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*Better Dead: J. M. Barrie's First Book and
the Shilling Fiction Market*

Abstract

This article provides a critical and bibliographical discussion of J. M. Barrie's neglected first book, *Better Dead*, published by Swan Sonnenschein, Lowrey & Co. in 1887. Drawing on previously unexamined evidence in the Sonnenschein archive, it shows how this shilling novel was marketed and sold to its readers at railway bookstalls, and argues that the content and style of the story was conditioned by its form. Examining the many references and allusions in the story, it proposes that the work is best understood as a satire on contemporary political, social and literary themes. The article also shows how, contrary to all published accounts, the author actually earned a small amount of money from a work which, in spite of his efforts, refused to stay dead.

J. M. Barrie's first Book, *Better Dead*, published by Swan Sonnenschein, Lowrey & Co. in 1887, has never been much admired, least of all by its author who in his maturity was known to suggest that its claim to posterity – or lack of it – was answered by its title.¹ As early as 1896, in a preface to the American collected edition of his works, he wrote of it disparagingly:

This juvenile effort is a field of prickles, into which none may be advised to penetrate – I made the attempt lately in cold blood, and came back shuddering, but I had read enough to have the profoundest reason for declining to tell what the book is about.²

Characteristically, however, Barrie immediately qualified that assessment by confessing to having a 'sentimental interest' in *Better Dead* since it was his first published book, recalling how 'there was a week when I loved to carry it in my pocket and did not think it dead weight.'³ Having contributed

money towards the cost of its publication he spent much of his life down-playing the work and sometimes damning it outright. In the process he provoked considerable misunderstanding about its history. This article draws on previously unrecorded evidence in the Sonnenschein archive to discuss how this shilling novel, with its politically topical satire, was marketed and sold to its readers at railway bookstalls. It examines the nature of Barrie's satire and suggests that the content and style of the story was substantially conditioned by its form. It also shows how, contrary to all published accounts, the author actually earned a small amount of money from a work which, in spite of his efforts, refused to stay dead.

PUBLICATION: MYTHS AND FACTS

The precise terms upon which *Better Dead* was published have never been accurately documented. Barrie was himself partly responsible for this. In *The Greenwood Hat*, his idiosyncratic memoir first printed privately in 1930, he recalls that he published the work 'at his own expense' and 'lost about £25 over this transaction'.⁴ His critics and biographers have taken this statement as fact. So too have historians of Swan Sonnenschein. In their history of the firm, Mumby and Stallybrass rely implicitly on the record in *The Greenwood Hat*, while in a more recent account Ann Parry claims that Barrie 'never recouped the money he had advanced to publish the book'.⁵ This, however, is untrue. The book was not published 'at his own expense', as Barrie claimed, but issued on the half-profit system with the author paying a portion of the costs of production (the total, as explained below, was in fact £30). Barrie's first biographer, Denis Mackail, who must have overlooked the author's comment in *The Greenwood Hat*, estimates that Barrie 'probably' put up 'about a hundred pounds', a figure that assumes he paid the full costs of production.⁶ His payment of £30, however, was only a contribution, and the contractual arrangement allowed the author to recoup the money he advanced if his book proved successful.

This distinction is more than just technical. Although by 1887 the royalty system had started to be used more widely in British publishing it was not yet the standard method of remunerating authors. Many books were published on the half profits system and a good number involved an author contributing to the costs of production. In *The Methods of Publishing*

(1891), S. Squire Sprigge estimated that three-quarters of novels published were issued subject to the author laying down a sum of money for expenses.⁷ This was written in condemnation of the system and was probably an exaggeration, but there is no doubt that the practice was widespread, especially for new authors. Barrie was not alone in contributing money towards the cost of producing his first book. In 1879 Thomas Hardy paid £75 towards the expenses of his first novel, *Desperate Remedies*, and the following year George Gissing invested a hefty £125 into the production of his first book, *Workers in the Dawn*. Both authors were promised a half share of any profits and Hardy received £60 back from his publisher, Tinsley Bros.⁸ Gissing got nothing.

The 'commission and divide' system, as it was termed in the trade, was certainly open to corruption if an unscrupulous publisher artificially inflated production costs. Paul Delany argues that Gissing's payment was 'designed' to 'hide a comfortable profit' for his publisher, Remington.⁹ Such practices undoubtedly existed, yet at the same time the contractual method did allow the author to retain his copyright and thus earn some money if a book proved successful or, as with Barrie, if the success of subsequent books generated new demand. In this sense it was a fairer system than the other main method of disposing of literary property in the period: sale of copyright. In the same year that *Better Dead* was published, Arthur Conan Doyle sold the copyright of *A Study in Scarlet*, the first Sherlock Holmes book, to Ward, Lock & Co. for £25. It was a bargain he was to regret for the rest of his life for, unlike Barrie, he earned nothing more from his first book.

In the years between the publication of Hardy's and Gissing's first books and those of Barrie and Conan Doyle, an important development had taken place in the history of authorship and publishing. The formation of the Incorporated Society of Authors in 1883 was the summation of a long campaign for greater transparency in the contractual relations between authors and publishers. Among the Society's most important objectives in its early years was the maintenance, definition and defence of literary property and it issued several publications (including Sprigge's *The Methods of Publishing*), strongly advising against selling copyrights and advancing money towards costs of production.¹⁰ Mackail is thus right to comment that Barrie's action in arranging for *Better Dead* 'to be issued at his own expense' was 'something against which, as a future President of the Society of Authors, he should certainly have set his face.'¹¹ For a first book, however, and one pub-

lished at a cheap price in a bibliographical form that was widely seen as ephemeral, it was not unprecedented or unusual.

Better Dead grew out of a sketch Barrie published under that title in the *St James's Gazette* on 21 April 1885. Like much of his early journalism it was pseudonymous, carrying the enigmatic signature 'By a Friend of His Species'. It introduced the idea of a society devoted to getting rid of people who would be better out of the way, proposing as a start W. H. Mallock. This was a satirical swipe at the author of *Is Life Worth Living?* (1879), a discourse on religion and positivism which provoked considerable controversy in the 1880s. Nine months later Barrie had evolved the idea further and a second sketch, now entitled 'The Society for Doing Without Some People', appeared on 13 January 1886 in the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, signed 'A Humanitarian.' In *A Greenwood Hat* Barrie confesses ignorance as to why 'Anon', as he styles his earlier journalistic self, should have been encouraged to enlarge this idea for a 'little book'.¹² The story was written very quickly. On 15 September 1886 Barrie told his friend T. L. Gilmour that he had written two chapters out of ten: 'It isn't so uniformly bad. So go on.'¹³ Six weeks later he reported that the completed manuscript had been sent to Messrs Blackwood.¹⁴ An introduction had been provided by Frederick Greenwood, editor of the *St James's Gazette* where much of Barrie's early journalism appeared. It took Blackwood three months to decline the work, after which it received a swifter rejection from Kegan Paul.¹⁵ It may well have been submitted to other firms before Swan Sonnenschein, Lowery, & Co decided in September 1887 to issue it in paper covers priced at one shilling.

