, Ellen's life was tightly interwoven with the military and naval arms of empire; afterwards, she lived in a form of exile dictated by the collapse of his military career. She was part of a network of transnational connectivity which spanned the globe — extending beyond the familial to the cultural and artistic worlds

[15] Horstman, *Victorian Divorce*, p. 37.

which formed an integral part of her experience of Empire. She inhabited an expansive connected world: the natural habitat of a woman of the officer class of the naval and military society of *Pax Britannica*.

Chapter 1 Biographical Self-representation: The Empire

Ellen Augusta Morrison was born in St Helier on the Island of Jersey in 1837, just eight days after Queen Victoria's accession to the throne.[1] A survey of her family reveals how deeply enmeshed in the empire it was. She was the youngest child of Isaac Hawkins Morrison, then a Captain in the Royal Navy but later a retired Vice-Admiral, and his wife Louisa Adams Smith. With three sisters and two brothers she seems to have lived an idyllic childhood on the island. Her family, however, were what Jersey natives today call 'blow-ins', i.e. not natives of Jersey. Her father was born in Wolverhampton, Staffordshire in 1785 and entered the Royal Navy as a boy under the patronage of Isaac Hawkins Browne the younger (1745-1818), MP for Bridgenorth, in 1795.[2] Browne the younger was a Tory who supported Pitt and was consistently anti-Catholic. In 1774 he purchased Badger Hall and estate on the boundary of Shropshire and Staffordshire[3] and opened coal mines there, through which he became a wealthy man. A staunch supporter of the Anglican Church and a benefactor of the poor, he may well have been related to the Morrisons through the original Isaac Hawkins, a wealthy land holder (feoffee) in nearby Burton-upon-Trent. Isaac's parents were Doctor Robert Morrison[4] and his wife Susanna. Their first son, Isaac Hawkins was born in 1780,[5] but he died in infancy. Five years later Robert and Susanna bestowed the same name on their next son, who eventually became Ellen's father.

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[1] Because she was born before civil registration in Jersey (1842), her exact date of birth is not known, but she was baptised on 28 June 1837, and her death certificate in 1923 states that she was 86 years old. Victoria. Births Deaths and Marriages. Deaths. 1923/6223.

[2] John Marshall, *Royal Naval Biography*; Navy List 1829, Corrected to 20 December 1856, p304. Browne was the only child of Isaac Hawkins Browne MP (1706-1760), a poet best remembered for his parody *A Pipe of Tobacco* and a Latin poem on the life of the soul.

[3] Badger lies about 15km west of Wolverhampton in the West Midlands.

[4] Ellen's father's grave in the churchyard of St Saviour at St Helier describes him as the son of Robert Morrison, MD, of Wolverhampton.

[5] *Wolverhampton St Peter's Baptisms 1538-1812* at www.woverhamptonhistory.org.uk

Browne himself had strong connections with the Empire, not only by virtue of his position as a Member of Parliament and a mining magnate, but also as a trader. His second wife was Elizabeth Boddington, the daughter of Thomas Boddington, a West India merchant and trenchant defender of slavery.[6] His attitude to slavery is doubtless the result of the West Indies sugar trade which was heavily reliant on slaves for labour. The industry eventually collapsed under the weight of anti-slavery sentiment and the British parliament's abolition of it in 1833. Connections with the West Indies feature in some of Ellen Chads' stories and are also a prominent part of the family background of her husband John Henry Chads.

As a youngster in the Navy, Isaac Hawkins Morrison saw action against the Dutch in the West Indies[7] and against the French in 1815 as Captain of the 16 gun brig *Achates*. On 21 October 1813 *Achates* fought with the French ship *le Trave*, which was shortly afterwards captured by the *Andromache*. This ship would some twenty years later be captained by Henry Ducie Chads (Captain of the *Andromache* from 1834-1837[8]), an uncle of Ellen Chads' husband.

When the Napoleonic Wars ended large numbers of half-pay military men and their families settled on Jersey, attracted by the comfortable climate and the cheap cost of living[9]. In 1823 Morrison married Louisa Adams Smith, twenty years his junior and the daughter of John Powell Smith of Upper Berkely St, Portman Square.[10] He became the Inspecting Commander of the Revenue Coast Guard Service, Tralee District, Ireland, where several of

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[6] J. M. Scott, Stephen M. Lee, 'Browne, Isaac Hawkins (1745–1818)' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). [http://www.oxforddnb.com.rp.nla.gov.au/view/article/3678, accessed 31 Dec 2011]

[7] *The Annual Register, or a View of the History and Politics of the Year 1860.* (London: Longman, 1861), p. 464.

[8] John Marshall, *Royal Naval Biography*; Navy List 1829, Corrected to 20 December 1856, p304; J. K. Laughton, 'Chads, Sir Henry Ducie (1788–1868)', rev. Andrew Lambert, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); online edition, January, 2008. [http://www.oxforddnb.com.rp.nla.gov.au/view/article/5012, accessed 31 Dec 2011].

[9] C. E. B. Brett, *Buildings in the Town and Parish of St Helier.* (St Helier: National Trust for Jersey, 1977), p. 14.

[10] Edmund Burke *The Annual Register, or a View of the History, Politics and Literature of the Year 1823* (London; Dodsley, 1824), p. 175.

Ellen's older sisters were born. By 1837, when Ellen was born, the family resided at St Helier, the major city of Jersey. Isaac Hawkins Morrison retired in October 1846.

We have few details of Ellen's childhood, but census records inform us that she lived on Jersey with her two brothers, three sisters and two aunts.[11] In 1839, when Ellen was two years old, Captain Morrison RN is listed among the nobility, gentry and clergy, and said to be living at Albion Place, St Helier.[12] In 1850 he is listed at Chevalier Rd and in 1851 and 1855 at Five-oaks, close to the church of St Saviour.[13] In 1858 and 1859 he was a tenant in Claremont Terrace.[14] Ellen was well-educated in music and art and became a well-travelled young woman. The art, music and current event notices that she later wrote for a Melbourne journal called *Once a Month* are scattered with instances of self-representation in which some details of her young adulthood are revealed. She presents herself as a well-educated and widely travelled young woman with strong links to the military officer class.

The only direct information we have about her education is a remark in one of her music columns. Noting a new book on vocal technique for singers by Armand Semple (1844-1895), she remarks that 'Our own experience entirely agrees with the author, as the gentleman who gave us vocal instruction in youth (himself one of the Paris Conservatoire Masters) followed the same plan with uniform success.'[15] *Robson's Directory* tells us that St Helier had several schools at the time, including some specifically for girls, and any one of these may have used

[11] Her brothers were William Lawtie and George Powell Edwards. Her sisters were Isabella, Louisa and Rosa Emily. Her aunts were the unmarried Susan Morrison, and her widowed sister Mary Pearson. The two sisters lived together, along with the two sons of Joseph Pearson by a previous marriage. Ellen's father and two aunts were all born in Wolverhampton in England. See Census data for the Channel Islands 1841, 1851, 1861 and 1871, as well as Wolverhampton St Peter's Baptisms 1538-1812 at www.woverhamptonhistory.org.uk

[12] *Robson's 1839 Directory of Guernsey and Jersey* p. 26.

[13] Captain Childers, *The Royal Jersey Almanac 1850* (St Helier: British Press Office, 1850, 1851), p. 143; W. Jones, *Gosset's Jersey Nautical Almanack, Perpetual Solar and Stellar Ephemeris, Guide and General Directory for the Year 1855 of Our Lord, Being the Third Year After Bissextile and the Nineteenth of the Reign of Her Present Majesty.* (St Helier: Gosset and Co, Booksellers, 1855.) p. 160.

[14] *Loi Sur La Taxation Du Rât* (Jersey: Le Lievre, Frères Imprimeurs des États, 1858); *The Jersey Independent Almanac and Directory 1859* (St Helier: The Independent, 1859).

[15] *Once a Month* January 1886, p. 79.

the services of a French elocution or singing master. Several people are listed in the directory as 'professor of music'.

The 1851 Channel Islands Census lists Ellen at age 14, but ten years later both her parents had died and she herself is not listed in the 1861 Census. It is likely that she spent some time in England, enjoying a very successful social life among the officer class of the army. She represents herself in this way in the preface to her last published book, *Tracked by Bushrangers*. Referring to a previous book, in which the female protagonist enjoys a secure and happy social life, staying with friends and relatives in Dover and other parts of England while an army regiment was stationed nearby, she mentions 'the described style of life in England such as I was accustomed to.'[16]

In her art and music notes for *Once a Month* she provides 'clues' that indicate a 'Grand Tour' trip through Europe. Paintings of various places evoke positive recollections, reminiscences and memories for her, and she appears eager to inform her readers that she is familiar with the settings that various artists had chosen for their work. These settings include Italy (particularly Naples and Venice), Boulogne, Edinburgh and Granada.[17]

Similar clues claim familiarity with The Lakes District, Cornwall, and Leeds in England, as well as Bombay and Bengal in India. Her stories add to this catalogue, being set in such places as Jersey, Dover, London, Naples, India and Mauritius. All these claims are readily believable as facts in the life of a woman in Ellen Morrison's circumstances.

More problematic are the clues that she is familiar with Japanese life and culture. Commenting on some Japanese photographs she declares that 'the costumes are in exact

[16] Ellen Chads *Tracked by Bushrangers* preface.
[17] *Once a Month* June 1885, p. 473; May 1883, p.393; December 1884, p. 466; October 884, p. 315; November 1884, p.394; December 1884, p. 394.

accordance with those worn in Japan.'[18] She repeats this claim when commenting on two large Japanese portraits: 'the dresses are precisely the same as those worn by ladies in that country.'[19] Then, reporting on a show of chrysanthemums held by the Victorian Horticultural Improvement Society, she asks 'Will the time ever come when our Melbourne florists will see plants in pots numbering over four hundred perfect blossoms, as is often to be remarked on those exhibited at the yearly show in Japan of that national flower?'[20]

These comments hint at sufficient experience of Japan to remark authoritatively on dress and hold up Japanese examples for Melburnians to follow. The implication is that she has been there and seen dresses and flowers with her own eyes. Given that Japan's isolationist policy did not end until 1858 and that we can account for Ellen's whereabouts from the beginning of 1865, there is only a small window of opportunity for such a visit to occur. It is an exotic but not impossible claim.

Whether or not all these hints had a strict basis in fact, one fact that is indisputable is that part of Ellen Chads' self-representation is that of a widely travelled individual and member of a widely travelled family. The same preface that claims a certain lifestyle for Ellen Morrison in England adds that the stories set in India 'occurred to my husband, my brother and myself.'

Ellen Chads' hints at her breadth of travel are reinforced by what might be termed instances of furtive self-representation. Many of the characters in her fiction have distinctive surnames, which in real life belonged to a variety of people with whom she may have been acquainted. She insists on giving all her main characters the formality of surnames, and frequently refers to the males with ascribed military titles such as Captain, Major and Colonel, or in the case of civilians, prefixed by Mr. Females are often Miss or Mrs. The surnames thus have a

[18] *Once a Month* September 1884, p. 228.
[19] *Once a Month* March 1885, p. 234.
[20] *Once a Month* May 1885, p. 397.

prominence that we would find strange in modern fiction. These names appear to be not merely clues, but cryptic clues, decipherable by people who inhabit her world, but closed those who do not. For example, Lionel Straubenzie appears in *The Ghost of Wanganilla*, a story published as part of *Tracked by Bushrangers and other stories* in 1891, as an English visitor to an Australian 'station', who is told the story of the ghost. Simon John Hay has remarked that this is 'an oddly Germanic name for a character whose role is to represent Englishness.'[21] Hay, however, has missed the clue, for, with a minor change in spelling, there is a very English Straubenzie in British military history. This is Sir Charles Thomas van Straubenzee (1812-1892), who was made commanding officer of a Division of the Bombay Army in 1862, where Ellen may well have been at the time, and who subsequently became that army's overall commander. It is also worth noting that Ellen's brother George, serving in the Military Train in India, married the daughter of John Alexander Archibald Eckford, a Major in the Bombay Army[22] (part of the Honourable East India Company Service).

In *Graham Jocelyn's Revenge*,[23] Chads gives a villainous character the name Rupert Eardley. In real life, Sir John Eardley Wilmot (1783-1847) was a barrister who in 1835 had testified in the divorce case of Ellen's maternal Aunt Isabella from her husband Charles Malpas.[24] He later served a brief and very controversial term as Governor of Van Diemen's Land (1843-5).

Other examples abound, particularly in Chads' disclaimed autobiography, *Dora's Repentance*, Dora's sister's husband is said to be Colonel Frank Vereker of the 92nd Highlanders. Such a person did not exist, but Vereker Monteith Hamilton, a military artist who did exist and who painted some celebrated battle scenes, was the son of Lieutenant

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[21] Simon John Hay, *Society of the Specter* p. 151.
[22] Jersey Parish Records, St. Saviour, 1857.
[23] Ellen Chads, 'Graham Jocelyn's Revenge' in *The Snowdrops' Message and other tales* (Melbourne: George Robertson, 1888), pp. 31-39.
[24] *The Examiner* August 2, 1835.

Colonel Christian Monteith Hamilton of the 92nd Highlanders.[25] The name of Vereker combines two of Chads' spheres of interest: art and military men. In the story Colonel Vereker and his wife are even given a fondness for painting and a habit of visiting the Royal Academy, of which the real Vereker Hamilton was an exhibiting member. The names Conway, Carruthers and Merivale all appear in *Dora's Repentance*. Captain Grosvenor's 'greatest friends were Mr. and Mrs. Conway,' squatters in Australia. Conway may be named for Captain Wedderburn Conway Halkett of the 79th Highlanders, which fought in India with the 92nd Highlanders.[26] Conway Halkett may have been a friend or acquaintance of Ellen's husband, who also served in India, or of either of Ellen's brothers, who both had connections with India.

The name given to Grosvenor's rival for Dora's hand is Mr Merivale, and this name also has Indian connections. Herman Merivale was an Oxford don who wrote about colonialism[27] and was Permanent Undersecretary of State for India at the time of Ellen and John Henry's wedding.[28] His son, the dramatist and poet Herbert Charles Merivale,[29] suffered depression and in 1879, on the advice of his doctor, came to Australia, and was recovering his health there at the very time that Chads was writing her stories. When Merivale returned to England, however, he found that his solicitor had misused the power of attorney left with him and had lost his fortune.

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[25] The real Vereker was the brother of British General Sir Ian Standish Monteith Hamilton, who wrote poetry and later commanded the ill-fated Mediterranean Expeditionary Force at Gallipoli in the First World War. See Peter Harrington *British Artists and War: The Face of Battle in Paintings and Prints, 1700-1914*. (London: Greenhill,1993).

[26] *Historical Records of the 79th Queens Own Cameron Highlanders*, compiled from the Orderly Room Records (London, 1887), p. 244.

[27] *Lectures on Colonization and Colonies* 1841.

[28] He was Permanent Undersecretary of State for India from 1860 until his death in 1874.

[29] His works included farces such as *A Husband in Clover* (1873) and novels such as *My Experience in a Lunatic Asylum by a Sane Patient* (1879). His friends included Thackeray, Gilbert and Sullivan, Dickens, Bulwer-Lytton and Trollope.

Grosvenor's fortune was lost by a negligent agent called Carruthers, who may be John Carruthers, an attorney who lived, married and worked in Madras, India. He may have been known to Ellen's brother George Powell Edwards Morrison, whose wife was born in Madras and who had part ownership of an estate at Mercara Coorg. John Carruthers' son was Major General Francis John Carruthers, who was born in Madras and entered the 2nd Madras Cavalry in 1828.[30]

This use of names seems to be part of Ellen Chads' strategy of furtive disclosure. The names are a challenge for her readers, but the challenge is not set for innocent amusement. It constitutes an indirect surreptitious claim to a position of familiarity with the world inhabited by military officers, artists and writers. The emphasis in her stories is not on their military activity, however, but on their status and privileges as officers. This emphasis is significant in the light of her husband's cashiering and its ignominious consequences, including ostracism by other officers.

Ellen Morrison was well placed, however, to know high ranking officers and officials of the Empire. One of her older brothers was George Powell Edwards Morrison (1826-1882), who at the age of eighteen graduated from the Royal Military College and was appointed Ensign in the 22nd Foot in June 1844. [31] Two years later he became lieutenant by purchase in the same regiment. [32] He became a Captain in the Military Train[33] and retired as a Major. [34] He must have spent a considerable part of his career in India, since his wife was born in

[30] http://genealogy.links.org/links-cgi/readged?/home/ben/camilla-genealogy/current+%210%3a124676+2-2-0-1-0

[31] *Morning Post* 29 June, 1844.

[32] *Morning Post* 29 September, 1846.

[33] Principal Probate Registry. *Calendar of the Grants of Probate and the Letters of Administration made in the Probate Registries in the High Court of justice in England*. London. Wills, 1865, Mary Pearson, p.287

[34] Principal Probate Registry. Calendar of the Grants of Probate and the Letters of Administration made in the Probate Registries in the High Court of justice in England. London. 1882, George Powell Edwards Morrison, p. 319.

Madras,[35] his death was announced in the *Times of India*[36] and he owned shares in a property called Closebury Estate at Mercara Coorg in the Western Ghats in India.[37]

In her columns in *Once a Month*, paintings depicting Indian scenes become an opportunity for Chads to display her familiarity with India. In November 1884, for instance, she describes the Indian Court at the Jubilee Exhibition which 'shows, in miniature, numerous specimens of the beautiful work common to Cashmere and the Punjaub.'[38] This is but the merest hint, but more pronounced hints are given in the issue of March 1886. Here she writes about the art of Horace van Ruith (1839-1923), who lived and worked in India for some time: 'Indian subjects appear to be a speciality with him, and it is evident that he is completely at home in their delineation, for the most cursory glance . . . is sufficient to make the observer feel certain that [his] knowledge of Bombay life is one of long standing.' Commenting on one of van Ruith's works, *Sunset on the Bombay Coast*, she adds an explanation of the name of the bay depicted in it: 'a view of what is known as 'Reclamation Bay' on account of the attempt made some years ago to reclaim a portion of the land from the sea; the endeavour was, however, unsuccessful, and resulted in a heavy loss to the shareholders.'[39] This seems to indicate a personal acquaintance with Bombay, and perhaps some connection with the failed scheme. Commenting on another of his works, she adds a description of the duties of a police-peon in Bengal.[40]

We have no reason to doubt that Ellen spent time in India, and it seems likely that she visited her brother George and travelled with him there, and that this may explain her absence from the 1861 English Census. An alternative explanation as to her whereabouts in 1861 is that she

[35] This is Annie Alexine Morrison, Channel Islands Census 1871.
[36] *Times of India* 23 February 1882.
[37] Will and Testament of George Powell Edwards Morrison, 12 February 1872, accessed at http://www.jerseyheritagetrust.jeron.je/wwwopac.exe?&DATABASE=catalo&LANGUAGE=0&DEBUG=0&BRIEFADAPL=../web/archbrf&DETAILADAPL=../web/wwwreq&%250=300045401&LIMIT=10
[38] *Once a Month* November 1884 p. 400.
[39] *Once a Month* March 1886 p. 266.
[40] *Once a Month* March 1886 p. 266.

may have been with her oldest brother, William Lawtie Morrison (1824-1885), another Army officer but serving in the Royal Engineers. He later achieved the rank of Colonel and became Acting Governor of Bermuda, but in 1861 was appointed Surveyor General and Colonial Engineer for Mauritius.[41] In St Helier, Ellen's father died in 1860[42] and her mother died in 1861,[43] when Ellen was in her early twenties. Military and naval families were often placed in positions where childbearing had to be delayed until later in life, and this, combined with the shorter life spans of the era, meant that Ellen's circumstances as the youngest and unmarried daughter were not unusual. As John Tosh points out, 'The logical course for these adult spinsters and bachelors was to move in with a sibling who was married.'[44] Both Ellen's brothers had military careers which necessitated overseas travel, but this was no deterrent to the usual custom. Ellen may have travelled with George or with William, or with both, but must eventually have gone to spend some time with her brother William and his family in Mauritius.

