

A Different Type of New Woman: The Life and Writing of Lady Mary Jeune

by

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Abstract

Much work has been done in both the popular and academic presses over the last few decades to build the foundational knowledge of women's activism through life writing, research, and the development of feminist methodologies for studying women's lives and the cultures in which they lived. This dissertation is a case study of one woman in the nineteenth century that will show what activism for women and children looked like at the fin de siècle. Using life writing techniques and periodical studies, these chapters show the complex evolution of Lady Jeune's public persona from a self-identified conservative position to an active liberal position heavily influenced by her Scottish heritage, also illuminating the intersectional complexities of class and regional identities in a way that highlights the fluid nature of Victorian feminisms. To do so, the life of Lady Jeune is examined through primary source materials in the periodical press, both her own writing and responses from her peers, illustrating the shifts between fictional New Woman characters and the lives of real women who stepped outside of the domestic sphere for an active life in the public eye.

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Introduction

Generous, empathetic, witty, clever, inexhaustible, driven, sharp, astute, practical, Scottish, English, Lady Mary Jeune was the leading society hostess in London at the fin de siècle, an outspoken activist for women and children, philanthropist, journalist, and one of the first women to hold office on the London County Council. Lady Jeune was born, Susan Mary Elizabeth Stewart-Mackenzie in 1845 to Keith William Stewart-Mackenzie and Hannah Charlotte Hope-Vere as the eldest of four children. Her grandmother was the Hon. Mary Elizabeth Frederica Mackenzie, chieftainess of the Highland clan Mackenzie. Her family was one of the oldest Highland clans who held lands stretching from sea to sea and included the Island of Lewis, one of the largest and most profitable islands in Northern Scotland. She was raised on the family estate of Brahan Castle north of Inverness. She was presented at court in 1865 and enjoyed the social life of a debutante as Miss Stewart-Mackenzie until her first marriage in 1871. As the wife of Hon. John C. Stanley, she was known as Hon. Mrs. Mary Stanley. The couple settled in London and had two daughters, Madeline Cecilia Carlyle Stanley, born in 1876 and Osma Mary Dorothy Stanley, born in 1877. She was widowed in 1878. She married her second husband, Francis Jeune in 1881, and had a son, Christian Francis Seaforth Jeune in 1882. Through this marriage she became known as Lady Jeune and then Baroness St. Helier. For the sake of clarity, I will refer to her as Lady Jeune throughout this project, the name she was most commonly known by from the 1880s until her death in 1931.

I will be working with Lady Jeune's essays and memoir to demonstrate how she fit into the major topics about women and how she approached philanthropy. She was a

hands-on social reformer and a partial list of the charities that she worked in, founded, and championed are important to understanding her identity. She assisted in gathering supplies for wounded soldiers, and coal for the poor; she published several letters in various newspapers for the Ladies' Committee at Constantinople for the Relief of the Turkish Wounded Soldiers while married to her first husband; she worked with the Red Cross and Red Crescent charities, she helped raise money and was a committee member for the Princess Helena College for girls; she worked on many charities with Baroness Burdett Coutts; she was president of The Children's Home (which had 8 separate institutions); she was founder and president of The Children's Happy Evening Association; she worked with the Ragged School to pilot a free meal program that would later become government policy; and she opened and owned two workhouses for reclaiming fallen women.

To truly understand where we are, and to make forward progress in overcoming systems of oppression, we need to garner a better knowledge of what has been done in the past. This knowledge gathering serves two functions; it provides a solid foundation in the history of women's activism for women and children, and it highlights the successes and failures of the past so that mistakes are not so easily repeated. Much work has been done in both the popular and academic presses over the last few decades to build the foundational knowledge of women's activism through life writing, research, and the development of feminist methodologies for studying women's lives and the cultures in which they lived. Using life writing techniques and periodical studies, I will show the complex evolution of Lady Jeune's public persona from a self-identified conservative

position to an active liberal position heavily influenced by her Scottish heritage, and show how she fits into the existing discourse surrounding the New Woman.

A significant amount of work has been done on Victorian New Woman debates. In *New Women, New Novels: Feminism and Early Modernism*, Ann Ardis works through the shift in rhetoric surrounding the Victorian Woman Question. She asks first, “[w]hy do certain segments of women’s history still remain hidden from history,”¹ and second, “[h]ave we in fact contributed to the labeling of the feminist as Other by marginalizing certain portions of our history?”² This marginalization took place through the mid-20th century as critics participated in what Ardis calls “compromise formations.”³ In other words, when early feminist critics challenged the traditional canon of literary works, they often dismissed most of the female writers in the 1880s and 1890s as minor writers in order to introduce a selection of major writers in academic discourse.⁴ In returning to the naming of the New Woman, Ardis pays special attention to the periodical press where she finds that “[h]aving been a social debate at its inception in the 1860s, what had once been termed the “Woman Question” became a more strictly literary affair following the naming of the New Woman.”⁵ Prior to 1894, periodical “rhetoric was aimed not at characters in novels but at real women, women whose violations of the social code were viewed as a serious threat to bourgeois culture’s hegemony.”⁶ Working between Sarah Grand’s March 1894 essay, “The New Aspects of the Woman Question,” and Ouida’s

¹ Ann L. Ardis, *New Women, New Novels: Feminism and Early Modernism* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990), 7.

² Ardis, *New Women, New Novels: Feminism and Early Modernism*, 9.

³ Ardis, *New Women, New Novels: Feminism and Early Modernism*, 8.

⁴ Ardis gives a full-throated discussion of the development of feminist literary criticism from Elaine Showalter’s groundbreaking *A Literature of Their Own* (1977) up to the point of her 1990 publication.

⁵ Ardis, *New Women, New Novels: Feminism and Early Modernism*, 6.

⁶ Ardis, *New Women, New Novels: Feminism and Early Modernism*, 12.

response in May 1894, “The New Woman,” Ardis explains how the conversation shifted from being about real women to fictional characters. She argues that “[a]fter Ouida’s essay appeared in May of 1894, however, the New Woman novel, not real New Women, became the center of controversy.”⁷ As scholarship about the New Woman progressed through the 1990s into the 21st century, the focus remained largely on works of Fiction. Ann Heilmann picked up the mantle in 2000 along with Martha Vicinus, and Sally Ledger, and more recently, Ann Ardis, Talia Schaffer, Allison Booth, and Jill Ehnenn have offered important critical insight to both the New Woman in Fiction and to a lesser extent, the real women of the fin de siècle. Even as these critics work to uncover the lived experiences of Victorian women and work through important essays in the periodical press that shape our understanding of the complex cultural environment, none of these works mention Lady Jeune, who was a contributor to nearly every major conversation they have analyzed.

Defining the New Woman is at the heart of the debates in the latter half of the nineteenth century. At the extreme, the New Woman wanted nothing to do with marriage or motherhood. She was a fiercely independent woman who was educated, worked for her own money and support, she demanded that either men be held to the same virtuous sexual standards as women or that women have the same sexual freedoms as men, she lived a public life, and she argued for equal legal and voting rights. This was the definition that was most challenged in the press. This was also the type of New Woman who frequently appeared in fiction and almost always met with an untimely death in novels. A less hyperbolic definition of the New Woman, and the one that I rely on, is any

⁷ Ardis, *New Women, New Novels: Feminism and Early Modernism*, 12.

woman—in reality, not fiction—who moved outside of the domestic sphere that was glorified by Patmore’s “Angel in the House”⁸ and took on an independence from her father and husband to live, work, and follow her own mind in and out of her home. It is also important to understand that the concept of the New Woman does not conform neatly to any attempt at definition; instead, she exists on a continuum of activities and ideologies, personal, social, and political. In short, the New Woman does not keep herself solely to the domestic duties of daughter, wife, and mother under constant subjection and deferment, instead, she lives her own life in her own way—as much as possible—given her particular circumstances.

The New Woman was not the only type of woman struggling to find her way at the end of the 19th century. Ardis identifies three other groups; “[t]hese are, in order of their increasing “deviancy” from the dominant Victorian ideal of femininity and as they have been labeled by recent critics: single-issue social reformers, “Independent Women,” and middle-class women who “converted” to socialism in the 1880s and 1890s.”⁹ I focus on the Independent Women because Lady Jeune most closely resembles this type of New Woman. Martha Vicinus wrote: *Independent women: work and community for single women, 1850-1920*. She argues that Independent Women found a way to enter the public sphere by claiming that the feminine-maternal talents of women were needed to balance the paternal influences in areas of public activity including; school boards, philanthropy, nursing, and social work, to name a few.¹⁰ By claiming a traditional nurturing motive,

⁸ Coventry Patmore’s poem, “Angel in the House,” was published in 1854 and revised in 1862. This poem established the idea that the perfect British woman was a paragon of virtue, and deference, in the home, whose sole existence was dedicated to the love and service of her husband and children. As such, she was to be glorified and protected from all outside influence.

⁹ Ardis, *New Women, New Novels: Feminism and Early Modernism*, 15.

¹⁰ Martha Vicinus, *Independent women: work and community for single women, 1850-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), See Chapter 1, “The Revolt against Redundancy.”

Independent Women were able to enter the public domain in more permanent ways than other groups of women because they were not seen as competing with men. One of the drawbacks to this approach is that it continued to enforce gendered notions of what women could and could not do, confounding feminist studies of Victorian women through the 20th century.

In recent scholarship, Alison Booth offers a new way of studying the lives of these women. Booth's combination of feminist Victorian studies and digital studies attempts "to outline a feminist criticism that encompasses both typological classifications and flesh-and-blood individuality, both digital research and interpretative advocacy."¹¹ I use this hybrid approach to consider how nineteenth century typological classifications of women—ideals of domesticity and submissiveness along with class status and social standing—are acted out by Lady Jeune as an individual in the periodical press. Booth points out that, "[i]n biographical history, women have been interpreted through gendered types. In digital humanities, the hybrid and emerging field that responds to new ways of manipulating data and accessing cultural heritage, we require metadata that reinforce such types," furthermore, "[l]ooking more closely at narratives of women's lives, we can forestall the presupposition of what a person gendered female can be and do."¹² Beginning with a biographical study of Lady Jeune and her highland family, and then moving across multiple publications that will draw in other voices participating in the conversations across those publications, my work uses digital studies to broaden our understanding of the lived experiences of real New Women at the turn of the century.

¹¹ Allison Booth, "Particular Webs: Middlemarch, Typologies, and Digital Studies of Women's Lives," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 47, no. 1 (2019): 5–34, 5–6.

¹² Booth. "Particular Webs," 8.

Chapter two looks at Lady Jeune's early writing and does a quantitative analysis of her essays and the thousands of responses and comments about Lady Jeune's ideas and activities. The digital approach makes it possible for 21st century scholars to see how wide her reach was in ways that 20th century scholars did not have access to unless they could physically spend countless hours in the British Library in London. Even then, there were no efficient ways of searching all of the material such as the British Newspaper Archive that has a fully customizable and searchable database. These tools also make it easier to collect conversations or debates with many contributors, giving us a better understanding of how communities worked through difficult issues.

Taken together, the narrative voices of these women help shape the community that participated in the social and cultural activism of the period. Talia Schaffer outlines a Composite feminism based on an ethics of care that focuses on "the significance, incidence, and nature of care relations" that are particularly present in Victorian writing as "the community of care, a group of voluntary participants who show up to help someone in trouble" in fiction.¹³ This can also be applied to real women. Schaffer explains how "[t]his care community structure offers two useful ideas. First, it allows us to imagine ourselves as enmeshed in a care relation with a text, and to think about what we want to do in that role. Second, it enables us to reconceptualize Victorian authors as communal, interactive figures, rather than linear inheritors of a female tradition."¹⁴ Recovery work has done a great deal to introduce more women from history, but it has not always placed those women in a detailed community culture. Where "[r]ecovery

¹³ Talia Schaffer, "Victorian Feminist Criticism: Recovery Work and the Care Community," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 47, no. 1 (2019): 63–91.

¹⁴ Schaffer, "Victorian Feminist Criticism," 65–6.

feminism wants to identify the author's political allegiance and the text's reception history... ethics of care asks about relationality as a fluid, ongoing activity: How might care relations describe the author's relation to others, to the text, to the reader."¹⁵ Reading Lady Jeune's life, social activity, and various forms of publications in the context of community provides deeper insight into (a) the woman, (b) the culture of her historical moment, and (c) the period in feminist history that began to see real progress in women's fight for equality.

In building our knowledge of historical feminisms, it is imperative that we carefully situate our studies of women across time into the complex web of identity. Mooring a woman as a site for investigation or as the center of a web of information. A web that includes the identity of the woman in question, the identity of the culture in which she lived, the identity of feminism at her moment of being, considering gender, class, race, and nationality as interwoven ingredients in the constant evolution of a single identity. In thinking about the current political situation in the United States, and how that situation affects feminist studies in general and Victorian feminist studies in particular, Jill Ehnenn considers "how we grab back and backward—how, as scholars and feminists, we attend to our relationship to the future, present, and past."¹⁶ Ehnenn works to find new ways of reading historical texts that take into consideration multiple sites of identity and meaning using gender, sex, and sexuality. Looking back at early theorists, she pays especial attention to Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity and how "feminism also began to prioritize how the lived experience of gender intersects with other identity

¹⁵ Schaffer, "Victorian Feminist Criticism," 73.

¹⁶ Jill R. Ehnenn, "From 'We Other Victorians' to 'Pussy Grabs Back': Thinking Gender, Thinking Sex, and Feminist Methodological Futures in Victorian Studies Today," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 47, no. 1 (2019): 37.

categories such as sexuality, race, and class.”¹⁷ In this dissertation, I will explore how these intersections are represented in Lady Jeune’s essays. I work to illuminate the intersectional complexities of class and regional identities in a way that highlights the fluid nature of Victorian feminisms at her time of being. As the eldest daughter of a Highland Chief, Lady Jeune fundamentally believed in an aristocratic responsibility to care for and uplift the lives of the less fortunate members of society. As a leading member of British society in London, she spent her life working for better treatment of women and children through philanthropy and social activism while calling on her peers to share in that responsibility in more meaningful ways. I make the distinction between her Scottish upbringing and her adult life in London’s British society because Lady Jeune refers to herself and her approach to philanthropy in terms of her being Scottish first and English second.

As a hybrid identity study, my dissertation goes beyond close analysis of literary texts to merge life writing with feminist critical approaches that seek to place the voice of the subject on equal par with my own. By relying on Lady Jeune’s narrative voice as she participated in the groundswell of activity in the waning years of Victoria’s reign, I hope to add a more nuanced understanding of the women who fought for better education, access to meaningful employment outside the home, and eventually equal political rights. Susan Lanser explains that:

Narrative voice, situated at the juncture of ‘social position and literary practice,’ embodies the social, economic, and literary conditions under which it has been produced...both narrative structures and women’s writing are determined not by essential properties or isolated aesthetic imperatives but by complex and changing

¹⁷ Ehnenn, “From ‘We Other Victorians,’” 42.

conventions that are themselves produced in and by the relations of power that implicate writer, reader, and text.¹⁸

Lady Jeune's social position is the product of her Scottish upbringing and her marriages into prominent British families. As a society hostess, then a philanthropist, and a social activist, Lady Jeune constantly shifted through these outside conventions, sometimes as an expert on the issue she discussed and sometimes as an interviewee who was produced for celebrity consumption; both changing and being changed by her cultural environment. This reciprocal activity moors her literary contributions to the rapidly evolving debates surrounding the role of women in fin de siècle London.

The most effective genre for overlapping a woman's voice with a rapidly shifting cultural movement is life writing. Life writing as a genre: "put simply, is a less exclusive genre of personal kinds of writing that includes both biography and autobiography, but also the less 'objective,' or more 'personal,' genres such as letters and diaries."¹⁹ I will expand this list to include periodical writings that reflect Lady Jeune's position in society and her perspective on society. Using life writing as a feminist approach, Kadar suggests that, "[p]ostmodernism and deconstruction argue for this critical area somewhere in between a feminism with clarity and a feminism that suffers its own ignoble glitches and moves on."²⁰ In other words, in searching for evidence of feminism in the late 19th century, we need to account for what is and deal—as best we can—with the many contradictions of the earliest part of the movement without getting bogged down in them. With this in mind, "life writing as a critical practice, then, encourages (a) the reader to

¹⁸ Susan Lanser, *Fictions of Authority: Toward a Feminist Poetics of Narrative Voice* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2018), 5.

¹⁹ Marlene Kadar, ed. *Essays on Life Writing: From Genre to Critical Practice*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014): 5.