Sonnenschein has always been seen as an unusual choice of publisher and something of a last resort for Barrie. J. A. Hammerton argues that *Better Dead* was 'quite out of the run of this particular publishing house' and Mackail concurs, commenting that the firm 'actually specialised in anything but this class of literature'.¹⁶ This is not the case, however. Certainly Sonnenschein was best known as a publisher of educational, religious and social science books; moreover, its reputation as a supporter of radical literature – in later years it would become the main publisher of the sexual and political radical Edward Carpenter – was already in evidence in 1887 when it published George Moore's *Parnell and his Ireland* as well as the first English translation of Marx's *Capital*.¹⁷ The firm did publish a small amount of fiction, however, and at the time Barrie submitted his manuscript was seeking to

expand its list of titles in this area. It began advertising 'shilling fiction' in 1886, and early in 1887 issued George Bernard Shaw's *An Unsocial Socialist*, his first novel published in volume form. In May of the same year it declined Shaw's invitation to publish another of his early serials, *Cashel Byron's Profession*, but asked to keep the matter open until the Autumn when it planned on 'starting a somewhat extensive series of cheap novels by good writers, into which series it might fall.'¹⁸ Barrie's manuscript, received in late summer 1887, was thus submitted at a perfect moment. Early listings of the story appeared in a block advertisement announcing four 'New Novels at all Libraries', three 'New Six Shilling Novels', five 'New Three-and-Sixpenny Novels' and eight titles under 'New Shilling Fiction', headed by *Better Dead*.¹⁹

THE SHILLING FICTION MARKET

The publishing category of 'Shilling Fiction' and the epithet 'shilling shocker' were essentially products of the 1880s. The common ingredients of crime and mystery reveal the genre's ancestry in the penny dreadfuls of popular street literature from earlier in the century. The emergence of the form was facilitated by the growth of new retail outlets for fiction, particularly the spread of railway bookstalls. In fiction publishing of this period the retail price of a book often indicated its consumer outlet. Sonnenschein's advertisements announced that volumes of shilling fiction were available 'at all bookstalls', whereas its new two-and three-volume novels were available 'at all libraries'.²⁰ The growth of shilling fiction in the 1880s was attributable in part to the determination of some publishers to reduce the price of new fiction from the exorbitant levels (a guinea and a half per volume) set by the circulating libraries. Central to this enterprise was the Bristol firm of Arrowsmith, which marketed its stories successfully enough to attract the attention of the major periodicals and reviews. Arrowsmith sold 350,000 copies of Hugh Conway's *Called Back* (1884) in three years, boosted by a successful stage adaptation²¹ and two years later lured Wilkie Collins onto its list. Other publishers picked up on the trend. In 1886 Longman issued Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, and in the following year Fergus Hume's *The Mystery of the Hansom Cab* sold 300,000 copies in six months in shilling form.²² Sonnenschein's decision to

move into the cheap fiction market in the mid-1880s was thus an attempt to capitalise on a buoyant and profitable area of publishing.

Contemporary commentators were largely dismissive of shilling novels, viewing them as a temporary vogue. In November 1886 *Book-Lore* announced ‘great cause for congratulation that what has not inappropriately been called “the shilling Shocker” is at least on its deathbed’.²³ Observing that for some three years Arrowsmith had had ‘a practical monopoly’ on the form, the periodical condemned how many ‘incompetent authors’ had rushed into print and ‘openly damned themselves in the process’. It was not until the end of the decade that demand dissipated, however. This was probably due to the downward trend in book prices generally which gave readers a wider range of titles for their money.²⁴ The form persisted but its notoriety ebbed away and it came to be seen as a phenomenon of the 1880s, much as the sensation novel came to be viewed as a product of the 1860s.

Shilling fiction was not wholly characterised by sensation. Satire was an equally common feature and many works seized on topical matters of the day. *Better Dead*, with its dark vein of humour and its parodying of contemporary politicians, blended the two main features of the form. This made it especially suitable for the Sonnenschein list which was characterised more by humour than horror. Among the titles advertised alongside *Better Dead*, *Condemned to Death* by A. Wall may have been unintentionally humorous, but H. F. Lester’s *Ben D’ymion, Muddlemarsh and other parodies*, and E. C. Grenville Murray’s *Queer Stories from Truth* indicate a parodic style to which *Better Dead* easily belonged. The other writers listed alongside Barrie were Richard Dowling (better known as an author of Irish regional novels), the Earl of Desart, Robert L. De Havilland, and W. Delisle Hay, whose *Blood: A Tragic Tale* bucked the comic trend. These were all minor writers, better known as journalists; only three – Desart, Dowling and Murray – make it into John Sutherland’s *Longman Companion to Victorian Fiction*. As journalists they were inclined to write on topical subjects. Murray is described by Sutherland as an ‘occasionally scurrilous journalist’ who ‘was once publically horsewhipped outside the Conservative Club by Lord Carrington in 1869 for a satirical article in the *Queen’s Messenger*’.²⁵ Contemporary politicians were the main target of *Better Dead*, but the absurd premise of the story was unlikely to earn Barrie similar chastisement.

Each of these authors already had several published titles to their names. Although their contracts differed from Barrie’s, the terms were not

markedly more generous. Wall, like Barrie, was required to subvent publication of his book; Lester was given a royalty of 20 per cent but only after the first 1000 copies had sold; Dowling received a flat 10 per cent royalty but denied the advance he requested, the publisher explaining that 'the sale of shilling books is so uncertain now'.²⁶ Barrie was certainly not being treated exceptionally when, on 9 September 1887, Sonnenschein wrote informing him that they were willing to publish his book on a half-profit arrangement if he paid £25 towards the cost of production.