It was in Mauritius that Ellen Morrison married Captain John Henry Chads. John Henry Chads was born into a family with a heritage of trading, shipping and naval service. His Irish ancestors had owned ships and his immediate forbears served prominently in the British Navy.[45] In 1824, when John Henry was born,[46] his father John Cornell Chads, and his uncle Henry Ducie Chads had both distinguished themselves and their families with unblemished records in the Royal Marines and Royal Navy respectively. John Cornell was second lieutenant at the age of 16 and became Captain in the West Indies Regiment in 1820. He married Elizabeth Styles Parker, who was born in Bermuda. The birthplaces of his eight

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[41] *Gentleman's Magazine* 1861.
[42] St Helier Death Register vol. 14 p.9 entry 88. He died on 16 August of hydropsia. William Lawtie was present at the death. An obituary appears in the *Gentleman's Magazine* Sept, 1860
[43] St Helier Death Register vol 14 p. 48 entry 477. She died on 23 March of liver disease.
[44] John Tosh *A Man's Place; Masculinity in the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven: Yale, 1999) p. 21.
[45] Diana Chads *The Chads Family History 1650-2000.* (London, Pyrford Press, 1999).
[46] John Henry Chads was born in Fareham, Hampshire on 30 October 1824 (Statement of Military Service, Kew)

children trace his career in the West Indies. Three daughters were born in Antigua, and another in Tobago. John Henry was born in Fareham during a prolonged visit to England. Another daughter was born in Trinidad, and another in Grenada, and finally a second son was born in Trinidad, where John Cornell was now a Major. He retired with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in 1843. In 1852 he was recalled from his retirement to take up the position of President (Governor) of the British Virgin Islands, where he died two years later.[47]

John Cornell's brother, Henry Ducie, became an Admiral and was knighted for his services to the navy. As a youngster he served under Admiral Nelson on the *Excellent*[48] and as a young lieutenant he fought against the French in the Napoleonic wars, notably on the *Sirius*[49] at the Battle of Grand Port off Mauritius in 1810, where he was a prisoner of war for a short period. Two years later he fought against the Americans and lost a ship there but was exonerated after the customary court martial. He went on to captain ships to all parts of the Empire and beyond, including Quebec, Cape Horn, the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean, Malaya, India and China. He was responsible for improvements in gunnery, for which he was knighted, and was commissioner of inquiry after the sinking of the *Amphitrite*, a female convict ship that was wrecked off the coast of France in 1833.[50]

The next generation of Chads were also prominent in naval and military service. Admiral Sir Henry Ducie's sons became Admiral Sir Henry, Major General William John and Captain John Hanbury. In an age when patronage and family traditions held sway, John Henry's career choice seemed clear. His older brother Herbert had entered the Army, and his sister

[47] Diana Chads, *The Chads Family History* pp. 45-6.
[48] Diana Chads, *The Chads Family History* pp. 79-80.
[49] This *HMS Sirius* was not the same as the flagship of the First Fleet, which sank off Norfolk Island in 1790.
[50] For a comprehensive but rather hagiographic account of Admiral Chads' career see Montague Burrows, *Memoir of Admiral Sir Henry Ducie Chads, G.C.B.*, (Portsea: Griffin, 1869). See also Diana Chads, *The Chads Family History* pp. 77-142. Gerald Stone's *Beautiful Bodies*, (Sydney: Macmillan, 2009) is a semi fictional account of the *Amphitrite* disaster. A better study is Andrew Jampoler, *Horrible Shipwreck!* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2010). Chapter 7 deals with the Admiralty Investigation.

Mary had married Felix Bedingfeld, a barrister at law who held high office in the colonies, including Leeward Islands, Turks Islands, Trinidad and Mauritius. John Henry left school at the age of 17 and entered the army as a second lieutenant. He worked as a Civil Servant for some ten years before sailing to Mauritius, and the first sign of trouble, in 1850.

On January 11, 1851, the Commander of the Forces in India, General Sutherland, issued an order in which he stated that 'the conduct of Lieut. Chads, 5th Fusiliers, on Friday night last, at the Theatre, was most reprehensible'. John Henry's 'improper act', had been, while in the company of other officers, to 'replace his foot over the front of the box after the feelings of the audience had been so unequivocally expressed'. This caused an 'unfortunate fracas' resulting in police intervention. A report of the incident and its aftermath was published in the Indian press.[51] This was a black mark against the family name that no doubt brought displeasure to John Henry's father and uncle.

The incident, though publicly declared reprehensible by the authorities, probably to repair relations with the local civilian population, was regrettable but relatively minor and almost certainly alcohol related. It was a hiccough, but not enough to derail the prospects of a member of the Chads family. John Henry took his medicine, pulled up his socks and got on with his life and career.

A year later, still in Mauritius, John Henry married. His bride was Elizabeth Ann de Villiers de Smidt, daughter of the Assistant Commissary General in Cape Town, Johannes de Smidt[52]. Immediately after the wedding he was posted to Burma, where he served as an aide-de-camp

[51] *Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce* 19 March 1851. ProQuest Historical Newspapers Times of India (1838-2001) p. 195

[52] Return of Marriages solemnized by the Revd Pering, MA, Chaplain to the Forces for the Troops at Mauritius 5th Regiment from 1st January to 18th May 1852. Port Louis 16th March 1852.

and was slightly wounded in an attack on a pagoda.[53] He was favourably mentioned in dispatches for 'rendering assistance.'[54]

In October 1854 John Henry, back in England with his South African wife, became a father. He named his son Arthur Colville. He held a position as recruiting officer in Clonmel, Ireland, in 1855 and then held a similar position in Manchester the following year, when his daughter Georgina Eleanor was born and he was promoted to Captain. In August 1856 he was on stand-by to return to Mauritius.[55] In May 1857 he was appointed paymaster of the 60th Rifles. A few months later, in July 1857, his wife Elizabeth died, just a week after giving birth to her second daughter, Annie.

Six months later John Henry sailed from Gravesend, where Elizabeth had died, to Calcutta on the *Prince of Wales*,[56] and fought in the Indian Mutiny in 1858. He served in the campaign in Rohileund and took part in the destruction of the fort at Mabundie, for which he received a medal. He participated in the Oude Campaign, including the action of Rissoolpore in north-west Pakistan.[57]

In January 1862 John Henry was transferred to paymaster of the 24th Foot.[58] At the end of the year, undoubtedly thinking about the prospects of his two young daughters, he made a donation towards the establishment of the Royal School for Daughters of Officers of the

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[53] *The Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce* (1839-1859); May 5, 1852; ProQuest Historical Newspapers *Times of India* (1838 - 2001) p. 295
[54] *Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce* 6 November 1852. ProQuest Historical Newspapers *Times of India* (1838-2001) p. 721
[55] *The Times* August 1856.
[56] Families in British India website.
[57] *New Army List*, 1859 p. 185; New Army List 1861.
[58] *London Gazette* 28 January 1862.

Army.[59] The school opened in August 1865 but there is no record of either daughter ever attending the school,[60] for just prior to this time John Henry brought disgrace on his family.

As paymaster, he had access to quite large sums of money, which were in his care. The temptation to embezzle some of these moneys for his personal use was too great for John Henry and he found himself in very hot water indeed. His father had died ten years earlier, but his uncle, now the powerful Admiral Sir Henry Ducie Chads, used his considerable influence to keep the news of his court martial as quiet as possible (and quite possibly paid off the debts that John Henry had incurred).[61] John Henry was court-martialled in Port Louis in Mauritius, where his regiment was stationed, on 10 May 1865. He was charged with embezzlement of public money and making false statement to his commanding officer, and was declared 'unworthy to serve Her Majesty in any capacity whatever.' He was cashiered, a fate generally considered worse than mere dismissal, since it ruined a man's prospects for the remainder of his life. The verdict was approved by the Queen on the fifth of August, 1865.[62] Contributors to the *Oxford Notes and Queries* in 1927 pointed out that cashiering was 'an ignominious sentence given for a disgraceful act . . . Dismissal does not carry with it the same stigma.'[63] Cashiering could be carried out by ritual punishments such as breaking an officer's sword or ripping off his epaulettes. An American newspaper correspondent asserted in 1904 that 'it is held scandalous for any officer of the army to associate with a man who has been cashiered.'[64]

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[59] *The Times* 17 December 1864.
[60] Email from Mandy Fyfe, Royal School Archivist 11 January 2011.
[61] Adele Chads family notes in possession of Chads family.
[62] National Archive, Kew. WO 92/2 p. 124. Further details of the court martial are not available since the court papers for that period, which would have contained a detailed description of the charges, including how much money had been embezzled, an account of how the crime had been discovered, and a defence by John Henry, were destroyed by German bombing of London during the Second World War. Chads' replacement was announced in the *London Gazette* 20 October 1865 and in the *Times of India* on 27 November 1865.
[63] *Notes and Queries* January 29, 1927 p. 84.
[64] *New York Times* 7 April 1904 p. 8.

There is no evidence to suggest that in return for 'saving' John Henry from a public scandal and paying off his debts, his uncle Sir Henry Ducie extracted a promise from him that he would leave England's shores forever, but such a course of action would not be inconsistent with the practices of the time. Whatever the truth about his uncle's involvement, John Henry clearly decided that his interests would be best served by spending some time with his sister Mary and his brother-in-law Felix Bedingfeld in Mauritius, where Felix was Colonial Secretary.

Bedingfeld had previously served in the Diplomatic Service in the West Indies.[65] He was appointed Treasurer and Paymaster General of Mauritius in 1854 and became its Colonial Secretary in 1860. As treasurer he took an interest in promoting the values of civilisation. He served on the Education Board and was treasurer of the Mauritius Literary Institute, a collection of some 6000 volumes of French and English books.[66] He had married John Henry's sister Mary Woodward Chads in 1849.[67]

On 23 September 1856 he wrote a personal letter to his friend Lord Bradford through which we gain more than a glimpse of the kind of life lived by the Empire's administrators abroad.[68] He wrote that Mauritius 'is essentially French in manners feelings and politics'. The French had been masters of Mauritius for precisely one hundred years before it was captured by the British in 1810, shortly after the lost Battle of Grand Port, and was officially ceded to England in the Treaty of Paris in 1814. Wealthy French planters, many of them refugees from the French Revolution, grew sugar, utilising slave labour until it was abolished in 1835, and then cheap imported Indian labour.

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[65] Diana Chads, *The Chads Family History* p. 47.
[66] *Mauritius Register*, 1859.
[67] Diana Chads, *The Chads Family History* p. 47.
[68] Archives of Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent D1287/18/22 (P/675) accessed on 8 April 2008 at http://staffscc.net/staffsinternational/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Mauritius-Transcript.pdf

In Bedingfeld's view the imported labourers were part of an economic formula and he opposed what he called philanthropic efforts to ameliorate the hardships faced by such labourers by encouraging them to bring their wives with them. His term for these wives is 'useless people':

> Our population is about 200,000 of whom at least half are Indians. The proximity to India and the consequent comparative facility of keeping a constant supply of labor [sic], has preserved Mauritius from the ruin which overtook the West Indies and I see no reason why the colony should not continue to prosper, so long as you good people at home do not become too philanthropic, and insisting on each Indian labourer [sic] bringing his wife with him, *bongré* or *malgré* – such an increase of useless people would swamp our Treasury, and even as it is, you will readily believe what an expensive experiment it is when I tell you, that we paid for Immigration in 1854, £117,000.

Indians who were employed as domestic servants fared no better, characterised as 'a bad set, idle drunkards and thieves.'

Bedingfeld was aware that English rule sat uneasily with the French planters and their descendants. He wrote to Bradford, 'The English are hated feared and obeyed.' All the arrogant superiority of imperialism is encapsulated in this one sentence. Although Bedingfeld does express disappointment at the lack of friendly relations with the French, this is no more than mere personal regret. The uncordial state of affairs that he bemoans is tacitly acknowledged as the necessary concomitant of being a colonial power. Masters could not rule without engendering enmity and fear in their subjects.

Ellen Chads reflects Bedingfeld's attitude in an autobiographical story set in Mauritius. Describing her brother William Lawtie, the Surveyor-General, she says of him

> The Captain held a good position as Surveyor-General in one of the loveliest islands in the Indian Ocean, and was popular with all but those who sought to win his official favour by what was not very far removed from bribery. To *them*, Captain Dundas was a complete *bête-noir*. His eyes seemed ever on the lookout to frustrate their schemes

> for enriching themselves at the expense of Government, and they found their rents raised when they had hoped by judicious '*gifts*' to have learned the former were lowered. But to all others he was courteous and pleasant . . . [69]

Profiteering and rebellion had to be discouraged by means of maintaining a careful watch on the untrustworthy natives and as well as on rebellious foreign subjects. This distance was not merely personal, but applied to entire races, although it found its expression in the personal and social dimension of colonial living. Thus Bedingfeld's letter to Bradford:

> The outward manifestation is a wish to belong once more to France . . . The consequence of this antagonism is that there is no fusion between French and English society — and the intercourse of friendly relations is confined to a careful exchange of ponderous dinner parties, and visiting cards

It was at one of these 'ponderous dinner parties' that John Henry Chads gave Ellen Augusta Morrison reason to believe that romance was in the air and that a marriage proposal might be expected.[70] The Surveyor General's sister and the Colonial Secretary's brother-in-law, visiting their respective families, married on the 19th of April 1865,[71] just three weeks before John Henry's court martial. A marriage between these two children of the empire must have seemed a very suitable match, one that would win approval from all their acquaintances, though perhaps not of those among their more intimate friends who may have known John Henry's dark secret.

Both partners were part of an enormous network that encompassed the Americas, the West Indies, the Pacific and Indian Oceans, and the jewel in the crown, India. In many ways they epitomised the upper middle ranks of Empire, with naval, military, mercantile and legal connections all over the 'pink map'. Their families were successful members of the most

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[69] Ellen Chads, *A Strange Sequel to a Ball* p. 42.
[70] Ellen Chads, *A Strange Sequel to a Ball.*
[71] Diana Chads, *The Chads Family History* p. 51. The wedding occurred in Pailles, some ten kilometres north of Port Louis.

successful and prosperous empire the world had ever seen. The ability and willingness of such people to travel all over the globe and their commitment to the Empire through military and administrative service brings us to the nub of what it meant to belong to the Empire.

People like the Morrisons, Chads and Bedingfelds belonged to a world that belonged to them. In a breath-taking survey, Felix Bedingfeld describes the global resources for Mauritius' wants:

> For rice (50,000 bags a month) we send to India and Madagascar from which latter place comes our beef. We get mules from France, Buenos Ayres, and the Red Sea. Horses from Montevideo the Cape and Arabia, and poneys [sic] from Lombock Muscat and Pegu – Cows from France – Sheep from the Cape and India – Wine and beer from Europe, and all our ladies legion of wants direct from Paris.

Produce from Mauritius itself included:

> We have strawberries and peas in perfection; peaches apricots plums broccoli cauliflower English potatos [sic] beet root & besides all the tropical productions – and our mangoes are proverbial besides the leechee, [sic] a chinese [sic] fruit now become indigenous, a splendid tree with fruit as large as large cherries hanging in grape clusters and having a mixed taste of muscatel grapes and peaches

The Empire, for its colonial administrators, was clearly more than a political entity. It suffused their lives. Every activity, from transport to dining, was premised on its existence.

While belonging to the Empire certainly brought rewards such as privilege and wealth, the requirement for commitment is palpably demonstrated in their lives. Morrisons and Chads' were prepared to serve their Empire in capacities that entailed hardship and isolation, and a willingness to make the supreme sacrifice when necessary.

As Felix Bedingfeld's letter to Lord Bradford shows, the colonial administrative class was conscious of being part of an Empire. Its members thought imperially in relation to politics and enterprise, but in addition, they always assumed its presence in the given world that had made them who they were. Although it is problematic to claim that John and Ellen Chads

and others of the military officer class *identified* as belonging to the Empire, since such an existential and psychoanalytic use of *identity* would be anachronistic, as Frederick Cooper and Rogers Brubaker point out,[72] they were nevertheless very conscious of being part of the Empire and having a role to perform for it in the world.

It is not clear just when Ellen Chads learned of her husband's shady financial dealings, or whether she had any warning before the formal notice that he had been cashiered arrived. As I argue in Chapter 3, the recurrence in her short stories of a moment of catastrophic revelation after marriage suggests that the blow may have fallen without warning, totally overthrowing whatever dreams she may have formed for a life at home with her military hero husband. Within months of their marriage in Mauritius, John Henry and Ellen set sail for Melbourne, then the busiest and most prosperous city in Australia and one of the busiest in the Empire, as unassisted immigrants. They arrived in Melbourne on the *Pactole*, a French ship, in December 1865. John Henry's young children by his previous marriage remained in England with members of his extended family.

Melbourne was a bustling city, gateway to the goldfields of Ballarat and Bendigo and to the rich sheep grazing country of Western Victoria. The first insane years of the gold rush were over, but Melbourne was settling down to become a centre of serious wealth and commerce. Here was a place where a man could be rewarded for hard work, earn a fortune and live well. Here was a place where the past might conveniently be forgotten and respectability established anew. Here was a place for John Henry and Ellen Augusta Chads.

The Chads family established a home in Murphy Street South Yarra, but it is by no means certain that John Henry was interested in re-establishing respectability for himself and his wife. Many of the details of the following years are recorded in an affidavit sworn by John

[72] Frederick Cooper and Rogers Brubaker, 'Identity' in Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question; Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2005), p. 60.

Henry in February 1877.[73] He states that he arrived in the colony with his wife and some £300 capital. This money may have been Ellen's or have been given or loaned to him by his family in England. He set himself up in partnership with a man called William Simpson as an estate agent and financier. As early as June 1866 Simpson and Chads, No. 1 First Floor of the Hall of Commerce in Collins Street, advertised in the *Argus*, Melbourne's daily newspaper, that they had sums of money, £200 and upwards, to lend on freehold securities at current rates of interest. [74] In 1867 the business appears in the Sands Directory, [75] but according to John Henry's affidavit the partnership had already been dissolved in November 1866, just five months after its creation. The business had proved a failure.

After the failure of his business John Henry had no income and was forced to live on credit. Ellen was pregnant and often ill, and in June 1867 she gave birth to a son. They called him Harry, but the birth was premature and the boy lived only nine hours. Harry's death certificate describes John Henry as a gentleman.[76] The truth was, according to his own affidavit, that his business had failed, he was unemployed, and living on credit at high interest. None of these, it seems, disqualified him from representing himself as a gentleman. The affidavit goes on to say that in December 1867 John Henry was engaged by a Hay and Corn Merchant as bookkeeper on a salary of one pound per week.