²⁰ Kadar, *Essays on Life Writing*, 9.

develop and foster his/her own self-consciousness in order to b) humanize and make less abstract (which is not to say less mysterious) the self-in-the-writing. Thus, there are many forms or genres, in which a reader may glean this written self.”²¹ Life writing considers a variety of texts as personal documents—written by a self, in the first person, about the self and the self-perception of the world in which the self resides—including diaries, letters, journals, autobiographies and various fragments along with evaluations of fictional works in search of autobiographical clues to the subject. For these reasons, life writing is not a sufficient approach to this project and is accompanied by other strategies.

I use a mixed methodology for each chapter that includes biographical writing, historical analysis, digital archival research in the periodical press, and close reading. Chapter One is a condensed biography of the Mackenzie Clan to demonstrate a long tradition of clan leader’s responsibilities and attitudes towards the poor and laboring tenants that builds the foundation of Lady Jeune’s approach to philanthropy. I then give a condensed biography of Lady Jeune’s life that relies on her memoir, *Memories of Fifty Years*, published in 1909, newspaper accounts of her activities and significant events, and historical accounts of pivotal moments in both Scottish and British history to provide a contextual backdrop for later analysis of her writing and activity. This chapter functions as an identity study that will demonstrate how her Scottish identity informs and complicates our understanding of women’s roles in the fixed categories of private and public spheres and how her clan identity complicates our understanding of gender roles in the late nineteenth century.

²¹ Kadar, *Essays on Life Writing*, 9-12.

Chapter two is an expanded reception history of Lady Jeune's first explosive essay that garnered a wide response over several months and publications. This chapter focuses on her periodical essays in the 1880s and other voices that shaped the debates surrounding fallen women and the woman question that led to the naming of the New Woman along with the early debates over women's suffrage. It has been noted that the naming of the New Woman shifted the debates from real women to fictional characters. This chapter seeks to shift that conversation back to the real women in the last two decades of the century in an effort to examine how individual identity affected the ways in which different women participated in the debates and lived as women in this environment.

Chapter three continues a close analysis of Lady Jeune's essays as she solidified her reputation as an expert on philanthropy. This chapter considers her work and writing on the conditions and needs of the poor in London's East end, paying special attention to her work with poor children. This chapter looks most closely on how her Scottish upbringing influenced her approach to working with and campaigning for London's rapidly expanding class of working poor people. Chapter four then focuses on Lady Jeune's activism on behalf of women and views on key issues such as working conditions and trades unions along with her participation in the New Woman debates and her views on women's public participation in political activity. Considering her evolution from charity work to philanthropist to social activist with selections of her essays from this period through the lens of identity expands our understanding of public women in Late Victorian London.

Based on a social science reading, identity is the product of historical-generational experience based on mutually agreed upon perceptions of a generational culture and the location of self within that culture.²² Identifying the ‘habitus,’ “a system of durable, transposable dispositions that predispose individuals to do certain things,”²³ allows us to understand an individual and the choices they made in a historical context based on their generational perception of the world around them. Social identity, a fluid and evolving concept, builds on the ‘habitus’ of an individual through experience as they perform identity. Unpacking these layers of identity also allows us to understand how multi-generational differences came into conflict in the study of specific social movements such as the New Woman debates that played out in the periodical press. By locating Lady Jeune in the generation of elite female Scots, born in the mid nineteenth-century, who married into prominent British families and moved to London in the last quarter of the century, I will use her biography to identify her specific ‘habitus,’ and then use the ‘habitus’ to examine her periodical writings about women’s participation in philanthropy, the New Woman debates, and gendered politics at the turn of the century.

By the end of the first decade of the 20th century, Lady Jeune had witnessed radical political and social change that propelled women forward to economic and political independence at an astounding pace. Her own views and actions had become progressively more liberal than when she first began her writing career in the late 1870’s. In 1909, holding to the last vestiges of her traditionalist perspective, she wondered:

²² For further reading on this application of identity, see *Theorizing Identities and Social Action*, edited by Margaret Wetherell, 2009. Most important to my reading is Part One, “Biographies and Personal Trajectories.”

²³ Jane Martin et al. “Biography, Education and Civic Action: Teaching Generations and Social Change” in *Theorizing Identities and Social Action*. Ed Margaret Wetherell (New York: 2009), 39.

If the militant suffragists who clamour for political representation would only consider what women have achieved within the last forty years, and see how differently they now stand in regard to the occupations and professions in which they have secured a recognized position, they would realize that the day *cannot* be far distant when women as citizens will enter into full possession of all the powers for which they are now agitating.²⁴

This prediction would come true in less than a decade after the publication of the memoir. The publication of the book added Lady Jeune's name to the list of moderate women who worked in the first women's movement to make these changes happen. It also helps to clear up some of the many inconsistencies her journalism created over those early years. While much attention has been paid to the suffragettes and women who supported them, and only slightly less to the women who openly opposed giving women full voting rights, little (if any) attention has been paid to the women who did not fit squarely into either of those camps; most likely because they are complex and hard to understand. Lady Jeune is one such complex woman who often disagreed with the methods of the New Woman on paper, but who also was a New Woman whose actions resulted in positive changes in the lives of thousands of poor women and children.

The most prominent themes present in Lady Jeune's essays are women's education, female involvement in politics, the new woman, and how those roles were changing. Unlike the essays that broadly focus on London society, numerous papers specifically address some of the most contested topics of the period. Lady Jeune was not a suffragette, nor did she support the aggressive practices of the more radical members of first-wave feminism. However, she did support a quiet movement for the increased intellectual and professional development of Englishwomen, based on their class distinctions and the needs of the nation. She worked closely with suffragists and took an

²⁴ Lady St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years* (London: Edward Arnold, 1909), 341.

always practical approach to improving the lives of women and children. Her approach to advancing the position of women was to provide a solid foundation for every class of women through education.

To better understand Lady Jeune's essays on the woman question, it is vital to consider her personal beliefs about a woman's place in the public sphere. Lady Jeune's political ideologies were complicated and fluid. Traditional conservatives argued that a woman's place was only in the domestic sphere while the radical liberals wanted all women to be on an equal footing with men in all aspects. A Mr. Grant Allen used the emerging scientific concept of survival of the fittest to pontificate on a popular theory of the dangers of women venturing out of the domestic sphere:

You "educate" your women at the expense of their reserve fund; and after all you find they marry, and make very unsatisfactory and physically inefficient mothers. For a woman ought to possess a vast reserve fund of vigour, [sic] accumulated in youth, to enable her to bear up against the exceptional strain of childbearing. You may think you have done no harm to her health by your training; and that may be true enough while she remains single; but have you done it positive good? Have you let it lay up that reserve fund of strength without which child-bearing is dangerous and (what is far worse for the community) inefficient? You can never tell that till the time comes; and then many of your seemingly healthy Girton and Nuneham girls break down utterly. The training you give the mass of your women must be a training fitted to make good mothers; and the residue must be left to their own devices.²⁵

While this was one of the extreme arguments for keeping women confined to the domestic sphere in general, and to motherhood specifically, some vein of this argument was used to warn that the Nation would suffer and potentially disappear if women were allowed greater education and freedom to join in public careers. At the radical end of this debate, advocates for women's equality found no topic off limits. An unsigned notice in

²⁵Grant Allen, "A Biologist on The Woman Question," *Pall Mall Gazette*, January 11, 1889, British Newspaper Archive.

the St. James's Gazette signaled the length to which some New Women would go to secure equality.

The New Woman has another grievance. It is announced from America that there is to be a new translation of the Bible made under the auspices of some of the "leading women of the day." The Revised Version is said to have been a disappointment in important respects to those who feel that injustice has been done to woman in King James's authorized reading of the Scriptures. A proclamation is made by those who are preparing a Woman's Bible to the elect that "the first step in the elevation of woman to her true position in the scale of being is the recognition by the rising generation of a heavenly mother, to whom their prayers should be addressed, as well as to the heavenly father."²⁶

In demanding equal scriptural—even to the point of deity—footing with men, some activists would leave no stone unturned. Understanding that these two examples are extreme, I chose them because they represent the metaphorical goal posts of the New Woman debates in the 1880s and 1890s.

Lady Jeune disagreed with both blanket ideologies and took a practical approach to resolving the bitter disputes between the two parties. In chapters 2 and 3 I will give a much closer analysis of the essays that comprise Lady Jeune's stance on gender divisions. For now, a brief outline of those writings demonstrates her practicality and calls for qualified equality. In one of her first known essays, "Saving the Innocent," she offers a practical solution to the expenses associated with rearing illegitimate children that hold men and women to the same legal standard.²⁷ As she moves through essays focused on reclaiming fallen women and what should be done with illegitimate children in the 1880s, her approach to solving the problems women face remain practical. Always looking for solutions, Lady Jeune offers a class-based approach to educating women in "Technical

²⁶ "Another Version of The Bible." *St. James's Gazette*, April 1, 1895, British Newspaper Archive.

²⁷ Mary Jeune, "Saving the Innocent," *Fortnightly Review* 38 (1885): 345.

Education for Women.”²⁸ By 1890, Lady Jeune was addressing the Woman Question more directly with “Women of To-day, Yesterday, and To-morrow,” where she responds to descriptions of the “Woman of To-day,” a precursor to the naming of the New Woman.²⁹ By 1894, the year of Sarah Grand and Ouida’s naming of the New Woman, she is firmly ensconced in the debate and systematically dissects the social disruption in “The Revolt of the Daughters.”³⁰ As many scholars have noted, much of the conversation about the New Woman shifted to fictional characters after 1894, but conversations in the periodical press about real women continued to attract readers. When Grand continued the discussion with “The New Woman and The Old”³¹ in 1898, Lady Jeune responded with “The New Woman and The Old: A Reply to Sarah Grand.”³²

Throughout Lady Jeune’s participation in the New Woman debates, she considered women in terms of age, class, and economic position, and argued that each group had primary responsibilities and opportunities based on those distinctions. She used conservative rhetoric to bar some women from political activity in the public sphere (even where she gave them great power over national politics from the confines of the domestic space) and gave other women permission to enter public politics once their Natural feminine duties (meaning motherhood) were complete. In this way, she helped to shift the center of women’s activity toward the public domain. She, like many others in her time believed that the better education of women and girls was the key to improving their lives and position in society.

²⁸ Mary Jeune, “Technical Education For Women,” *National Review* 12 (1888):14. Also reprinted in Lady Jeune’s book: *Lesser Questions* in January 1894: 201-222.

²⁹ Mary Jeune, “Women of To-day, Yesterday, and To-morrow,” *The National Review* 82 (1890): 550.

³⁰ Mary Jeune, “The Revolt of the Daughters,” *Fortnightly Review* ns 55 (1894): 267.

³¹ Sarah Grand, “The New Woman and the Old,” *Lady’s Realm* 4 (1898): 466.

³² Lady Jeune, “The New Woman and the Old: A Reply to Sarah Grand,” *Lady’s Realm* 4 (1898): 600.

Lady Jeune was an advocate for better education for women, but she did not believe that all classes of women needed the same types of education. Her arguments were very practical in nature and demonstrated an acute understanding of the social and financial crisis facing each class, and the collective results of those troubles for the nation as a whole. She found two primary reasons for both the rapid social changes that were taking place in the middle of the century, and the increased focus on female intellect that took place in the second half of the Victorian era. The two conditions were the accession of the Queen and the increasing number of “superfluous women.”³³ The term “superfluous women” was used by Lady Jeune and many other Victorians to describe the number of women for whom there were not enough men to marry. Lady Jeune gives census returns for 1831 and 1891 showing that by the end of the century, there were nearly one million more women than men in England. Lady Jeune argued that “the recognition of their numerical superiority destroyed at one blow the doctrine that marriage was the object of every woman’s life, and with the destruction of that important belief, it was necessary to create a new ideal and fresh career.”³⁴ Her argument that the marital goal of every woman was “destroyed at one blow” is contradictory to her own writings from the previous decade, but the argument that it was necessary to find new careers for these women can be seen in the increased education of the middle classes, and in numbers of women who went into professional careers that were previously occupied solely by men.

Understanding that the growing number of redundant women in England came primarily from the middle-class helps us to clearly see Lady Jeune’s perspective of each

³³Lady Jeune, “A Century of Women,” *Anglo-Saxon Review* 4 (1900): 199.

³⁴Jeune, “A Century of Women,” 198.

class's needs for greater female education. Lady Jeune's view of the higher standards of learning for women as a whole were positive and inclusive:

The education of women, and the better, higher intellectual standard required and expected of them, has created a class of women in England which no other country possesses, or has ever possessed, who are able not only to hold their own with men in every branch of learning, but to eclipse them in some; and it has also impressed them with the realities and dignity of their position, nothing being more striking than the singular modesty and retirement of the most remarkable of modern Englishwomen.³⁵

This general sentiment elevates all Englishwomen and Britain by impressing on its readers the value of higher intellectual achievements for the women of the nation who are also the mothers of all future citizens. From this general approval, Lady Jeune moves to specific discussions of the types of education that are relevant to each class of women, and how each class plays a specific role in the welfare of the empire.

Because Lady Jeune understood that the family into which one was born and wealth determined an individual's position in society, as well as the opportunities afforded to them, she also understood that each group faced a separate set of basic needs for survival, and thus a different need for specific types of education. She argues throughout her essays on the woman question that upper-class women do not require technical training because they do not have to earn their living. For this class, she argues that "women are not really expected to know more, or even as much, as formerly; but what they profess to know, they must know accurately...A much wider knowledge of English literature and history is now part of the necessary curriculum of any educated woman."³⁶ She does acknowledge that "the new education was more thorough, its foundations more solid, its methods better calculated to stimulate intellectual power," and

³⁵Jeune, "Women of To-Day, Yesterday, and To-Morrow," 550.

³⁶ Jeune, "Women of To-Day, Yesterday, and To-Morrow," 549.

that the result of this improvement for upper-class women has been “more equality of feeling between the sexes, and if there is less gallantry and coquetry, there is a healthier camaraderie.”³⁷ Greater education for this class of women has also led to more productivity that benefits the entire English community: “To educational, charitable, political, and religious work women of the upper classes render the most valuable assistance; the languid interest, the feeble recognition of the realities of existence, have disappeared, and women have thrown themselves into every cause and work with all the energy of their devoted nature.”³⁸

So, to the greater education of upper-class women, Lady Jeune makes the argument that social gatherings are more enjoyable because the women can have better conversations with men, and that there has been an increase in humanitarian efforts for the lower classes because these women now recognize—more than at any time in the past—that they should assist those less fortunate than themselves. Because of her own Scottish upbringing, Lady Jeune was acutely aware of the needs of lower-class women and was constantly encouraging her English sisters to pay closer attention.

Shifting from discussions of upper-class women to the needs of the middle-class, Lady Jeune weighs in on some of the most pressing social and economic concerns of the rapidly expanding working class. Those in greater need were the “superfluous women” of the middle and upper-middle classes who had little chance of marriage and had to earn a living for themselves. For this class of women, a higher intellectual education was of little use. Lady Jeune points out that “every woman could not be a scholar, or a teacher, a doctor, a lawyer, or attain to any great position in professions where the competition with

³⁷ Jeune, “A Century of Women,” 202-204.

³⁸ Jeune, “A Century of Women,” 205.

men was keen, and where there was overcrowding.”³⁹ For these women, technical training was of the utmost importance, because without it, England would have starving women on the streets who could be—and often were—forced to turn to prostitution to survive. Prostitution was the social evil that Victorians strove hardest to eradicate. Aside from avoiding the ultimate female disaster, education for the middle class has “enabled thousands to go afield, and expend their superfluous energies, or their unsatisfied yearnings, in good, honest, solid work, which, while acting as a safety valve, has enabled them to earn their living.”⁴⁰

Beyond the urgent call for better education and training for women who needed to be able to support themselves, Lady Jeune also participated in the debates surrounding women’s role in politics in the 1890s. By this period, women have gained better access to education and training and are once again bringing voting rights to the forefront of their fight for equality. Lady Jeune takes up her conservative position on women’s place in the public sphere by arguing that women already possess great political power. She argues that “women can have as much political and social influence as will satisfy their most insatiable ambition, but they must be content to exercise it in their legitimate sphere, and not encroach on ground fitted only for stronger wills and rougher natures.”⁴¹ Lady Jeune argues in many of her essays that men have stronger physical and mental constitutions, and that they have no domestic responsibilities, so they are better capable of dealing with the strains of Parliament. This is the most common argument made by the members of both sexes who opposed the full franchise of women.