THE PATH TO PUBLICATION

Sonnenschein determined the format and target audience for *Better Dead* from the moment the story was read in manuscript. The firm considered it 'decidedly clever' but questioned whether the satire would be fully appreciated: 'The chief doubt we feel about it is that it may be somewhat above the level of the ordinary reader's comprehension.'²⁷ The 'ordinary' reader who purchased literature from railway bookstalls was perceived to be less intellectual in taste than those who borrowed books from subscription libraries. There was another potential obstacle. In the same letter Sonnenschein requested that Barrie 'eliminat[e] certain Scotch phrases' from his manuscript. In his 1896 preface Barrie recorded that the book was published at a time 'when I had small hope of getting any one to accept the Scotch'.²⁸ The publication of *Auld Licht Idylls* five months after *Better Dead* would prove that the orthographic reproduction of his native Forfarshire dialect was no impediment to sales. There are few Scots words in *Better Dead*, but in a later letter Sonnenschein specified two idiomatic expressions in Barrie's original manuscript:

The Scotch expressions to which we refer are such as 'close' which a Londoner does not understand; 'alley' is more applicable to Fleet Street. 'Plenty' is also used in an idiomatic way. But you will doubtless be able to correct this and others upon reading over the MS.²⁹

'Alley' was substituted for 'close' in the published text and 'plenty' does not appear at all.

In addition to altering some of the Scots idiom, Barrie was also required to increase the length of his story. It is well known that the three-volume

format often required Victorian authors to pad out their stories to fit the eight hundred or more pages which comprised the typical library novel. Shorter fictional forms also carried strictures on length. Barrie was informed that his book 'ought to be about 160pp' and his original manuscript was 'somewhat short' of that extent. Although he was advised not 'to spoil a good idea by padding', Sonnenschein judged that the story 'would be none the worse for a little expansion [. . .] in its present form we could not use a bigger page than the enclosed, which, as you will see, is rather meagre.'³⁰ Unfortunately, what additions Barrie may have made are unknown.

The cover of *Better Dead*, which Barrie later described 'certainly the best' of the book,³¹ was designed by the *Punch* cartoonist William Mitchell who had been at school with the author at Dumfries Academy in the mid-1870s and remained a friend during Barrie's time at Edinburgh University. The cover pictured in silhouette the unmistakable figures of two eminent politicians: Lord Randolph Churchill (the father of Sir Winston Churchill), who was the current Chancellor of the Exchequer, and his predecessor Sir William Harcourt. To the left of them, behind a wall, a sinister-looking assassin, dagger in hand, is poised to strike. The 'B' and 'D' in the letters of the title are made up of a rapier and its scabbard and belt, a revolver and a coiled noose.³² Barrie sent the design immediately on acceptance of his manuscript and Sonnenschein judged it 'very good indeed'.³³ Visual appearance on a railway bookstall was important as the publisher made clear: 'there is no doubt that it will materially add to the sales . . . We think it could be a good investment as a shilling book depends very much on an attractive cover'. The investment nevertheless came at a price and the publisher was unprepared to gamble on its own. Sonnenschein calculated it would cost an extra £10 'to get a block specially cut' and asked the author to contribute £5. Barrie's total payment towards the publication of his first book was thus £30, not the £25 he recalled. His cheque was received on 21 September 1887.

Sonnenschein had informed Barrie on 15 September that it intended to 'put the book down for prompt publication as it is very desirable to get the book out before the market is flooded with Christmas productions.' The Christmas season was always a busy time for book production but, according to Simon Eliot, 'in terms of the proportion of annual production [it] was at its largest between the 1870s and the 1890s' and 'at its most dominant' in the 1880s.³⁴ Shilling fiction had to compete on railway bookstalls

with Christmas annuals and special numbers of periodicals. On 30 September, just three weeks after accepting the manuscript, Barrie was informed that the book was printed and could be produced as soon as the cover was received from the lithographers.³⁵ A month later, however, the wrapper had still not been received.³⁶ On 10 November an impatient Barrie was informed that copies of the book were expected the following day and an advertisement had been inserted in the weekly number of *Truth*.³⁷ When the cover finally arrived, however, it was not up to Sonnenschein's standards. The firm told Barrie: 'the lithographer did it so badly that we had to order them to do it again.'³⁸

Frustrating as these delays must have been, there was a more significant obstacle which threatened to delay publication still further. Although the book had been advertised early in November, no pre-publication order had been received from W. H. Smith, the wholesaling and bookselling firm which held a near monopoly over station bookstalls. Such was the importance of this retail outlet to the success of a shilling novel that Sonnenschein considered postponing publication until after Christmas. This route had been taken by Longman with *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* almost exactly two years previously. Richard Dury records that Charles Longman decided to postpone publication of Stevenson's story 'on or just before 28 November [1885]', claiming that 'the bookstalls were already full of Christmas numbers &c, and the trade would not look at it.'³⁹ The same fate looked set to befall *Better Dead* until on 19 November 1887 Sonnenschein wrote to Barrie:

We could not get an answer from Messrs W. H. Smith and Sons, who demurred to taking the book on account of the great pressure of Christmas books, annuals &c. You no doubt are aware that without Smith a shilling book falls flat, and had he refused it we should have asked you to allow us to postpone publication till January. We are glad to say, however, that we have got an order from him today. The book is ready, and we are sending you an early copy.⁴⁰

The publication date, accurately recorded by Mackail, was thus 19 November 1887.⁴¹ As has been noted, however, the published volume records 1888 on the verso of the title page. Postdating books was not uncommon in this period, but it is possible that Sonnenschein printed a set of title-pages in anticipation of a January issue before receiving the order from W. H. Smith and deciding to issue the book immediately.

