

THE SECRET GARDEN

FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT



EDITED BY
GRETCHEN HOLBROOK GERZINA

A NORTON CRITICAL EDITION

A NORTON CRITICAL EDITION

Frances Hodgson Burnett
THE SECRET GARDEN



AUTHORITATIVE TEXT
BACKGROUNDS AND CONTEXTS
BURNETT IN THE PRESS
CRITICISM

Edited by

GRETCHEN HOLBROOK GERZINA
DARTMOUTH COLLEGE



W. W. Norton & Company has been independent since its founding in 1923, when William Warder Norton and Mary D. Herter Norton first published lectures delivered at the People's Institute, the adult education division of New York City's Cooper Union. The Nortons soon expanded their program beyond the Institute, publishing books by celebrated academics from America and abroad. By midcentury, the two major pillars of Norton's publishing program—trade books and college texts—were firmly established. In the 1950s, the Norton family transferred control of the company to its employees, and today—with a staff of four hundred and a comparable number of trade, college, and professional titles published each year—W. W. Norton & Company stands as the largest and oldest publishing house owned wholly by its employees.

Copyright © 2006 by
W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

All rights reserved.
Printed in the United States of America.

The text of this book is composed in Fairfield Medium
with the display set in Bernhard Modern.
Composition by Binghamton Valley Composition, LLC.
Manufacturing by the Maple-Vail Book Group, Binghamton.
Production Manager: Benjamin Reynolds.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Burnett, Frances Hodgson. 1849–1924.

The Secret garden: authoritative text, backgrounds and contexts, Frances Hodgson
Burnett in the press, criticism / Frances Hodgson Burnett; edited by
Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina.
p. cm.—(A Norton critical edition)
Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 0-393-92635-4 (pbk.)

1. Orphans—Fiction. 2. Gardens—Fiction. 3. Friendship—Fiction. 4. Sick
children—Fiction. 5. Yorkshire (England)—Fiction. 6. Burnett, Frances Hodgson,
1849–1924. Secret garden. I. Gerzina, Gretchen. II. Title. III. Series.

PS1214.S4 2005
813'.4—dc22
2005053420

W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10110-0017
www.wwnorton.com

W. W. Norton & Company Ltd., Castle House,
75/76 Wells Street, London W1T 3QT

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

The Editor

GRETCHEN HOLBROOK GERZINA is Professor of English at Dartmouth College. She is the author of *Carrington: A Life*; *Black London: Life Before Emancipation*; *Frances Hodgson Burnett: The Unexpected Life of the Author of The Secret Garden*; and she is the editor of *Black Victorians/Black Victoriana*. She is currently working on the Norton Annotated Edition of *The Secret Garden*.

W. W. NORTON & COMPANY, INC.
Also Publishes

THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE
edited by Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Nellie Y. McKay et al.

THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE
edited by Nina Baym et al.

THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE
edited by Jack Zipes et al.

THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF CONTEMPORARY FICTION
edited by R. V. Cassill and Joyce Carol Oates

THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
edited by M. H. Abrams and Stephen Greenblatt et al.

THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF LITERATURE BY WOMEN
edited by Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar

THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY POETRY
edited by Jahan Ramazani, Richard Ellmann, and Robert O'Clair

THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF POETRY
edited by Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter, and Jon Stallworthy

THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF SHORT FICTION
edited by R. V. Cassill and Richard Bausch

THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF THEORY AND CRITICISM
edited by Vincent B. Leitch et al.

THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF WORLD LITERATURE
edited by Sarah Lawall et al.

THE NORTON FACSIMILE OF THE FIRST FOLIO OF SHAKESPEARE
prepared by Charlton Hinman

THE NORTON INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE
edited by Alison Booth, J. Paul Hunter, and Kelly J. Mays

THE NORTON INTRODUCTION TO THE SHORT NOVEL
edited by Jerome Beaty

THE NORTON READER
edited by Linda H. Peterson and John C. Brereton

THE NORTON SAMPLER
edited by Thomas Cooley

THE NORTON SHAKESPEARE, BASED ON THE OXFORD EDITION
edited by Stephen Greenblatt et al.