³⁹ Jeune, “A Century of Women,” 203.

⁴⁰ Jeune, “The Revolt of the Daughters,” 268.

⁴¹ Jeune, “Women of To-Day, Yesterday, and To-Morrow,” 555.

By the 1890s, women were working in the public sphere, not just to earn money, but also as leaders of social activism and philanthropy. They served on school boards and created multiple foundations to support the poor and working classes. With a newfound voice in the public sphere, the argument that women should also be involved in political activity including voting took on a new urgency. Lady Jeune did not believe that women should enter the political arena. She explains her middle ground approach to emancipation through various arguments, including the common reasons why education was originally opposed:

The higher education of women in England was opposed, not from any reluctance to have the position of women improved, but from an instinctive conviction that when once they could affirm intellectual equality with men they would claim equal rights in all respects. That opposition has been justified.⁴²

As Lady Jeune points out, once women gained better education, many of them went on to seek equality in other areas, including the franchise. In becoming public speakers, and entering into very public lives, Lady Jeune's claim is that "political speaking for women has done more to unsex them, and destroy the unique position they occupied, than any invention of the Evil One," and by becoming public figures, Lady Jeune further argues that these women "have thrown aside all the distinctive qualities that once were the pride and glory of Englishwomen."⁴³ In these statements, we begin to see the very aggressive condemnation of a particular class of women by Lady Jeune.

Once again, Lady Jeune divides women into class categories to build her arguments on what women should and should not participate in. She asserts that education has benefited and occupied the middle-class women, but that the upper-class

⁴²Jeune, "The Revolt of the Daughters," 267.

⁴³ Jeune, "Women of To-Day, Yesterday, and To-Morrow," 556.

women who do not have to work for a living, are the ones attempting to gain entrance to these final masculine frontiers. What's more, Lady Jeune makes the argument that these women are not wanted or welcomed in the public sphere:

No one wants them [women] to become inferior men, intellectually or politically; but the life of excitement interest [sic] them, the notoriety, coupled with the easy-won applause of a crowd (who would cheer a juggler who swallowed knives and plates, or, in fact, any one who performed some unusual antics) they misinterpret for admiration.⁴⁴

In this point, Lady Jeune argues from a position of authority. She is not only speaking as an influential woman, but she is repeating the same argument that is professed by many of the men writing at the same time. Unlike the men who campaigned against allowing women to participate in politics, Lady Jeune did not attempt to be delicate in expressing what she thought of those women. She criticized them with an open contempt that would have left less determined women cowering in the corner.

Her sharpest criticism was designed to shame women into more lady like behavior: "[u]nfortunately, as I said before, the most prominent and well known of these women belong to the upper classes, who give tone to all others; and as all classes are influenced by those above them...the life of excitement they lead is worse than any dram-drinking, and its effects more permanently injurious, not to themselves alone, but to their children."⁴⁵ Lady Jeune's unequivocal argument is that women, no matter their rank or intelligence, do not belong in politics at all. To dissuade the upper-class women who were seeking a place in this very public and masculine occupation, Lady Jeune calls on their duty to set a good example for those less fortunate than themselves, and if that tactic fails, she seeks to shame them into conforming to society's views of a distinguished

⁴⁴ Jeune, "Women of To-Day, Yesterday, and To-Morrow," 555.

⁴⁵ Jeune, "Women of To-Day, Yesterday, and To-Morrow," 558.

Englishwoman. Shame was not the only tactic that the conservatives deployed. They also worked very diligently to remind women that their first duty was in the domestic sphere; in supporting their husbands and raising their children to become strong English citizens. Lady Jeune predicts that the rebelling woman will “be bested by Mother Nature and returned to the domestic sphere,” despite all her protestation to the contrary, because once married (as nearly all upper-class women become), a family will soon follow, and her time for political debate will be gone.

By the end of the century, Lady Jeune’s ideas about the public presence of women in political arenas did shift. From her original stance in the late 80s and early 90s that ladies should be quiet, and stay out of the public sphere all together, by 1900, she allowed for limited participation. Her new views were favorable to women assisting in campaigns in a more public fashion and recognized the value of women as public speakers. She began to argue that women were effective and often eloquent speakers who could strongly benefit a campaign by gaining the sympathies of the groups that she spoke to.⁴⁶ Even at the turn of the century, Lady Jeune was not prepared to give women the franchise or full voting rights. Her argument was simple, “the House of Commons is emotional and hysterical enough, even with its present composition, but can anyone deny that it would not become infinitely more so were it elected by an overwhelming female franchise?”⁴⁷ This “overwhelming female franchise” refers to the fact that women outnumbered men by nearly one million extra females at the end of the century. If everyone voted, and all women were united, they would easily carry off the House of Commons, and according

⁴⁶ Jeune, “A Century of Women,” 205.

⁴⁷ Jeune, “A Century of Women,” 207.

to Lady Jeune, women would not be able to avoid becoming more ‘emotional and hysterical’ than the men who were then currently seated.

Lady Jeune’s final argument against the female franchise may have offended some of the members of Parliament. Where she normally insulted the women of the upper class to make her point, she turned a satirical eye to current conditions, hoping to convince those who would not be swayed by shame, and attempted a comical logic:

The mass of women in England are indifferent, or opposed, to any change, being satisfied that their influence is wide and powerful enough to be felt on all public questions; and there are many indications that they are beginning to accept the fact that what political power they have must be exercised through the male puppets whose strings they have pulled since the creation of the world.⁴⁸

In the following chapters I will expand on the life of a woman born and raised in the Scottish Highlands as the daughter of a Highland Chief. A woman who carried that rich cultural heritage with her as she married into prominent British families and moved to London where she embarked on a life of education, philanthropy, social activism, political activity, and of course, High Society.

My aim is to combine periodical studies with life writing. By combining genres, I will use personal documents such as letters and memoirs alongside periodical essays and newspaper entries to tease out details of a life and culture. Further complicating the study are both a mid-level prosopography of women in late Victorian London and a micro-level investigation of a woman through the tri-level lens of gender, class, and cultural identity using a digital humanities approach. This study calls into question the fixed typologies of women at the fin de siècle. It will focus—like the mid-Victorian debates on the Woman Question—on a real woman’s lived experience as a type of New Woman instead of on

⁴⁸ Jeune, "A Century of Women," 207.

the fictional character that the latter New Woman debates shifted to, thus bringing the discussion full circle.

In questioning the established types of women and how their individual behaviors were or were not subversive based on their identity as women of a particular class and cultural identity, I hope to introduce a more nuanced understanding of womanhood that disrupts the notion of a paradigm shift between ‘Old Woman’ and ‘New Woman’ at the end of the nineteenth century. I will show that women of Lady Jeune’s class and cultural identity had a long tradition of advocacy traits that were attributed to the New Woman. It was because of this tradition that she was unafraid to voice her knowledge and opinions publicly, that she was politically active. While she resembled the New Woman in London, she was—to the core—a traditional Scottish woman.

Chapter 1

A Daughter of The House of Seaforth

Lady Jeune wrote essays about her family and her life growing up in the Scottish Highlands, and made herself clear in interviews that “she was proud of being a Scotswoman.”¹ In this chapter, I introduce Lady Jeune’s family and pay close attention to the history of the clan Mackenzie, with special focus on the Earls of Seaforth. My aim is to establish a long history of relationship patterns that help define Lady Jeune’s worldview; how she views her own identity, how she views class, how she views responsibility towards others and how she views her position in society. As a member of the ruling class, with a unique Highland bond to members of the lower classes, Lady Jeune spent her life building personal relationships across class distinctions that solidified her adult position in the upper classes and allowed her to advocate for practical solutions to the problems facing London’s poorest citizens just as she had done for the poor tenants on her family’s Highland estates. While there has been a great deal of scholarship on the work of middle-class women in Victorian philanthropy, there has been far less discussion of the aristocratic women who were actively involved in this type of work. This study adds to our understanding of what some in the upper classes were willing and able to accomplish.

Lady Jeune, née Susan Mary Elizabeth Stewart-Mackenzie of The House of Seaforth was born the eldest of four children on May 18, 1845, into one of the oldest and most powerful Scottish Clans of the Northern Highlands. Her parents, Keith William Stewart-Mackenzie (1818-1881) and Hannah Charlotte Hope-Vere (1816-1868) were

¹ “Lady Jeune, Scotswoman,” *St. James Gazette*, December 11, 1903, British Newspaper Archive.

married on May 17, 1844,² and were still on their honeymoon tour in Munich when she was born.³ The Prime Minister of Bavaria, Count Beust, stood as proxy godfather at her christening before the young family returned to the Seaforth estate on the grounds of Brahan Castle in the Northern Highlands just outside of Dingwall and North of Inverness.⁴ Over the coming years, a brother, James Alexander Francis Humberston Stewart-Mackenzie, 1st and last Baron Seaforth (1847-1923) and two sisters, Julia Charlotte Sophia Stewart-Mackenzie (1846-1937) and Georgina Henrietta Stewart Mackenzie (1851-1868) would complete the family. The family of six lived in “a small house under the shadow of the old home” where her grandmother, the Hon. Mary Elizabeth Frederica Mackenzie (1783 –1862), also known as Lady Hood Mackenzie, lived until Lady Jeune was 15 years old.⁵ That “old home” was Brahan Castle, the ancestral seat of the Chiefs of Kintail; her grandmother was then Chieftianess.

Keith William Stewart-Mackenzie was the eldest son of Lady Hood Mackenzie. He served in the 90th Scottish Regiment, spent a great deal of time in India, served as Aide-de Camp to Lord Gough in the Chinese Campaign, and at his death was the colonel of the Ross-shire Volunteers.⁶ Hannah Charlotte Hope-Vere was the daughter of James Joseph Hope-Vere and Lady Elizabeth Hay, another one of the most prominent families in Scotland.

² Charles Mosley, editor. *Burke's Peerage, Baronetage & Knightage, 107th edition, 3 volumes* (Wilmington, Delaware: Burke's Peerage (Genealogical Books) Ltd, 2003.)

³ Lady St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years* (London: Edward Arnold, 1909), 4.

⁴ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 4.

⁵ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 2.

⁶ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 15.

The Clan Mackenzie

While there is some dispute over the origins of the Clan Mackenzie, originating from Colin Fitzgerald of the Norman Irish House of Geraldine, or Gilleoin *na h'Airde*, “descended, or so it was said, from the ancient royal house of Lorne, forebears likewise of the Celtic Kings of Moray,”⁷ there is no dispute that “[a]t one time they owned property in Ross-shire which stretched from sea to sea; they had acquired the Island of Lews, [sic] by conquest, from the Macleods; and for centuries the Earls of Seaforth represented one of the most powerful clans in the country.”⁸ Originally serving as vassals to the Earldom of Ross and then to the MacDonalds when the Earldom was transferred, the Mackenzies continued amassing land and power so that in the 15th century they were able to side with King James I against the MacDonalds and the Earls of Ross, and in so doing were granted charters for lands directly from the King.⁹ By the end of the 16th century, the Mackenzies were no longer vassals to any other clan and were loyal supporters of the Scottish Crown.

Along with the accumulation of land, the chiefs of the clan actively participated in national politics. The sheer size of the clan estates in the Highlands made them an important ally for any monarch. In 1609, Kenneth Mackenzie, Chief of Kintail, was made Lord Mackenzie of Kintail, and in 1623 his eldest son Colin became the first Earl of Seaforth.¹⁰ Other branches of the family were equally rewarded for their participation in national politics and granted the title Earl of Cromartie. George Mackenzie of Tarbat,

⁷ Fitzroy Maclean, *Highlanders: A History of the Scottish Clans* (London: Viking Studio Books, 1995), 29.

⁸ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 34. See also (MacLean 1995) 29-30 for descriptions of the Mackenzie lands in the 12th and 13th centuries.

⁹ Maclean, *Highlanders*, 54.

¹⁰ Grant and Cheape, *Periods in Highland History*, 109. See also: MacLean, *Highlanders*, 136. And Eric Richards and Monica Clough. *Cromartie: Highland Life 1650-1914*, (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1989), 10-11.

an Uncle to Colin Seaforth, was the first Earl and through a brilliant political career moving from Lord Justice General of Scotland in 1678, to Privy Court, to Lord Clerk Register and Lord of Session in 1681, to finally being raised to the Peerage in 1685 as Viscount Tarbat, Lord Macleod and Castlehaven.¹¹ The Earl of Cromarty's loyalty to the Stuarts is well documented through the 17th and 18th centuries.¹² After the Union of Scotland and England in 1707, The whole of the Mackenzie clans, including the chief, William Mackenzie, Earl of Seaforth led the clan in loyal defense of the Stuart dynasty in an effort to restore them to the Throne of England and Scotland in the Jacobite Rebellions of 1715.

In the uprising of 1715, William Mackenzie, Earl of Seaforth, was a major contributor to the Jacobite rebels in terms of manpower and organization. By November of 1715, reports had Seaforth marching to join the Earl of Mar where he participated in battles at Sheriffmuir as lieutenant-general which resulted in the forfeiture of his estates and an attainure by act of parliament.¹³ By January of 1716, the major battles of the 1715 uprising had ended and both Seaforth and his companion Huntley were negotiating their positions.¹⁴ Seaforth did not turn himself in and by the end of March, he had fled to Paris.¹⁵ On April 22, "the Lords read the first Time the Bill to attain the Earls Marshal,

¹¹ Richards and Clough, *Cromartie*, 19-20.

¹² In nearly every book on the Jacobite Rebellions of 1715 and 1745, Cromartie's loyalty to the Stuarts is detailed in many of the battles all the way through the Battle of Culloden in 1745.

¹³ "Edinburgh, Oct. 27," *The Stamford Mercury*, November 10, 1715, British Newspaper Archive. See also: Davie Horsburgh. "Mackenzie, William, Fifth Earl of Seaforth (d. 1740), Jacobite army officer." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. 23 Sep. 2004.

¹⁴ "Edinburgh, Jan. 26," *The Newcastle Courant*, January 28, 1716, British Newspaper Archive. This article discusses how both men returned home, laid down arms, and toasted to King George's health. See also: "Edinburgh, Feb. 23," *The Newcastle Courant*, February 25, 1716, British Newspaper Archive. Huntley surrendered himself to Colonel William Grant, the British Commander in Scotland and both Huntley and Seaforth wrote letters to the Duke of Argyle, one of the original commanders of the British forces in Scotland at the start of the uprisings.

¹⁵ "London, March 22," *The Newcastle Courant*, March 24, 1716, British Newspaper Archive.

Seaforth, Southesk, and Panmure, of High Treason, and then adjourned til Tuesday next.”¹⁶ In the same month, The Countess Dowager of Seaforth began more public negotiations to secure the estates and a pardon for her son.¹⁷ Historical accounts of the Commissioners of Forfeited Estates abound with stories of the impossible task of subduing the Mackenzie estates and collecting rents.

Seaforth fled to France, after addressing a circular letter to his people, in which he counselled them not to pay their rents to the Government... The determination and strategy of Daniel Murchison, Seaforth’s intrepid factor, baffled the officers of the Crown, and they were forced to relinquish the attempt to coerce the refractory tenantry. Murchison collected the rents and remitted them to Seaforth, giving tenants receipts, which protected them from having to pay the money over again to the Government. When General Wade, in 1725, received the submission of the Seaforth tenantry at Brahan Castle, he indemnified them against any proceedings which might be taken for the rents so remitted (the factors had threatened to make them pay over again); and agreed to their stipulation that their chief should be granted a free pardon.¹⁸

The disarming took place in August of 1725 and soon thereafter, when the Commission attempted to sell the estates, Seaforth’s reputation and the rest of the clan were so succesful in discouraging would-be buyers that the tenants were able to purchase the estates at a very low price and return the land back to the family by 1740.¹⁹ General Wade was true to his word and with the Commissioners arguing that “as the clan chieftain he was simply irreplaceable, and finally allowing him to return home de facto restored the order to his clan’s territory,”²⁰ in July of 1726, newspapers reported that “The Earl of Seaforth has lately obtained his Majesty’s Pardon.”²¹ After 10 years in exile,

¹⁶ *The Newcastle Courant*, April 23, 1716, British Newspaper Archive.

¹⁷ “Inverness, April 10,” *The Newcastle Courant*, April 23, 1716, British Newspaper Archive.

¹⁸ William Morrison and William Cook Mackenzie, *History of the Outer Hebrides (Lewis, Harris, North and South Uist, Benbecula, And Barra)* (United Kingdom: A. Gardner, 1903), 414-15.