Better Dead was afforded substantial advance publicity. When he reviewed the story in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, George Bernard Shaw asserted that ‘friendly hands have rolled the log of Mr J. M. Barrie’.⁴² An example of this friendly log-rolling appeared in the *Academy* on 8 October 1887. In the ‘Notes and News’ column the following rather cryptic announcement appeared:

Messrs Sonnenschein & Co., will publish very shortly a brochure, entitled *Better Dead*, which, by reason of its *bizarre* humour, is likely to attract considerable notice. The hero regards social questions from a novel and somewhat startling point of view, having reached a profound conviction that society should be weeded out like a turnip field; and a number of prominent politicians and other notori-eties are amusingly hit off. The titlepage will bear the name ‘J. M. Barrie.’⁴³

The style of this paragraph is uncharacteristic of the ‘Notes and News’ column, which usually conveyed in a matter-of-fact way pieces of information drawn from publishers’ lists or inside knowledge. It is tempting to detect Barrie’s hand behind it. The elliptical presentation of the text as a ‘brochure’ serves to downplay its status as fiction and elevate its topical nature. More strikingly, the relegation of the author’s name to the end of the paragraph, and the corresponding elevation in importance of ‘the hero’, reflects Barrie’s distinctive habit of hiding behind his fictional masks. The conspicuous avoidance of the word author implies that Barrie’s name has somehow strayed onto the title-page. If Barrie was indeed responsible for the paragraph, it amounts to one of the earliest examples of what was to become his distinctive habit of playfully evading ownership of his works, whether through the adoption of a pseudonym (‘Gavin Ogilvy’, ‘McConnachie’, ‘Anon’) or denying authorship altogether, as he did the play *Peter Pan*.⁴⁴

‘THE BEST SKIT THAT HAS APPEARED FOR A LONG TIME’

Though undeniably a slight and immature work, *Better Dead* is extremely well written and establishes several characteristic elements of Barrie’s style. The story opens in Scotland with Andrew Riach⁴⁵ in the manse-parlour at Wheens.⁴⁶ Andrew is about to depart for London, leaving behind his sweet-

heart Clarrie. The opening paragraph establishes the humorous tone, the second sentence gently puncturing the first: 'When Andrew Riach went to London, his intention was to become private secretary to a member of the Cabinet. If time permitted, he proposed writing for the Press.'⁴⁷ The story is full of these sorts of humorous turns of phrase. Barrie's comic style lies in the way the tone of a sentence or paragraph abruptly shifts with the introduction of a new clause. The following description of Andrew's upbringing is a good example:

A native of Wheens and an orphan, he had been brought up by his uncle, who was a weaver and read Herodotus in the original. The uncle starved himself to buy books and talk about them, until one day he got a good meal, and died of it. (5–6)

Andrew departs for London, having interrupted his goodbye kiss with Clarrie to enquire about the price of herrings (a typically Barriesque deflation of lovemaking). He calls on all the great statesmen of the day but discovers no opening for a cabinet secretary. He survives at first as 'a phrase-monger for politicians', writing and selling pithy put-downs – only 'the Irish members' paid him (21) – and by undertaking paid tasks of deception, such as fainting 'in the pit of a theatre to the bribe of an emotional tragedian (a guinea)', and melodramatically 'assault[ing]' a young lady and her aunt 'by arrangement with a young gentleman who rescued them and made him run (ten shillings).' (22–23) Though frivolous in themselves, these light-hearted ideas point to the preoccupation with role-playing and emotional deception which informs Barrie's mature prose and drama. Andrew takes to following people out of idleness. One day he observes a stranger calmly topple another man into the river. The stranger explains that he is a member of the SDWSP – the 'Society for Doing Without Some People' – and that Andrew has been on the Society's list of potential victims. Moved by Andrew's story, however, the stranger (who is later revealed as the Society's President) proposes he be admitted into the 'Brotherhood' (62).

As contemporary reviewers were quick to notice, the idea for a Society dealing in death was not exactly original. Barrie would probably have known Gilbert and Sullivan's operetta *The Mikado*, which premiered in 1885. In an Act 1 aria, Ko-Ko, the Lord High Executioner, reads off a list of people who 'never would be missed' if executed:

As some day it may happen that a victim must be found,
I've got a little list — I've got a little list
Of society offenders who might well be underground,
And who never would be missed—who never would be missed!⁴⁸

Another likely inspiration was Robert Louis Stevenson's 'The Suicide Club', collected in the volume *New Arabian Nights* (1882). Stevenson's story is concerned with a club whose members are tired of life but who cannot confront the act of suicide. Each week a killer and a victim are chosen according to the chance turn of a playing card. Barrie's spin on the idea is more farcical. Whereas Stevenson's hero, Prince Florizel, makes it his task to hunt down and banish the President of the club, Barrie's anti-hero makes a swift exit back to Scotland when the other members decide that *he* is 'better dead'.

Critics have judged Barrie harshly for failing to make the most of the sinister potential in his theme. Yet the idea of the SDWSP is a means to an end and the story is better understood as a satire on contemporary political, social and literary themes, not all of which are easily understood today. Some have a permanent resonance, such as the joke at the expense of James Anthony Froude, biographer of Thomas Carlyle. Andrew learns that, until his death, Carlyle acted as Honorary President of the Society and suggested Froude as a target. Froude escapes death, however, the President stating that he 'would hardly have completed the "Reminiscences" had it not been that we could never make up our minds between him and Freeman.'⁴⁹ (68–69) This was a sly reference to the controversy sparked by the hasty publication of Carlyle's *Reminiscences*, edited by Froude, shortly after the sage's death in 1881.

Other literary references are more laconic. For example, Andrew observes a scrap piece of paper which lists potential targets (including Andrew Lang) and records that 'Robert Buchanan has written another play.' (68) By the 1880s Buchanan, once a highly acclaimed poet, had taken to writing plays to clear his debts, severely damaging his reputation. There are also a number of in-jokes in the story. The 'first man of any note' that Andrew disposes of is "'Punch's" favourite artist on Scotch matters' (110), which was probably William Mitchell the cover designer of the book. Barrie also depicts John Stuart Blackie, Professor of Greek during his time at the University of Edinburgh. Blackie is pursued by Andrew because he cannot

bear to think that his 'favourite professor', having resigned his chair, 'was now devoting his time to writing sonnets to himself in the Scotch newspapers.' (114) Blackie (who compiled several books on Scottish song) manages to outpace his pursuer when, humming 'Scots wha hae', he sings himself into 'a martial ecstasy'. (114)

Barrie's portrayal of contemporary events reflects his journalist's eye for contemporary incident. He references the growing incidence of anarchism in London, a theme which also interested Stevenson.⁵⁰ There was a spate of dynamite explosions in London in the 1880s and the President explains that 'the dynamiters, vulgarly so-called, are playing into our hands. Suspicion naturally falls on them'. (83) Barrie also humorously portrays the suffragette movement, a cause he supported more earnestly in his leaders on the *Nottingham Journal*. While the treatment of the suffragettes in *Better Dead* is far from mocking, the satirical tone can again be attributed to the demands of the shilling form. Andrew attends a meeting of the Society which is addressed by Mrs Fawcett (Millicent Garrett Fawcett), a prolific author, campaigner and leading suffragette. Mrs Fawcett forcefully demands that women be admitted as both members and victims of the Society. Complaining that the men 'take up the case of a petty maker of books because his tea-leaf solutions weary you' (77), she offers instead as more worthwhile targets Eliza Lynn Linton, the anti-feminist novelist, and Mrs Kendal (Madge Robertson), an actress and supporter of the suffragette movement but whom Mrs Fawcett suggests needs to be cut off in her prime. Barrie's joke is partly a theatrical one. In 1879 Mrs Kendal moved into theatrical management with her husband running the St James's Theatre, and Mrs Fawcett suggests she is already falling foul of the lure of publicity and celebrity which surrounds the stage.