By 1868 John Henry and Ellen had moved to William Street South Yarra[77] and John Henry found employment as a supernumerary clerk in the General Post Office at a salary of about £170 per annum. He lost this position when he became insolvent in October 1876.

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[73] Public Record Office Victoria VPRS 762 Unit 90 71/2036.
[74] *The Argus* 9 June 1866, p. 6.
[75] *Sands Directory*, Melbourne, 1867.
[76] Victoria. Births Deaths and Marriages. Deaths 1867/913.
[77] The addresses mentioned throughout this paper are drawn from *Sands Directories*, *Sands and McDougals Directories* and *Melbourne Directories* for the relevant dates.

Despite John Henry's employment with the Post Office, which at least provided a stable income, the Chads' life together remained unsettled. They lived an almost itinerant lifestyle. In 1869 they moved to Gardiners Street Prahran and in 1870 returned to Murphy Street South Yarra. Their home in Murphy Street was called Espoir Cottage. Towards the end of that year Ellen placed an advertisement in the Argus offering the services of a recently arrived German lady who wished to give lessons in Parisian French, German and fancy work.[78] If this 'German' lady is Ellen herself, and given the French name of the house and her own recent arrival this may be a possibility, although there is no apparent reason for passing herself off as German, it indicates that she was a lady of some education and ability, though perhaps of poor health. John Henry's affidavit, though perhaps exaggerated, declares that his wife, despite frequently being an invalid, sometimes found employment as a governess in private families.

Further problems lay just around the corner. John Henry had once again accrued debts that he could not repay, and in April 1871 he was pursued in the Court of Prahran by Mr. J. Moorhead for a debt of £2 6s 4d.[79] A few weeks later Mr. C. Hoskins sued him for a debt of £5 0s 6d.[80] John Henry did not appear at either of these court hearings. A fraud summons was issued and fourteen days jail ordered if the sums were not paid within one month. Somehow, the debts must have been paid, but early in July John Henry was back in court. Joseph Jones wanted payment of £1 14s 0d for goods and works. The court ordered Chads to pay the sum plus 5s costs. John Henry paid with a false cheque and a week later was charged with fraud and ordered to pay £1 19s 0d plus another 5s costs within seven days or spend seven days in prison. The court record indicates that this amount was paid, but two weeks later the court

[78] *The Argus* 24 November 1870, p. 1.
[79] *Prahran Telegraph* 8 April 1871, p. 4; VPRS 00340/P0000/000007.
[80] *Prahran Telegraph* 24 April 1871, p. 4.

ordered John Henry to pay Robert Hunter the sum of £10 0s 11½d for 'board and lodging', together with the obligatory 5s costs. [81]

This was a period of high drama in the Chads' family life. Ellen was pregnant again, but this ended in more disappointment. As John Henry battled his creditors in court, largely by simply not appearing, she gave premature birth to a stillborn and unnamed daughter. [82] Melbourne continued prosperous, becoming a major finance centre, home to several banks and of Australia's first stock exchange. In the following decade it would be the richest city in the world and the second largest city in the British Empire. It rejoiced in large numbers of new buildings, including a very grand brand new town hall, but there could have been little joy for either Mr or Mrs Chads in that dark year. Days after the disappointing premature birth, John Henry was listed to appear in the County Court, pursued by a Mr Scott for a debt under £20. [83] From August to November 1871 the case brought against him by Robert Hunter was before the Prahran court a further three times, without being resolved. [84]

The pattern of frequent relocation, established early, continued, along with the visits to the County Court in relation to small debts, and more personal tragedy. In 1872 they were living in Wangaratta Street Richmond. In May 1874 John Henry's son Arthur Colville, now aged nineteen and still living in England, was killed in a railway accident 'when compressed between buffers of railway carriages at Waterloo Station'[85] where he was employed as a clerk in the general manager's office.[86] Two more visits to the County Court were necessary in

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[81] For details of John Henry's court appearances in Prahran, I am indebted to Pam Jennings of the Geelong Heritage Centre, who tracked down the records at the Public Records Office of Victoria (PROV).
[82] *The Argus* 4 August 1871, p. 4.
[83] *The Argus* 7 August 1871, p. 5.
[84] Incomplete references at PROV show 31 August 1871 fraud of £10 10s 11½d 'dismissed' but tried again and postponed on 11 September, adjourned on 9 October and postponed again on 6 November.
[85] Chads, *The Chads Family History* p. 51.
[86] House of Commons Parliamentary Papers 1875 [C.1224] Railway accidents. 1874. *Return of accidents attended and unattended with loss of life or personal injury which have been reported to the Board of Trade by the several railway companies in England and Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, in pursuance of the Regulation of*

August of that year[87]. It must have been at about this time that John Henry contracted two debts with a Dr Dymock of Mornington, which he reveals in another affidavit sworn in connection with his application for a Certificate of Discharge in 1877. The terms of this debt, he claimed, were so extreme that he was unable to reduce the principal despite paying three times the principal in interest in just thirty months.

In July 1875 Georgina Chads, the elder of John Henry's daughters and now 18 years old, arrived in Melbourne aboard the *Somersetshire* and was added to the household.[88] During 1876 John Henry was obliged to make three more visits to the County Court, courtesy of Messrs Lachlan, Weaver and Don,[89] and in October he was declared insolvent. [90] He was granted a Certificate of Discharge in February 1877,[91] and soon gained new employment, this time as a mail clerk in the Education Department.[92] By this time the Chads family had removed to 26 Bridport St Emerald Hill, in what is now South Melbourne. In December of that year John Henry's second daughter, Annie, arrived on the *Highflyer*[93] and was accommodated in the house. Each of the girls had a small annuity from their Aunt Mary Woodford Bedingfeld.[94] John Henry conveniently forgot to mention the annuity that Georgina had brought to the household in 1876 when he swore the affidavit which 'proved' his inability to repay the debts which had led to his insolvency, though he was not averse to claiming the extra costs involved in feeding the extra mouth.

Railways Act (1871), 34 & 35 Vict. cap. 78., as having occurred on their lines during the year ending the 31st of December 1874. Part I and Part II. p. 125.

[87] Victoria. *Government Gazette* 7 August 1874 and 9 August 1874.

[88] Victoria. Public Record Office Immigration records.

[89] Victoria. *Government Gazette* 10 April 1876, 7 June 1876, 10 July 1876.

[90] Victoria. *Government Gazette* October 1876, p. 2003.

[91] Victoria. *Government Gazette* 24 February 1877.

[92] In 1884 his official status was administrative officer, clerical division 5 in the Education Department, with an annual salary of £230.*The Argus* February 2 1885, p. 9; *Victorian Public Service Board Return* for 1885

[93] Victoria. Public Record Office Immigration records.

[94] Notes held by Chads family.

Whether or not the annuity gave the household sufficient extra income to compensate for the extra mouths to feed, in 1879 John Henry made another three appearances at the County Court, pursued for small debts by Messrs Wheeler, Marks and Caughey.[95] In March 1880 there was another appearance[96] and in July 1881 he was sued for a larger amount by Mr Ninnis, a prominent Melbourne pawnbroker.[97] By this time the family had moved to 13 Service Crescent Emerald Hill. In the midst of all this, Ellen worshipped regularly at the Emerald Hill Baptist Church and stood behind the flower stall at the church bazaar,[98] clinging desperately to whatever shreds of respectability were still within her grasp.

While John Henry continued to work as a clerk in the Education Department he augmented the family income by borrowing money from all and sundry, with no apparent intention of ever repaying his debts. Those of his creditors who sought redress in the County court invariably allowed their claims to lapse. The amounts were not large enough to warrant the expense of pursuing them, and the chances of recovering their money were virtually nil. In the meantime, each of his daughters brought their own annuity to the household and Ellen also contributed with frequent periods as a governess in private families.

But in 1880 the picture changed. Ellen's short story entitled *What Katie Vaughan Lost and Gained on Christmas Day* was published in the *Melbourne Christmas Annual* for 1880, alongside stories by such luminaries of the infant Australian literary scene as Henry Kendall and Marcus Clarke. *Katie Vaughan* was not her first published story, since in the by-line she is identified as 'the author of '*The Pine-Grove Murder*', '*Two Christmas Eves*', etc., etc.'[99] The publishers, Cameron, Laing and Co., were also responsible for *The Melbourne Quarterly*

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[95] Victoria. *Government Gazette* 7 July 1879, 10 July 1879 and 8 September 1879.
[96] Victoria. *Government Gazette* 8 March 1880.
[97] Victoria. *Government Gazette* 14 July 1881.
[98] *The Argus* 3 November 1881, p. 10 and 1 November 1882, p. 4.
[99] *Melbourne Christmas Annual* [1880] pp6-7; also published as the *Christmas Supplement* in the *Burra Record* (South Australia) 24 December 1880.

and *The Australian Women's Magazine and Domestic Journal*, to which Ellen began to contribute in 1882, initially with columns on *New Music* and *New Books* but soon followed by another short story, *Dora Grosvenor's Repentance*.

It is unlikely that John Henry would have been impressed by his wife's didactic romances and moral tales, but he was impressed by the opportunity for greater income that her writing represented. With or without her consent, he approached Cameron, Laing and Co. with a book proposal. When they demurred, he offered to pay the costs of publication and they agreed. The book, *Tried as Pure Gold, and Other Tales* was published in 1882. The title story is an unrealistically moral and religious tale about a young lady from Jersey and includes an 'exile' in Australia. *Two Christmas Eves* is included among the 'other tales'. *The Pine-Grove Murder* is not included, although its plot may have formed part of *Tried as Pure Gold*, which incorporates a murder in a pine avenue. The book carried nine pages of advertisements, a number of them from local Emerald Hill merchants, who doubtless paid John Henry for the space he sold them. Some of these advertisers, including art supplies, violin teaching and an agency for servants, reflect Ellen's interests, and she may have had a hand in securing their business.

John Henry 'paid' Cameron, Laing and Co. the book publication costs with a promissory note to the order of £46/10/8d. He received the books and sold them, but in February 1885 the publishers had not yet received any payment and instituted proceedings to recover their costs. John Henry stared them down. He wrote to their solicitor, giving his return address as Education Department, simply stating that he could not pay. He pointed out that the publishers still had 130 copies of the book which, if sold for 5/- each, would 'very nearly clear the debt.' He concluded, 'If they choose to institute proceedings I can only regret the

same.' The matter was listed in the Supreme Court but, as John Henry had no doubt anticipated, was again allowed to lapse.[100]

In 1883 Ellen expanded the story first published in *The Australian Women's Magazine and Domestic Journal* as *Dora Grosvenor's Repentance*, and the extended version was published that year as *Dora's Repentance* by Smith, Hutchinson, Radcliffe and Whitelow. John Henry may have repeated the arrangement he made with Cameron, Laing and Co. No conclusive evidence for that has emerged, although the volume carries several advertisements for local businesses and an appeal for funds for the Salvation Army, of which John Henry's two daughters were active members.

John Henry, meanwhile, was earning £230 p.a. in the Education Department. The Public Service Board return for that year describes his duties as 'assists in press copying and despatch of letters'. In March 1885 he was again summoned to appear before the courts, this time owing a debt of less than £20 to Mr Solomons.[101] Descendants of his uncle Admiral Sir Henry Ducie Chads relate that the family story is that John Henry drank and probably gambled, and this seems as good an explanation as any for the plethora of continuing small debts. This story is supported by the fact that many of Ellen Chads' stories revolve around men being led astray by drink and gambling and thereby accruing debts, leading to forgery of some kind. John Henry died of 'bronchitis and general debility' in May 1890.[102] His mismatched marriage and his troubled exile had lasted almost a quarter of a century. The inscription on his tombstone in Boroondara Cemetery makes what is perhaps not an unwitting reference to this exile: *In loving memory of my dear husband John Henry Chads. Gone home. 3 May 1890.*[103] Ellen's last book, *Tracked by Bushrangers and Other Stories, together with*

[100] Public Record Office Victoria VPRS 267 Unit 695 1885/1440.
[101] *The Argus* 2 March 1885, p. 6.
[102] Victoria. Births Deaths and Marriages 1890/7547.
[103] Boroondara Cemetery Grave Baptist A 713.

Work for the Master; a Series of Papers for Women, published in 1891,was dedicated to the memory of her late husband.

In her fiction, Ellen Chads consistently portrays Australia as a new beginning for those who have fallen from grace in England, but she clearly found her 'new beginning' less than idyllic. The disgrace of her husband may have been left behind, but living in Australia was never going to replicate living in England as if nothing had happened. The repercussions of her husband's crime and his ongoing financial problems dogged her until and beyond his death. Daughters of the Empire were not immune from the vicissitudes of life. Privileges they had — ease of travel through the wide pink world, a variety of diet through imported foods, a compatible social milieu, a readily understood code of social behaviour, and a sense of racial superiority, to name a few — but the Empire also imposed constraints.

For women accustomed to and dependent upon a respectable lifestyle, but who found themselves in parlous circumstances, there were few choices. Without her husband's income from the Education Department, Ellen was thrown onto her own resources. She would eventually receive a pension of £11 per week (exactly half John Henry's salary), grudgingly paid by John Henry's cousin Major General William John Chads,[104] but there were other avenues for genteel women to make a kind of living. During 1891 Mrs. Chads advertised herself as a kind of employment agency for parlourmaids and housemaids, operating from Glenferrie Platform.[105] This must have been a difficult step for her to take. Rosamund Billington points out that 'Marriage was an economic necessity for middle class women because they had no means of earning an independent income without losing their status as

[104] Adele Chads, Notes in possession of Chads family.
[105] *The Argus* 29 May, p. 1 and 25 November 1891, p. 8.

'ladies'.'[106] Ellen Chads was no stranger to economic necessity, but her widowhood clearly imposed new stringencies which had to be addressed by taking steps contrary to the ideal of genteel female respectability.

Meanwhile, her changed circumstances demanded a resumption of her itinerancy. By June 1892, she was living at 3 Columbia St Hawthorn. In 1894 she was living in Caulfield,[107] but in 1896 Ellen returned to Hawthorn, living at 86 Rathmines Road. Georgina, and presumably Annie, had moved from Duke Street Prahran to Henry Street Prahran. The following year Ellen had moved to May Street Kew, but in 1898 she had returned to Rathmines Road, where she remained until 1901, when she moved to Camberwell Road Hawthorn. The 1903 Electoral Roll lists her as living at 13 Aberdeen Street Hawthorn, and engaged in 'home duties'. [108] From 1904 to 1911 she had a new address every year, all within walking distance of each other in Hawthorn.

She may, at this time, have augmented her income by writing for the *Melbourne Herald* and for *The Weekly Times*. When she died in 1923 an obituary in the *Herald* noted that she had been 'engaged on *The Herald* and *The Weekly Times* during the time Mr S V Winter and Mr Carrington were editors.'[109] Samuel Vincent Winter purchased *The Herald* in 1874 and was its editor from then until his death in 1904. The Herald at that time carried an unsigned weekly column entitled *Chronicles from the Churches*, which may well have been the work of Ellen Chads. The *Weekly Times* carried short and serial stories of the kind that Ellen Chads wrote. It advertised itself as four papers in one, comprising *The Australian Irrigationist*, *The*

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[106] Rosamund Billington, 'The Dominant Values of Victorian Feminism' in Eric Sigsworth ed., *In Search of Victorian Values; Aspects of Nineteenth-century Thought and Society* (Manchester: Manchester University Press,1988), p. 120.

[107] The senders' address on the 1894 letter.

[108] Ancestry.com. *Australian Electoral Rolls, 1903-1980* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2010. Original data: Australian Electoral Commission. *[Electoral roll]*.

[109] *The Herald*, Melbourne, 8 October 1923.

Farmers' Gazette, *The Story Teller* and *The Weekly Times*. Some of Chads' fiction may well have found its way into *The Story Teller*.

The larger part of her energies, however, was now devoted to the cause of animal protection, in particular the care of lost dogs and mistreated horses. She was a committee member of the first private lost dogs home in Melbourne and was responsible for initiating a campaign which led to the eventual establishment of the Temporary Home for Lost and Starving dogs in North Melbourne, which opened in 1913 and is still operating today.[110]

Ellen had spent several years now at the one address in Hastings Street Hawthorn, but in 1914 she is listed in the Electoral Roll as an 'authoress' living at 'Craigielea' Campbell Road, Auburn, and in 1917 she moved to 285 Church Street Hawthorn, to share with a Mrs Jane Stanley. Mrs Stanley was the widow of Charles Greville Stanley who had died in June of that year.[111] In January 1918, now eighty years old, Ellen donated her clothes and books to the Melbourne Benevolent Asylum and Hospital for the Aged and Infirm. By 1919 Ellen was a 'writer' living at 344 Canterbury Road Surrey Hills. She died on 5 of October 1923 at Nurse Fitzgerald's Private Hospital in New Street Brighton. [112]

John Henry's elder daughter Georgina is listed in the 1924 Electoral Rolls as living at 77 York Road, Prahran Gardens. By 1931 she had moved to 46 Upton Road, Prahran,[113] where she remained until her death by pneumonia in 1936, having never married.[114] Her younger sister Annie, also unmarried, had died in 1914.[115]

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[110] Jack, *Faithful Friends,* pp. 12-13.
[111] *The Argus* June 4 1919, p. 1. 'In Memoriam' notice.
[112] Victoria. Births Deaths and Marriages. Deaths. 1923/6223. See also *The Herald* 8 October 1923.
[113] Ancestry.com. *Australian Electoral Rolls, 1903-1980* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2010. Original data: Australian Electoral Commission. *[Electoral roll].*
[114] Victoria. Births Deaths and Marriages. Deaths 1936/7476.
[115] Victoria. Births Deaths and Marriages. Deaths 1914/3185.

By the time Ellen Chads died in 1923 all Australian adult women had the right to vote, and even in England women could vote if they were over thirty years old and met property ownership conditions. Universal female suffrage for women over twenty-one was not achieved there until 1928. There is no evidence to suggest that Ellen had ever changed her mind on the question of woman suffrage, and there was clearly still enough resistance to it to make her stance a 'legitimate' position and one that still conformed to the now old-fashioned notions of Respectability that she had so fully endorsed in her self-representation in the 1880s and 1890s.

The Empire in Ellen Chads' fiction was large enough to allow new beginnings, but in reality its various parts were not homogenous. Melbourne was not Jersey, India or Mauritius. Though Ellen Chads continued to represent herself as a respectable member of society with connections with its upper echelons, the sense of racial superiority she experienced in India and Mauritius, for instance, had little real meaning in Melbourne. The principle which tied these disparate colonies to each other to make an Empire was the metropole — 'home' in the language of its expatriates.

In the next chapter the notion of 'home' and its role in the formation of expatriate culture will be examined from the point of view of Ellen Chads' self-representation as an educated, respectable woman whose allegiance to the Empire was unwavering. Her commitment to Empire and Civilization has an almost missionary zeal. This is revealed in her art and music criticism, her essential belief in the organization of groups to pursue 'civilized' activities, her works of charity and her role in animal protection.

Chapter 2 Cultural self-representation: Civilization

Native Industry and Middle Class Culture

Ellen Chads' experience of Empire and of herself as its representative did not change when she married John Henry Chads and accompanied him to establish a new home in Melbourne, but the environment in which she expressed it did. She was moving away from the parts of Empire where a sense of racial superiority was constantly reinforced through day-to-day contact with Indigenous people over whom Britain played overlord to one where they had been so thoroughly subjected that their very existence could easily be overlooked. When Ellen Chads does notice them it is as curiosities rather than people with whom any interaction is required. She refers to them variously as aborigines, natives and blacks as she describes tableaux with life-size figures at exhibitions[1] and their curious ability to forecast rain by observing the behaviour of ants,[2] already little more than museum pieces displayed for the wonderment of the civilized race which now occupied their territory.