¹⁹ Nigel Leask, *Stepping Westward: Writing the Highland Tour C. 1720-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 29.

²⁰ Daniel Szechi, *1715 The Great Jacobite Rebellion* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), 239.

²¹ “Wye’s Letter, verbatim, July 7,” *The Caledonian Mercury*, July 12, 1726, British Newspaper Archive.

Seaforth returned, first to London to meet with the King, and second back to his Highland home and people.²² When the Jacobites again rebelled in 1745, Seaforth fought alongside Lord Loudon, Commander of the British forces in Scotland, to demonstrate his continued loyalty to the British Crown.²³ The family would spend several decades recovering from the economic consequences of the forfeiture.

The family immediately began rebuilding their power and wealth: “The 5th Earl’s grandson was created Viscount Fortrose and served in Parliament for Inverness before his death in 1761.”²⁴ The Right Hon. Kenneth Viscount Fortrose and his male heirs were then restored to the Earldom of Seaforth in 1771 (albeit these titles were in the Irish peerage).²⁵ To continue developing a stronger bond with the British monarch (now Scotland’s monarch as well), the Chief raised the 78th Regiment of Foot: the Seaforth Highlanders, a thousand young lads who fought in many campaigns for the Empire.²⁶ The chiefship and Seaforth estates continued to be passed through the male line of the Mackenzie clan to Lady Jeune’s great-grandfather, Lt. Gen. Francis Humberston, first and last Lord Seaforth MP (1754-1815), who was Lieutenant-Colonel of the Seaforth Highlanders and Governor of Barbados and raised to the British Peerage in 1797.²⁷

Francis Humberston Mackenzie, Lord Seaforth mentioned above, was one of the few major landowners who did not evict the majority of his tenants in the Highland

²² “From *Stanley’s News-Letter*, September 3,” *The Ipswich Journal*, September 3, 1726, British Newspaper Archive.

²³ “From the *London Gazette*, March 22,” *The Glasgow Courant*, March 24, 1746, British Newspaper Archive.

²⁴ *The Oxford Journal*, October 24, 1761, British Newspaper Archive.

²⁵ “Wednesday’s Post,” *The Derby Mercury*, November 22, 1771, British Newspaper Archive.

²⁶ See the advertisement to raise the Highlanders in: Lady St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years* (London: Edward Arnold), 39. From the date the regiment was raised through the end of the 18th century and beyond, there are hundreds of reports of their movements and Seaforth’s loyalty to the Crown in the contemporary newspapers.

²⁷ “Preferments,” *The Scots Magazine*, October 1, 1797, British Newspaper Archive.

Clearances that took place in the late 18th and early 19th century in Scotland. He, like the chiefs before him, strongly believed in the traditional role of the *Cabarfeidh*, or chief, as protector of his clan, tenants, laborers, and servants. When offered double the rent for his land by sheep farmers, McKenzie responded that “he neither would let his lands for sheep-pasture, nor turn out his people upon any consideration, or for any rent that could be offered.”²⁸ Despite changes in government, agricultural depression, and the heavy fines levied against the estate after the Jacobite Rebellions, the Mackenzies of Seaforth and the tenants on their vast estates remained fiercely loyal to the traditional roles of Chief and clan well into the 19th century. Fortunately, Lord Seaforth was able to improve on the family’s economic situation. Because of his success and growing wealth, he was able to “live in far grander and more cosmopolitan style than his predecessors in the title. He purchased not just one but two townhouses in London, as well as another in Edinburgh’s most fashionable square. He also restored the family’s ancestral seat, Brahan Castle, which had been devastated by an English army in 1725 as punishment for the 5th Earl of Seaforth’s uninhibited Jacobitism.”²⁹

The death of Francis Mackenzie fulfilled the last of an old family prophecy that would see the end of the male line of Seaforth Chiefs. The story that was passed through generations of Highlanders for over a hundred years involved the family seer, Kenneth Ogh. It was the early part of the eighteenth century when the fourth Earl of Seaforth was in Edinburgh on business for what his wife considered too long a visit. She being “a lady of violent temper and jealous disposition, became anxious at his prolonged absence, and

²⁸ *The Dublin Evening Post*, September 13, 1787, British Newspaper Archive.

²⁹ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012), 161. When General Wade left Brahan Castle, before McKenzie was issued a pardon, Wade had the roof taken off the Castle, as was customary in times of war.

her suspicions being aroused, she sent for Kenneth Ogh, and commanded him to tell her where his lord was.”³⁰ The seer attempted for some time to avoid using his gift to report on the Earl, but the lady refused to dismiss him without the information she wanted. So, in front of all of her guests, the seer informed the lady that her husband was in a beautifully decorated room with two women, one on his lap and one playing with his curls.³¹ The lady became furious and when the seer refused to take back what he had said, she ordered him burned to death. Although he managed to hide for some time, when he was caught, he gave one last prophecy: “I see the downfall of the Lords of Kintail. There will come a deaf and dumb Seaforth; he will have three bonny sons, all of whom shall die before him, and he shall be the last male of his line. He will be succeeded by a dark-eyed woman, who will come from the East with snow on her coif, and she will be the last Mackenzie.”³² Indeed, Francis Mackenzie was almost entirely deaf, which severely impeded his speech. He had three sons who all died before him and at his death the estates passed to his eldest daughter, Lady Hood Mackenzie, who returned to Scotland as a widow, wearing a white cap.³³ The last Lord Seaforth’s friend, Sir Walter Scott, wrote “The Farewell to Mackenzie” (1815), that would be reprinted on many occasions to honor both father and daughter. The final stanza recognizes the heavy sorrow of the family and the responsibility that Lady Hood Mackenzie assumed: “And thou, Gentle Dame, who must bear, to thy grief,/ For thy clan and thy country the cares of a Chief./ Whom brief rolling moons in six changes have left,/ Of thy husband, and father, and

³⁰ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 5.

³¹ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 6.

³² St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 6.

³³ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 8.

brethren bereft;/ To the ear of affection, how sad is the hail/ That salutes thee the heir of the line of Kintail.”³⁴

Lady Hood Mackenzie married, first, Vice Admiral Sir Samuel Hood, 1st Baronet of the Royal Navy, and second, Lady Jeune’s Grandfather, James Alexander Stewart who was a Member of Parliament for Ross-shire and Ross and Cromarty before becoming the 7th Governor of British Ceylon and held the office of Lord High Commissioner of the Ionian Islands.³⁵ So powerful was the name of Mackenzie that he changed his name to Stewart-Mackenzie, thus preserving his wife’s family name and position. Lady Hood Mackenzie became the Chief of the Clan Mackenzie upon the death of her father. She also cultivated a lifelong friendship with Sir Walter Scott, who spoke fondly of her in his letters and journals.³⁶ In her memoir, Lady Jeune described the relationship between her grandmother and Scott as the most prized friendship of Lady Hood Mackenzie and in which “[h]e treated her all through his life with a friendship and confidence which he vouchsafed to very few people...She shared in all the enthusiasm of his successes, and sympathized with all her heart in the clouds and sorrows that overshadowed his later life.”³⁷ Beyond cultivating relationships with leading artists and politicians, Lady Hood Mackenzie took her responsibilities as the head of a great family to heart and provided for the tennantry and counties she oversaw.

³⁴ Walter Scott. “Farewell to Mackenzie High Chief of Kintail, Imitation to the Preceding Song,” *The Poetical Works of Walter Scott: Complete in One Volume* (Frankfort OM: Printed by and For H.L. Broenner, 1826), 322.

³⁵ R. Hon. James Alexander Stewart-Mackenzie. “Person Page 3665,” *The Perrage*. <http://www.thepeerage.com/p3665.htm#i36642>.

³⁶ John Gibson Lockhart, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott* (United States: C. S. Francis, 1857), 34, 210, 232.

³⁷ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 27.

When the Scottish Evangelical Free Church broke from the Established Protestant Church of Scotland, Lady Hood Mackenzie played a prominent role in establishing the new church in the Highlands. Proving once again that the women of the Mackenzie clan were no strangers to public works. Prior to the Great Disruption that took place in May of 1843, when roughly a third of ministers broke from the Established Church,³⁸ Lady Hood, along with her sisters Charlotte and Augusta, commissioned the building of a new church in 1839 for the people of the estate. After paying for the church to be built, she contributed £80 per year for the minister.³⁹ The Maryburgh Free Church still stands at Seaforth Place and has an active congregation in the 21st century.⁴⁰ Part of what makes this action so interesting is the fact that the Free Church gave the parishoners the ability to choose their own clergy instead of relying on the old system that allowed the patrons to choose ministers. As chief of the clan Mackenzie, Lady Hood Mackenzie shared the decision of selecting a minister with her clan to ensure that their needs were being met.

Lady Jeune's Early Life

The family became staunch adherants of the Free Church and Lady Jeune recalled that “all my early life was spent under the shadow and influence of that powerful and most tyrannical rule.”⁴¹ It was common practice for Free Church members to spend most all of the day on Sunday in religious observance. The religious devotion of the Scots was unflinching in that “[a] Sunday which began at eleven by a two and a half hours’ service

³⁸ Allan MacLaren. *Religion and Social Class: The Disruption Years in Aberdeen* (London: Routledge, 1974), 29. For greater detail, see: Richard Buchanan, *The ten years’ conflict: History of the Disruption of The Church of Scotland* (London: Blackie and Son, 1852).

³⁹ Charles W. Muirden, “Erection of Church” *Maryburgh Free Church: A history of 150 years, Ross and Cromarty Heritage*. <http://www.rossandcromartyheritage.org/Community/Maryburgh/History/A-History-of-Maryburgh-Free-Church/Chapter-2.aspx>

⁴⁰ See: *Places of Worship in Scotland: Maryburgh Free Church* at: <http://www.scottishchurches.org.uk/sites/site/id/8901/name/Maryburgh+Free+Church+Fodderty+Highland>

⁴¹ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 29.

in Gaelic, with an interval of one hour for dinner, and was continued in English until half-past three or four.”⁴² After services, the Bible and pamphlets were studied in preparation for passing the Catechisms in “a day of gloom and darkness [where] there were no hot baths; no food was cooked; there was no pudding for dinner; the most rigid Presbyterians abstained from the ordinary luxury of sugar in their tea, and the men refrained from shaving on Sundays, because any of these ordinary indulgences were a desecration of the Sabbath.”⁴³ Despite what may have felt like deprivation, that early religious training would keep Lady Jeune faithful to the Free Church of Scotland even when her husband and children belonged to the Church of England.

There was a good deal more to Highland life for children than Evangelical religion. Lady Jeune also recalled many fond memories of “inherit[ing] the traditions and superstitions of our country; and as children with Highland nurses, who spoke little else than Gaelic, we lived in a world of fairies, witches, second sight, and all the various superstitions which were an article of faith with the people.”⁴⁴ These superstitions included cutting an apple in half, in front of a mirror, in a room lit with a single candle or planting rape-seed after dark on Halloween eve with the promise of seeing their future husband or Satan himself.⁴⁵ Added together with prophecies, reading egg whites and tea leaves, and the belief that a death-candle could foretell the death of the head of a family, Lady Jeune’s childhood was filled with competing belief systems that were both entertaining and instructive of this world and the next.

⁴² St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 30.

⁴³ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 30.

⁴⁴ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 34.

⁴⁵ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 34.

Religious training and Highland superstition were only a part of the early education of Lady Jeune and her siblings. Due in large part to Enlightenment thinking, liberal Scots believed it was important for girls to have a higher level of academic training so that they would be better teachers for their children—intellectually and morally. More conservative thinkers agreed that the hard work demanded by academic training had moral value but they were also concerned that too much intellectual training would unfit girls for their predestined situations as mothers and as domestic servants in the lower classes.⁴⁶ These debates continued into the 19th century and “[a]lthough there was an increasing emphasis on moral discipline rather than intellectual freedom, academic teaching was still regarded as the main purpose of the school, even by advocates of domestic training.”⁴⁷ As a daughter in an upper-class family, Lady Jeune’s education was more rigorous than that of girls in the lower classes.

A clear description of her childhood education is offered by Lady Jeune in her memoir:

Our education was not neglected, however, for my mother, who was a remarkably clever woman, taught us herself for some years, and she was a stern, inexorable tutor. The education which even children in our position received in those days was much simpler than it is now, and was confined principally to a thorough knowledge of the three R’s; but we read a great deal of history, and learned geography and elementary science, and my mother in several ways strove to develop and improve our memory, while we also learned great quantities of the English poets and classics by heart. Shakespeare, Pope, Dryden, Cowper, and Milton were the works principally taught us, and our reading was of a very serious character...It was not until we were past fifteen or sixteen that we were allowed to enter into the enchanted land which the Waverley Novels opened up to us. Though our education was of so simple a character, the interesting questions of the day were followed with deep and great attention by my mother, who in

⁴⁶ Lindy Moore, “Educating For the ‘Woman’s Sphere’: Domestic Training Versus Intellectual Discipline,” in *Out of Bounds: Women in Scottish Society 1800-1945*, eds. Esther Breitenbach and Elanor Gordon (Edinburgh University Press, 1992), 11-41.

⁴⁷ Moore, “Educating For the ‘Woman’s Sphere,’” 15.

thought and education was very much in advance of most of the women of her time.⁴⁸

Lessons in history, geography, and science were certainly beyond what was taught in the Ragged or Sabbath schools to children of less privileged families, especially for girls in the mid-nineteenth century. Instead, girls of the lower classes were taught some form of the three R's (reading, writing, and arithmetic), but a good portion of their education consisted of domestic training in sewing, laundry, and cookery.⁴⁹ Lady Jeune's education was expanded away from home, first on a trip to Edinburgh with her grandmother when she was 10 years old, and then, five years later when the girls spent a "winter there for serious education, and had lessons in dancing, music, languages, and the various accomplishments which were then considered necessary to finish the education of young people."⁵⁰ On that first trip to Edinburgh with her grandmother, the young Lady Jeune stayed at a hotel on George Street that was occupied by many prominent Scottish people and women seeking medical care. The most interesting events of that stay centered around Sir James Simpson, "the first doctor who used chloroform in his practice. That great discovery, which has brought more alleviation of pain than any other, was then in its infancy, and there was much diversity of opinion as to its safety, and also dislike to its use on religious grounds."⁵¹ Because of her family's wealth and position, Lady Jeune would be exposed to many of the greatest thinkers and advances in science, literature, and the arts as they occurred in the rapidly advancing industrial world of Victorian Great Britain.

⁴⁸ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 33-34.

⁴⁹ Moore, "Educating For the 'Woman's Sphere,'" 11-16. This chapter offers a detailed description of the debates surrounding female education and the subjects taught to middle and lower-class girls.

⁵⁰ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 20.

⁵¹ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 19.

It was on her second trip to Edinburgh, in the summer of 1860, that the girls attended the theatre for the first time, an event that would spark a lifetime of love for the arts. The memory of that experience left an indelible mark on the girls: “What a joy that was! And what an impression it made! That the theatre was old and badly lighted, the plays poorly mounted, the dresses incongruous...could not detract from the indescribable and unforgettable joy of going to the theatre for the first times in our lives.”⁵² While Lady Jeune does not name the first play she saw, The Queen’s Theatre & Opera House in Edinburgh opened for the summer season with shows such as, “Duel In The Snow,” “Fra Diavolo,” and “Fish Out of Water.”⁵³

As exciting as the visits to the theatre were, another event took place on this trip that would leave a lasting impression, and would demonstrate the family’s position in Society. On August 7, 1860, Queen Victoria and other members of the Royal Family came to Edinburgh for a review of the Queen’s Volunteers in Queen’s Park. This was an important national event designed to reinforce the unity of Scotland and England as one country. According to the newspapers, there were 21,514 troops and an estimated 200,000 spectators where “The Queen, having inspected the whole line, returned to the flagstaff, in the rear of which a covered gallery, 900 feet in length, afforded seats for the élite of Edinburghh society.”⁵⁴ Years later, Lady Jeune recalled that “[w]e were lucky enough to have tickets for the enclosure, and were able to see everything well...It was a day of wild excitement and enthusiasm. I have never fotgotten the Queen, who, with the

⁵² St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 21.

⁵³ “Queen’s Theatre & Opera-House,” *The Caledonian Mercury*, July 9, 1860, British Newspaper Archive.

⁵⁴ “The Royal Volunteer Review at Edinburgh.” *The Illustrated London News* (September 8, 1860), British Newspaper Archive.