For a complete list of Norton Critical Editions, visit
www.wwnorton.com/college/english/nce_home.htm

Preface

When Frances Hodgson Burnett sat down to write *The Secret Garden* in her Long Island, New York, home, after having permanently left her beloved Maytham Hall, in Kent, England, she had no notion that she was creating a modern classic. She knew that she found the story compelling and close to her heart and was delighted that it would make its serial debut in the *American Magazine*, the first children's story that they had ever published. After her death fourteen years later, in 1924, her friends got together to plan a memorial to her in Manhattan's Central Park and were startled by the suggestion of the writer Elizabeth Jordan that it take the form of a fountain featuring Mary Lennox and Dickon Sowerby. Were not the characters of some of her other novels—*Little Lord Fauntleroy*, *The Dawn of a Tomorrow*, *The Lady of Quality*—far better known, they wondered?

Burnett published more than fifty novels, most of them for adults, and wrote and produced thirteen plays. She was the highest-paid and best-known woman author of her time, and from the time she was eighteen and published a short story in *Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine* her work was never turned down by any publisher. Born and raised in England and transplanted to the United States during the last months of the Civil War, she made homes in both countries, and both countries claim her as their own today. The reputation that she enjoyed in her lifetime as a prolific author for adults and young people today rests on a single book, *The Secret Garden*.

Its climb to the stature of a children's classic depended less on what the critics had to say about it than on the thousands upon thousands of girls and boys who cherished it over the years, taking it out of public libraries, passing it on to their friends, and giving to their own children as a special gift. It is rare to find a woman in England or America who does not count it among her most beloved books, and it consistently ranks near the top of the lists of favorite or influential books. And the story of two children who find healing and hope in the confines of nature, aided by a third child, is truly universal: it has been translated into nearly every language, and reworked into plays and films.

This Norton Critical Edition presents the text of *The Secret Gar-*

den within the context of the press, Burnett's own writings on gardens and spiritual healing, and modern critical analysis. Several articles appear here for the first time, including one that carefully looks at the important revisions Burnett made to the manuscript of the novel, and another that charts its progress from a personally loved story to a modern classic by looking at reviews and its critical reception. Other selections reprinted here apply literary and cultural analysis to the story. The result is an edition that will appeal to students and professional scholars alike.

Acknowledgments

My journey with *The Secret Garden* has been a long one, beginning as a childhood reader of Burnett's books, then as her biographer, and now as an editor. I've been helped along the way by a number of people and institutions, and wish to thank them here. My mother, Joyce Holbrook, gets priority for giving me my first copy of the book. Penny Deupree, Burnett's great-granddaughter, has been consistently generous with access to private material and has truly made me feel a part of the author's family. The staff at the Dorothy and Lewis B. Cullman Center for Scholars and Writers at the New York Public Library helped me to get my first view of the manuscript, and the British Library, in particular senior curator of manuscripts Sally Brown, put the manuscript into a magical context by displaying part of it in their 2005 exhibition "The Writer in the Garden." Kimberly West, a student at Barnard College, helped me order and retrieve critical articles. Deepest thanks go to editors Carol Bemis and Brian Baker at W. W. Norton, who not only got me through the process but did so with patience and cheerful goodwill.

Contents

Preface	ix
Acknowledgments	xi
The Text of <i>The Secret Garden</i>	1
Facsimile of the opening page of <i>The Secret Garden</i>	2
<i>The Secret Garden</i>	3
ILLUSTRATIONS	174
<i>The American Magazine</i> • First episode of <i>The Secret Garden</i> (October 1910)	174
<i>The Critic</i> • Frances Hodgson Burnett (December 17, 1881)	175
<i>Sunday World</i> • Frances Hodgson Burnett (Caricature) (1906?)	176
Backgrounds and Contexts	
Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina • [The End of an Era]	179
Gretchen V. Rector • Digging in the Garden: The Manuscript of <i>The Secret Garden</i> by Frances Hodgson Burnett	186
Frances Hodgson Burnett • My Robin	199
Frances Hodgson Burnett • In the Garden	209
LETTERS	215
Vivian Burnett to Frances Hodgson Burnett (April 10, 1911)	215
Frances Hodgson Burnett to Vivian Burnett (April 16, 1911)	216
Frances Hodgson Burnett to Vivian Burnett (April 20, 1910)	217
Frances Hodgson Burnett to Vivian Burnett (April 1911)	217
Frances Hodgson Burnett to Elizabeth Jordan (no date)	219
Frances Hodgson Burnett • <i>From A Far, Fair Country</i>	219
BURNETT IN THE PRESS	
R. H. Stoddard • Frances Hodgson Burnett (1881)	222
Anonymous • Authors at Work—III (1889)	226
Anonymous • The Boston Mind Cure (1885)	227