Chief among Barrie's targets, however were politicians. Three contemporary figures in particular come under satirical fire in *Better Dead*. As noted, Sir William Harcourt, Chancellor of the Exchequer under Gladstone's Liberal administration in 1886, and Lord Randolph Churchill who held the same office at the time of publication of Barrie's story under Lord Salisbury's Tory administration, are portrayed on the cover. Harcourt plays only a passing role in the story but Randolph becomes one of Andrew's two main assignments, the other being the controversial Henry Labouchère, best known today as the man responsible for the clause in the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885 which outlawed 'gross indecency' among men and

enabled the prosecution of Oscar Wilde. Described in *Better Dead* as ‘the great Radical’, Labouchère was a powerful voice on the radical wing of the Liberal party. From 1876 he promulgated his views, which included anti-semitism and anti-suffrageism, via his own personal weekly journal, *Truth*. Many of Labouchère’s views and characteristics are satirised by Barrie in the chapter where Andrew attempts to persuade him that he would be ‘better dead’. A ‘lifelong agnostic’,⁵¹ we first meet him with a hymn-book in hand. ‘A handsomely framed picture, representing Truth lying drowned at the bottom of a well’ which stands on his mantelpiece, is a double-edged allusion to the title of his weekly paper; and Andrew’s neat judgement that ‘the very persons who blunt their weapons on you do you the honour of sharpening them on “Truth” (98), refers to the many libel actions brought against Labouchère’s paper, most of which he won and were ‘such good advertisements for his paper that he could afford to be indifferent to his irrecoverable costs amounting to scores of thousands of pounds.’⁵²

Andrew’s attempts to convince Labouchère that he has reached the ‘summit of his fame’ (98) and that only death would make it endure, fall on deaf ears. All the arguments he can muster – newspaper placards edged in black; six-column obituaries; a motion to adjourn the House, a statue in Hyde Park – fail to convince the statesman that he would be better dead. Yet Barrie’s joke takes on a mordant dimension when placed in its historical context. For early in 1886, shortly before *Better Dead* was written, Labouchère failed in his attempt to forge an agreement between the radical wing of the Liberal party, the Irish Nationalists, and the Liberal Prime Minister, Gladstone. When Joseph Chamberlain, the leader of the radicals, voted against the first Home Rule Bill, it caused a split in the Liberal Party which soon fell from power. It also proved, as one commentator has argued, ‘the greatest disappointment of Labouchère’s life, for it ruined his main enterprise. Thereafter his political zeal, though unabated, was diverted.’⁵³ Barrie was too alert an observer of contemporary affairs for this not to have influenced his portrayal of Labouchère. So far as his reputation as a politician was concerned, Labouchère might have been better off accepting Andrew’s proposal to die.

Andrew turns his attention to Lord Randolph Churchill where once again Barrie’s portrayal has a very specific literary and political context. In lampooning Randolph, Barrie was participating in a widespread vogue for satirical portraits of the current Chancellor. As Jonathan Rose notes, ‘no

politician was more ruthless at self-publicity than Lord Randolph Churchill' and the statesman's theatrical public speeches and memorable political put-downs brought him constant media attention.⁵⁴ He was the subject of several satirical attacks in *Punch* and other periodicals and also 'appeared as a character in several literary and stage works'.⁵⁵ A few months before *Better Dead* he was fictionalised in W. F. Rae's *Miss Bayle's Romance*, and in the following year appeared as the Tory Democrat Mr Bellarmin in *The Rebel Rose*, a novel co-written by Justin McCarthy and Mrs Campbell Praed. Both of these volumes were first issued anonymously. Barrie, by contrast, made no attempt to disguise his satirical portrait. At one point Andrew observes Randolph standing at the windows of tobacconist shops counting and scribbling something down on a piece of paper. When he steals the paper, Andrew discovers that the politician has been 'calculating fame' by comparing the number of times his face appeared on vesta matchboxes with those of other celebrities. Delighted that '[Joseph] Chamberlain [is] 'nowhere', he fumes that he ranks second to Maud Branscombe, the actress and light-opera singer whose portrait was ubiquitous in print media of the day and which is neatly described in *Better Dead* as 'obstruct[ing] the traffic.' (124)

Randolph obviously didn't mind having his insatiable desire for publicity humorously exposed because he wrote to Barrie 'to say how much he had been tickled and amused' by the story.⁵⁶ Andrew hears the Chancellor deliver a brilliant speech in the House of Commons, and considers this 'a worthy close to a brilliant career' (126). In his attempt to knife him, however, he manages only to carry away a shoe. Having failed in his efforts at eliminating the leading politicians of the day, Andrew is finally undone when he delivers a speech arguing that, as a radical answer to social problems, everyone should die when they reach forty-five years of age, including members of the SDWSP. Inevitably the members turn against him. He is hurried away to King's Cross by the President who, just as Andrew is boarding the train, suddenly gives in to temptation and leaps at his throat. Andrew manages to escape and returns to Wheens where he marries Carrie and becomes minister of the parish.