Prince Consort beside her, looked small and young, but so beamingly happy.”⁵⁵ The Queen’s marital happiness would be cut short only a year later when the Prince Consort would die leaving the Queen in deep mourning for the rest of her life. While this may have been one of the first state events that Lady Jeune attended, it was only the beginning of a lifetime in élite circles in both Scotland and London.

After returning from Edinburgh, at the age of 15, Lady Jeune’s family moved into Brahan Castle where she served as personal assistant and secretary to her grandmother. She later wrote, “[t]he years I spent a Brahan with my grandmoter, after the marriage of my aunt to Lord Ashburton, were some of the most interesting in my life.”⁵⁶ Indeed, the visitors to Brahan in those times were some of the most prominent politicians and literary people of the day. When the Lodge at Loch Luichart, the Scottish home of Lady Ashburton, overflowed, visitors were sent to Brahan. One of those evenings, The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Tait, Sir Roderick Murchison, and Robert Browning were sent to the castle and a lifelong friendship between Lady Jeune and Robert Browning began.⁵⁷ Her first meeting with the British Prime Minister, Mr. Gladstone and his wife, was as tour guide of the estate gardens on behalf of her grandmother who was ill.⁵⁸ Another prominent visitor was Sir Edwin Landseer, the famous animal artist of works such as, “The Chief Mourner,” “The Monarch of the Glen,” “Dignity and Impudence,” and “The Nutcrackers” among many others.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 21-22.

⁵⁶ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 28.

⁵⁷ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 4.

⁵⁸ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 22.

⁵⁹ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 26. See also: Frederic G. Stephens and Gilbert R. Redgrave, *Sir Edwin Landseer, David Cox, and Peter De Wint* (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Company, 1895).

Another Aunt, Jane Loftus, Marchioness of Ely (1821-1890), was a Lady of the Bedchamber and close friend of Queen Victoria.⁶⁰ A first cousin to Lady Jeune's mother was Lady Elizabeth Hay, the daughter of Lord Tweeddale, who married Lord Duro, The First Duke of Wellington's oldest son. The Duke, who served as Prime Minister, Leader of the House of Lords, and Secretary of Foreign Affairs shared a close relationship with the three cousins.⁶¹ He referred to Lady Jeune's mother and aunt as "My dear Daughter Hannah, and My dear Daughter Jane," and he gave Hannah away at her wedding.⁶² It was Lady Ely who first presented Lady Jeune as Miss Stewart Mackenzie to Society at a Drawing Room held by Her Royal Highness, The Princess of Wales on behalf of Her Majesty on Tuesday, June 14, 1864 at St. James's Palace.⁶³ Many holidays were spent at Ely Lodge and various other locations in Ireland.⁶⁴ One location in particular was the Chief Secretary's lodge near the Dublin Castle during Lord Carllisle's time in that position.⁶⁵ "The Viceregal *entourage* was aristocratic, and numbers of the upper classes came from all parts of the country to spend five or six weeks of the season in Dublin."⁶⁶

Upon the death of her grandmother in 1862, the newspapers reported that Lady Hood Mackenzie "had known so many eminent persons, had seen so much, and read so extensively, that her intellectual resources in society appeared inexhaustible."⁶⁷ Added to

⁶⁰ K.D. Reynolds. *Aristocratic Women and Political Society in Victorian Britain* (United Kingdom: Clarendon Press, 1998), 212-13. See also: St. Helier. *Memories of Fifty Years*, 16.

⁶¹ GR Gleig, *The Life of Arthur Duke of Wellington* (London: Longmans, 1865), Chapter 1. See also: St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 16.

⁶² St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 16.

⁶³ "The Drawing Room," *The Daily Review* (Edinburgh, Friday, June 17, 1864), British Newspaper Archive.

⁶⁴ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 56-59.

⁶⁵ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 60.

⁶⁶ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 61.

⁶⁷ "Death of The Hon. Mrs. Stewart Mackenzie," *The Inverness Courier* (Dec. 4, 1862), British Newspaper Archive.

this great intellect and experience, her commitment to sustaining Highland life on the Seaforth estates continued the centuries old traditions of the Mackenzie clan. The obituary goes on to inform the unfamiliar reader how “[t]he hospitality of Brahan Castle is too well known North and South, to require mention, but in the humbler scenes of life—in attending to the poor and sick, in providing education for the young, and comfort for the old—the deceased lady nobly discharged the duties attached to her as the representative of an ancient Highland family and line of chiefs.”⁶⁸ This dedication to her country and her people resulted in what Lady Jeune called “the last great Highland funeral...[where] thousands of people came from all parts of the country to attend it, and the long procession to Fortrose, about twenty miles away, where she was buried, extended over five miles of that distance.”⁶⁹

In 1863, after the death of her grandmother, Lady Jeune began attending balls and social functions at the age of 18. Her first season in London marked the beginning of her annual attendance at The Grand Caledonian Fancy Dress Ball—held in the month of June, even now—an event to support Scottish charities and attended by The Royal Family and the most distinguished members of society.⁷⁰ During the London season, “[a] certain number of people rode in Rotten Row in the morning, but there were no luncheon parties and no evening parties...and girls were hardly ever asked out to dinner. Evening receptions were rare, and they were generally only attended by older people, girls being

⁶⁸ “Death of The Hon. Mrs. Stewart Mackenzie,” 5d.

⁶⁹ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 52.

⁷⁰ “The Caledonian Ball,” *Elgin Courant, and Morayshire Advertiser* (Scotland, Friday, June 19, 1863), British Newspaper Archive. See also, *The Dublin Daily Express* (June 15, 1864), The British Newspaper Archive. *The Scotsman* (Edinburgh, Thursday, June 22, 1865), British Newspaper Archive. *The Morning Post* (London, Saturday, June 23, 1866), The British Newspaper Archive. *The Morning Post* (London, Saturday, June 22, 1867), The British Newspaper Archive. *The Inverness Courier* (Inverness, Thursday, July 1, 1869), The British Newspaper Archive. and *The Morning Post* (London, Monday, June 27, 1870), British Newspaper Archive.

usually put to bed at 8 o'clock to sleep until 9.30, when, refreshed and beautified by their rest, they dressed themselves for their ball."⁷¹ The London balls were dazzling and attended by all European Royal houses and nobility of every rank. The newspapers abounded with lists of parties and the most fashionable names attending the parties along with every detail of the decorations, the food, and the dresses worn by the highest ranking women. To be invited to these balls was a mark of distinction, to be listed in the newspapers was the ultimate acknowledgment of one's position in High Society. Between June of 1863, when Lady Jeune officially began attending society events, and 1871, when she married, her name was listed in dozens of newspapers in Scotland, Ireland, and London, marking her as an eligible young woman of distinction.⁷²

As the London seasons ended, fall in the Highlands kicked off another round of parties, market gatherings, shooting competitions, and Scottish balls to keep Lady Jeune busy while home at Brahan Castle. She paid visits to The Conon-Bridge and Maryburg Horticultural Society competitions along with her mother.⁷³ The Northern Meeting was an annual "brilliant gathering of Highland families and Southern visitors" that featured the Stewart Mackenzie family as the head of The Seaforth Estates and a leading clan of the Highlands.⁷⁴ Prior to her official debut in Society, Lady Jeune was in London for extraordinary moments that were special in both her memory and in cultural history. Building on her love of the theatre, she was able to witness many firsts:

⁷¹ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 66.

⁷² There are far too many newspapers and mentions of Lady Jeune in guest lists to give anything close to a comprehensive list here. A few representative titles include: *The Banffshire Journal*, *The Inverness Courier*, *The Army & Navy Gazette*, *The Dublin Daily Express*, *The London Evening Standard*, and *Morning Post*.

⁷³ "Conon-Bridge and Maryburgh Horticultural Society," *The Inverness Courier*, August 27, 1863, British Newspaper Archive.

⁷⁴ "The Northern Meeting," *The Inverness Courier*, September 28, 1865, British Newspaper Archive; see also: *The Elgin Courier* (Scotland, September 28, 1866), British Newspaper Archive.

The opera was a very expensive amusement, and had it not been for the kindness of Lord Dudley and Mr. Delane, I should have gone very little. Gounod had just written “Faust,” which was produced in London with some hesitation on the part of the managers, as it was not an opera to which *les jeunes filles* could go. My people, however, belonged to that section of society which thought that an opera in a foreign language was different from an English play, because very few people could understand the words.⁷⁵

“Faust” debuted in London in May 1860, three full years before Lady Jeune officially came out in society. She clearly understood that her *people* viewed the world differently than the British people she encountered in London. Her more liberal Scottish family believed in showing their children all the world had to offer. Just one year later, She recalled that, “I was at the opera the first night Patti made her appearance, and the wild enthusiasm of the house over the new diva was indescribable.”⁷⁶ This was the premier performance, in London, of the famed soprano Adelina Patti starring in *La Sonnambula*.⁷⁷

It was not just the opera house that Lady Jeune visited as a young woman. Following the more open-minded practices of her Scottish parents, she was also exposed to experiences that were—at best—questionable for young women. On a trip to London with her father and aunt (she does not say which one,) she remembered “once as a great treat, and under promise of inviolable secrecy, being taken...to Cremorne. There is always in the feminine heart a great craving for forbidden fruit, and I suppose that is why I wanted to go. But I found it very dull, and could see no charm or reason for visiting it a second time.”⁷⁸ Cremorne Gardens were the sight of an outdoor entertainment zone with

⁷⁵ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 73. See also: “Canterbury Hall Concerts,” *The London Sun*, May 11, 1860, British Newspaper Archive.

⁷⁶ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 72.

⁷⁷ “Royal Italian Opera-Covent Garden,” *The Morning Post* (London), May 14, 1861, British Newspaper Archive.

⁷⁸ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 73.

live music, lights, fireworks, and street performers of all sorts;⁷⁹ it was not considered a place for reputable young women. Even less a place for young ladies was Evans's Supper Rooms in Covent Garden. This was a place where gentlemen went every evening to eat, drink, and listen to music.⁸⁰ It was to Evans's where, "one year when my father and I were in London before Easter, he also took me to what was considered hardly a place for young ladies...and to me it was then a most decidedly thrilling place, especially as I went there for the first time on the night of the Boat Race...but two or three visits to Evans's quenched all desire on my part to go there again."⁸¹

Recalling the time she spent in London as a young lady, it is clear the Lady Jeune's life as a debutante was filled with high society balls and parties where she encountered members of the Royal Family—indeed many Royal families from all across the continent—politicians, great military leaders, the leading authors and performers of the time, and the aristocracy and landed families of Great Britain. She dedicates two chapters to "London in the Sixties," and the extensive lists of people she knew. Her own reflection many years later marked her very exclusive access to society:

Though my father and mother had lived for many years very quietly in the country, they belonged to that happy class of people who have a large number of relations and connections. Luckily for me and my sister, all these were extremely kind, so that the first year I came out was in every way a very delightful time. I remember being very proud of the fact that during my first season I had sat next to Lord Clarendon one night at my aunt's (Lady Ely), that I had sat between Charles Dickens and Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton at Lady Molesworth's, while at Mr. Shirley Brooks' I met Mark Lemon, Sir Henry Thompson, Sir John Tenniel, and sundry other interesting and remarkable people.⁸²

⁷⁹ Edward Walford, "Chelsea: Cremorne Gardens," in *Old and New London: Volume 5*, (London: Cassell, Peter & Galpin, 1878), 84-100.

⁸⁰ "Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race," *The London Sun*, March 21, 1861, British Newspaper Archive.

⁸¹ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 73-4.

⁸² St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 77-8.

Interesting and remarkable people is, perhaps, an understatement. Lord Clarendon was an Irish politician, Charles Dickens was by then a famous author, Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton was an English Politician, Mark Lemon was the founding editor of *Punch*, and Sir John Tenniel was a renowned artist. The women were equally remarkable. Lady Palmerston, Lady Waldegrave, and Lady Molesworth were the leading political hostesses of the early 19th century. She also spent time with one of the most famous English philanthropists, Angela Burdett-Coutts, and developed a lifetime friendship with Princess Helena, (or Princess Christian after her marriage), Queen Victoria's third daughter. Lady Jeune never bragged about her relationship with the royal family, as that would have been a serious breach of etiquette, but she is recorded at dinners, charity functions, school openings, and a host of other events with Princess Christian and other members of the Royal family from the 1870's until her death in 1931.

Marriage and Moving to London

By 1885, her fame as a society hostess and philanthropist was well cataloged. When asked about her, the most common replies were that no one was ever bored at her parties because of the complete cross section of society who attended them. When speaking about Lady Jeune, an often repeated description ran, "It may interest you to know that she comes of an ancient and honourable Scotch [sic] family, that her brother possesses a castle, that her sister is Julia, Marchioness of Tweeddale, that her husband is an eminent Queen's Counsel and the son of a late Bishop of Peterborough, that her former husband was brother to the late Lord Stanley of Alderly, and that a ducal coronet was once laid at her feet which she did not care to put on her head."⁸³ In reading these

⁸³ "At Mrs. Jeune's," *The York Herald*, September 17, 1885, British Newspaper Archive.

descriptions, it seems that the London society pages were determined to make her as much of a lioness as those varied and interesting people who she invited to her parties.

While there is no real evidence that she rejected a ducal coronet, her marriages were both hailed as very happy occasions. On August 15, 1871, Lady Jeune married Colonel the Hon. John Constantine Stanley.⁸⁴ In Dingwall, Scotland, “[t]he marriage was made the occasion of a general meeting of the Magistrates and Town Counsell and the leading inhabitants of Dingwall, the county town of Ross-shire, convened by the Provost of the burgh.”⁸⁵ Many toast were drank to the happy couple including that of the Provost who offered that “by her courteous and ladylike deportment, and amiability of dispositon, [she] had gained the respect and affection of the community whilst going out and in amongst them. And irrespective of her own merits, which are not a few, it well becomes the inhabitants of Dingwall to do any honour in their power to a daughter of the House of Seaforth.”⁸⁶ Sir Kenneth Mackenzie of Gairloch, of a neighboring estate, presided over the meeting of the tenantry. After highlighting his own family’s close ties with the Seaforths, he offerd the hearty praise from the neighboring families, “[t]he company had all known Miss Stewart-Mackenzie from early childhood, they had observed her day by day as she grew up among them interesting herself in the welfare and happiness of all around her...they found there had grown up in their heart a sincere, loyal, and respectful attachment to her, which led them to give hearty expression to their sympathy with her hopes and prospects of happiness.”⁸⁷ On behalf of the tennants, Mr Adam Hamberston

⁸⁴ “Marriages,” *The Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*,” August 18, 1871, British Newspaper Archive. See also: “Births, Marriages, and Deaths,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, August 17, 1871, British Newspaper Archive.

⁸⁵ “Marriage of Miss Mackenzie of Seaforth,” *The Inverness Courier*, August 17, 1871, British Newspaper Archive.

⁸⁶ “Marriage of Miss Mackenzie of Seaforth,” *The Inverness Courier*, August 17, 1871, 8.

⁸⁷ “Marriage of Miss Mackenzie of Seaforth,” *The Inverness Courier*, August 17, 1871, 8.

noted how fitting it was that the celebration was being held on the centenary of Sir Walter Scott's birth given Lady Hood's close connection with the author, and as a mark of high praise, he offered a detailed description of Lady Jeune's life as the tenants saw her:

It is generally admitted that Miss Stewart Mackenzie, now the Hon. Mrs Stanley, inherited much of her grandmother's nobility and generosity of character. She seemed to rejoice in the comfort and prosperity of all on their estates. She did what she could to secure suitable situations for young men and women who had to leave their father's homes. She oft times visited the dwellings of the poor and the afflicted, and there her liberality was bounded only by the means at her disposal. She took her place, kindly and unassumingly, week after week, in the Sabbath school, and there taught a class of girls, whose hearts she appeared entirely to win. She continued to take the deepest interest in the week-day schools, and endeavoured to secure the instruction of the very poorest children on the estate.⁸⁸

A true daughter of the House of Seaforth, Lady Jeune was deeply connected to her ancient family and the responsibilities of the family toward their tennantry. She was taught to go among them and help where she could. Having been cared for by Gaelic nurses and then caring for the poor and sick and teaching in the Sabbath school, she learned the responsibilities of the wealthy and developed a work ethic that would follow her through her adult life in London.