In her twenty-four art columns for *Once a Month* she mentions three works that portray Aboriginal people. One is Eugene von Guerard's *Barter*[3] and the others are two portraits of Aboriginal people, which 'are now to be seen in Mr. Fletcher's Art Gallery'[4]. The artists' names are not mentioned. In the first the Aboriginal man and his name are curiously separated. He is not Jack Weatherby, but 'an aboriginal of Port Phillip bearing the name of Jack Weatherby' as if the English name could not really 'be' the person in the way that von Guerard, for instance, could 'be' von Guerard. The distancing of Jack Weatherby from his name also distances him from those who are identified with their names. The second portrait

[1] *Once a Month* November 1884, p. 401 and March 1886, p. 272.
[2] *Once a Month* February 1886, p. 174.
[3] *Once a Month* January 1885, p. 76.
[4] *Once a Month* February 1885, p. 158.

is 'a likeness of Wooraddy, one of the last of the Aborigines of Tasmania'. She adds that Wooraddy assisted Aboriginal Protector Robinson in persuading many aboriginal tribes to 'come in'[5]. This elevation from novelty status to assistant in the attempted preservation of his own race is preceded by a description of the Maloga Mission camp at Brighton, which was declared successful on the grounds that 'many of the aborigines gave 'fine addresses''.[6] Here, perhaps, is an indication that the natives could attain some of the marks of civilization, although the mention is still more in the nature of a passing curiosity than a genuine step on the road to civilization.

Ellen Chads was an urban settler with little exposure to indigenous peoples other than as curios. Earlier in the nineteenth century humanitarians in England had pointed out that aboriginal peoples were British subjects, but few people, if any, believed in the prospect of their civilization. They could never be British. Alan Lester argues that respectable colonial settlers worked out a definition of Britishness in response to pressures applied by humanitarians who had succeeded in abolishing the slave trade and were now extending their philanthropic efforts to the civilizing of the subjects of the empire as a whole. The imperative to civilize became the 'essence of Britishness projected onto the wider world.'[7] Lester shows that respectable colonial settlers resisted philanthropic urges because they ran counter to the economic and social interests of settlement. He also points out that by 1865, the year in which Ellen Chads arrived in Melbourne, philanthropic efforts in Australia were almost irrelevant because the settlers had defeated the 'liberal' and 'Whiggish' impetus in public discourse. More importantly, Australia's native races had been all but eradicated.

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[5] Wooraddy was Truganini's partner. Together they helped Robinson locate and bring the Tasmanian Aborigines into protective custody.

[6] *Once a Month* February 1885, p. 158.

[7] Alan Lester, 'British Settler Discourse and the Circuits of Empire' in *History Workshop Journal* No. 54 (Autumn 2002), p. 26.

Ann Standish points out that Jessie Ackermann and Beatrice Webb, writing a decade or two after Chads, do so without mentioning the Indigenous peoples at all, and suggests that this is not merely because Aboriginal people had been dispossessed, but because they wish to show Australia as a country 'without history — without a life before white settlement, without a conflict.'[8] Ellen Chads' representation of Australia is no different. Her work supports Lester's argument about settler discourse. Although not involved in pioneering settlement of the 'bush', she nevertheless shared the ideals of those who were. The site of her struggle for settlement was urban. Her enemy was not what she would consider a sub-civilized native population, but the improper impulses of the lower orders of emigrants and their descendants who threatened to establish a more primitive, uncouth society than that which she had experienced in Britain. What motivated her contributions to the discourse of settlement was not philanthropy but a desire to ensure that 'civilization' triumphed over the ignorant ways of the general population.

Unsurprisingly, Aboriginal people are entirely absent from Chads' romantic stories. When those stories are set in the 'bush', the threats to settlers are not Aborigines but bushrangers, the landscape itself and isolation from opportunities to worship with other Christians. Likewise, the target for civilizing energies was not indigenous people, but the general population. Australia was a long way from home and effort was required to ensure that it did not slip into the uncultured and uncivilized barbarism that characterised some parts of the English urban population. The colonies did, after all, have their origins in convict settlements.

Ellen Chads represented herself as one who laboured to bring civilization to the ancient, barren and hostile environment of the Empire's remotest outpost. In the preface of her first book she characterises her fiction as a 'product of 'Native Industry' . . . a fresh source of legitimate amusement and possibly of instruction . . . [and] a new link in the chain of colonial

[8] Ann Standish, *Australia through Women's Eyes* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2008), p. 227.

literature.'[9] Her use of the term Native Industry to define her work is unusual. Deirdre David points out that 'Victorian writers' use of the term 'native' [was] almost always pejorative and patronising,'[10] but this does not hold true in this instance because Chads applies it to her own work without any reference to indigenous people or culture. She does not claim that her fiction is indigenous, or the work of a native-born Australian,[11] but neither is it a simple continuation of English culture. It stands in a new 'Native' tradition. Although she does, on other occasions, use the term native to characterise Aboriginal people it is then tellingly uncapitalised.[12] She appropriates the notion of 'Nativeness', dispossessing its rightful referents and 'elevating' it to a variant of Englishness.

Chads reveals in her art notes that she was not unaware that creative effort could reveal a double source of inspiration. Recording a visit to a Melbourne studio she remarks that:

> Mr. [James Waltham] Curtis exhibits some work which, though Australian in its subject, has yet much that carries the gazer back to England; the grey slightly cloudy sky, and the softened look of the whole scene remind one more of the old country than the blue sky and great brightness usually noticeable in an Australian scene; it is more from the admirably delineated gum-trees than anything else that one realized where it is laid. It is a charming subject, most picturesquely treated . . . [13]

It is worth noting, however, that this blending of diverse inspirations was not a difficulty for Chads. She did not criticize it, nor did she express a longing for a purely Australian art, aggressively independent of the English School, for Curtis' painting still meets with unreserved approval. Her notion of 'Native industry' is not one that craves independence from England, but one that melds with it.

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[9] Ellen Chads, *Tried as Pure Gold,* preface.
[10] Deirdre David, *Rule Britannia; Women, Empire, and Victorian Writing* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 5.
[11] Ellen, as we have seen, was born in Jersey and would not have considered the use of Native, as used by the Australian natives Association, where it meant exclusively men born in Australia, as appropriate for her circumstances. See John N Molony *The Native Born; the First White Australians* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2000).
[12] *Once a Month* November 1884, p. 401.
[13] *One a Month* April 1885, p. 312.

One contemporary reviewer declared Chads' stories a 'valuable contribution to Australian literature', though the nature of that value is not explained beyond the fact that 'the scenes of most of them are laid in Australia.' The reviewer adds that she 'manages the puppets she creates with considerable skill.'[14] A less charitable reviewer declared the claim to be a product of Native industry to be 'ostentatious', the reading of it 'more a task than a pleasure', and the characters 'nothing but dummies' and 'quite uninteresting'.[15]

Criticism of Australian art and writing as being Englishness set in Australia was not unusual, and it was seldom as benign as Chads' remarks on Curtis' art. Desmond Byrne, for example, writing in 1896, said of Ada Cambridge's novels that 'It is not possible . . . to point out anything in the shape of an essentially local first cause for any of the principal incidents of *All in Vain* and *A Marriage Ceremony*.' Byrne compared the Australian advances in national literature with those of America and found them far less advanced. He reasoned that as long as the Australian colonies 'remained dependencies of Great Britain, and therefore lack the stimulus of an active patriotism, so long will much of whatever is individual in their social development and national aspirations be without expression.'[16]

Whether or not Ellen Chads may be said to have succeeded where Ada Cambridge was deemed to have failed, her view of the place her work should hold in the literary world is clear. She represented it as a link in the chain of colonial literature, a contribution to the civilising of a new society. This new society was not a radical break from its British origin, but a variation of it. Her claim that her book was a 'new link in the chain of colonial literature' may be a reference to its mode of publication rather than to its content or style, for Chads departs from the usual road to success as a novelist. Susan Sheridan points out that

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[14] *The Australian Town and Country Journal* 17 February 1883, p. 319.
[15] *The Leader* 9 December 1882, p. 35.
[16] Desmond Byrne, Australian *Writers* (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1896), p. 135-6, p. 4.

> Women novelists of the 1890s, such as Cambridge, Praed and Tasma, were 'popular' in the sense that their fiction was published in accessible forms and widely circulated. The usual pattern was: serial publication in an Australian weekly newspaper or journal, followed by book publication with an English company . . . [and then placement in] the big English circulating libraries like Mudie's."[17]

Chads took the first step of this trail with her publications in newspapers and magazines, but then, as we have seen, paid (or didn't pay!) an Australian company to publish her first book. Her later books were published by Melbourne publisher George Robertson. She was, in fact, never published by an English company, and may have a just claim to a "new link in colonial literature."

That books were more often published in London is just one manifestation that the centre of the Empire was, of course, England, which was generally referred to as 'home'. Ellen Chads also referred to England as home, particularly in her art and music notes. But calling England home did not mean a simple equivalence, as if the Australian colonies were, even ideally, a mere extension of Englishness. At first, replication may have seemed a natural aspiration for the colonists, but already early in the nineteenth century people had come to realize that this was not only impossible, but even undesirable. There was a sense that something new was being created. An unnamed reviewer of Haygarth's *Recollections of Bush Life in Australia* in 1848 declared triumphantly, but mistakenly:

> the operation of some natural law by which the further development of this hardy colonizing race [i.e. Britons] is forced in a specific direction towards a new form of social life and new aspects of individual and national character. Before the highly blended race — the Composite order of man — which in modern language we call Anglo-Saxon, from its preponderant element , assumed the mission of conquest and colonization, the process of making new states was not a creation but mere continuation. The ancients only reproduced themselves. Spain only made miserable new Spains; Holland produced nothing but Dutch settlements, and France only inferior French departments. England alone creates — renders something which is not a petty

[17] Susan Sheridan *Along the Faultlines; Sex, Race and Nation in Australian women's Writing 1880s – 1930s* (St Leonards NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1995) p. 29.

> England. Her colonial children grow up, not in her own likeness, but in the form of her first-born [i.e. America]. . . The importance of well noting this curious fact cannot be over-estimated. The globe is belted with these growing states. From New Zealand to Australia, through the Eastern Archipelago to Hindustan, from the Indian Ocean to Natal, and from the Cape of Good Hope through the West India Islands and Honduras, to the vast region of the northern Continent of America, a system of nations dominated by the one great race is forming, and a century is not likely to pass away before these nations separately or confederately will hold the entire world in their embrace.[18]

Such a view is not surprising given the long period of *Pax Brittanica*, and the view was pervasive. The entire world, even Victoria, would be encircled by a system of nations dominated by the British race. Ellen Chads, despite her emphatic self-representation as someone who 'claims the old country as their home'[19] could nevertheless call her first book a 'product of Native industry' and a 'new link in the colonial chain of literature' because she shared this kind of grandiose vision of Empire and civilisation. Claiming England as 'home' and being 'Natively' Australian were not mutually exclusive, but naturally complementary. When she represents her work as being native, she does so not from the perspective of nationalism, which she predates, but from that of colonialism.

Ann Laura Stoler has shown that despite the expressed confidence of English superiority, colonialism was not the secure project it frequently claimed to be. There was a great deal of what she labels 'pervasive anxiety about white degeneration in the colonies.'[20] This is a theme taken up by Penny Russell in her study of manners in colonial Australia. She points out that although there were shifts in the makeup of British class structures, they remained stable in their pyramidal shape, but that colonial society 'seemed more like detached blocks

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[18] Unsigned review of 'Recollections of Bush Life in Australia by H W Haygarth Esq.' in *The Athanæum* No. 1077, 17 June, 1848 p. 599.

[19] *Once a Month* January 1885, p. 76.

[20] Ann Laura Stoler, 'Cultivating Bourgeois Bodies and Racial Selves' in Catherine Hall, ed., *Cultures of Empire: Colonizers in Britain and the Empire in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries; a Reader* (New York: Routledge 2000), p. 91.

from different parts of the pyramid, oddly intermingled, juxtaposed and redistributed.'[21] Ellen Chads' art notes reflect both the assurance of bourgeois colonists in promoting their ideals, and the vulnerability they felt in their isolation from the metropole. While she admires art works that reflect the values of the bourgeois, she constantly bemoans the public's ignorance of and lack of interest in art.

The force of attitudes like those expressed so confidently by the reviewer of Haygarth's book in 1848 should not be underestimated. The Empire as an idea grew increasingly popular. John Springhall has suggested that histories of the Empire have emphasised 'unromantic political and economic factors . . . [as] causes of the new imperialism . . . [to the neglect of] imperialism's successful hold on the public imagination.' Springhall's focus is popular culture as expressed in the art and literature of mass circulation newspapers and magazines, particularly as it related to the 'little wars' of Empire in the last two decades of the nineteenth century and leading up to the Great War. He argues that this material was propagandist in nature. 'The idea of Empire was to be sold to the great British public.' [22]

While popular culture sold the Empire to the great British public, a parallel process of propaganda occurred among the more educated and cultured middle classes of society, largely through the fine arts, and especially painting. Popular culture romanticised exploration, military exploits and missionary zeal, while the fine arts glorified historical connections, the grandeur of nature and the respectability of society's leaders. It valued the middle class ideals of hard work, skill and application. Ellen Chads' art and music notes in *Once a Month* represent an overt outworking of this propaganda, with its undercurrent of

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[21] Penny Russell, *Savage or Civilized? Manners in Colonial Australia* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2010), p. 114.

[22] John Springhall, 'Up Guards and At Them! British Imperialism and Popular Art, 1880-1914' in John M. MacKenzie ed., *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press,1986), p. 49.

vulnerability, while at the same time reinforcing Chads' self-representation as a respectable lady of the Victorian era.

The Victorian art world, according to Alison Inglis, 'was one of the most vibrant and successful in Britain's history.' As evidence for this claim she adduces the increasing numbers of artists and their increasing status, the demand for exhibitions and the expansion of the commercial market. She makes it clear that this vibrancy was not restricted to London or even to England, but also extended to colonial cities like Melbourne, by examining art exhibitions in London, Manchester and Melbourne.[23] The peak of the art boom in Melbourne occurred in the 1880s when art dealerships and galleries abounded in Collins Street East.[24] It was precisely at this time that Ellen Chads wrote her art notes for *Once a Month.*

It was also at precisely this time that what later came to be known as the Heidelberg school began in Melbourne, upon the return of Tom Roberts from England in 1885 and his withdrawal from the city to attempt a different style of painting. Roberts and his fellow artists McCubbin, Streeton and Condor exhibited their work in 1889 and were eventually so influential that Australian painting that predates them is usually dealt with dismissively by art historians. Robert Hughes, for example, declared that

> A whole century passed without producing anything but mediocre, amateurish, or thwarted painters. There is little in the history of Australian art between 1788 and 1885 that would interest a historian except the way that painters, set down in an environment for whose forms their training had not prepared them, accommodated themselves to it.'[25]

While there may be little to interest the art historian who focuses on developments in technique, colour, form and style, there is much to interest the historian who wants to

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[23] Alison Inglis, 'The Empire of Art' in Martin Hewitt, ed., *The Victorian World* (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 585-602.

[24] For a description of the Melbourne art scene focussing on Alexander Fletcher's art gallery on Collins Street see Caroline Jordan, 'Fletcher's of Collins street; Melbourne's Leading Nineteenth Century Art Dealer, Alexander Fletcher' in *The La Trobe Journal* no. 75, (Autumn 2005), pp. 77-93.

[25] Robert Hughes, *The Art of Australia* 2nd ed. (Ringwood: Penguin, 1970), p. 51.

understand how a certain class of people lived at a certain age, and what role art played in their social relations, for this was the era when art was not being practiced for art's sake, but for the advancement of civilisation through the creation of wealth and the improvement of the people. Pre-impressionist English art was a tangible expression of the ideals of the Victorian era. As Bernard Smith concluded, as long ago as 1945, 'Art, then, to the Australian middle classes of the later nineteenth century was *good* to the extent that it raised moral standards, inculcated patriotism and promoted commerce.'[26]

This was the conviction of the pre-eminent English critic John Ruskin and echoed by The Argus art critic James Smith, Ruskin's counterpart in Australia. Urging the establishment of a National Gallery in 1857, he wrote

> The value of the Fine Arts, as instruments of civilization, moral teachers, means of intellectual culture, sources of enjoyment and adjuncts of industrial enterprise is now fully realised by the most enlightened nations of Europe.[27]

Art commentators like Ellen Chads played a vital role in validating and transmitting an interpretation of art that performed these functions. Her two dozen art columns for *Once a Month* reveal exactly how she carried out her role as a conduit. Her preferences reflect Ruskin's taste as mediated by Smith: dignified portraits, mimetic landscapes, and accurate history painting. She admires technical skill, respects conservative art teachers such as Mather and Dowling, and encourages students who show promise. Ellen Chads' notes frequently resemble those made by Smith in *The Argus* but add religious remarks, suggesting that she saw her role very much as the purveyor of his, and therefore Ruskin's values.[28]

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[26] Bernard Smith, *Place Taste and Tradition; a Study of Australian Art since 1788.* (Sydney: Ure Smith, 1945), p. 96.

[27] Cited in Lurline Stuart, *James Smith: The Making of a Colonial Culture* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1989), p. 113.

[28] See, for instance, Smith's treatment of Dowling's *From Calvary to the Tomb* in *The Argus* 10 September 1884, p. 5 and Chads' description of it in *Once a Month* November 1884 p. 394.

Dianne Sachko Macleod has argued cogently that Victorian art was a product of the English middle class, which had what she called a genuine love of mimesis and of highly finished art works. 'Finish . . . signalled tangible evidence of painstaking labour, pride in the work ethic and corroboration of money well spent,' qualities which were 'deeply embedded in the identity the middle class had constructed for itself.'[29] These are qualities which Chads admires, which may be seen in phrases such as 'admirable', 'worthy of inspection', 'delicate and finished in the highest degree', 'every detail is worked out with fine execution' and 'displays a good deal of conscientious work'. Macleod explains the attraction of mimesis in patriotic terms:

> Visual representation played a key role in elucidating what it now meant to be English. . . it was imperative that mimesis remain at the heart of artistic practice: it served to remind art's public of the wholesome attractions of the nation's countryside and native character . . . Images from the past were recycled to project a reassuring picture of a tranquil, rural, enduring England that was too stable to be buffeted by the winds of change[30]

If it was necessary for art to reinforce Englishness in the face of rapid transformation of society in England, it was even more so in the colonies, where comfortable Englishness was threatened externally as well as internally. Hugh Cunningham has pointed out that from the 1870s patriotism, always a contested site, had been appropriated by the right. It became a 'key component in the ideological apparatus of the imperialist state.'[31] He enumerates the various ways in which patriotism was inculcated in the English working classes during the latter part of the nineteenth century, listing such activities as leisure reading, the music hall, chapel and games. In the Australian colonial setting the addition of art appreciation to this catalogue would not be inappropriate. It too was a contested site, with various European

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[29] Dianne Sachko Macleod, *Art and the Victorian Middle Class: Money and the Making of Cultural Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) p. 15.
[30] Dianne Sachko Macleod, *Art and the Victorian Middle Class* p. 337.
[31] Hugh Cunningham, 'The Language of Patriotism, 1750-1914' in *History Workshop* No 12 (Autumn 1981) p. 23.

schools vying for popularity, but Ellen Chads' notes come down heavily on the side of Englishness. English art is still the yardstick. She laments, for instance, that the art teacher and portrait painter G. F. Folingsby is 'so devoted to the German School of Art.' She justifies her opinion by arguing that 'Victoria is an English colony and her students should be taught to love and admire the school belonging to their mother country . . . than which there is none more beautiful.'[32] Art has a patriotic and imperial purpose, and a respectable female colonist could do no better than to promote it in those terms. Patriotism and respectability went hand in hand.