Mackail claims that Barrie 'had taken pains . . . to employ his own influence with the Press' and *Better Dead* was fairly widely noticed.⁵⁷ In January 1888 Sonnenschein reported that the book 'continues to be favourably reviewed by all people capable of understanding a joke. There is a very good notice in today's *Academy*.'⁵⁸ The *Academy* reviewer was William

Wallace, who would later greet *Auld Licht Idylls* with measured appreciation. Though he detected the influence of 'The Suicide Club', Wallace thought highly of the story and hoped it might transform the tenor of the shilling novel: 'It is not merely that *Better Dead* is the best skit that has appeared for a long time – that would be but a poor compliment – but it even encourages the hope that the shilling laughable will in time supplant the shilling dreadful.'⁵⁹ He was not the only critic to weigh Barrie's story against prejudices associated with shilling fiction. *To-Day* found a mischievous way of praising the work while damning the form, declaring:

The book is full of sayings smart, if not very profound, and the leading idea is worked out amusingly. There are many men who would be 'better dead.' . . . The authors of shilling shockers, for instance, would not be greatly missed. It says something for Mr Barrie's success in this branch of literature, that one is not tempted to place him in the list of suggested persons, which includes Mr Andrew Lang, and Mr Hyndman, but, on the contrary, wishes 'more power to his elbow.'⁶⁰

These reviews demonstrate the extent to which form and content co-existed in the shilling novel. Another paper, the *Glasgow Herald*, perceptively suggested that Barrie was parodying the form of the shilling novel almost as much as he was parodying contemporary politics. It declared the work 'a shilling screamer, or rather a political burlesque on shilling screamers, marked by genuine humour.'⁶¹

SALES, EARNINGS AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY

As noted, Barrie's contractual arrangements meant that he retained a pecuniary interest in his book, and when demand increased after the success of *Auld Licht Idylls*, published in April 1888, *Better Dead* quickly went into profit. Sonnenschein did its best to bolster sales by belatedly reviewing the book in its house magazine, *Time*, declaring that it 'satirizes in a brief space at once the career in London of the hungry Scot, the blatant aspirations of the self-seeking democrat, the boredom of celebrities, and the characteristics of certain notables.'⁶² In September 1888 Barrie was sent a remittance of £21/10s/8d. Although Sonnenschein referred to this as 'royalties', it was

actually a half share of the profits accrued thus far.⁶³ Three months later in December Sonnenschein printed a second impression of the first edition, probably again targeting the Christmas market.⁶⁴ On Christmas Day Barrie wrote to Gilmour about the book's success: 'It was "Better Dead" I said was going well just now. There is a lively show of it at the bookstalls. Got £21 for sales up to now.'⁶⁵ No mention is made in Sonnenschein's letters of the actual number of copies sold and no account rendered of production costs and receipts. The drawback of the half-profit system was that most publishers did not routinely provide such information. In the absence of the firm's financial records there is no way of knowing whether Barrie was getting his absolute fair share, but Sonnenschein was probably acting honourably. Two further, much smaller, remittances were made over the next two years: 15s/8d in 1889 and 16s/11d in 1890.⁶⁶ Over forty years later Barrie would forget (deliberately or otherwise) these payments when reinventing the past in *The Greenwood Hat*.

In December 1890, three months after making the second of these two small payments, Sonnenschein proposed a new edition of *Better Dead* in a more lasting physical format. By this time, however, *A Window in Thrums* (1889) had brought Barrie even greater critical acclaim, and as Sonnenschein's letter makes clear the author was now mindful of his reputation. This made him hesitant about reviving what he saw as a piece of juvenilia:

It occurs to us that a reprint . . . would now meet with a sale, if brought out uniformly with your other books; and we suggested to Messrs Hodder & Stoughton that they might care to do it. They reply to us as per enclosed. Please let us know what are your objections to a reprint. We should not wish to act against your inclination, but it seems to us a pity not to make sales which, according to our agreement, are for your and our benefit equally; & the discretion it empowers of making such [a] reprint were [*sic*] vested entirely in us.⁶⁷

Hodder & Stoughton were the publishers of *Auld Licht Idylls*, *A Window in Thrums* and two other Barrie titles, and Sonnenschein evidently proposed selling on its rights in *Better Dead* for a lump sum. The author's objection was not to republication but to grouping the story bibliographically with his other works:

With regard to Better Dead I sh[oul]d not care to have it reprinted with my other books as it had no pretensions to being more than an ephemeral work. If you however wish to print another edition of it yourselves you are of course quite entitled to do so. Not only have you the right but I sh[oul]d be entirely satisfied.⁶⁸

Barrie's view demonstrates how, in this period, shilling paperbacks could be viewed as ephemeral compared to hardback volumes which were for posterity.

Barrie's preoccupation with his developing oeuvre was not easily understood by Sonnenschein whose desire to republish was essentially commercial. Arguing that Barrie's name was enough to excite curiosity in the book, the firm explained that the object of the reprint

would be to supply the numerous possessors of your other books with an [*sic*] uniform volume. We quite see your point . . . as to the character of the book being more or less ephemeral, but that is not the whole question with a book by a writer who has a growing public.⁶⁹

It went on to suggest that Barrie might augment the volume by adding 'a few short stories . . . so that there might be a *raison d'être* for republication other than a purely trade one'. Unsurprisingly, this idea did not appeal to the author, who commented in reply: 'Collections of fugitive papers make one cheap, I think.'⁷⁰ Later, he would be irritated when unauthorised collections of his newspaper sketches were published in America.

Sonnenschein continued to push, however. A letter sent the following day demonstrates how quickly Barrie's books had begun to be pursued by collectors. The firm wanted to issue a 2s6d edition (two-and-half times the original price), on 'better paper' in a 'cloth' binding 'uniform with *Auld Licht Idylls*':

A 2/6 edition would be appreciated by 'Barrie collectors' who at present want the book & are rather disgusted that they cannot get it. The suggestion to reissue it uniform with the other volumes has come to us from more than one quarter; & we have no doubt that a certain sale can be achieved for it. We do not see that it can affect other new books of yours which are due to appear next year, & we shall of course not disguise the fact that it is a mere reprint.⁷¹

Barrie was offered a 20 per cent royalty in place of the half-profits agreement and, despite his misgivings about the venture, acceded. The 2s6d edition, bound in a dark blue buckram with a gilt top, was first advertised in the press on 18 April 1891. Sonnenschein inserted the line 'Uniform with the author's 6s books' at the head of early advertisements. Barrie had earlier pleaded that it was 'a pity' to lose the book's cover – 'It was clever . . . Perhaps the figure on cover c[oul]d go inside?'⁷² – and the illustration was duly used as a frontispiece.

When asked if he wished to make any changes to the text, Barrie wrote: 'Please take out all the notes in Better Dead. That is the only alteration I suggest. The critics will say the book should have been called "In Darkest England, or Another Way Out".'⁷³ The first printing of the story contained five footnotes by Barrie, two of which in fact remained in the 2s6d edition. The three omitted occur early in the story and establish the political allegiances of Mr Gladstone (Liberal), Mr Chamberlain (Radical), and Lord Randolph Churchill (Conservative). Each note is prefixed by the words 'At this time . . .' (14–15) which jokingly suggests that each man was subject to vacillation. The two retained were a jibe at the *Spectator* and a statement that Lord Rosebery later made fun of Andrew in a speech.