While there is a shared understanding of the responsibility of the wealthy to the poor in most all of English society, Lady Jeune's time spent growing up with the poor highland tenants did more than instill a sense of responsibility. It taught her who those people were in the very human, everyday sense of the word. She developed an understanding of their daily struggles, their work ethics, their belief systems, and the lack of resources they struggled with. While it is clear that in her youth and in her later life she worked tirelessly to offer relief where she could find practical solutions to their problems, she never challenged the established class systems that served as the major oppressive

⁸⁸ "Marriage of Miss Mackenzie of Seaforth," *The Inverness Courier*, August 17, 1871, 8.

forces that blocked opportunities for the poor. So, while her adherence to class structures made her philanthropical efforts similar to other English ladies, her personal experiences with the Scottish tenantry gave her a unique understanding of and sympathy for the poor. It is this knowledge and experience that she would spend a great deal of time trying to convey to her English counterparts in many of her essays.

Fittingly, David Russell's exploration of tact as a rhetorical foundation of the essay genre is useful in examining Lady Jeune's essays through the lense of her Scottish identity. Russell explains that "[i]n broadest terms: tact privileges encounters over knowledge, and an aesthetic of handling over more abstract conceptualization—whether of people or object."⁸⁹ Meaning, tact is more interested in lived experience than preconceived knowledge of people or objects. It focuses on the encounters between people and things and how those encounters impact and shape those lives. Lady Jeune's essays, regardless of topic, are replete with references to her own experience and her personal interactions with other people and with poverty as an issue. She draws on those personal encounters to give her readers more full understanding of the poor people that her philanthropic efforts help.

Additionally, Russell argues that "[f]or tact, in its invention and its creative instantiation in essays of the nineteenth-century and beyond, was an egalitarian and artful response to a complex, modernizing world...It maintains a grasp on the ambivalent complexity of the cultural field, the difficult conditions we all inherit, while proposing new—more just, more creative, even more vital—ways of handling established forms."⁹⁰

⁸⁹ David Russell. *Tact: Aesthetic Liberalism and the Essay Form in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 1.

⁹⁰ Russell, *Tact*, 2.

Meaning, the use of tact in nineteenth-century essays astutely seeks more equitable ways of navigating a complex modernizing world. It holds on to the difficult minefield of inherited cultural knowledge while simultaneously offering new more creative and socially just ways of maneuvering through or beyond outdated social and cultural ideologies about ways of being or identity politics. This becomes increasingly more important in the later nineteenth-century as class distinctions began to shift and urban populations reached critical mass, particularly in cities like London, throwing people from all classes into closer contact. For Lady Jeune in particular, navigating her own Scottish identity in conjunction with her London identity and the shifting population of poor people that she encountered in London, meant coming up with new ways to describe them and their situation to effectively advocate for both immediate help and longterm changes that would help stabilize their lives.

Before Lady Jeune could put her pen to work soliciting help for the men, women, and children she spent a lifetime trying to help, she had to meet those people in the London Slums and adjacent workplaces and build relationships with them. About this tricky situation, Russell asks:

But what of the tact that provides the conditions for trust: the relation of collaborative hope that makes new demands on the world? There has been less attention to the suggestion that social relations also could be imagined from, as it were, the inside out: that small, tactful moments of handling could contain within them claims and assumptions from which to demand new relationships in a shared world. This requires a clearing, at least provisionally, of established means and ends, and so a renewed insistence on mediation, considered not as a technology but as a quality of attention: on the qualities and distributions of spaces and experiences between people, rather than focusing on identarian knowledge about the constitution of individual subjects.⁹¹

⁹¹ Russell, *Tact*, 3.

In considering how tact is used to establish trust between groups of individuals, it is the encounter—the small moments of human connection—and how the parties handle one another in that moment, that leads to establishing new relationships. By clearing past (mis)conceptions of identity and focusing on the quality of interactions between people, tact allows for new approaches to modern social problem-solving that considers what is⁹² over past inherited knowledge. Lady Jeune had to set aside her past knowledge of the poor tenants from her Scottish home and engage—on an individual and personal level—with the cosmopolitan poor in London to develop a real understanding of who they were and how their lives were different from her previous experience to deploy the same type of practical solutions (the methods she brings forward from her Scottish upbringing) in the complex machinery of London life at the fin-de-siècle.

⁹² By what is, I mean the actual physical, social, economic, and political position of the people involved in the encounter and how those conditions relate to the reason for the encounter, or the problem to be solved.

Chapter 2

Converting Celebrity Status into Feminine Authority in the Periodical Press¹

Lady Jeune was indisputably the most famous society hostess in London during the 1880s and 1890s. Hundreds of newspapers and fashionable magazines constantly reminded readers of her reputation and the value of an invitation to her home. She was followed by paparazzi in much the same way that Princess Diana was hounded. In England, newspapers commented on a daily basis on where she went, who she was with, her mode of transportation, what she was wearing, and what she had to say; similar reports occurred weekly in nearly every major American newspaper. But far from being a superficial socialite, Lady Jeune exploited this constant attention to promote her views on the condition of society, philanthropic work, and the Woman Question. She was one of the complex women who led a public life at the end of the nineteenth century. She was close friends with the most famous writers and politicians of the period, including Thomas Carlyle, Alfred Tennyson, Matthew Arnold, Thomas Hardy, Randolph Churchill, and William Gladstone. And as a prolific writer for the periodical press, Lady Jeune was in conversation with other women authors who weighed in on social questions, including Ouida, Mona Caird, Sarah Grand, Mary Ward, and many others.

Jeune's life and writing suggest that while she opposed loud and public demonstrations, such as those employed by the suffragettes, she was an advocate for better education, legal autonomy, and recognition of women's capacity to be strong contributing members of nation building. Indeed, she became one of the first female

¹ This chapter originally appeared, in slightly different form, as "Converting Celebrity Status into Feminine Authority in the Periodical Press," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 53, no.2 (2020): 267-283; it is reproduced here by permission of Johns Hopkins University Press.

London County Council Aldermen. Though she attacked the *New Woman* for poor behavior, she also eviscerated men for socially indecent behavior towards women. In short, she was an equal-opportunity conservative who believed that all should conduct themselves in more polite and responsible ways for the good of both sexes, society, and the nation. Though Jeune disappeared from scholarship for nearly a century, critics have begun to recognize her contributions to politics and periodicals. William A. Davis, who has done more than any other scholar to recover Jeune's work, places her alongside other late-Victorian female prose writers who did not agree with all of the demands of the *New Woman*: Margaret Oliphant, Alice Meynell, Eliza Lynn Linton, and Mary Ward, just to name a few.² Sarah Wise discusses some of Lady Jeune's philanthropic efforts in the Old Nichol in her impressive study of these slums.³ And K. D. Reynolds considers how Lady Jeune used her status as a hostess to bring people together and potentially influence political ties. Reynolds demonstrates that, despite the doctrine of separate spheres, women like Jeune were active in making decisions that shaped public events and society.

While Jeune's essays demonstrate her contribution to a crucial moment of early feminist activity, the overwhelming body of print about her reveals the extent of her influence. She was taken seriously as an expert on social problems; for example, her focus on feeding poor schoolchildren led to government-run free lunch programs. Her sharp judgments on demoralizing behavior were turned into advice for middle-class readers, and her fearless attacks on the *New Woman* sparked responses that ranged from

² William Davis, "Mary Jeune, Late-Victorian Essayist: Fallen Women, New Women, and Poor Children," *English Literature in Transition, 1880–1920* 58, no. 2 (2015): 181–208.

³ Sarah Wise, *The Blackest Streets: The Life and Death of a Victorian Slum* (New York: Jonathan Cape), 2008.

angry name-calling to near worship of her as the sensible woman of her day. Through a close analysis of her early publications and their reception, I will show how Lady Jeune used her increasing celebrity status as a society woman to become a respected authority on the social ills plaguing late-Victorian London.⁴ In order to accomplish this task, I looked for the moment when her writing first triggered a large-scale response. Davis establishes Lady Jeune's 1894 essay "The Revolt of the Daughters" as an important work on the Woman Question, but this was not the first of Lady Jeune's essays to incur widespread acclaim or criticism. Two years earlier, the publication of "London Society" catapulted her from London's leading hostess to London's authority on social matters. It should be noted that "The Revolt of the Daughters" is the only one of Jeune's essays to be republished in a contemporary anthology. But although Carolyn Christensen Nelson's *A New Woman Reader* includes this essay, Lady Jeune is missing from many of the debates featured in this anthology. The section focused on Sarah Grand and the New Woman includes nine essays from women who opposed Grand but not Lady Jeune's direct response, "The New Woman and The Old: A Reply to Sarah Grand" (1898). The section entitled "The Marriage Question" includes Mona Caird but not Lady Jeune, who co-authored a book on the marriage question with Caird.

To demonstrate Lady Jeune's rise, in this chapter I will examine key moments in her publication history from her first known essay, "Helping the Fallen" (1885), to her first widely discussed essay, "London Society" (1892), along with responses to those articles. Between these two pieces, Lady Jeune published at least nineteen others: seven

⁴ To address every word that was ever written about Lady Jeune would require a volume that would make Dickens cringe. By necessity, this project leaves out the hundreds of daily reports on her outings, shopping, hobbies, philanthropic work, social activities, and companions on any given day (even though this body of work deserves future attention).

about caring for and feeding poor children, five about helping women regain employment and respectability, two about the poor, two about the Salvation Army, and three offering social reflections about people and places past. Sixteen of these essays served to establish Lady Jeune as an expert in charitable and philanthropic work, while the remaining two dabble in lighter subjects. I will discuss many of these essays in future chapters to look more closely at how her Scottish identity informed her philanthropy, activism, and journalism. I use the British Newspaper Archive as my primary search tool because it holds over 36 million pages of British Newspapers and Magazines from the eighteenth-century forward and is constantly adding to its digital database. A simple search of the British Newspaper Archive shows, Lady Jeune's name is mentioned with increasing frequency—from 145 times in 1885 to 2,672 times in 1892—with the largest jump in public notice between 1891 (491 mentions) and 1892.⁵ This dramatic increase indicates that her critique of London society marked a pivotal moment in her writing career and reputation.

A Bold Beginning

Unlike many female writers who found the need to couch their language in conciliatory phrases or publish anonymously for fear of being censored, Lady Jeune wrote bluntly—seemingly without fear—and, as far as I can tell, she signed all of her essays with her own name. Davis nicely outlines Lady Jeune's direct, authoritative style that remained consistent throughout her essays. He demonstrates her use of researched statistical data combined with personal observations to argue that “the representative Jeune essay, then, especially of those oriented toward exploring and offering solutions to

⁵ I used the *British Newspaper Archive Online* to conduct an advanced search of the name Jeune, excluding “le” and “Henry” (her husband's name) with dates set between January 1885 and December 1892.

social problems, is straightforwardly expressed, well or partially researched, grounded in its author's practical experiences, well aware of its audience yet unapologetic in implicating that audience if need be, detailed in delineating the causes of significant social problems and their solutions, and urgent in its call for specific action."⁶ She did not build up to this bold style; she began with it in her first essay "Helping the Fallen," published in the *Fortnightly Review*, a magazine edited by Frank Harris that supported the women's movement. Lady Jeune's straightforward style matched the increasingly bold complaints and calls for greater educational, technical, and political equality for women that filled the pages of the publication.

This early essay points to the type of social activism Lady Jeune would develop and pursue for the rest of her life.⁷ She begins by giving a social history of the condition of fallen women. She does not approach the sordid details of a woman's fall, but instead immediately points out how society turned its back by arguing that "when a woman wandered from the path of virtue, the door of society was relentlessly barred against her, and over the portals of the new home were inscribed the words, 'All hope abandon, ye who enter here.'"⁸ In this desperate situation, women were then condemned to the workhouse where Lady Jeune unfolds a nauseating picture of the filth and degradation of young women and children from her own experience as a charity organizer working in these houses. Her strategy in this essay was to paint a dreary and sympathetic picture so that the "dream indulged in only by a few enthusiastic women, who, struggling against

⁶ Davis, "Mary Jeune, Late-Victorian Essayist," 189.

⁷ Lady Jeune actively worked to change the living conditions of poor women and children, she supported women's trade unions, she campaigned for free or reduced meals for school children, and she worked to rehabilitate fallen women. These issues are discussed at length in this and following chapters.

⁸ Mary Jeune, "Helping the Fallen," *Fortnightly Review* 38 (1885): 669.

opposition and discouragement, clung to the hope that public opinion might change, and the charity of some portion of the community be directed towards them and their objects.”⁹ Lady Jeune provides statistics on the number of women and children who perish in workhouses and then gives her personal observations on the miserable plight of deserving young women who she believes can be saved because of their pure love for their illegitimate children (despite the pain and social stigma that those children bring to their mothers) before letting her audience know that she is asking for financial support. She then spends the rest of the essay outlining, in clear detail, how these women can be saved and reintroduced to society as useful domestic servants through the funding of homes that will keep them out of ineffectual workhouses. She lays the actual work to be done at the feet of other women and challenges her sisters in fortune to consider that “in these days of luxury, extravagance, and self-indulgence, women should turn for a moment from their happy life, and give a thought to their suffering and struggling sisters, many of whom have known days of luxury and pleasure. . . . It is for women to hold out the hand of fellowship, and lead the fallen back again to a pure life.”¹⁰ In her quest to save women, she calls on women to think of each other as a special community with a different bond that men do not and cannot share.

While laying out her plan, based on statistics and personal observations, Lady Jeune also addresses the shortcomings of other plans to rescue fallen women, especially those who adopt a religious approach:

It has for so long been the custom to regard the matter in a religious light, that anyone who attempts to approach it from any other standpoint is looked on with grave suspicion and mistrust. And yet years of work and experience have convinced me that those who thus begin, begin at the wrong end. . . . Therefore,

⁹ Jeune, “Helping the Fallen,” 671-2.

¹⁰ Jeune, “Helping the Fallen,” 681-2.

while speaking with the greatest respect and admiration for those who hold opinions on the point opposed to my own, and while recognising the magnitude and value of the work they have done, every day's experience convinces me that unless you are prepared at once to stretch out a hand to supply the material wants of a woman, your efforts will be wasted.¹¹

This passage highlights the bold demeanor with which Lady Jeune subverts social notions about the connection between religious piety and sexual purity in women by insisting that their material needs be supplied before any spiritual needs are addressed, not to mention her then highly controversial claims that fallen women could be reclaimed to become useful domestic servants and respectable English wives if given the proper chance. From the onset of her writing career, Lady Jeune was searching for ways that women could help and empower other women. Her systematic approach to investigating and then proposing that the material wants of women be met first and foremost comes a decade before Helen Bosanquet's *Rich and Poor* (1896), and two decades before Florence Bell's *At the works* (1907), and nearly 30 years before the Fabian Women's Group would publish a similar report, *About a Pound a Week* (1913). Each of these works takes on the lives of poor women and how to best support them in providing for their material needs of employment with better wages, a suitable living environment, and enough food and clothing to feed their children. Lady Jeune's approach then, is one of the first of its kind, investigated and reported by a woman. It is also important to note that most of the subsequent women doing this work were distinctly middle-class and she was a member of the upper-classes.

Despite the very direct approach that Lady Jeune took in claiming that religious attempts to save the fallen woman, workhouses, and social ostracizing had done no good

¹¹ Jeune, "Helping the Fallen," 678.

in slowing the number of illegitimate births, her first essay did not garner a large response. In fact, there are less than two dozen mentions of the essay in the year after its publication. Of those, the vast majority are advertisements for the *Fortnightly Review* with a list of essays and nothing more. The *St. James's Gazette* mentions the second article written by Lady Jeune in the same issue of the *Fortnightly* and claims that “Saving the Innocents” is the title of an admirable essay on the social question of which we have lately heard so much,” while completely ignoring “Helping the Fallen.”¹² On the same date, the *Western Times* offers the only other detailed commentary on Lady Jeune’s essays. It informs readers, “The burning social evil question being uppermost in the public mind, Mrs. Jeune’s paper will catch early attention. She is a lady of great and uncommon experience in the work of reformation of women, and approaches the subject in a frame of mind sympathetic with the spirit of the new Criminal Act. Her opinions will therefore carry weight to the reader’s mind. It will be seen that this lady is not inclined to turn a credulous ear to the tales told by fallen women or women who have devoted themselves to ministering to vice.”¹³ This introduction to Lady Jeune’s writing career is nothing short of glowing, even if it is only limited to a couple of articles in the newspapers. Whether it be that prostitution was “the burning social evil” and that people were ready to hear practical solutions, or that she was already well known as a successful philanthropist, we can only speculate. Either way, she was not criticized for her

¹² “Publications,” *St. James's Gazette*, September 3, 1895, British Newspaper Archive.