Anonymous • The Lounger (no date)	228
Frances Hodgson Burnett • Mrs. Burnett Protests (1889)	229
Anonymous • Mrs. Burnett's Timely Protest (1889)	234
Charlotte Harwood • Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett at Home: A Visit to Maytham Hall, Rolvenden, Kent (1902)	235
Pendennis • Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett Finds a New Field for Her Pen (1906)	238
Anonymous • Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett: The Authoress of "Little Lord Fauntleroy"—Has Something to Say about Children and Children's Books (1907)	242
Anonymous • [Untitled] (1907)	246
Lonis V. De Foe • A New Thought Mixed with Fantasy Is Served in Guise of Melodrama (1909)	246
Frances Hodgson Burnett • Mrs. Burnett Not a Christian Scientist (1909)	249
Magda Frances West • 'There Is No Devil,' Asserts Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett (1910)	250
Anonymous • Social Sets of Other Cities (1910)	252
Anonymous • Mrs. Burnett and the Occult (1913)	255
Frances Hodgson Burnett • The Magic in Children's Books (1920)	259

Criticism

REVIEWS AND MENTIONS OF *THE SECRET GARDEN*

Anonymous • <i>From</i> New York Literary Notes (1911)	265
Anonymous • What Was Hid In a Garden (1911)	265
Anonymous • The New Books (1911)	267
Anonymous • <i>From</i> A Guide to New Books (1911)	268
Anonymous • <i>From</i> The Way of Letters (1911)	269
R. A. Whay • Frances Hodgson Burnett's "The Secret Garden" (1911)	269
Anonymous • <i>The Secret Garden</i> . By Frances Hodgson Burnett (1911)	270
Anonymous • <i>From</i> Reviews of New Books. Fifty of the Season's Best Books for Children (1911)	271
Anonymous • One Hundred Christmas Books (1911)	271
Anonymous • <i>From</i> The Nation (1911)	272
Anonymous • <i>From</i> American Monthly Magazine (1911)	272
Anonymous • <i>From</i> The Bookman, Christmas 1911	273
Anonymous • <i>From</i> Among the Authors (1912)	274
Anonymous • <i>From</i> The Way of Letters (1912)	274
Anonymous • <i>From</i> Among the Authors (1913)	275

MODERN CRITICAL VIEWS OF *THE SECRET GARDEN*

Anne Lundin • The Critical and Commercial Reception of <i>The Secret Garden</i> , 1911–2004	277
---	-----

Phyllis Bixler • Gardens, Houses, and Nurturant Power in <i>The Secret Garden</i>	287
Gillian Adams • Secrets and Healing Magic in “The Secret Garden”	302
Christine Wilkie • Digging Up <i>The Secret Garden</i> : Noble Innocents or Little Savages?	314
Shirley Foster and Judy Simons • Frances Hodgson Burnett: <i>The Secret Garden</i>	324
Jerry Phillips • The Mem Sahib, the Worthy, the Rajah and His Minions: Some Reflections of the Class Politics of <i>The Secret Garden</i>	342
INFLUENCED BY <i>THE SECRET GARDEN</i>	
Margaret Mackey • Strip Mines in the Garden: Old Stories, New Formats, and the Challenge of Change	367
Sally Sims Stokes • Noel Streatfeild's Secret Gardens	387
Phyllis Bixler • <i>The Secret Garden</i> “Misread”: The Broadway Musical as Creative Interpretation	422
Frances Hodgson Burnett: A Chronology	443
Selected Bibliography	453

The Text of
THE SECRET GARDEN



1

Mistress Mary quite Contrary
Chapter 1

When Mary Lemon was sent to Memsaltheinite Manor to live with her uncle every body said she was the most disagreeable looking child they had ever seen. It was true too. She had a little thin face & a little thin body & ~~her~~ ^{her} straight light ~~eyes~~ ^{eyes} hair with only ~~one~~ ^{two} ~~at~~ ^{at} the end. The hair was yellow & her face was yellow because she had been born in India & had always been ill in one way or another. Her father had held a good position under the English Government & had always been busy & ill himself, & her mother had been a great beauty who cared only to go to parties & amuse herself with gay people. She had not wanted a little girl at all until when Mary's mother died she was handed over to the care of an uncle who was made to understand that if she wanted to please the Mem Sahib she must keep the child out of sight as much as possible. So when she was a sickly pretent eyeless baby she was kept out of the way & when she became a healthy fatling thing she was kept out of the way also. She never remembered seeing anything but the dark faces of her ayah & the other servants ~~but~~ ^{and} as they always teased her & gave her her own way in everything because the Mem Sahib would be angry if she was disturbed by her crying, ~~and~~ ^{and} the time she was ~~very~~ ^{very} old she was a tyrannical & selfish little pig as you might say. But the young English governess who came to teach her to read & write had had her so much that she ~~and~~ ^{she} gave up her place in three months & ~~the~~ ^{the} other governess ~~and~~ ^{and} it came to my mind that they always went away in a short time ^{that} if Mary had not chosen to really want to know how to read books she would never have learned her letters at all.