Technically speaking the 2s6d edition was not a new edition at all since it was printed from the stereotype plates used for the first edition. That Sonnenschein decided to make plates and keep them for three years suggests it had some inkling that Barrie's book would endure. A 1903 impression records that the 2s6d 'edition' was reprinted twice more in 1891, in June and July, and then again in February 1892.⁷⁴ On 10 September 1891 Sonnenschein sent Barrie a royalty cheque for £19/8s/4d; the following year he received another for £19/5s/4d.⁷⁵ These sums suggest a fairly substantial sale over these two years in excess of 1500 copies, the 20 per cent royalty being paid on the publishing price of 2s6d (Sonnenschein would have sold to wholesalers and retailers at about two-thirds of this price). In the six years between the date of publication and the end of 1893 Barrie thus received a total of £68/19s/2d (£23/3s/3d on the original edition plus £45/15s/11d on the 2s6d edition), over twice the sum he initially contributed towards publication.

By 1893, however, demand for the book had slackened and Sonnenschein again tried to sell on the rights. The firm's flirtation with fiction publishing was at end and it was now seeking to dispose of its cheap novels

‘which our undertakings in other and, to us, more important directions rather handicap’.⁷⁶ Arrangements had already been made with Chatto & Windus to take over Sonnenschein’s unwanted titles but Chatto objected to the ‘heavy royalties’ on *Better Dead*, and offered a cash payment for the remaining rights. Sonnenschein advised Barrie to accede to the demand: ‘The book has almost ceased selling with us, and is of a distinctly ephemeral character, as you remarked a year or two ago. . . . We are pretty sure that we shall not be able to do much more with it.’⁷⁷ Barrie must have refused, however, and for all the publisher’s pessimism the book went on selling in the Sonnenschein edition, seemingly unbeknownst to the author. In the 1896 American collected edition Barrie reported that *Better Dead* was ‘by my wish, no longer on sale in Great Britain’.⁷⁸ In March of that year, however, Sonnenschein announced the ‘seventh edition’ and a further impression appeared in July 1903. It continued to be sold under the imprint of George Allen & Unwin when that firm acquired Sonnenschein in 1911. Whether under a misapprehension or not, Barrie’s statement in the American edition reads like a further attempt to deflect attention from a work that he preferred to be forgotten.

Better Dead continued to live on bibliographically in a sort of ghostlike state. In an essay of 1900, J. A. Hammerton commented: ‘I have ceased to be surprised when people tell me they have never read this book of Barrie’s; indeed, it is not astonishing to hear a well-read man declare he has never heard of it.’⁷⁹ Hammerton’s essay was first published in the *Young Man* on 3 March 1900, and when the *Academy* noticed it in its ‘Bibliographical’ column the anonymous writer asserted that Barrie had ‘not reprinted the “book”, and in doing so he has been wise.’⁸⁰ This prompted Sonnenschein to reply, explaining that the work had ‘never been out of print, and several editions have from time to time been printed.’⁸¹ It remained available well into the twentieth century, but was always on the margins of the Barrie canon. In 1925, at the same time as the rest of Barrie’s *oeuvre* was being issued in a blue-cloth uniform edition by his other publishers, Allen & Unwin issued a new edition in the same style as the 1891 edition.

Barrie never tired of building mythologies around himself and his work. In another chapter in *The Greenwood Hat* he reprints a comical sketch, ‘Love me Never or For Ever’, where an unsuccessful novelist watches prospective buyers browse his three-volume novel on a remainder bookstall in Holywell Street. Barrie’s accompanying commentary claims that the experiences of the

fictional novelist afterwards occurred to himself, 'so that such an article as this becomes autobiographical'.⁸² He was apt to repeat this possibly apocryphal story. It crops up in a speech he made in 1922 to the Critic's Circle.⁸³ If the events really did occur, however, they could not have happened in the manner described in *The Greenwood Hat*, where Barrie records that, like the novelist in his sketch, he asked for *Better Dead* at Mudie's circulating library 'with palpitating heart' and watched browsers peruse but reject it at a tuppenny bookstall. *Better Dead* would certainly have been found at a bookstall but it would never, in its original form, have been stocked by Mudie's. Its retail outlet was written into its genre, just as its content was written into its form.

Notes

- 1 See Patrick Chalmers, *The Barrie Inspiration* (London: Peter Davies, 1938), p. 104.
- 2 *The Novels, Tales and Sketches of J. M. Barrie: Auld Licht Idylls and Better Dead* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1896), p. x.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 J. M. Barrie, *The Greenwood Hat: being a memoir of James Anon, 1885-1887* (1930; repr. London: Peter Davies, 1937), pp. 29-30.
- 5 F. A. Mumby and Frances H. S. Stallybrass, *From Swan Sonnenschein to George Allen & Unwin Ltd.* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1955), p. 30; Ann Parry, 'Swan Sonnenschein Ltd.', in Jonathan Rose and Patricia Anderson (eds), *British Literary Publishing Houses, 1820-1880* (Detroit, London: Gale, 1991), pp. 291-95, 294.
- 6 Denis Mackail, *The Story of J. M. B.* (London: Peter Davies, 1941), p. 136.
- 7 S. Squire Sprigge, *The Methods of Publishing* (London: Henry Glaiser, 1890), p. 12.
- 8 John Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists and Publishers* (London: The Athlone Press, 1976), p. 218.
- 9 Paul Delaney, *George Gissing: a Life* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2008), p. 42.
- 10 See Victor Bonham-Carter, *Authors by Profession, Volume 1* (London: The Society of Authors, 1978).
- 11 Mackail, pp. 135-36.
- 12 Barrie, *The Greenwood Hat*, pp. 29-30.
- 13 ALS, Barrie to Gilmour, 15 September 1886. Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University, MS Vault Barrie. (Hereafter Beinecke).
- 14 ALS, Barrie to Gilmour, 25 November 1886. Beinecke.
- 15 Mackail, p. 121.
- 16 J. A. Hammerton, *Barrie: The Story of a Genius* (London: Sampson Low and Marston, 1929), p. 130; Mackail, p. 136.