¹³ “Publications,” *Western Times*, September 3, 1895, British Newspaper Archive. The Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885 was passed on August 14, 1885. Among other things, the law raised the age of consent to 16, protecting young girls. It made legal proceedings against brothels easier, prohibited the forcing of young girls into prostitution, and punished offenders for encouraging or failing to prevent the sexual exploitation of girls under 18. It also prohibited sexual acts between men. This was the law that sent Oscar Wilde to prison in 1895. See, “The Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885 and Sexual Assault on Minors” by Jennifer Payne.

straightforward comments, her denouncement of religious efforts to reclaim fallen women, and her call to upper-class women to work with the lowest of the lower class. Instead, at the start of her journalistic career, she was introduced as a knowledgeable and experienced woman who should be listened to by the periodical readers.

Though her first publications did not gather a great deal of response, Lady Jeune was frequently mentioned in the newspapers for her dinner parties and her philanthropy. In June 1886, the *Sheffield Independent*'s gossip column ran a story titled "Good Work in Society" that featured her as "one of society's best known leaders" for her dinner parties, noting that "it is the peculiarity of Mrs. Jeune that, though herself a Conservative, she is on terms of equally warm friendship with the prominent men of all sides."¹⁴ Peculiar is certainly an appropriate term to describe Lady Jeune's political views because while she advocated for traditional ideals, she also was a staunch advocate for the empowerment of women. While she did not argue for full equality of the sexes, her dedication to raising women from shame, poverty, and abuse was in line with many early feminist goals. It was her dedication to these tasks that led the *Sheffield Independent* to claim that "it is, indeed, one of the most hopeful signs of the change in our times that the work of social reform is most ardently carried on by those whose position raises them above even the prospect of want."¹⁵ Lady Jeune, along with Princess Christian, worked tirelessly to help better the conditions of the lowest classes of women and children.¹⁶ Both of these women were well beyond the "prospect of want."

¹⁴ "Good Work in Society," *Sheffield Independent*, June 5, 1886, British Newspaper Archive.

¹⁵ "Good Work in Society," 9.

¹⁶ Between 1885 and 1915, there are literally thousands of mentions of Lady Jeune, often accompanied by Princess Christian, and her philanthropic work in the British newspapers. Many newspaper ads requested donations for one of the multiple charity funds that the two women ran, while many more were notices of

By 1888, Jeune's prominence in the papers began to swell. Long since noted for her charitable works, her social position became the true highlight of commentary about her. By September, the *York Herald* ran an article about her distinction in the highest circles:

She has a marked influence on the development of social intimacies or acquaintances. . . . It may interest you to know that she comes of an ancient and honorable Scotch family, that her brother possesses a castle, that her sister is Julia, Marchioness of Tweeddale, that her husband is an eminent Queen's Counsel and the son of a late Bishop of Peterborough, that her former husband was brother to the late Lord Stanley of Alderley, and that a ducal coronet was once laid at her feet which she did not care to put on her head. She reckons among her friends whole sections of London society, and those among the most important. Princes and Princesses, the Prime Minister and his Cabinet, the Archbishop and his bishops, ambassadors, and duchesses. . . . Her house is not typical; there is only one Mrs. Jeune, but in measuring the flow of the tide her house is for this purpose at high water mark.¹⁷

This, and many other essays like it, give Lady Jeune credit for a great deal of social influence. By recounting her heritage, the paper sets her above the middle class and many upper-class people. She is not only descended from an honorable family but also connected to the most powerful people in the nation. Most striking in this exposition is that she rejected a proposal from a high-ranking aristocrat, possibly from a member of the royal family given her close relationship with the family. This is not the only reference to her rejection of the ducal coronet, but no other information has been found to either corroborate this claim or suggest who the Duke was. Her rejection of this proposal demonstrates an independence of mind and spirit, especially given that her acceptance

donations to those funds. Both of these women used their celebrity status to promote programs to help the poor in London's inner-city.

¹⁷ "Good Work in Society," *Sheffield Independent*, June 5, 1886, British Newspaper Archive.

would have insured her a position of power and influence. Instead, she set about establishing her influence through her own works and character, without relying on a title to ease the way. She was, as the paper suggested, one of a kind and set the bar high for those wishing to meet her on her own level of success.

In December 1889, we see a dramatic change in the way Jeune is described in the newspapers after she published an essay in the *National Review*, “Women of To-day, Yesterday, and To-morrow,” a direct response to Lady Catherine Milnes Gaskell’s essay “Women of To-day” which appeared in the November issue of the *Nineteenth-Century*. In the *Western Morning News*, the debate is thus presented: “The contest between these two literary amazons claims universal attention, not only for the brilliancy of their weapons, but for the interest of the subject discussed. . . . Mrs. Jeune’s reply is on the whole reassuring . . . [and] there is a ring of true comfort in this last Sibylline utterance which will be generally acceptable.”¹⁸ In all, I have found twenty-five references to this essay in the British Newspaper Archive between December 1889 and February 1890, after which I have found no further mention. Even so, the labels of “literary amazon” and “Sibylline” mark a shift in Lady Jeune’s reputation as a woman to be followed and listened to on various subjects.

By 1890, Lady Jeune’s reputation as a social leader and successful philanthropist who spent time inspecting slums, raising money for the poor, and advocating to better the lives of unfortunate women and children was well known. She continued expanding her efforts to help women in and outside of London. The *St. James’s Gazette* reported in July 1890 that “an influential meeting was held yesterday at 37, Wimple street, the residence

¹⁸ “Notes and News,” *Western Morning News* (Plymouth), December 24, 1889, British Newspaper Archive.

of Mr. and Mrs. Francis Jeune to discuss the position of women in India . . . [where] resolutions were passed as to the remarriage of widows and kindred subjects.”¹⁹ Earlier in the year, Lady Jeune published a plea to help a woman and her destitute family raise 200 pounds so that the woman could go back to Paris where she was sure to be able to earn a living.²⁰ By January 1891, Sir Francis Jeune was knighted by the Queen and promoted to the High Court of Justice, adding an official title and rank for himself and Mrs. Jeune, who would be known as Lady Jeune for the rest of her life.²¹ For the remainder of the year, the newspapers were flooded on an almost daily basis with news of Lady Jeune’s numerous social engagements with the royal family and her expansive charitable foundations and activities.²² Still, at this point, mentions of her writing were primarily in the form of advertisements and brief excerpts of her essays, with little actual commentary on the content of what she wrote.

Lady Jeune Takes on London Society

The lack of commentary surrounding Lady Jeune’s writing abruptly changed when she published a scathing referendum on the condition of society in an essay titled “London Society” in the May 1892 issue of the *North American Review*. Up to this point, she had worked tirelessly to help women in the lower classes and had encouraged upper-class women to be active in charitable works, so it came as a bit of a surprise when she blamed the decline of morals and values in society on women of rank and privilege. She begins at the top and works her way down through the ranks of aristocratic women to

¹⁹ “Women in India,” *St. James’s Gazette*, July 15, 1890, British Newspaper Archive.

²⁰ “A Sad Case,” *St. James’s Gazette*, January 31, 1890, British Newspaper Archive.

²¹ “London, Tuesday, January 27, 1891,” *Morning Post*, January 27, 1891, British Newspaper Archive.

²² The British Newspaper search mentioned earlier yielded just under 500 results for Lady Jeune in 1891. This is a substantial increase from the 145 results in 1885.

make her point. She argues that “the long mourning and seclusion of the Court was the commencement of the Queen’s abdication of her position as head of society, and though from time to time she has appeared, it has been at too long intervals and in too fragmentary a manner to have any perceptible influence.”²³ With all possible respect to the mourning of the Queen, Lady Jeune makes it clear that she believes that the Queen’s physical absence from Court has diminished her traditional influence and set society on a downward spiral.

Lady Jeune acknowledges that the change in society had been a gradual one. The democratic government is said to be “largely composed of self-made men, who, with their families and belongings, gratify the keenest of ambitions, that of ‘getting into Society,’ with a facility that was impossible fifty years ago, in the days before the passing of the Reform Bill.”²⁴ In those days, parties were exclusively political, and were strictly controlled by the hostess. She discusses how London society has grown enormously, along with the number of hostesses, and argues that “the center of Society has, in fact, changed.”²⁵ She claims that a large portion of it remains, but it has opened its circle to members of literature, art, and science. This small section of society keeps at its head the traditional aristocratic leaders. The “smart set,”²⁶ as she calls them, attempts to congregate in mass for the sole purpose of seeing and being seen.

At this juncture, Lady Jeune’s essay becomes a strong indictment against the ills of luxury and ease: “There never was an age where fame of any kind was more of a cult.

²³ Mary Jeune, “London Society,” *North American Review* 154 (1892): 603. Albert, Prince Consort and husband to Queen Victoria, died in 1861. The Queen went into mourning and avoided, as often as possible, social engagements for the rest of her life.

²⁴ Jeune, “London Society,”: 603.

²⁵ Jeune, “London Society,”: 605.

²⁶ Jeune, “London Society,”: 610.

To have a good cook; to be the smartly-dressed woman; to give magnificent entertainments, where a fortune is spent on flowers and decorations; to be the last favored guest of Royalty; or to have sailed as near to the wind of social disaster as is compatible with not being shipwrecked...it must be admitted that these qualifications are not high.”²⁷ She adds, “Luxury, ease, comfort, are the watchwords of a large part of society in London, and they are undermining our society as surely and as certainly as they did that of ancient Rome.”²⁸ Here, Lady Jeune draws on the authority of classic literature and history to support her warning that if attitudes do not change soon, London society is doomed to fall just as the Roman Empire fell.

Despite the hyper-masculine reference to Rome, Lady Jeune does not blame the impending fall of English society on men. Instead, she argues, “Society as well as the tone of society, is not governed or instituted by men, their role in society being a very secondary one; for society in its tone and composition is created by women, as women are virtuous or the reverse, so is their *entourage*.”²⁹ Women, she argues, are responsible for the example set by the upper classes because their behavior spreads to the middle classes and further down. Men and women sell themselves out for luxury and neglect their obligations. Lady Jeune claims, “In all societies there are men and women low enough to accept these positions; but in England thirty years ago such a position would have been impossible, and no man or woman occupying it would have dared to appear in society.”³⁰ This torrent of accusations against the vices of wealth and luxury leads her to question, “When all that is needed to insure an entrance into the highest society in

²⁷ Jeune, “London Society,”: 606.

²⁸ Jeune, “London Society,”: 606.

²⁹ Jeune, “London Society,”: 607; italics in the original.

³⁰ Jeune, “London Society,”: 612.

England is unlimited wealth, where morality is unnecessary, and where it is patronized by the highest in the land—is it to be wondered at that the deterioration which is going on is much more complete, and will be more disastrous in its effects, than any one likes to admit.”³¹ In this essay, Lady Jeune takes up the role of public moralist and joins a long tradition of nineteenth century women who used the periodical press to establish cultural authority. From her own salon, Lady Jeune witnessed the changing behaviors of Society and then from her work in the East London Slums, she saw how behaviors trickled down to the lower classes. Benjamine Dabby’s history of women moralists highlights how “[t]he role of literary salons in the careers of women moralists was crucial, as these were the sites which allowed them to refine their writing and build reputations for expertise. They also provided access to reading publics at a national level.”³² Lamenting the decline of moral values evokes a nostalgic yearning for a more civilized past that was common to women moralists throughout the Victorian era. By publishing this article in the North American press, Lady Jeune not only reaches a national audience, it garners some international attention that offers an opportunity for even greater cultural authority.

It is in response to this treatise on the ills of London society that Lady Jeune receives her first series of meaningful responses to her writing in the periodical press. Because of the massive number of responses to this essay (over 150 at my current count), I will focus on exemplary responses in the newspapers. The month of May saw fifty-two mentions and reprints of Lady Jeune’s essay in many of the most prominent British newspapers. The first response appeared in the *London Daily News*, which asserted,

³¹ Jeune, “London Society,” 610.

³² Benjamin Dabby, *Women As Public Moralists in Britain: From the Bluestockings to Virginia Woolf* (Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2017), 13.

“Lady Jeune has apparently been asked to tell the Americans what they ought to think—or, at any rate, what she thinks—of London Society. She has done so in a thoughtful article in the May number of *The North American Review*. It is more to her credit than to ours . . . it is finely said.”³³ This was the first of numerous articles that, while not fully supporting Jeune’s comments, did nothing to contradict her condemnations. One of the most popular papers of the time, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, offered the first critique. The front page of the paper claims that Jeune does not give a sufficient reason for the decline in society, but although her essay presents “a sufficiently heavy indictment” it is nevertheless “a true bill we do not suppose anybody will doubt.”³⁴ Many lesser known papers reprinted, in part or in whole, the article from the *Pall Mall Gazette* on subsequent days. The *Portsmouth Evening News* went even further in its acclaim for Lady Jeune by informing readers:

Lady Jeune is one of the best known women in London society. It has been said that to know her is a liberal education. Her receptions are famous. To them is sooner or later invited every person of distinction in politics, society, diplomacy, the drama, art, literature and science. As a hostess she thus stands in the first-rank, while as a woman she has earned the affection of countless poor people by years of unselfish labour. . . . The views of such a woman on London Society have thus all the weight of intimate knowledge . . . it is strong presumptive evidence that the charge is true.³⁵

In the month of its release, Lady Jeune’s most powerful indictment of London society and the role of women in its declining moral values established her as a leader of society and an expert on its condition in the periodical press. She became the hostess from whom everyone wanted an invitation; as a woman, her charitable work placed her above

³³ “Publications,” *London Daily News*, May 4, 1892, British Newspaper Archive.

³⁴ “The Curse of the Idle Rich,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, May 6, 1892, British Newspaper Archive.

³⁵ “Publications,” *Portsmouth Evening News*, May 7, 1892, British Newspaper Archive.

reproach, and as a writer, her life experience made her an authority on social subjects. But not all people were equally impressed with her ideas.

In true patriarchal fashion, those who could not directly oppose Lady Jeune (due to their inferior social position or lack of experience) sought to reduce her authority by claiming that her ideas were not original and must have come from her husband. In an effort to minimize her authority, one article circulated among a few papers suggesting that “it is a somewhat curious coincidence that immediately after the publication of Lady Jeune’s fierce diatribe on ‘smart’ society, her husband should have been appointed President of the Divorce Court. It is thought her husband provided her with the material for the article.”³⁶ Attributing the material for her essay to her husband was a common tactic for male critics who wanted to discredit female writers. So, when a woman such as Lady Jeune attacked the easy lifestyles of prominent people, she was bound to have the reins pulled back on previously uncontested discourse.

Before anyone else had a chance to respond, the *Pall Mall Gazette* published an interview with the Queen in which she shares her thoughts about the controversial essay. While the Queen does not disagree with Lady Jeune’s suggestion that the downfall of society began with her withdrawal from public life, she explains that she avoids London for health reasons. The article ends by saying, “Her Majesty then spoke more plainly, and some things that Lady Jeune has written to-day about the deterioration of English Society might well have been taken down from the Queen’s own lips during this forgotten conversation. Lady Jeune is a bold writer; but really her ideas must be tinged a little by

³⁶ “Gossip of the Day,” *Shields Daily Gazette and Shipping Telegraph*, June 6, 1892, British Newspaper Archive.

the judicial experiences of her husband.”³⁷ This article does several things that both compliment and minimize Lady Jeune’s position. The Queen does not deny that she has avoided social occasions but instead offers a reason for her absence. A reason, I might add, that people were all too happy to accept as a justification for the Queen’s regular absences from London. The most powerful support of Lady Jeune comes from the Queen’s acknowledgment that some of the points made in the essay may have “been taken down from the Queen’s own lips.” This implies that Lady Jeune spoke, if not for the Queen, then at least with the Queen’s approval; for British subjects, there can be no higher authority on earth. This far-reaching approval is then tempered by the interviewer’s snide addition, “But really her ideas must be tinged a little by the judicial experiences of her husband.” This statement is designed to distract readers from the authority and power that the Queen’s support of Lady Jeune gives and suggest that perhaps society is not so bad as Lady Jeune suggests—it is just that her husband’s work exposes her to the worst of life and that has tainted her views.

The next month saw two direct responses to Lady Jeune’s essay in popular magazines, which in turn garnered further attention from the newspapers. Writing for the *North American Review*, the same magazine in which Jeune had published her essay, W. H. Mallock suggests that while “some exulted in its accuracy, others were indignant at its distortion.”³⁸ Mallock takes the middle ground and argues that “the justice of Lady Jeune’s remarks taken separately can perhaps be denied by no one, but there are many

³⁷ “The Queen and Lady Jeune’s Indictment,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, May 7, 1892, British Newspaper Archive. While first appearing in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, this article was reprinted in nearly every newspaper in London and many outside the metropolis.