The importance of respectability for female emigrants to the colonies was emphasized by the Female Middle Class Emigration Society, founded three years prior to Ellen Chads' arrival in Australia. The object of this society was to encourage (single) middle-class women to immigrate to Australia as governesses and domestic servants. Its founder was Maria Rye, who likened the immigration of such women to Australia to the Biblical story of the invasion of Canaan by the Hebrew tribes and continually 'elevate[s] the respectability of this option for single middle class women.'[33] Using the eponymous heroine of Catherine Helen Spence's novel *Clara Morison* as an example, Janet Myers argues that such women often lost status in Australia due to insufficient demand for governesses and that literacy was a form of cultural capital that enabled them to retain an aura of gentility in their straitened circumstances. Lack of interest in literature and culture are depicted as typical of those who lack the refinement of people like Clara.

A parallel situation exists in the life of Ellen Chads. She too was a middle class female emigrant to Australia who had fallen on difficult circumstances, who nevertheless represented herself as a respectable woman through the media of literature and art, and constantly

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[32] *Once a Month* February 1885, p. 154.

[33] Janet Myers, ''Verily the Antipodes of Home': The Domestic Novel in the Australian Bush' in *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* Vol 35 no. 1 (Autumn 2001) p. 52.

distanced herself from those who lack her education and refined tastes. Chads represents herself in the notes in *Once a Month* as a well educated lady of the world, an authoritative arbiter of taste and above all a champion of respectability and of Empire. We see a woman who appreciates art, and especially its finer points, but who did not subscribe to Whistler's credo of *Art for Art's sake*. She appreciated art for what she believed was its moral and civilizing influence. Art appreciation was a duty to the Empire, and vital for its continuing advance.

Bernard Smith's 1945 generalisations that 'appreciation of art has always been ephemeral in Australia' and that 'No class since the settlement has consistently supported the arts even as a form of social display,'[34] echo Chads' frequent complaint that activity in the field of art did not form a major component of Australian consciousness. Melbourne, she believed, was very much in need of education in matters pertaining to art. Again and again she lambasts the ignorant Melbourne public for its lack of interest in artistic endeavours. Particular works are said to 'deserve far warmer and more appreciative allusion to its merits than was awarded to them.'[35] On another occasion she complains that art gallery visitors are 'too apt, in their ignorance of the subject, to assert that the artist is wrong and his colouring defective.'[36] Melbourne, it seems, concerned itself with football and cricket 'to the exclusion of higher and more profitable sources of amusement and instruction.'[37] Chads' hopes for a brighter future for Art in Melbourne end in despair. Neither the government nor the wealthier members of Society showed any encouragement for artists,[38] and the 'artistic portion (a small one, we

[34] Bernard Smith, *Place Taste and Tradition;* p. 86.
[35] *Once a Month* August 1884, p. 132. Said of *Breezy Weather off Brille, Coast of Holland* by G. S. Walters.
[36] *Once a Month* January 1885, p. 76. Said respecting *Forest of Fontainebleau Spring* by H. F. Johnstone.
[37] *Once a Month* February 1885, p. 137, and March 1885 p. 235.
[38] *Once a Month* February 1885, p. 136. Said concerning the work of C. F. Summers.

regret to say) of our great city'[39] occasionally appreciated an exhibition, 'that is to say, as much so as Art ever is in Melbourne.'[40]

Melburnians' ignorance is illustrated by this story, told with apparent relish by Ellen Chads:

> Though art is certainly becoming more appreciated in Melbourne, it is yet treated in many cases with a species of ignorant contempt unknown in Europe. The following incident, a perfectly true one, will show that such is *occasionally* the case: - An artist was one day called upon by a visitor who, after due inspection of the studio and the works exhibited there, announced her intention of having her portrait taken and inquired 'what do you charge a day?' The astonishment and disgust of the gentleman so addressed can easily be imagined. Our readers will scarcely credit the fact but after every sitting the lady (?) laid down a certain amount – the day's wages, as she probably expressed it in her own mind. The artist in question wisely looked upon the affair in its ludicrous light but the incident shows how little art is truly understood by many of the *nouveaux riches* to be found in the colony.[41]

Art appreciation was not just a matter of admiring pictures. Real appreciation of art required education, training and taste, as well as an understanding of its mores. The anecdote exposes an inherent contradiction in Chads' commentary. On the one hand, art should be more appreciated by the general population than it is, but on the other, it can only be appreciated by the elite (to which she belongs), who have been endowed with the necessary qualities, presumably by breeding. Attempts to access this elite status by such low-born people as the *nouveau riche* lady who paid daily for her portrait sittings could only lead to embarrassing faux pas' and ludicrous displays of ignorance, reinforcing the class distinctions inherent in Chads' patronising notes, and, not coincidentally, her own status as a well-born, educated respectable lady. Her mission to educate the ignorant was both essential to and incompatible with her respectable self-representation; essential because that was the proper role for respectable people, and incompatible because the more successful she was the more she

[39] *Once a Month* March 1886, p. 266.
[40] *Once a Month* January 1886, p. 72.
[41] *Once a Month* October 1885, p. 312.

undermined her own elite status by diluting the pool of respectable people. Another commentator similarly castigates Melburnians when she describes Herbert Schmaltz's *Too Late* as 'a picture that tells a story so plainly as to leave very little to the imagination, and this, I fancy, is partly the reason for its popularity.'[42]

Chads' patronising attitude to Melbourne's capacity for culture is also on display in her music notes. Here she noted that the German city of Bonn had instituted a system of licences for music teachers, and expressed a wish that Melbourne would follow its lead. This, she believed, would 'put a stop to the very inferior teaching now often given by young ladies who, because they can play a few popular airs and a little dance music, think themselves perfectly fitted to instruct in one of the noblest of the arts.'[43] Melbourne, despite oft-expressed hopes for improvement, is far from attaining the ideal English civilized condition of which Ellen Chads represents herself as an ambassador.

Charity and Animal Welfare

Chads' art and music notes position her firmly in the conservative middle class of colonial society. The fact that her husband had been declared unworthy to serve her majesty in any capacity whatever and continued to incur unpaid debts made no difference to her self-representation as a respectable, well-educated and articulate woman. Her fitness for service seemed unimpaired by his past and continuing misdemeanours. Neither did her self-representation as not merely a respectable married middle class female but as a voice for middle class taste depend upon her own economic circumstances.

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[42] Our Lady Correspondent, *Melbourne Gossip* in *The West Australian* 2 December 1887 p.3 cited in Alison Inglis *The Empire of Art* pp. 596-7.
[43] *Once a Month* February 1886, p. 173.

The first decade or more of her life in Melbourne was beset by financial woes which were not eased until she began to augment her husband's meagre public service salary by writing. To maintain their position in society and its associated lifestyle, John Henry borrowed money at high interest and was frequently unable or unwilling to repay his creditors. Despite this lack of financial security, Ellen Chads presented herself as a member of that part of society that dispensed charity to the worthy poor. In December of 1886 she wrote a letter to the editor of the *Argus*:

> Sir – Will you allow me, through your columns, to bring under the notice of your readers a case that has lately come to my knowledge? A poor woman living in this neighbourhood, and belonging to the Wesleyan (Hawthorn) Church, lost her husband a few weeks ago and is left with three children (the youngest two and a half) and a crippled aunt of 92 dependent upon her care. She is expecting a further addition to her family in about four months' time, and is in so precarious a state of health from over-fatigue and grief that the doctor of the lodge to which she belongs says perfect rest is indispensable if very serious results are to be averted. By the aid of friends I have placed her above present want, but as she is actually penniless, I am endeavouring to raise a small sum to pay off a few debts (such as rent, &c) that have necessarily been incurred during her late husband's illness, and which she has no means of discharging. Freedom from mental anxiety is requisite for one in her position and it is with the hope that some of your readers will aid her in this time of great trial and suffering that I now make this appeal in her behalf...
>
> Trusting the open hand and sympathising heart that ever mark out the Master's children may respond to my plea for one sorely bereaved and in great need of comfort in every way, I remain &c. E.A.Chads

Two weeks later she wrote again, to thank the readers who had responded to her appeal, noting that she had been able to pay the unfortunate widow's rent from September to the end of the year, as well as amounts due for gas, bread and milk. The family had been supplied 'with an ample store of groceries and enough wood for present wants.' No further donations were required.[44] These letters display a typical Victorian attitude to the poor and provide an example of the 'respectable' way to deal with the victims of economic misfortune. Her failure

[44] *Argus* 17 December 1886, p. 7 and 31 December 1886, p. 6.

to address any systemic cause of the poor widow's plight or a solution to it is typical. In the Victorian era poverty was, in the words of Michael Rose

> the lot of most of the manual labouring classes and was seen . . . as inevitable, natural and indeed necessary as a stimulus to hard work. By contrast pauperism was the condition of a relatively small percentage of the population. It was a degenerate state in which the will to work was lost, the urge to self help was broken and dependency and degradation were the results.[45]

Chads' intervention on behalf of the poor widow was intended to provide temporary relief of present want and when that was satisfied, the widow was again cast upon her own resources. She was rescued from the degeneracy of pauperism but given no cause for complacency. Chads' attention to individual cases such as these was augmented by her support of charitable institutions. In December 1891 she was elected secretary and treasurer of the Hawthorn Nurses Society,[46] an organisation that provided free nursing care for those who could not afford to pay for it, and in 1915 she appealed to the public for donations of old sheets and towels to the Leper Mission in the East, though acknowledging the prior right of the Red Cross to old sheets and towels for recycling as bandages for wounded soldiers.[47] Soldiers, however, were not neglected. For them, Mrs. Chads appealed for small bags of dried lavender, to which a Bible verse would be attached before being distributed to wounded soldiers through the Army Scripture Readers' Society in London.[48]

She supported initiatives such as The South Yarra Home. 'Many poor women,' she assured her readers, 'would quit their life of sin and misery if they could find admittance into the home.'[49] The Melbourne Ladies Benevolent Society,[50] a proposal for a Temperance

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[45] Michael E. Rose 'The Disappearing Pauper: Victorian Attitudes to the Relief of the Poor' in Eric M Sigsworth Ed. *In Search of Victorian Values; Aspects of Nineteenth Century Thought and Society* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), p. 57.
[46] *The Argus* 3 December 1891, p. 6.
[47] *The Argus* 9 June 1915, p. 6.
[48] *The Argus* 11 June 1915, p. 10.
[49] *Once a Month* October 1885, p. 316.
[50] *Once a Month* November 1885, p. 399.

Hospital,[51] and the Rev. Cherbury's New Home of Hope for Destitute Children in Collingwood are all commended to her readers. The last, she notes approvingly, refused the Chief Secretary's offer of state aid 'as they prefer still carrying on the work as heretofore,' although private donations were 'much needed.' [52] The Chief Secretary saw a place for government assistance but the charities themselves preferred to rely on the benevolence of their traditional sources of funding. This was entirely consistent with the Victorian English sentiment that in matters of welfare they would entrust nothing to the State that they could accomplish themselves.[53]

Conforming to the mid-Victorian ideal of the active citizen, Ellen Chads also attempted her own initiatives. At the time of her husband's death, Ellen had been raising funds to start a shelter for the women and girls selling papers in the streets. The Metropolitan Liedertafel had arranged a concert and funds had been raised by selling gifts, but the amount raised was small. A few months after her bereavement, Ellen noticed that the girls, for whatever reason, were no longer selling papers in the streets, so she notified the public that she had redirected the funds to a Women's Refuge and a Home for Destitute Children.[54] The idea of organising a concert to raise funds was one that she took up again some twenty years later, this time in connection with raising funds for a lost dogs' home.

The lot of stray or unregistered dogs in Melbourne was not a happy one. A spate of letters to the editor appeared in *The Argus* in August 1910, in which people complained of over-zealous dog-catchers, sometimes sardonically called dog-snatchers, who seized any unleashed dogs, even as their owners stood nearby. Even registered dogs were not immune from the predations of officialdom. One correspondent related that he or she had seen the

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[51] *Once a Month* June 1885, p. 477.
[52] *Once a Month* January 1885, p. 80.
[53] Brian Harrison, 'Animals and the State in Nineteenth-Century England' in *The English Historical Review* vol 88 no. 349 (October 1973) p. 787.
[54] *The Argus* 17 July 1890, p. 6.

dog-man holding 'one end of a small animal, while its mistress clung to the other, and it was only when things threatened to be serious for the dog that the lady . . . surrendered her end.' She then clung to the dog-man's horse until a police officer arrived and insisted that the dog-man restore the dog to her.[55] Heart-rending stories were told of pets being taken from children in the streets and of tearful youngsters attempting to borrow money to pay the five shillings tax to save their pets.[56] Other correspondents pointed out that the dog-men were entirely within their rights and that stray dogs could be dangerous, or at best a great nuisance to the general public. *The Argus* itself, while deploring the 'ruthless and wanton seizures described by [their] correspondents' pointed out 'the necessity of preventing wandering and ownerless dogs from running about the streets at will.' Creating and maintaining a civilized environment should be accomplished by civilized means.[57]

The morality of dog-catchers might be contentious, but the means by which diseased, unclaimed or unwanted dogs were destroyed seemed indefensible. Captured dogs would be taken to a holding pen in Clara Street, South Yarra. Diseased dogs were destroyed by drowning them in the Yarra River. Unclaimed dogs were offered to the public at auction. Those not purchased were also drowned in the river. The Municipal council drowned 1200 dogs per year. Richmond Council drowned another 1000.[58] Drowning of dogs was described by one journalist as occurring in

> a huge hamper filled with ownerless tykes of every size and shape. Faithful old Newfoundlands, St Bernards grown blind and unattractive, shrill terriers, foundling pups, down they go, struggling, tearing, choking, drowning, all tangled up together in a basket.[59]

The Argus printed a piece titled *The Kennels of Despair* which told the story of a dog auction in melodramatic terms, emphasizing the innocence of the dogs and the agony of their

[55] *The Argus* 6 August 1910, p. 21.
[56] Felicity Jack, *Faithful Friends,* pp. 11-12. See also *The Argus* 1 August 1910, p. 7.
[57] *The Argus* 8 August 1910, p. 6.
[58] *The Argus* 12 April 1911, p15.
[59] *The Capricornian* Melbourne Gossip 19 February 1898 p6.

suffering, and ending pathetically with the tears of a little girl.[60] Dog-seizures enraged sensitive people, but the barbaric drownings appalled them.

Ellen Chads had long had an interest in animal welfare. As early as January 1886 she had supported the action of the Society for the Protection of Animals in writing to the Jockey Club about the treatment of racehorses. A letter to the editor of *The Age* had labelled the scenes he or she had witnessed at the race course as 'blots on our boasted civilization.' Chads echoed the correspondent's argument that prevention of cruelty to animals was the responsibility of rich men as well as poor men.[61] Such a declaration might seem self-evident today, but was probably necessary a mere ten years after the English Royal Commission into Vivisection had been told that legislation relating to animal cruelty was 'intended for the ignorant, not for the best people in the country.'[62] For 'best people in the country' read 'rich men who owned racehorses and participated in fox hunts'. Such people believed that they were exempt from the requirements of animal protection legislation, which was intended, according to them, to curb the excesses of poor, insensitive and uneducated underclasses.

Chads' concern for the suffering of domestic animals was not confined to horses but extended, with some effect, to dogs. Felicity Jack mentions that Mrs Chads was a member of the committee of a home established by Sister Rose in Marlton Crescent, St Kilda around 1897, which closed in 1905.[63] In 1910, a few weeks before the dog-catching controversy, she had written to *The Argus*

> Sir, -A very kind offer has been made by Mr H Tripp Edgar and other members of the Asche-Brayton company to the effect that if a good committee be formed to carry out the details of a matinee in behalf of a home for lost dogs and the purchase of a lethal chamber, they will willingly give their valuable services to render it a success. They

[60] *The Argus* 13 August 1910, p. 17.
[61] *Once a Month* January 1886, p. 78 and *The Age* 7 November 1885.
[62] Cited in Brian Harrison, *Animals and the State,* p. 791.
[63] Jack, *Faithful Friends,* pp. 12-13.

> lately did the same kind act to the dogs' home in Sydney with most happy results. May I plead, through your columns, with all lovers of humanity to avail themselves of this opportunity to come to the aid of the unhappy dogs so cruelly turned adrift by owners who are heartless enough to object to paying the tax, and leave them to die of want in this cold weather? Will any of the various dog and other clubs come to their rescue, and lend a room in which a meeting could be held to arrange the details of the matinee? Though the time given (some three weeks) by Mr Edgar is not very long, much could be done by willing hearts and I do hope this kind offer will be accepted. Sydney has set a good example in helping Miss Best to make her private home a permanent dogs' shelter, and it is time that Melbourne should be free from the disgrace of, with all of its wealth, having no similar institution. Even if that could not at present be established, a lethal chamber could be bought with the proceeds of the matinee and so put an end to the present horrible drowning system. Yours etc. Ellen A Chads.[64]

Ellen Chads' letter received a swift and enthusiastic response. The very next day *The Argus* published a letter from Ronald MacKinnon, MLA and R J Oehr, president and secretary of the Victorian Poultry and Kennel Club, offering their rooms for a meeting.[65] A meeting was held there on July 4 and a committee was formed to arrange the matinee. Ellen Chads, though not a member of the committee, nevertheless encouraged it, in a series of letters to the editor, to establish a general appeal so that those unable to attend the matinee might yet contribute to the fund, and suggested that the home, when established, could support itself by boarding dogs of people on holiday, giving the Battersea Home for Lost and Starving Dogs in London as an example, and relating how she had herself boarded a businessman's favourite dog for good pay, which she considered a contribution for her rescue work. She also suggested that the establishment be called the 'Edward' or 'Caesar' Home in honour of the lamented and 'dog-loving' King Edward VII and his 'faithful little companion'.[66] Her absence from the

[64] *The Argus* 28 June 1910, p. 9. Howard Tripp Edgar was a professional touring actor who had played *Othello* and *Timon of Athens* for the Royal Shakespeare Company and in other Shakespearean plays at the Royal Lyceum Theatre in Edinburgh.
[65] *The Argus* 29 June 1910, p. 9.
[66] *The Argus* 5 July 1910, p. 4 and 8 July 1910, p. 5.

committee may have been due to her advanced age, being now in her mid-seventies, and to the 'seriously impaired health' mentioned in the Herald obituary.[67]

The matinee was held on Thursday 21 July under the patronage of the Governor, the Lord Mayor, and Sir John and Lady Forrest. Its programme included a play called *The Outside Porter*, and scenes from *The Hunchback* and from *Richard the Third*, as well as songs by four popular singers, tickets costing from five shillings to one shilling. The benefit raised £170/17/-.[68] The Committee approached the Council asking it to accept a lethal chamber in which dogs would be gassed rather than drowned, and asking permission to care for lost dogs on the piece of land on the banks of the Yarra now used by the council for that purpose. It took some time for the Council to consider these requests, during which the fund increased to £278, and in December it declined any involvement by the committee on the grounds that *The Dog Act* made the Council responsible for dog care and did not permit it to delegate this task, although it would give careful consideration to the use of a lethal chamber.