Facsimile of the opening page of Burnett's manuscript of *The Secret Garden*. Note that the title is "Mistress Mary quite Contrary." Courtesy of the Frances Hodgson Burnett Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

CHAPTER ONE

There Is No One Left

When Mary Lennox was sent to Misselthwaite Manor to live with her uncle everybody said she was the most disagreeable-looking child ever seen. It was true, too. She had a little thin face and a little thin body, thin light hair and a sour expression. Her hair was yellow, and her face was yellow because she had been born in India and had always been ill in one way or another. Her father had held a position under the English Government and had always been busy and ill himself, and her mother had been a great beauty who cared only to go to parties and amuse herself with gay people. She had not wanted a little girl at all, and when Mary was born she handed her over to the care of an Ayah, who was made to understand that if she wished to please the Mem Sahib¹ she must keep the child out of sight as much as possible. So when she was a sickly, fretful, ugly little baby she was kept out of the way, and when she became a sickly, fretful, toddling thing she was kept out of the way also. She never remembered seeing familiarly anything but the dark faces of her Ayah and the other native servants, and as they always obeyed her and gave her her own way in everything, because the Mem Sahib would be angry if she was disturbed by her crying, by the time she was six years old she was as tyrannical and selfish a little pig as ever lived. The young English governess who came to teach her to read and write disliked her so much that she gave up her place in three months, and when other governesses came to try to fill it they always went away in a shorter time than the first one. So if Mary had not chosen to really want to know how to read books she would never have learned her letters at all.

One frightfully hot morning, when she was about nine years old, she awakened feeling very cross, and she became crosser still when she saw that the servant who stood by her bedside was not her Ayah.

"Why did you come?" she said to the strange woman. "I will not let you stay. Send my Ayah to me."

The woman looked frightened, but she only stammered that the Ayah could not come and when Mary threw herself into a passion and beat and kicked her, she looked only more frightened and repeated that it was not possible for the Ayah to come to Missie Sahib.²

1. A respectful term of address, usually used by Hindus when addressing or referring to European women. "Ayah": A nursemaid hired by English families in India and the colonies to care for their children.

2. Formal address by an Indian servant for a European girl.

There was something mysterious in the air that morning. Nothing was done in its regular order and several of the native servants seemed missing, while those whom Mary saw slunk or hurried about with ashy and scared faces. But no one would tell her anything and her Ayah did not come. She was actually left alone as the morning went on, and at last she wandered out into the garden and began to play by herself under a tree near the veranda. She pretended that she was making a flower-bed, and she stuck big scarlet hibiscus blossoms into little heaps of earth, all the time growing more and more angry and muttering to herself the things she would say and the names she would call Saidie when she returned.

"Pig! Pig! Daughter of Pigs!" she said, because to call a native a pig is the worst insult of all.

She was grinding her teeth and saying this over and over again when she heard her mother come out on the veranda with some one. She was with a fair young man and they stood talking together in low strange voices. Mary knew the fair young man who looked like a boy. She had heard that he was a very young officer who had just come from England. The child stared at him, but she stared most at her mother. She always did this when she had a chance to see her, because the Mem Sahib—Mary used to call her that oftener than anything else—was such a tall, slim, pretty person and wore such lovely clothes. Her hair was like curly silk and she had a delicate little nose which seemed to be disdainful things, and she had large laughing eyes. All her clothes were thin and floating, and Mary said they were "full of lace." They looked fuller of lace than ever this morning, but her eyes were not laughing at all. They were large and scared and lifted imploringly to the fair boy officer's face.

"Is it so very bad? Oh, is it?" Mary heard her say.

"Awfully," the young man answered in a trembling voice. "Awfully, Mrs. Lennox. You ought to have gone to the hills two weeks ago."

The Mem Sahib wrung her hands.

"Oh, I know I ought!" she cried. "I only stayed to go to that silly dinner party. What a fool I was!"

At that very moment such a loud sound of wailing broke out from the servants' quarters that she clutched the young man's arm, and Mary stood shivering from head to foot. The wailing grew wilder and wilder.