- 17 In Edward Gaitens's novel *Dance of the Apprentices* (1948), the young socialist Douglas Hamilton is pictured in Glasgow in 1915 reading *Das Kapital* in 'the big Sonnenschein volume'. Gaitens, *Dance of the Apprentices* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1990), p. 117.
- 18 Swan Sonnenschein, Lowrey & Co. (hereafter SS) to George Bernard Shaw, 3 May 1887, Letter Book 7, fol. 336. Swan Sonnenschein archive, University of Reading Archives and Special Collections, MS 3280.
- 19 e.g. *Gentleman's Magazine Advertiser* (November 1887), p. 2.
- 20 e.g. *Athenaeum*, 12 November 1887, p. 625.
- 21 John Sutherland, *The Longman Companion to Victorian Fiction* (second edition, London: Pearson Longman, 2009), p. 98.
- 22 Christopher Pittard, 'The Detective Story', in *The Oxford History of the Novel in English, Volume 4: The Reinvention of the British and Irish Novel 1880-1940*, ed. Patrick Parrinder and Andrzej Gąsiorek (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 214.
- 23 *Book-Lore* (November 1886), 180.
- 24 Simon Eliot notes a marked reduction in the average price of books in the literature category at the end of the nineteenth century. See Eliot, *Some Patterns and Trends in British Publishing 1800-1919* (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1994), pp. 72-74.
- 25 Sutherland, *Longman Companion*, p. 458.
- 26 SS to Richard Dowling, 16 May 1887, Letter Book 7, fol. 426.
- 27 SS to J. M. Barrie, 9 September 1887, Letter Book 8, fol. 125.
- 28 *The Novels, Tales and Sketches of J. M. Barrie*, p. x.
- 29 SS to Barrie, 15 September 1887, Letter Book 8, fol. 168.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Barrie, *The Greenwood Hat*, p. 30.
- 32 The cover is reproduced in *The Greenwood Hat*, opposite p. 24.
- 33 SS to Barrie, 15 September 1887, Letter Book 8, fol. 168.
- 34 Eliot, p. 36.
- 35 SS to Barrie, 30 September 1887, Letter Book 8, fol. 333.
- 36 SS to Barrie, 1 November 1887, Letter Book 8, fol. 652.
- 37 SS to Barrie, 10 November 1887, Letter Book 8, fol. 721.
- 38 SS to Barrie, 19 November 1887, Letter Book 8, fol. 826.
- 39 *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, ed. Richard Dury (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), p. 183.
- 40 SS to Barrie, 19 November 1887, Letter Book 8, fol. 826.
- 41 Mackail, p. 136.
- 42 [George Bernard Shaw], 'Three New Novels', *Pall Mall Gazette* (26 March 1888), p. 3.
- 43 *Academy*, 8 October 1887, p. 234.
- 44 See the Dedication to the 1928 printed text.
- 45 The name was a joking reference to Barrie's friend, Alexander (Sandy) Riach, editor of the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*.
- 46 Barrie would change this fictionalised name for his native town of Kirriemuir to Thrums in *Auld Licht Idylls*.
- 47 J. M. Barrie, *Better Dead* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1888 [1887]), p. 1. Further references are in the text.
- 48 W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan, *The Mikado, or The Town of Titipu* (London: Chappell & Co., [n/d]), p. 9.
- 49 Freeman was presumably Edward Augustus Freeman, a rival historian to Froude.

- 50 Stevenson's *More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter* (1885), co-written with his wife Fanny, picks up the characters of *New Arabian Nights* in a new set of linked short stories set against the background of spies and dynamite explosions.
- 51 Herbert Sidebotham, rev. H. C. G. Matthew, 'Henry Du Pré Labouchère', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Online edition www.odnb.com accessed 31 July 2014.
- 52 Ibid.
- 53 Ibid.
- 54 Jonathan Rose, *The Literary Churchill: Author, Reader, Actor* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), p. 4.
- 55 Ibid., p. 5.
- 56 Mackail, p. 137.
- 57 Ibid., p. 136.
- 58 SS to Barrie, 6 January 1888, Letter Book 9, fol. 171.
- 59 *Academy*, 7 January 1888, p. 7.
- 60 *To-Day*, 9 (January 1888), 28.
- 61 *Glasgow Herald*, 3 December 1887, p. 9.
- 62 *Time*, 18 (May 1888), 634.
- 63 SS to Barrie, 17 September 1888, Letter Book 11, fol. 53.
- 64 This second printing is wrongly recorded as December 1887 in later editions published by Sonnenschein and George Allen & Unwin.
- 65 ALS, Barrie to Gilmour, 25 December 1888. Beinecke.
- 66 SS to Barrie, 21 August 1889; 8 September 1890, Letter Books 13, fol. 355 and 15, fol. 975.
- 67 SS to Barrie, 3 December 1890, Letter Book 16, fol. 616.
- 68 Barrie to SS, 5 December 1890. Beinecke.
- 69 SS to Barrie, 6 December 1890, Letter Book 16, fol. 642.
- 70 Barrie to SS, 9 December 1890. Beinecke.
- 71 SS to Barrie, 10 December 1890, Letter Book 16, fol. 676.
- 72 Barrie to SS, 9 December 1890. Beinecke.
- 73 Barrie to SS, 18 December 1890. Beinecke.
- 74 Barrie, *Better Dead* (1887; London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1903), p. [ii].
- 75 SS to Barrie, 10 September 1891; 18 October 1892, Letter Books 18, fol. 392 and 20, fol. 934.
- 76 SS to Barrie, 25 March 1893, Letter Book 21, fol. 769.
- 77 Ibid.
- 78 *The Novels, Tales and Sketches of J. M. Barrie*, p. ix.
- 79 J. A. Hammerton, *J. M. Barrie and his Books: Biographical and Critical Studies* (London: Horace Marshall, 1900), p. 79. Hammerton reprinted the essay, with minor amendments, in his *Memories of Books and Places* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co., 1928), pp. 147–61.
- 80 *Academy*, 3 March 1900, p. 178.
- 81 *Academy*, 10 March 1900, p. 258.
- 82 Barrie, *The Greenwood Hat*, p. 52. A similar claim is made in the introduction to *The Novels, Tales and Sketches of J. M. Barrie*, p. x.
- 83 See J. M. Barrie, *McConnachie and J. M. B.* (London: Peter Davies, 1938), p. 53.