A new public meeting was called and Ellen Chads implored the public to 'do their utmost' to attend it and help establish something, no matter how small, by the end of the year.[69] By the end of January 1911, an honorary veterinarian had been appointed and premises were sought in St Kilda, but the St Kilda Council refused permission, citing nuisance to residents. Richmond Council followed suit. Land adjacent to the City Morgue was also refused. The Victorian Government expressed support but declined to provide land. Attempts to obtain land in South Melbourne and Port Melbourne also failed, and it was not until May 1912 that the Committee was able to purchase land, approved by the Surveyor General, in North Melbourne. In the meantime the committee did what it could to board out or find permanent

[67] *The Herald*, Melbourne, 8 October 1923.
[68] *The Argus* 9 August 1910, p. 6.
[69] *The Argus* 20 December 1910, p. 8.

homes for dogs that came into its hands, and destroying dogs with the use of chloroform rather than allowing them to fall into the hands of the council and its primitive methods.[70]

Finally, on 28 February 1913, The Temporary Home for Lost and Starving Dogs was opened. It consisted of 'a simple weatherboard cottage which housed a board room, and three rooms and a bathroom for the use of the keeper; six large yards with sheds each supplied with water and sewerage, and various sheds for storage and cooking, a dispensary and a lethal chamber.'[71] *The Argus* singled out Mrs Chads, 'a lady who has worked unceasingly on behalf of dumb animals' for beginning the campaign with a letter she had written three years previously.[72] Not everybody was happy, however. In Western Australia a newspaper correspondent complained that 'When one reads of Lady Fuller opening a Lost Dogs Home in Melbourne, one feels that she had little to do, and the Victorian people must have no poor and needy if they can afford to squander money on stray dogs.'[73] The Home received over 1300 dogs in its first year, selling some but destroying about 800 by gas in its lethal chamber. The Melbourne Municipal council still conducted its own 'care' for lost dogs, while suburban councils sent their stray dogs to the Home at North Melbourne.[74] At the first anniversary celebrations it was announced that plans for boarding kennels were under way and that a generous donation had allowed the committee to purchase an additional piece of land for them.[75] By the second anniversary in 1915 over 3500 dogs had passed through the home, and a new lethal chamber had been constructed. Painless death now occurred within twenty seconds.[76]

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[70] *The Argus* 2 August 1911, p. 14.
[71] Felicity Jack, *Faithful Friends,* p. 18.
[72] *The Argus* 28 February 1913, p. 5.
[73] *The West Australian* 5 April 1913, p. 8.
[74] *The Argus* 25 July 1914, p. 23.
[75] *The Argus* 30 Mar 1914, p. 7.
[76] The *Argus* 3 May 1915 p. 5.

With the Lost Dogs' Home established, Ellen Chads once again turned her attention to horses. She wrote to the papers about the cruel treatment of cab horses and advocated the establishment of a 'Home of Rest for Horses'. 'If the general public would recognise that horses have rights, as much as people themselves and should be treated with the justice and humanity they deserve, there would not be so many such sad sights.' [77] A meeting was held in the rooms of the Society for the Protection of Animals to consider how such a 'home of rest for horses' could be provided. *The Argus* reported that the movement had been initiated by Mrs Ellen Chads, who was 'a leading worker in the establishment of a Lost Dogs' Home.'[78] One correspondent in *The Argus* suggested, without a hint of irony, a race meeting to raise funds for it.[79] A meeting was held, attended by seven women and one man, but a report in *The Argus* ridiculed the whole concept. The farm was labelled a 'health resort for horses' and the suggestion made that its proposed distance from the city might make it a cemetery for horses exhausted by the journey.[80] The matter seems to have lapsed.

For Ellen Chads personally, the work of mercy for animals was a deeply religious one. In the days prior to Christmas 1910 she expressed the hope that a home for dogs might soon be established 'wherein the poor friendless creatures may find rest and shelter, and enjoy their rightful portion of the peace and goodwill that with which we should celebrate the living Saviour's birthday.'[81] The care of animals was more than a religious duty. As part of God's creation, she invested them with a prophetic role. Animals were able to impart religious lessons to those who cared to see them. In 1913, she published a children's story that illustrated this truth. A horse cares for its sick stable-mate, encouraging it to eat and by this

[77] *The Argus* 8 September 1913, p. 5.
[78] *The Argus* 21 November 1913, p. 11.
[79] *The Argus* 28 November 1913, p. 12.
[80] The Argus 25 November 1913, p. 8.
[81] *The Argus* 20 December 1910, p. 8.

means restores it to health. This action by the horse has been 'in some wonderful way taught him by God Himself' and is an example that 'we all ought to follow'.[82]

Chads' involvement in the protection of animals shows that Jennifer MacCulloch's description of the New South Wales situation at that time also applied to Victoria. Attributing 'emotionalism, hysteria and religiosity'[83] to the animal protection movement, she argues that by the second decade of the nineteenth century animal protection had been transformed from 'a social-reform lobby to a largely female group of pet enthusiasts who emphasised the genteel promotion of kindness to domestic animals, especially cats and dogs.'[84] Despite this transformation, the animal protection movement did achieve goals previously unattainable, such as the establishment of the Lost Dogs Home in North Melbourne. MacCulloch's further assertion that 'the cause of animal protection looked to the betterment of the working classes' behaviour and social conditions through self-improvement'[85] finds little resonance in the letters and actions of Ellen Chads, who seems to have been genuinely concerned about the suffering of domestic animals and little interested in the betterment of the working classes. Her hierarchical view of society was far too static for that. Her concern was rather to arrest the potential slide of the middle classes into the degeneracy of the lower classes.

Moira Ferguson's attempt to link the work of five non-canonical women English writers about animals to a gendered attempt to redefine Englishness and the Empire[86] provides a better framework for understanding the letters that Chads and her ilk wrote to the newspapers. Their attitudes evidence that such a redefinition was occurring. These letters frequently lament the lack of humanity and civilization of 'cruel' people and 'uncaring'

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[82] *Beautiful Star; a True Story* by Ellen Chads in *Malvern Standard* 1 February 1913 p4

[83] Jennifer MacCulloch, *Creatures of Culture; The Animal Protection and Preservation Movements in Sydney 1880-1930* Ph.D. Thesis, University of Sydney, 1993 p. 202.

[84] Lyle Munro, *Compassionate Beasts; the Quest for Animal Rights* (Westport: Praeger, 2001), p. 15.

[85] Jennifer MacCulloch, *Creatures of Culture* p. 5

[86] Moira Ferguson *Animal Advocacy and Englishwomen, 1780-1900; Patriots, Nation and Empire* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Pres, 1998).

authorities. This did not mean, however, that Ellen Chads can be aligned with people like Frances Power Cobbe, whose opposition to vivisection Ferguson links to her advocacy for the rights of women. Chads championed the cause of a local Lost Dogs Home within a framework of a redefined empire, but never wrote about vivisection, and for her woman suffragists were something of an oddity to be quickly but firmly dismissed.

Chads' interest, insofar as it related to women at all, was in respectability. Respectability entailed caring for the vulnerable, and domestic pets clearly fell into that category.

Chapter 3 Intimate Self-representation: Marriage

Ellen Chads consistently represented herself as a respectable woman of Empire and of culture. It is in her public self-representation as a married woman, however, that we are confronted with the full scale of her loyalty to the notion of respectability.

At the beginning of the Victorian era marriage was the cornerstone of the Empire. Its esteem can be gauged from the fact that until 1857 of all protestant countries, England had the most stringent requirements for divorce, which could only be granted by ecclesiastical courts on the grounds of adultery. The only way to remarriage was through an Act of Parliament for each individual case.[1]

The indissolubility of marriage had religious underpinning but really sprang from the fact that the institution of marriage was fundamental to the social structure that underpinned the wealth of the Empire. Marriage was about property. Lawrence Stone points out that marriage created economic partnerships and cemented alliances between families as well as being 'the most important vehicle for the transfer of property, far more important than purchase and sale.'[2] A wife's adultery was grounds for divorce due to the risk of 'spurious offspring' inheriting lands and property. A husband's adultery was not liable to the same outcome and was therefore insufficient grounds for the granting of a divorce, unless coupled with the taboo of incest.

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[1] See Frederick von Raumer, *England in 1835, Being a Series of Letters Written to Friends in Germany During a Residence in London and Excursions into the Provinces* (London: Murray, 1836), Volume 3 p. 60 for a brief contemporary view of divorce practices in England.

[2] Lawrence Stone, *Road to Divorce; England 1530-1987* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 6.

Divorces were rarely granted by parliament,[3] but one of just five divorces to receive Royal Assent in 1835 was, as it happens, that of Ellen Chads' maternal aunt Isabella Bowness Smith, apparently 'a very agreeable and attractive Lady' who had married barrister-at-law Charles Malpas in 1827.[4] During a period of separation, she lived in a lodging house with John Campden Cawley, 'a young gentleman of independent property and holding a very respectable position in the navy,' as man and wife. Officers on leave, according to Allen Horstman, were overwhelming temptations for 'grass widows'.[5] Malpas gained a divorce through the ecclesiastical courts, though awarded merely nominal costs, and Royal Assent was given to an Act of Parliament to dissolve the marriage on 25 August 1835. The Act declared Isabella Bowness formerly Smith guilty of 'adulterous and criminal conduct' due to which Charles Malpas was 'deprived of the comforts of matrimony and was liable to have a spurious issue imposed upon him.'[6] Less than five months later, Charles Malpas remarried[7] and could then feel more secure about the eventual passing of his property to legitimate offspring.

The divorce occurred two years before Ellen Chads' birth in 1837, and she may never have been made aware of the family scandal. There is however a tenuous but significant hint in one of her stories that she may well have known the story. We have already seen that Chads uses unusual names in her fiction, and that these names often have some significance. In this instance, Chads bestows the name of Malpas' colleague Sir John Eardley Wilmot, who in

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[3] See Sybil Wolfram, 'Divorce in England 1700-1857' in *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* Vol 5 no 2 (1985) p. 181, which reveals that divorces numbered in single digits annually in the early and middle parts of the Nineteenth Century.

[4] *The Morning Post* (London, England), May 24, 1827.

[5] Allen Horstman, *Victorian Divorce* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), p. 28.

[6] *An Act To Dissolve the Marriage of Charles Malpas, Esquire, with Isabella Bowness, his now Wife, and to enable him to marry again, and for other purposes therein mentioned. [Royal Assent, 25th August, 1835.]*House of Commons Parliamentary Papers accessed on 1 January 2012 via Proquest at http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk.rp.nla.gov.au/fullrec/fullrec.do?area=hcpp&id=pa-000519&pagenum=1&resultNum=9&entries=12&source=config.cfg&queryId=../session/1325446716_8196&backto=RESULTS&fulltexthits=9

[7] *The Morning Post* (London, England), January 5, 1836.

1835 had testified on Malpas' behalf, on the villain in *Graham Jocelyn's Revenge*,[8] who is called Rupert Eardley.[9]

By the time of Ellen Morrison's marriage to Captain John Henry Chads in 1865, the institution of marriage had undergone significant developments. Ellen Chads' marriage needs to be seen against the background of evangelicalism and the rise of companionate marriage. Her birth occurred at the height of evangelical power, with its emphasis on personal religion and holiness, which led to a new focus on friendship, love and happiness in marriage. The image portrayed in Chads' romances is of such marriages, which often overcome obstacles through religious insights and a turning to God in obedience. In many of them one of the principal male characters falls into debt through gambling and this leads to forgery or embezzlement and a commitment to religious obedience is required to overcome the obstacle. In others it is the female protagonist who must overcome a rebellious attitude or frivolous lifestyle through religious insight before true happiness with the one she loves can be achieved. In every one of them the obstacle to a happy union is cast as 'disobedience' in one form or another.

While such plot lines may be mere conventions of romantic stories of the time, it cannot be doubted that Ellen Chads sought to persuade her readers that obedience to God was the only route to companionate happiness. Her didactic work is unsentimentally forthright about the duty of women and girls to be obedient to God, whom she almost invariably refers to as 'the master'. Her choice of this term is perhaps unsurprising for the daughter of an Admiral who perceives herself as a woman of the empire. Such obedience in marriage is an absolute

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[8] *Graham Jocelyn's Revenge* in *The Snowdrops' Message and Other Tales* George Robertson 1888 pp. 31-39.

[9] Eardley-Wilmot (1783-1847) published several works on legal topics and received an honorary doctorate from Oxford in 1829. He was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Van Diemen's Land in 1843. His term of office was spectacularly unsuccessful and he was recalled in 1845. He refused to give up his post and the ensuing crisis only ended when he became ill and died in 1847. See Michael Roe *'Eardley-Wilmot, Sir John Eardley (1783–1847)', Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/eardley-wilmot-sir-john-eardley-2015/text2471, accessed 8 January 2012. This article was first published in hardcopy in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 1, (MUP), 1966

requirement, including subjection even to an unbelieving husband. This was a way in which she could impose some kind of order on the chaotic circumstance of her own marriage.

Ellen Chads' last book of short stories, *Tracked by Bushrangers and Other Short Stories*, was published a year after her husband's death. It is not surprising to find that she has dedicated the volume 'to the memory of my husband.' Readers would probably have noted it with a measure of sympathy for the widowed writer. This simple, austere dedication presents an entirely 'normal' image of the husband-wife relationship. Had any of her readers gone to visit the grave of Ellen's husband, they would have read a similarly unremarkable inscription on his tombstone. 'In loving memory of my dear husband John Henry Chads, gone home 3rd May 1890. Jesus says I am the resurrection Oh grave where is thy victory?'[10]

Inscriptions such as these are intended to provide a permanent reminder not only of the life of the deceased, but of the esteem in which they were held by those who knew them, as well as the grief occasioned by their loss. Ellen Chads' grief on the death of her husband is publicly acknowledged in these two inscriptions in ways that many had acknowledged similar grief before. Many books have been dedicated to the memory of deceased spouses, and the inscription on the grave of John Henry Chads, couched in mundane religious sentiments and expressions of endearment is replicated a thousand times in every cemetery in Western civilization.

The language used may be so formulaic as to be almost trite, but such inscriptions do other work than the mere recording of a bereaved partner's grief. While they are not intended to provide an objective analysis of the marriage, they do represent a powerful public claim for inclusion within the bounds of Respectability. The inscriptions tell us nothing about John Henry apart from his name and the date of his death, nor do they tell us anything about the

[10] Boroondara Cemetery Kew, Grave Baptist 713.

way in which John and Ellen Chads conducted their married life, but they do tell us something substantive about Ellen. At the appropriate time she went to some trouble to publicly present her marriage with John Henry as within the range of an acceptable, predictable, and respectable relationship.

Ellen Chads, however, went a step further than this in the preface to *Tracked by Bushrangers*.

> Some years since I published a story called 'Dora's Repentance' and to my great surprise I have recently learnt that a general impression exists that it was but the history of my own life put forward under another name. I am therefore glad of the present opportunity of correcting the error.
>
> Except for the facts that the character of Keith Grosvenor was taken from that of my husband – the described style of life in England such as I was accustomed to and the incidents related in the chapter 'Reminiscences of Indian Life', some that occurred to my husband, my brother and myself – the whole of the story was a mere creation of my own brain and I am at a loss to understand how such a curious mistake could have arisen.

This is an extraordinary claim. Even the most cursory reading of *Dora's Repentance* immediately reveals that although there are some superficial biographical parallels in their lives, Keith Grosvenor's character and behaviour, as previously noted, seem as opposite to John Henry Chads' life as it was possible to be.

Both men were Captains in the 60th Rifles, both men stayed at Dover when their regiment was stationed there, Grosvenor was an inspector of musketry, as was John Henry's brother Herbert, Grosvenor and Chads both lost their capital and their position in the Army (Grosvenor had a commission to sell, Chads did not), and both went to Australia in an attempt to restore their fortunes. Both men married before their emigration, though Grosvenor had to wait two years alone in Australia until his wife 'repented' her decision not to accompany him there. Grosvenor obtained a position with the Lands Department, Chads with

the Education Department. There can be no doubt that Ellen uses her husband's biographical details to create the fictional Keith Grosvenor.

Within the framework of biographical similarities between Chads and his fictional counterpart Grosvenor, however, are some striking differences. The first is that while the fictional character lost his capital through a bad investment made by his father-in-law, the real man used his position as paymaster to embezzle funds from the army. The second is that Grosvenor sold his commission to help pay his debts while Chads, being Captain without purchase, had no commission to sell but lost his sinecure when he was cashiered. Chads' identification of Grosvenor with her husband in the preface of *Tracked by Bushrangers* was an unstated claim that her husband had the kind of character that the Queen would honour with a Victoria Cross. In fact he had been declared unworthy to serve Her Majesty in any capacity whatsoever'. The most telling difference between the fictional and the real, however, is that Grosvenor refused to go into debt, though begged to do so by Dora, while Chads, for almost the whole of his marriage to Ellen, was continually before the courts for debt and fraud.

Ellen's public endorsement of her recently deceased husband's character was as audacious as it was extraordinary. Between 1871 and 1884 his presence was required at various courts no less than twenty times, including an insolvency in 1874, and all these events were listed in local papers and government gazettes. He seems to have stayed out of trouble from 1884 until his death in 1890 and Ellen may have considered this a sufficient period of time to erase whatever memories remained among those who perused government gazettes and who could have called her to account. Whatever the degree of risk, it did not deter Ellen from presenting her disgraced, debt-prone, and dishonest husband as a man of integrity and virtue. Not only was he to be considered worthy of the public's esteem but also of its trust, as is shown by her next public mention of him.

At the time of his death, Ellen had been raising funds to start a shelter for the women and girls selling papers in the streets. The Metropolitan Liedertafel had arranged a concert and a meagre amount had been raised by selling gifts. The impetus for this work, she says, was the desire of her late husband and herself to help the girls. The work came to nothing,[11] but John's Henry's old creditors must have considered his portrayal as a trustworthy and totally respectable pillar of society more than amusing.