"What is it? What is it?" Mrs. Lennox gasped.

"Some one has died," answered the boy officer. "You did not say it had broken out among your servants."

"I did not know!" the Mem Sahib cried. "Come with me! Come with me!" and she turned and ran into the house.

After that, appalling things happened, and the mysteriousness of

the morning was explained to Mary. The cholera³ had broken out in its most fatal form and people were dying like flies. The Ayah had been taken ill in the night, and it was because she had just died that the servants had wailed in the huts. Before the next day three other servants were dead and others had run away in terror. There was panic on every side, and dying people in all the bungalows.⁴

During the confusion and bewilderment of the second day Mary hid herself in the nursery and was forgotten by everyone. Nobody thought of her, nobody wanted her, and strange things happened of which she knew nothing. Mary alternately cried and slept through the hours. She only knew that people were ill and that she heard mysterious and frightening sounds. Once she crept into the dining-room and found it empty, though a partly finished meal was on the table and chairs and plates looked as if they had been hastily pushed back when the diners rose suddenly for some reason. The child ate some fruit and biscuits, and being thirsty she drank a glass of wine which stood nearly filled. It was sweet, and she did not know how strong it was. Very soon it made her intensely drowsy, and she went back to her nursery and shut herself in again, frightened by cries she heard in the huts and by the hurrying sound of feet. The wine made her so sleepy that she could scarcely keep her eyes open and she lay down on her bed and knew nothing more for a long time.

Many things happened during the hours in which she slept so heavily, but she was not disturbed by the wails and the sound of things being carried in and out of the bungalow.

When she awakened she lay and stared at the wall. The house was perfectly still. She had never known it to be so silent before. She heard neither voices nor footsteps, and wondered if everybody had got well of the cholera and all the trouble was over. She wondered also who would take care of her now her Ayah was dead. There would be a new Ayah, and perhaps she would know some new stories. Mary had been rather tired of the old ones. She did not cry because her nurse had died. She was not an affectionate child and had never cared much for any one. The noise and hurrying about and wailing over the cholera had frightened her, and she had been angry because no one seemed to remember that she was alive. Everyone was too panic-stricken to think of a little girl no one was fond of. When people had the cholera it seemed that they remembered nothing but themselves. But if every one had got well again, surely some one would remember and come to look for her.

But no one came, and as she lay waiting the house seemed to grow

3. A dangerous and sometimes fatal infectious intestinal disease, characterized by vomiting and diarrhea, leading to dehydration.

4. One-story houses.

more and more silent. She heard something rustling on the matting and when she looked down she saw a little snake gliding along and watching her with eyes like jewels. She was not frightened, because he was a harmless little thing who would not hurt her and he seemed in a hurry to get out of the room. He slipped under the door as she watched him.

"How queer and quiet it is," she said. "It sounds as if there was no one in the bungalow but me and the snake."

Almost the next minute she heard footsteps in the compound, and then on the veranda. They were men's footsteps, and the men entered the bungalow and talked in low voices. No one went to meet or speak to them and they seemed to open doors and look into rooms.

"What desolation!" she heard one voice say. "That pretty, pretty woman! I suppose the child, too. I heard there was a child, though no one ever saw her."

Mary was standing in the middle of the nursery when they opened the door a few minutes later. She looked an ugly, cross little thing and was frowning because she was beginning to be hungry and feel disgracefully neglected. The first man who came in was a large officer she had once seen talking to her father. He looked tired and troubled, but when he saw her he was so startled that he almost jumped back.

"Barney!" he cried out. "There is a child here! A child alone! In a place like this! Mercy on us, who is she!"

"I am Mary Lennox," the little girl said, drawing herself up stiffly. She thought the man was very rude to call her father's bungalow "A place like this!" "I fell asleep when everyone had the cholera and I have only just wakened up. Why does nobody come?"

"It is the child no one ever saw!" exclaimed the man, turning to his companions. "She has actually been forgotten!"

"Why was I forgotten?" Mary said, stamping her foot. "Why does nobody come?"

The young man whose name was Barney looked at her very sadly. Mary even thought she saw him wink his eyes as if to wink tears away.

"Poor little kid!" he said. "There is nobody left to come."

It was in that strange and sudden way that Mary found out that she had neither father nor mother left; that they had died and been carried away in the night, and that the few native servants who had not died also had left the house as quickly as they could get out of it, none of them even remembering that there was a Missie Sahib. That was why the place was so quiet. It was true that there was no one in the bungalow but herself and the little rustling snake.