An additional declaration of the goodness and worthiness of her husband occurs in a short story more directly biographical than any other. Ellen Chads used the evening on which she felt assured that John Henry would ask her to marry him as material for a story called *A Strange Sequel to a Ball*, which she labelled 'a true incident'[12]. In this story she is Kathleen Dundas, sister of the Surveyor General 'in one of the loveliest islands in the Indian Ocean'. Ellen's brother, William Lawtie Morrison, was Surveyor General of Mauritius[13] in the year that Ellen Morrison married John Henry Chads there[14]. On the night in question she had returned with her brother from a ball at Government House, and 'Love's magic influence engrossed her every thought.' She does not further reveal her thoughts, only that she was disturbed by an intruder who fled when he became aware of her presence in the darkened room. She goes on to recount that 'a few months later [she] was married to one well-deserving of the love he had gained.'[15]

This story was published twenty-six years after the events in it took place, and perhaps Ellen Chads considered her husband innocent and honourable despite all the evidence to the

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[11] *The Argus* 17 July 1890, p. 6.
[12] *Tracked by Bushrangers* pp42-47.
[13] In the story she claims that his position was ranked 'second after the Governor', but this claim seems exaggerated, as the Colonial Secretary and the Commander of the Garrison had greater authority than the Surveyor General. In the absence or indisposition of the Governor, it was the commander of the garrison who would act in his stead.
[14] John Henry Chads' sister was the wife of Felix Bedingfeld, colonial secretary of Mauritius at that time.
[15] *A Strange Sequel to a Ball* in *Tracked by Bushrangers*, p.46.

contrary, but whatever she believed about him, it is her idealised depiction of her marriage and her 'deserving' husband that are of interest here. Chads' journalism and fiction have many direct ties with her own experience, and a reading of her work with a focus on marriage relationships reveals a great deal of not only how she conceptualised marriage but of how she experienced it. Given the apparently dissolute character of her husband we may surmise that her marriage was under considerable strain, making an examination of how she saw her place in it even more valuable.

Victorian marriages, as Phyllis Rose has so amply demonstrated in her aptly titled *Parallel Lives*,[16] could take a variety of forms. Her examination of five such marriages, based on letters and diaries of the protagonists of the marriage, reveals just how different such marriages could be, and how great a space could exist between the parallel lives of the 'married couple'.

Rose's studies were of literary figures, men and women of letters, who were accustomed to expressing themselves in writing. Their published works are accessible and their private writings have been preserved in archives, making the marriages more or less recuperable. At first glance it may seem that Ellen Chads' marriage is less recuperable. Of John Henry's motives and expectations we know nothing. He was forty years old and this was his second marriage. He may have been seeking a step-mother for his son and two daughters; he may have been attempting to bolster his respectability in the face of his impending cashiering from the Army; he may have been seeking an escape from his alarming slide into moral dissoluteness; he may have been responding to overt or implicit pressure from senior members of his extended family; or he may have had a genuine desire for the companionship of a well-educated woman of his own class.

[16]Phyllis Rose, *Parallel Lives; Five Victorian Marriages* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1984).

Some of these motives seem more likely than others but a more sinister interpretation is that John Henry, contemplating his imminent court martial and its probable consequences, and being aware that Ellen had an income from her father's will, married her as a safe haven. If this was the case he must have been sadly disappointed, since the will stipulated that her income would be forfeited if and when she married.[17] We cannot know the truth. Perhaps several or all of these motives had some weight as he pondered making a proposal of marriage to the Admiral's daughter.

Ellen's position is a little more transparent. She was twenty-seven years old and a spinster. She had doubtless spent several years caring for her aged parents but after their deaths was living with her brother and his wife, helping to care for their three children, aged six, four and two, with another on the way. The prevailing view was that a woman's legitimate role was to be a wife and mother. In the absence of an opportunity to fulfil that role, the best contribution a spinster could make was exactly what Ellen Morrison did. She cared for her parents, and she cared for her sibling's children. As Katie Holmes puts it, 'a single woman could retain her womanliness through a life of service and self-denial.'[18] It was not until many years later that some women began to challenge this view, but even then Ellen Chads opposed the challenge.

It was not unusual for the unmarried female relatives of army officers serving in India to be sent there to find husbands. Lachlan Macquarie, serving in India before becoming Governor of New South Wales, had advised precisely this remedy for 'the plight of his female cousins who lacked sense, accomplishment and beauty, as well as money . . . [He suggested] to his aunt that they be sent to one of London's best boarding schools for a year . . . and then they

[17] Jersey Archive Reference D/Y/A/30/65.
[18] Katie Holmes, 'Spinsters Indispensable; Feminists, Single Women and the Critique of Marriage, 1890-1920' in *Australian Historical Studies* vol 29 Issue 110, (1998), p.78.

should be dispatched to India where, under his protection, they could find husbands.'[19] Whether or not Ellen lacked these qualities, a similar route to respectable marriage may have been attractive. In any case, she would be a useful nanny for her brother's family in the meantime.

When an opportunity arose to exchange this honourable but secondary role for the higher calling of marriage, Ellen gladly – perhaps too gladly – seized it. Her views on love and marriage and on her role within a marriage relationship are deducible from her stories, her overtly didactic writings and from her journalism. They are in many respects quite typical for a young Victorian woman of her class and religious temperament. For such women romance, physical intimacy and religion were intertwined. Ellen Morrison may not have expressed herself as boldly or candidly as Charles Kingsley's pious wife Frances Grenfell,[20] but the place of the Deity in her romance stories is no less central than it is in Grenfell's wedding night scenario.

As Joan Bellamy has argued, the women who wrote Victorian novels did participate in the debate about women's roles and functions and about their place in marriage. She maintains that these novels ought not to be read and understood as simple tracts, but claims that they did 'enter the field of the social moral and ideological debates of the time, including those bearing on women's lives.'[21] Bellamy refers to novels such as *Jane Eyre* and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and outlines their contributions to the development of a more independent definition of women's sexual identity, but writers of more conservative opinions also entered the fray with their own novels, of which she cites Charles Dickens as an example.

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[19] John Ritchie *Lachlan Macquarie; a Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1986), p.43.
[20] Phyllis Rose, *Parallel Lives*, p. 59.
[21] Joan Bellamy, 'Barriers of Silence; Women in Victorian Fiction' in Eric Sigsworth, ed. *In Search of Victorian Values; Aspects of Nineteenth-century Thought and Society* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988) p. 132.

Chads' fiction also exhibits very definite opinions about the sexuality, role, function and identity of women. Her conservative views reinforce simplistic fixed relations between men and women which are opposed not only to first wave feminists struggling for woman's rights but much more fundamentally to any notion of a woman's independence from men. These views are her reaction to events in her own life, informed by evangelical theology and deep social conservatism. She is very familiar with the plot of *Jane Eyre* and uses events from it in her own work, but with revisionist intent. In *Tried as Pure Gold* and *Dora's Repentance* the female protagonist experiences many of the same events as Jane Eyre, and they, too, find true love. However, while Jane refuses Rochester until he becomes the right man for her, in *Dora's Repentance* Dora only finds true love when she becomes the right person for her lover.

Given her clear, sometimes stated predilection for drawing on her own life experiences for characters and plots in her short stories, a careful reading of these enables the researcher to reconstruct the traumatic events around the 1865 wedding. Three major events that year changed Ellen's life. First was her marriage to Captain John Henry Chads on 19th April. Second was the court martial and cashiering of her husband three weeks later. And finally she migrated with him to Melbourne, arriving in December. These three themes — marriage, disgrace and migration — are oft-repeated in her stories, constituting what might be termed a fictive self-representation.

Marriage, Disclosure and Rebellion

In addition to these three events that are corroborated by external evidence in the public record, there are two other common themes in Chads' stories which may represent at least a partial truth in her marriage. The first is that of disclosure. It is not clear whether at the time of her marriage to John Henry Ellen knew of her husband's misdemeanours which would so

shortly afterwards end in his cashiering. The frequency with which disclosure of relevant facts before a marriage recurs in her stories, together with the dramatic consequences when the 'victim' becomes aware of the truth, suggests that she was unaware of the impending catastrophe.

The second theme is that of rebellion of the wife against the husband's will. Again, it is not clear what attitude Ellen Chads took to her imminent migration to Melbourne with her new husband, but the frequency with which her stories depict rebellion against a husband's will, particularly in relation to making a new beginning in Australia, suggests that she may have initially opposed such a scheme and was able to acquiesce only after a considerable struggle with her conscience and her religious beliefs.

The Snowdrops' Message and other tales, published in 1888, was a reprint of the longer version of *Dora's Repentance* with the addition of a number of other stories. Seven of the ten stories in this collection concern a good man meeting adversity through embezzlement and forgery, either of his own making or of others', and his eventual triumph and marriage to the girl he loves. These girls are almost invariably physically and emotionally frail and suffer enormously through the absence of their (extremely chaste) lovers. The stories usually have a happy-ever-after conclusion as the couple establish a happy and devoutly Christian home in Australia. Characterisation of the protagonists in these tales can be attributed to a formulaic approach to writing romance narratives, but the contexts in which Chads situates her stories and the nature of the obstacles that must be overcome to create a happy resolution are more of her own choosing and indicate an interest, if not a fascination, with a particular set of themes that also happen to play a role in her own life.

Of particular interest is *Colonel Montague's Secret*, where Chads canvasses the possibility of regaining a lost respectability and making an acceptable marriage. Ellen Montague's brother,

Duncan, is led astray by an older man, drinks and gambles and eventually forges a signature. His crime is discovered and he serves five years in Dartmoor prison. Ellen offers to break off her engagement to a clergyman, Allan Howard, because 'your wife should come to you as pure in name as in everything else.' She does not wish to 'shadow all [his] future' with the 'burden of [her] secret.' Howard refuses the offer. 'I cannot, will not, release you from your vow to me because your brother once erred.' All ends well when Duncan completes his sentence and the entire family enjoys a new start by having changed their name from Singleton to Montague and migrating to Melbourne, where even the now reformed Duncan finds redemption through marriage.

The stain of the past can be overcome but the conditions are stringent. The offender must genuinely turn to God for forgiveness, and loved ones connected to the family must be apprised of the shameful secret, so that they can forgive and accept. Even this, however, is not enough. To escape public censure the family needs a new name and must migrate to Australia to make a new beginning. A combination of religion, love and geography can bring redemption even to the one who brought scandal and dishonour to his family.

The parallels with Ellen Chads' own circumstances are glaringly obvious. The disgrace John Henry brought to his family and to his marriage could be overcome. Some of the conditions for it were present in the migration to Australia and, possibly, in the forgiveness proffered by his marriage partner, despite the possible lack of prior disclosure. We cannot know whether John Henry truly 'repented of his sins', although his subsequent behaviour seems to indicate little change in his habits, but we can conclude that Ellen considered this a vital ingredient in the recipe for personal if not public redemption.

Colonel Montague's Secret points to the harsh reality of Ellen Chads' position. She had linked her fate to a man who had brought disgrace and dishonour to a hitherto respectable

family. Perhaps her connection had been made unwittingly or perhaps in hopes of redemption for him and for his family. The conditions for effecting such redemption were almost impossible to attain in terms of public reputation, for the stain could not be expunged, although the exile in Melbourne offered some kind of hope. In England, however, and among those members of Melbourne Society who had close ties with England, John Henry's name would never be free of the shadow of his past.

The public face of her marriage would always be problematic, with the past threatening to undo whatever progress the couple could make in maintaining respectability in Melbourne. In the present too, there were the problems of the continual indebtedness, court appearances, frauds and fines. The public face must have seemed to her a thin veneer, constantly under threat of exposure. The private face of her marriage may have offered more hope in that it was predicated upon her own behaviour in exerting an influence for good on her husband and by such means leading him to repentance and reconciliation with God. We cannot know if she succeeded in the latter goal, but there are indications that she may have held herself responsible for his continuing bad behaviour.

We have seen that removal from England to Melbourne could be the beginning of a new life with a clean sheet, as in *Colonel Montague's Secret*, but renewal was difficult and not automatic. Penny Russell has shown that the formation of Melbourne Society and the determination of its membership were largely in the hands of women.[22] Achieving some kind of recognition in Society was the task which Ellen Chads set herself. Her main weapons in this challenge were her art and music notes, as well as her reputation as a short story writer. Her aspirations in this direction are also evidenced in the only surviving item of personal correspondence, which was addressed to Margaret Ward Cole, a leader of Society, in which

[22] Penny Russell, *A Wish of Distinction; Colonial Gentility and Femininity* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1994), pp. 14ff.

she asks to be remembered to Miss Ward Cole's mother and sister and extends the season's greetings to them.[23]

Recognition as a member of Society required good connections, which Ellen Chads sought to establish for herself, but her marriage to John Henry Chads would seem to be far from the asset it had briefly promised to be in this quest for respectability. His position as a mail clerk in the Education Department would be lowly enough to exclude her from most gatherings and his ever-threatening misdemeanours past and present had to be constantly concealed from the public view.

The twin themes of private disclosure and public concealment, which run strongly through a number of Chads' stories and were also dominant in her own life, were clearly compatible. The source of the necessity for private disclosure is the relatively new development of companionate marriage, while the requirement for public concealment derives from a desire for respectability, particularly on the part of middle class Victorian women. Public disclosure of her husband's past would clearly be ruinous to Ellen's own standing as a respectable female striving to overcome the forces of savagery in the establishment of a civilised new colony made in the image of England.

Lack of private disclosure, on the other hand, leads to dramatic consequences ranging from madness to death in many of Chads' stories. In *A Terrible Honeymoon*, subtitled 'a true story', the female protagonist is persuaded to marry a man without being told that there is a serious mental illness in the family, only to see him succumb to it and commit suicide during the honeymoon. If she was not forewarned of her husband's impending court martial, Ellen Chads' own honeymoon in Mauritius may have been almost as traumatic. Whether *A Terrible Honeymoon* obliquely refers to events in her own life, or is simply a story told to her by a

[23] Letter held in the collection of the author.

clergyman friend as she claims, or is even more fictional than that, her decision to record this story and present it to the reading public amply demonstrates her belief in the vulnerability of women to such deception, and describes the drastic consequences she felt they could face. Similar consequences are described in *Tried as Pure Gold*, where lack of disclosure, this time of a prospective husband's already married condition, leads to a young lady's madness and in *A Christmas Night's Story*, when she is not forewarned of her husband's imminent return from the Crimean War and she implausibly dies of shock in his arms. In this case the fault lies with the loving relatives who decided it would be better not to apprise her of his arrival.

While every effort had to be made to maintain public respectability through marriage alliances, private relationships in marriage were also important. These two stories in particular represent a cry of protest against the notion that marriage could be used as a tool for creating respectability for one or both the partners without any regard for the feelings and sensibilities of those partners. Marriage was definitely a public act, but it also had important meanings in the private arena.

Ellen's own marriage seems to have lacked transparency at its outset, and her stories are a strong argument that women should not be 'kept in the dark' as to the nature of the relationship they were entering and should not be used as a kind of path to respectability for 'gentlemen' who had disgraced themselves. The requirement for disclosure applied equally to men and women, as illustrated in *Colonel Montague's Secret*, where the female protagonist is aware of her responsibility to disclose the blot on her family name brought about by her brother's crimes.

This companionate equality of obligation did not mean an equivalence of roles in other spheres of married life. Another constant theme in Chads' stories is that of the wife's Christian duty of obedience to her husband as head of the house.

In *Dora Grosvenor's Repentance*,[24] a wilful Dora refuses to give up the pleasures of her comfortable society life in Dover in order to accompany her husband to a remote Australian station when he is forced to sell his Captain's commission due to the failure of his bank. 'I will never go out to that wretched bush-life in Australia. You must be mad to think of such a thing.' He goes alone and establishes a home, to which he finally persuades her to come. Just before she arrives his vision is impaired through an accident. When she sees him, Dora repents. 'If I had come here before now, he might never have gone out in that awful storm.' The husband's impaired sight remains as a 'daily punishment' for Dora. So too must the accomplished and society-loving Ellen have recoiled from the necessity of accompanying her new husband to what she perhaps saw as the primitive colony of Victoria, and learned to subject herself to a fate for which there appeared no alternative.

The subjection of wives to their husbands in loving obedience is even more strongly described in the longer version of the story, *Dora's Repentance*. In this version, Dora comes to see the error of her ways as the result of a story told her by a family friend who tells of her 'wilful' behaviour in ignoring the refusal of her husband when she proposed sailing on a shallow lake in Switzerland. He gave in to her wishes despite warning her that the weather was not safe. A storm arose and capsized the boat. Her husband was able to save her, but he himself drowned. This story is told by the unfortunate widow to encourage Dora to respect her husband's wishes at all times. 'Yield your will to his,' is her final advice, 'for he will ask you only to do that which is in accordance with the Master's commands.'[25]

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[24] *Australian Woman's Magazine and Domestic Journal*, July 1882, pp.101-103. This is a shorter first version of *Dora's Repentance*, which was published as a stand-alone romance in 1883 and considered by some at the time to be autobiographical, then reprinted in *The Snowdrops' Message and Other Tales* in 1888.

[25] *Dora's Repentance* in *The Snowdrops' Message and Other Tales* George Robertson, 1888 p139.

A husband's position as head of his wife and of the home was so common in Victorian society that thirty years after Chads' stories were published Jessie Ackermann, describing the state of affairs in Australia, was still able to write

> As a rule, when affairs of domestic interest are in question, the husband certainly is head of the home. Not the arbitrary, stern, dominating, all-wise, 'rule or ruin' sort, but the one who is consulted 'because he knows'. Women and children, especially girls, have always been assured that he really has a grip of things.[26]

Marriage and Religion

Chads' choice of 'Master' as her term for the Deity is perhaps unsurprising for a woman born and bred in a military household. It is her favourite, almost exclusive term throughout her journalism and fiction, from which we may infer an obligation of respect based on transparency, and female subjection as the religiously sanctioned relationship structure.[27]

This attitude corresponds to a view of marriage, and particularly the wife's role in it, that is directly derived from a literal naturalistic reading of the Bible. That Ellen Chads' reading of the Bible was of this nature is made clear on several occasions in her journalism relating to art and literature. When writing about J R Herbert's painting *Moses bringing down the tables of the law*, she defends it against its critics by an appeal to its faithfulness to Biblical detail.

> The bright hued and fresh looking garments, though one of the features sometimes condemned by visitors, are in themselves another proof that the artist has made himself completely master of his grand subject, for we have Scripture authority for knowing that the people were divinely ordered to 'wash their clothes, and keep the day as an holy-day.'[28]

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[26] Jessie Ackermann, *Australia from a Woman's Point of View* (London: Cassell, 1913 (facsimile 1981)) p. 77.
[27] See for example *Work for the Master* in *Tracked by Bushrangers and Other Stories*, 1891, pp. 75-77.
[28] *Once a Month* February 15 1885, p131.

This is a striking example of how a particular work of art is judged by the critic's overtly stated personal beliefs. Quite apart from any artistic merit the work is praised for rendering a biblically accurate literal interpretation of the scene. This is not the only time that Chads allows her personal beliefs to colour her judgment. When reviewing Edna Lyall's novel *Donovan*, she declared it a 'singularly fascinating book' but added this rider:

> the work as a whole loses some of its charm for me in the fact that the writer upholds the doctrine of evolution as well as the misleading one of what is vaguely called the larger hope. Both doctrines appear to me to be so sadly dishonouring to the wisdom and perfection of God, and so opposed to his revealed word, that their presence . . . is a drawback for which its many excellencies can in no way compensate.[29]

Creative effort is judged on whether it honours the literal interpretation of certain Bible passages that speak about creation being completed in six days. In this instance, however, Chads takes the next step and rejects creative effort because it is not in accord with a particular dogma of the church.

Edna Lyall was the pseudonym of Ada Ellen Bayly (1857-1903), a popular English novelist whose other works included *Won by Waiting* (1879), *We Two* (sequel to *Donovan*), *Mrs. Gaskell*, and *The Autobiography of a Slander*(1887). *Donovan* was published by Hurst and Blackett (London) in 1882 and was reprinted at least 24 times. Longmans published a biography, written by J. M. Escreet, in 1904. Georgia Corrick argues that Lyall's female characters make their own decisions about morality, even when they are blamed by society for the consequences of their choices.[30] In *Donovan* the eponymous protagonist becomes an atheist due to his mother's neglect. Chads found easier to dismiss Lyall's work on doctrinal grounds and is silent on this morality of Donovan's mother and its consequences for her son.

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[29] *The Australian Woman's Magazine and Domestic Journal* August 1 1882, p149.

[30] Georgia Corrick ''You Will Blame Me but it Seemed to Me Simply a Thing that Had to be Done'; Women's Transgressions and Moral Choices in Edna Lyall's Novels' in *Women's Writing: The Elizabethan to Victorian Period* Vol 14 no. 3 (2007) pp. 476-495.

These two instances of the use of the Bible and of dogma indicate the prominence she gave to 'Biblical accuracy', in that they overrode artistic and literary merit in her assessment of a work of art or literature. The Bible, as God's unmediated word, and as interpreted by the dogma of Evangelicalism, was the ultimate arbiter of all questions relating to faith and behaviour and set the boundaries for cultural pursuits.

Evangelicalism was not a denomination, or confined to one denomination of the church, but could be found in all protestant churches. Chads attended Baptist churches, and she also expressed admiration for the 'untiring zeal' of the first Anglican Bishop of Melbourne, Dr. Perry, who was an ardent Evangelical.[31]

Evangelicals applied their concept of the authority of the bible to marriage and to the roles of husbands and wives in marriage. Several New Testament passages, for instance, demand that wives should submit to their husbands 'as to the Lord.'[32]

A typical exposition of these texts was given by John Brown, a Scottish Presbyterian Divine, in 1855. He refers to Paul's letter to the Ephesians (5:21-22) and declares that because woman (Eve) was deceived first, she had been placed in a subordinate position to man (Adam) who 'shall rule over thee,' and that 'this appointment is in accordance with sound reason and true expediency.' He explains that although it is not the submission of a slave to his or her master, it is nonetheless real submission of which he speaks, and that because it is the 'rank the Lord's hand has placed [the wife] in, she will not break it.' Recognising that some husbands lack wisdom and will take advantage of their authority, he points out that submission is 'conduct acceptable to the Lord' and that by following such a course of action

[31] *Once a Month* Feb 15 1885 p 131.

[32] Ephesians 5: 22-24 reads 'Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.' Colossians 3:18-19 reads, 'Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.'

'many a woman has spent a life of respectability and usefulness, who, by acting otherwise would neither have been respectable or useful.'[33]

This was clearly the situation in which Ellen Chads found herself, and this kind of teaching, with its appeal to obedience, respectability and usefulness was the way in which Ellen Chads resolved the crisis of the marriage into which she had plunged.

John Brown's exposition is of I Peter 3:1-6, which reads[34]

> Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behaviour of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewellery or fine clothes. Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.

Wives are exhorted to obey their husbands and be in subjection to them, and through their gentle behaviour, influence them for good. John Brown, in pointing to the 'great gulf' that exists between an 'unconverted' husband and a 'converted' wife concludes that 'this is very far from being a desirable state of things,' a sentiment with which one feels Ellen Chads would heartily agree. Brown admonishes such a wife to 'continue with him, and perform to

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[33] John Brown, *Expository Discourses on the First Epistle of St Peter* 2nd ed. (Carter, 1855), pp. 366-7.

[34] This is the *New International Version*. Ellen Chads would have been familiar with the *Authorised Version* first published in 1611 (frequently called the King James Version):

1 Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may
without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;
2 While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.
3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting
on of apparel;
4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and
quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.
5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in
subjection unto their own husbands:
6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not
afraid with any amazement.

him all the duties of an affectionate and respectful wife.'[35] That Ellen Chads accepted that this stricture had divine authority is repeatedly demonstrated in her stories. Her didactic material and what we know of her life indicate that she applied it to her own situation as well.

If she hoped that her faithful obedience to the perceived Biblical command would influence John Henry for good she would have been disappointed, since there is not much evidence to suggest any improvement in his behaviour. That she nevertheless continued with this approach indicates that it was motivated by obedience rather than pragmatism. Her role was to do the will of the Master, whether she saw any result or not.

This use of the Bible is an extreme but probably common solution for what was a serious problem for many women in the Victorian era. Their view of marriage was derived from biblical texts and injunctions which also closely defined the partners' roles and power relationships along gendered lines.

Chads' attitude was in marked contrast to the 'first wave feminists' who were her contemporaries, although many of them had religious convictions of various kinds. As Farley Kelly points out, 'religion was important to these early feminists in widely different ways. Some saw the Christian Church as a symbol of male dominance and oppression . . . For others, however, the Church's framework, despite admitted constraints, offered support.'[36] This summary of the situation however, should not lead to an exaggeration of the differences between feminists, since the Christian Church was itself far from a monolithic whole. The many varieties made it possible for women to choose one which was perhaps less oppressive to them, as occurred in the case of Martha Turner, who was elected pastor of Melbourne's

[35] John Brown, *Expository Discourses* p. 375.
[36] Farley Kelly, 'Pulpit and Ballot box: Early Feminists and the Church' in *Women's Studies Journal* vol 1 no 3 (November, 1984) p. 16.

Unitarian church as early as 1873, but whose feminist convictions led to her presence at the inaugural meeting of the Victorian Women's Suffrage Society.

Marriage and woman suffrage

The first meeting of the Victorian Women's Suffrage Society was held in the drawing room of a Mrs Rennick on 25 May 1884. Presiding over this meeting of twenty men and women was Henrietta Augusta Dugdale, who had a far more negative view of the Church. She was twice widowed and three times married, the third time when she was seventy-seven years old, and an outspoken critic of the monarchy and of Christianity, both of which she described as despotism established by men to suppress women. In the same year that Chads' disclaimed fictional autobiography was published, Dugdale published *A Few Hours in a Far Off Age*,[37] a short Utopian novel in which men and women had achieved complete equality, and which was, if possible, even more overtly didactic and moralistic than Ellen Chads' short romance stories.

Dugdale, together with Annie Lowe, was instrumental in establishing the Victorian Women's Suffrage Society in 1884, and claimed to be Victoria's first activist for women's suffrage and other rights such as property ownership and university admission. Ellen Chads attended one of the early meetings of the Society and smugly predicted its failure to the readers of *Once a Month*:

> Happily for the common sense of our community, the Victorian Women's Suffrage Society is very far from a success. At the recent one held early last month, only about fifty persons were present and the proceedings were of a very tame nature. The members however, in spite of all adverse appearances, declared themselves quite confident of future success![38]

[37] Henrietta Dugdale, *A Few Hours in a Far-off Age* (Melbourne M'Carron Bird, 1883).
[38] *Once a Month* 15 June 1885, p. 477.

As a result of the meeting held in Mrs Rennick's drawing room a public meeting was called for June 1884, which was attended by fifty women and twenty men. The Reverend Dr Bromby, the Canon of St Paul's Anglican Cathedral, was elected president. A year later, at the first annual general meeting, he was succeeded by Mrs. Derham, although he retained his position on the committee as an elected vice president. The committee comprised six female and six male members.[39] The inclusion of men among the membership seems not to have been problematic and was probably accepted as necessary if any progress towards woman suffrage was to be achieved.

Part of Chads' patronising attitude to the Society and its members positions her as an adherent of 'the prevailing view that women had a different sphere of activity and influence from men.'[40] She was certainly opposed to the radical opinions, behaviour and appearance of Henrietta Dugdale, who pioneered a looser fitting garment, cropped her hair, practiced vegetarianism, grew her own vegetables, did her own carpentry and did little to dispel rumours of physical attraction to Mrs. Rennick.[41]

Chads, of course, was not the only woman to oppose woman suffrage. Many early opponents, however, probably took Chads' attitude of virtual indifference to an amusing but definitely passing fad, and their voices are not heard. Others were more vehement in their opposition. Susan Magarey cites the Rose Scott Family Papers where Maybanke Wollstenholm recalled the response of one member of the Women's Literary Society in NSW who responded in 'white heat' to a proposal that the meeting discuss woman suffrage, declaring that she hoped they 'they would never discuss such a disgraceful matter.'[42]

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[39] Audrey Oldfield, *Woman Suffrage in Australia; a Gift or a Struggle?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p137.
[40] Rosamund Billington, *The Dominant Values of Victorian Feminism* p. 116.
[41] Susan Magarey, *First Wave Feminists* p. 24.
[42] Susan Magarey, *First Wave Feminists* pp. 26-28.

Other, more moderately tempered opposition also appeared. In July 1885 an editorial in *The Argus* announced to its readers that the society, although quiet of late, 'was not dead' but suggested that 'helping to pass bills in parliament is nothing like so useful or meritorious an act as bringing healthy babies into the world and making good strong boys and girls of them.'[43]

This was a point of view which would have met with Ellen Chads' approval. Her perspective, at this early stage in the struggle for woman suffrage, was representative of public opinion. In 1891 she wrote, beginning perhaps with an oblique and painful reference to her own situation

> It is useless to deny that there are cruel and neglectful husbands in the world, but it is equally true that there would be far more happy homes if women only used their God-given power of influence in the right direction. Without entering into the vexed question of the woman's rights and suffrage movement, it can hardly be denied that if its advocates are granted all they desire, the generality of homes will not be thereby increased in comfort. No woman continually attending political meetings or occupied with the affairs of the State can give her own home the thought and care it demands, and, as a natural result her husband and children must be neglected and their rightful claims upon her time sacrificed, to allow of her occupying a position which God never intended her to fill.[44]

Ellen Chads was far more interested in women's roles than in women's rights. She considered the Biblical mandate of domestic service and wifely submission a universal truth. It was the only way for women to achieve private happiness and public respectability. Fulfilling this role required some fine balancing, and Chads' opinions are ambivalent when ideals clash. Women could legitimately participate in art, for instance, but Chads delimited their range of subjects. When describing 'Quatre-Bas', a large battle scene painted by Mrs. Butler, the wife of a general, as 'executed with an almost painful fidelity to truth . . . a fine work of art, but not a pleasing subject,' she adds that its subject was 'scarcely one that a

[43] *The Argus* 3 July 1885, p. 4.
[44] *Work for the Master* IN *Tracked by Bushrangers and Other Stories* George Robertson, 1891, p. 80.

woman would be inclined to choose.'[45] More appropriate subjects to engage the female creative spirit are enumerated when she comments on an exhibition of female student art. Such subjects include flowers, English landscapes, and still life.[46] Ambivalence is also evident when the demands of art and marriage compete. In *Work for the Master* she encourages young women to embrace music, singing and painting but warns against curtailing the time that should be spent on home-making.[47] She is nevertheless pleased that 'Mrs. Boyd (nee A'Beckett) has not relaxed her artistic efforts since her recent marriage.'[48]

Dugdale, on the other hand, was focussed on women's rights rather than women's roles. Her views on religion met with a great deal of opposition, even among other first wave feminists. Susan Magarey points out that the religious affiliations and views of these feminists varied greatly, and many of them worked within a church setting, believing that it was possible to reconcile the struggle for women's rights with their Christian faith.[49] The wife of Dean Selwyn, for instance, summarised the position of Maybanke Wolstenholme, a New South Wales suffragist thus:

> When we bear all these things in mind, we shall be constrained to believe that many apostolic counsels are counsels of prudence under existing conditions rather than universal laws binding upon all women in all walks of life.[50]

This more critical reading of the text of the Bible derives from a rationalistic, secular approach which sought to understand the Bible as literature produced in a social and historical context and which characterised the liberal theologians of the mid and late

[45] *Once a Month* October 1884, p. 315.
[46] *Once a Month* November 1884, p. 465.
[47] *Work for the Master,* p. 86-7.
[48] *Once a Month* June 1886, p. 560.
[49] Susan Magarey, *First Wave Feminists* pp. 31-2.
[50] Rose Selwyn papers cited in Audrey Oldfield, *Woman Suffrage in Australia;* p. 83.

nineteenth century.[51] The hermeneutics of liberal theology would not reach the pinnacle of their influence until the early twentieth century, but in the last few decades of the preceding century it was already having considerable impact on preaching in mainline protestant churches.

Marriage and temperance

Many women who agitated for woman suffrage were heavily involved in the temperance movement. They saw woman suffrage as a means of bringing about legislative change which would assist working class women who suffered the consequences of their husbands' abuse of alcohol.

Susan Zieger points to the class implications of the temperance movement when she declares that 'the temperance movement was led by middle-class social reformers and philanthropists who wanted to manage an unruly working class.'[52] At the same time, it cannot be doubted that many of those active in the temperance movement held genuine concerns for the suffering experienced by the victims of drunken husbands, since they were invariably the women and children who were so completely in their power, without means of defence or escape.

Ellen Chads does write about the evils of drink in her stories but, with one exception, she does not write temperance stories. In her tales, drink is invariably connected to gambling and embezzlement rather than to starvation and violence. This is because her characters are not the working class characters of a typical temperance novel, but middle class military officers, doctors, lawyers and clergymen and their families. The 'evil of drink' for such people was not the same as it was for the working classes. For Chads the problem of drink was more the

[51] Prominent early liberal theologians include the Germans Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) and Albert Ritschl (1822-1889), and the Americans William Ellery Channing (1780-1842) and Henry Ward Beecher (1813-1887).

[52] Susan Zieger, *Temperance, Teetotalism and Addiction in the Nineteenth Century* at http://www.victorianweb.org/science/addiction/temperance.htm Accessed 15 December, 2011.

shame associated with the loss of money and status than the lurid descriptions of poverty, violence and starvation that defined the temperance novel, neither did she dwell on the notion of alcohol as the cause of social and familial suffering. There are no descriptions of men drinking and returning home to abuse their families, again with one notable exception. Drink is merely stated as a fact, and was bad rather than evil, because it was associated with gambling and embezzlement. This, as we have seen, reflects her own experience.

The one occasion on which she does write a temperance story it is no more than a vignette in the larger story of *Dora's Repentance*. It is distanced by being told to one of the characters rather than being addressed directly to the reader. It is, moreover, irrelevant to the main plot and the characters are so sketchily painted that they remain almost nameless. The reader is not encouraged to identify with them. The main point of the story actually seems to be an advertisement for the popular pledge based organisation, The Blue Ribbon Army, of which Keith Grosvenor, the fictional representation of Ellen Chads' husband, is a member. Ellen Chads had attended a public meeting at which one of its leaders spoke and reported on it in November 1885. Chads was clearly impressed with his speaking abilities, noting the 'complete . . . sympathy established between the speaker and his immense audience,'[53] but she chose not to avail herself of the opportunity to advocate for temperance. Her attendance at that meeting may have provided the inspiration for the story of Shelton's hut, which appears as a rather incongruous interruption in *Dora's Repentance*.

The sole other occasion on which Chads mentions temperance in her monthly Current Events notes is to remark upon a meeting held to organise the establishment of a Temperance hospital. Her concern here is the practice of allowing female patients access to strong drink

[53] *Once a Month* November 15 1885, p 399.

such as brandy, presumably as a means of dulling pain, which she saw as a possible trigger for 'a life-long craving for drink.'[54]

Although Chads was not unsympathetic to the temperance movement she was certainly not an advocate or a campaigner. Her solution for intemperance, as it was for many other social problems, was to be found in individual behaviour, religiously motivated obedience and the dutiful loyalty of a beloved wife, in other words, sincere Christian marriage. She wrote one other story which could be considered a temperance story. In *Nellie Seymour's Trial* Nellie's 'lover' Hugh Courtenay pleads with her for another chance, after having broken his promise never to take strong drink again. 'If you give me up . . . I shall drift aimlessly along the current of life.' She does not yield and he goes to Australia where he sinks ever lower until he turns to God, upon which he turns away from drink, returns to England and marries Nellie, who has waited patiently for him.[55] Courtenay is saved from intemperance by turning to God and his love for Nellie, who shows that she deserved this love by waiting for him to come to his senses.

For Chads the mere taking of a pledge and wearing of a blue ribbon based on emotional speeches about the terrible fates of others is not sufficient to overcome the powerful grip of strong drink. After Keith Grosvenor hears the story of Shelton's hut in *Dora's Repentance*, he asks, 'did it act in any way as a warning to the other hands?' only to be told that the memory of it soon faded.[56]

The temporariness of the pledge solution described by Chads in this story accords with the view of Timothy Yates, that 'the Blue Ribbon Movement lost momentum everywhere by the latter half of the 1880s. Perhaps what most plagued the movement was the accusation that

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[54] *Once a Month* June 15 1885, p 477.
[55] Ellen Chads, *Nellie Seymour's Trial; or sowing in tears and reaping in joy* in *Tried as Pure Gold and Other Tales* 1882 pp 233-245.
[56] *Dora's Repentance* p 121.

after the initial enthusiasm wore off most pledge takers fell off the wagon and resumed their drinking.'[57]

Ellen Chads' view of intemperance illustrates Susan Zieger's point that intemperance was viewed 'more as a moral failing that the individual could correct if surrounded with better influences, such as alternative venues to pubs, community meetings at which members told their personal stories, propagandistic literature, and rituals such as the pledge.'[58] Chads would begin the list of 'better influences' with the Evangelical version of Christian marriage.

[57] Timothy Yates, 'Blue Ribbon Movement' in Jack S. Blocker, David M. Fahey and Ian R. Tyrrell, eds., *Alcohol and Temperance in Modern History: an International Encyclopaedia* (Santa Barbara: American Bibliographic Company, 2003) vol. 1, p. 109.
[58] Susan Zieger, *Temperance, Teetotalism and Addiction.*

Conclusion

Ellen Chads' experience and expression of marriage reveal how robustly the respectability it conferred on a woman could be defended. John Henry's misdemeanours were discoverable in the public arena, yet they could be ignored by Ellen as she represented her marriage and herself as exemplary contributors to the growth and development of the Empire. Her allegiance to the established order, as preached by Evangelicalism, prevented her from examining her own situation critically and made contemplation of the kind of changes being called for by the first wave feminists a dire threat. Her private insistence on companionate marriage and her public claim of respectability seem at odds, but their continued juxtaposition was crucial to a woman in Ellen Chads' situation.

Ellen Chads represented herself through her journalism and fiction writing, and later through her role in the campaign for a lost dogs' home in Melbourne, as a servant of the English Empire, and of Christian morality and sensibilities. Above all, she represented herself as a Victorian Respectable. The fact that she did so despite considerable evidence that undermines her claim indicates how completely the maintenance of respectability governed her life and work, and opens a portal into the nature of Victorian respectability and how it worked itself out in day-to-day living.

Through a biographic recuperation of Ellen Chads' life and an examination of her fiction and journalism it has been possible to see a great deal more than her life. She conforms to a great many of the generalizations made about the mid and late Victorian age, with its emphasis on respectability. Because of the clues left by her public declarations relating to her marriage and their discontinuity with the public record, it has been possible to reveal how some of the ideals to which Victorians subscribed worked themselves out in her day to day life. At the same time, her fictive self-representation, when coupled with the secrets revealed in the

public record, takes us behind the stereotypical 'straight-laced' Victorian female to reveal the conflicts she faced and the means by she resolved them.

Her solutions were not those of the first wave feminists, but relied on individual self-help and a particular hermeneutic of her own life. The dramatic events of 1865 and their consequences must often have driven her to despair. The first wave feminists had started work on a solution, but it was not one that she could embrace. For her, the solution had to be found within the framework of acceptable respectability and evangelical religiosity. By examining her solutions, we learn not merely about her, but about the Victorian framework within which she lived.

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