³⁸ W.H. Mallock, “Lady Jeune on London Society,” *North American Review* 155 (1892): 25.

factors in the case which she omitted altogether to consider, and thus though her details were right the effect of the whole was wrong.”³⁹ Again, we see that where an author cannot argue with Lady Jeune on specific points, he seeks to minimize her effectiveness by claiming that the “effect of the whole was wrong.” In the *Contemporary Review*, G. Osborne Morgan refers to Lady Jeune’s essay as a “clever sketch of ‘London Society’ by the popular and gifted wife of the President of the Probate and Divorce Division” and suggests that her views of society are the unconscious result of her husband’s judicial experiences.⁴⁰ Here again is an attempt to lessen the blow delivered to the egos of high society by discrediting Lady Jeune’s authority.

In August 1892, Lady Frances Balfour—one of the aristocratic women implicated in Lady Jeune’s essay—raised her pen in a furious defense of noble women. Balfour’s response, which also appeared in the *North American Review*, is especially interesting because it is the only known reply written by a woman, and unlike the male responses that agree with the foundations of the argument, this reply attacks Lady Jeune personally. Balfour showed as much contempt for Lady Jeune’s ideas as Lady Jeune had shown for the moral decline of polite society: “It must be supposed that in writing her jeremiad for the instruction and benefit of the American public, Lady Jeune has felt sternly compelled to wash her dirty linen before a younger and therefore purer society . . . no country will be less inclined to be influenced in its judgment by mere cant and Pharisaical morality than the audience to which Lady Jeune appeals.”⁴¹ In the first instance, Balfour is angry because Lady Jeune outlined the moral decline of English society in an American paper,

³⁹ Mallock, “Lady Jeune,” 6.

⁴⁰ G. Osborne Morgan, “Are We Really So Bad? A Word on Lady Jeune’s ‘London Society,’” *Contemporary Review* 62 (July 1892): 85.

⁴¹ Lady Frances Balfour, “A Last Word on London Society,” *North American Review* 155 (1892): 219.

but she is convinced that the American people will not pay attention to Lady Jeune because she is (in Lady Balfour's opinion) a trite and sanctimonious traditionalist. Her entire essay continues the furious rant against Lady Jeune's character, and its title, "A Last Word on London Society," fails to end the conversation as miserably as the essay itself fails to discredit Lady Jeune.

Considerable Claims to be Regarded as an Authority

The sparse and dismissive newspaper responses to these critics (one mention for Mallock, three for Morgan, and ten responses to Balfour) bolstered Lady Jeune's authority. Of Mallock's response, the *Pall Mall Gazette* suggested that "'reply,' is hardly the right word; as Mr. Mallock's object is to supplement rather than to contradict what Lady Jeune said."⁴² A second editorial in the same paper claimed that Morgan's response was "a slight and not very searching article."⁴³ Both of these responses flat out dismissed the commentary of well-known male writers without so much as a shrug. They gave greater discussion to Lady Balfour's response, but the general sentiment of the papers was that she was just "another defender of the existing order of things" and that she fails to "disprove the charges which have been set forth by Lady Jeune."⁴⁴ They grant that Balfour may be correct in arguing that the problems are not as widespread as Jeune's essay suggests, but "too much has been seen for a long while past of the seamy side of the lives of many of those who were made the subject of Lady Jeune's article last May to lead many people to think that she has exaggerated her case."⁴⁵ Unlike the men, Balfour

⁴² "In Defense of 'Society,'" *Pall Mall Gazette*, July 12, 1892, British Newspaper Archive.

⁴³ "The Reviews for July," *Pall Mall Gazette*, July 2, 1892, British Newspaper Archive.

⁴⁴ "Lady Frances Balfour on London Society," *South Wales Daily News*, August 15, 1892, British Newspaper Archive.

⁴⁵ "Lady Frances Balfour on London Society," 6.

was given some credit for being correct about the magnitude of social problems before being dismissed for her personal attacks.

As I mentioned earlier, Balfour did not get the last word as she had hoped. In October, Lady Jeune published a final response to her critics in the *North American Review*. “London Society and Its Critics” effectively ended the argument and established Lady Jeune as the clear authority—even if her glowing reputation was a little roughed up. Without the least notion of backing down, Jeune plainly states that “after having run the gauntlet of varied and somewhat keen criticism I do not feel that in any important point that account has been refuted.”⁴⁶ She defends her position on society in a final point-by-point attack to her would-be oppressors and then absolves herself from appearing to insult the Queen. Lady Jeune avows that she was in no way claiming that the Queen had neglected her stately duties—she had in fact been a champion of her people’s needs and devoted her life to serving the English people at a great personal sacrifice—but reiterates her claim that “surely no one can deny that the restraining influence that her presence exercised over Society has practically disappeared.”⁴⁷ Concluding with a final warning, she asserts that “the relaxation of some of the most wholesome rules for [society’s] guidance and control are bringing about many serious changes of which at this moment we can hardly guess the danger.”⁴⁸ Of the twenty-two journalistic responses to Lady Jeune’s final essay on this topic, the *Pall Mall Gazette* offered the most duplicated reaction: “While admitting that in matters of opinion she may have been wrong, Lady Jeune holds that as regards facts her position has not been shaken.”⁴⁹ By the end of May

⁴⁶ Mary Jeune, “‘London Society’ and Its Critics,” *North American Review* 155 (1892): 456.

⁴⁷ Jeune, “‘London Society’ and Its Critics,” 458.

⁴⁸ Jeune, “‘London Society’ and Its Critics,” 465.

⁴⁹ Mary Jeune, “‘London Society’ and Its Critics,” *North American Review* 155 (1892): 456.

1893, a year after “London Society” first appeared, more than 150 articles had made specific reference to Lady Jeune’s essay and her trenchant writing style. One of the final attempts by an aristocratic woman to paint a more pleasant picture of London society was dismissed as unrealistic. The *Yorkshire Herald* reported that although Lady Jeune takes a “somewhat gloomy view of society . . . she has considerable claims to be regarded as an authority.”⁵⁰ The article argues that while Lady Brooke has a similar claim to authority, her optimistic view of society is based on her “pathway fairly well strewn with roses,” and the author ends with a final judgment that Lady Brooke’s “experience has been almost too pleasant to permit her to be quite a reliable judge.”⁵¹ This final reference in the year after publication strikes down the last opposition to Lady Jeune’s authority on the conditions of social life in London and paves the way for her future essays to be regarded with greater interest and respect.

From May 1892 to May 1893, Lady Jeune’s name is mentioned more than 2,000 times in the British Newspaper Archive. Subtracting approximately 150 articles that make specific reference to “London Society,” the remaining number of times that she is discussed or quoted is staggering. A mere seven years after publishing her first full-length essay in 1885, she had become a household name, a celebrity in her own right, and an authority on the most pressing social issues being debated in the periodical press. For the remainder of the century, a basic search for “Lady Jeune” returns between 1,600 and 2,700 results per year in the British Newspaper Archive. At the start of the twentieth century, those numbers decline only slightly and then become supplemented if the search

⁵⁰ “Daily Notes,” *Yorkshire Herald*, May 26, 1893, British Newspaper Archive.

⁵¹ “Daily Notes,” 4f.

term is changed to her official title, “Lady St. Helier.” A detailed study of twentieth-century responses still needs to be conducted, especially considering that Lady Jeune became the first woman elected as a London County Council Alderman in 1910 and continued writing essays until her death in 1931.

For cultural studies in the digital age, a study of Lady Jeune’s life and writing provides a more thorough understanding of women’s progress into the public sphere. The binary terms feminist/anti-feminist and Old Woman/New Woman only account for a small percentage of the thought and work that went into first wave feminism’s battle against patriarchy. Lady Jeune’s career demonstrates the wider continuum of approaches and ideologies for the advancement of women’s equality. As more work becomes digitized and that continuum becomes clearer, we can better understand the influence of writers like Lady Jeune who do not fit neatly into one category or the other. Lady Jeune, like the women’s movement itself, evolved over time. Lady Jeune was born into a world of aristocratic and royal society as a member of one of Scotland’s leading families. She was taught clan and familial responsibility, Highland superstition, strict religion, the arts, politics, and Society. To make her way in this complex world, her education was multifaceted and more advanced than that of the free schools where most children were taught. Ultimately, she carried her Scottish Heritage to London and continued to apply her deep rooted sense of social responsibility to activism for the women and children who were less fortunate than herself. Knowing that she proudly identified herself as a Scottish woman and that the newspapers frequently reminded audiences of her identity, throughout her life, requires that we use her identity to examine her philanthropy and social activism from the time she began publishing full length essays in the 1880s,

through the early 20th century when she became a London County Council Alderman.

Her time on the council resulted in far fewer published essays and few records have been digitized in the last two decades of her life. For this reason, my focus in the remaining chapters will be primarily on Lady Jeune's life and work in the last two decades of the nineteenth century.

Chapter 3

Hands on Philanthropy: Humanizing and Helping the Poor

Lady Mary Jeune: Champion of Society's Unfortunates.

Born in the Scottish Highlands in 1845, Susan Mary Stewart-Mackenzie was the eldest child of The House of Seaforth, one of the oldest and most powerful clans in the region. Having spent a good portion of her childhood in the homes of poor tenants on her family's expansive Scottish estate, she developed an early understanding of the hearts and values of the poor. As an adult, she carried this knowledge to her new life in London. Her work in London's East End and her writing show that instead of viewing the poor as degraded, morally bankrupt, and lazy, she saw them as unfortunate people with the same propensity for hard work and moral character that could benefit society if given the opportunity. As a young woman, she married into an ancient noble family, the Stanleys of Alderly, and moved to London where she embarked on a lifetime of charitable efforts and social advocacy for women and children. She quickly became one of London's leading hostesses and then used that reputation to become a leading activist for women and children.

In 1871, at 26 years of age, Mary Stewart-Mackenzie married the Hon. John C. Stanley, second son of Lord Stanley of Alderley. Her new mother-in-law, Lady Stanley, was a champion for women's education. It is here that Lady Jeune began working with the Royal family in promoting better education for women. She worked closely with Princess Christian in multiple institutions and philanthropic efforts for the rest of her life. After giving birth to two daughters, Lady Jeune was widowed, but was well enough established to maintain her home on Wimpole Street in London for some years before she

married her second husband, Francis Jeune, in 1881¹. Her second husband was a talented young attorney who would go on to become the President of the Divorce and Admiralty Courts and part of the Queens Council. It was when Francis Jeune was raised to the peerage that she became Lady Mary Jeune, the name she was best known by for the rest of her life.

In her memoir, Lady Jeune includes chapters on “Life in Wimpole Street,” her first home in London, “Social London,” and “People of Interest.” These chapters name all of the people she entertained, socialized, and worked with from every walk of life. Her lists of friends and acquaintances include everyone from The Queen and other members of the Royal family to politicians, philosophers, philanthropists, newspaper editors, lawyers, authors, actors and more. Her circle was as varied as her interests. She had especially close relationships with Prime Ministers William Gladstone and Lord Randolph Churchill,² Thomas Carlyle was her eldest daughter’s godfather,³ Robert Browning came to her home almost weekly when he was in London,⁴ and Thomas Hardy stayed with her when he visited London.⁵ In discussing how her circle of friends and influences expanded after her first marriage through her close relationship with her mother-in-law, Lady Stanley of Alderly, Lady Jeune recalled that “Mrs. Garrett Anderson, Miss Emily Davies, Mrs. Grey, Miss Swanwick, Miss Mary Gurney, and others, the well-known pioneers of the Women’s Political and Educational Movements,

¹ 1881 England, Scotland and Wales Census. Last modified December 10, 2017. Findmypast.com (p. 24, Piece/Folio 140/15, The National Archive, Kew, Surrey; FHL microfilm 101,774,344.). <http://www.findmypast.com>: n.d. The 1881 census records show that she was head of household and had seven domestic servants.

² Lady St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years* (London: Edward Arnold, 1909), 183-84.

³ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 151.

⁴ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 159.

⁵ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 241.

were her [Lady Stanley's] staunch allies, and in knowing them, one realized how much the cause owed to their undaunted courage."⁶ She worked with Angela Burdett-Coutts,⁷ one of the most well known philanthropists of the nineteenth century. The list of people she engaged with is too extensive to repeat. She explained that "I was one of those people who had friends in every set, many of my visitors were people who held very strong opposite opinions."⁸ She surrounded herself with people on every side of the social questions that she wrote about. Frequently, she would start her essays by discussing what other philanthropists were doing, and why their efforts were not always successful, before moving on to her own proposals.

When she was not presiding over her cosmopolitan entertainments, Lady Jeune put all of her experience, talent, and connections to work promoting practical solutions to many of the problems plaguing London's poorest people. She was not blind to the fact that the poor were of a lower class by birth and that lack of opportunity made it easier for them to fall into degradation, nor did she think that they could all be helped or saved. The very titles of her first two essays shed light on where she would expend most of her philanthropic energies: "Helping the Fallen" and "Saving the Innocents." In the one, the woman is given agency in both her fall and her rescue as she is helped to make a better life for herself. In the other, the agency belongs solely to the philanthropist as they save the innocent children of fallen women and turn them into productive citizens. While working with fallen women, Lady Jeune was very clear about which women she would

⁶ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 150.

⁷ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 224.

⁸ St. Helier, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 183.

help. Her true passion and energy were spent saving children from the many miserable conditions that she found them in.

Unlike the Chartists who demanded universal manhood suffrage and political access to lift the lower classes from poverty, sometimes through violent means, Lady Jeune did not advocate for political gains for the poor.⁹ However, she did use the chartist method of using statistics to make her arguments for who to help and how to help them. She also believed that wealth derived from capitalist practices (e.g. manufacturing) should be better distributed to the working class who made that wealth possible—in the form of better wages—but did not go as far as the Fabian Society in attempts to reconstruct society around socialist ideals.¹⁰

Another of the major charitable movements at the end of the nineteenth century was the formation of the Salvation Army. When William Booth (known as General Booth) published *In Darkest England and the Way Out* in 1890, promoting his comprehensive plans for building the Salvation Army, Lady Jeune read the book and published her own essay, ““General” Booth’s Scheme,” questioning Booth’s failure to acknowledge the work being done by the hundreds of organizations already in existence. Lady Jeune’s overarching criticism of General Booth’s book, and by extension his scheme is “that he treats the condition of the ‘submerged tenth’¹¹ as a discovery of his own, and which until he began his work in England [they] had been treated with absolute

⁹ For a more recent discussion on the history of Chartism, see: Malcolm Chase’s *Chartism: A New History*. Manchester University Press, 2007.

¹⁰ For a discussion on the Fabian Society, see: Edward R. Pease’s *History of the Fabian Society; The Origins of English Socialism*. New York, 1916.

¹¹ The “submerged tenth” refers to the third or lowest category of poor people in England. It was believed by Lady Jeune and many others that this group was so hopeless that there was no way of helping them because they were too lazy and often too drunk to help themselves. For a fuller discussion see page 697 of “General” Booth’s Scheme.”

indifference, his being the first definite and serious attempt to raise their degraded and helpless condition.”¹² In the course of the essay, Lady Jeune takes on the three major aspects of the Salvation Army’s plan: providing shelter and food, finding employment for discharged prisoners, and reclaiming fallen women. After an introduction that describes how most of England’s philanthropy in the first part of the nineteenth century was focused on helping this group until it was agreed that nothing lasting or productive could be done to help this class, she names no less than 40 organizations that have been carrying out the work of helping the poor, the fallen, and children over a 50 year period and explains that there are hundreds of other organizations going quietly about the same business.¹³ Her biggest concern is that his sensationalization of poverty and the massive organization he proposed to build had already drawn over £100,000 from existing charities and would result in less help to those who needed it because of this deficit.¹⁴ While she clearly believed that the Salvation Army was a potentially disastrous mistake, she asked her readers to exercise caution.

Let us see what the Salvation Army are going to do. Let us ask them to tell us more, to give us facts and figures...But until then, till we can treat the whole matter on a business-like basis, and get some specific information, let us think of the many isolated workers, of the devoted clergy, of the existing means for meeting and averting many of the evils in the lives of the poor, and as a recognition of work begun and well done, be content to continue to support them, and not be dazzled by the brilliant and illusive probabilities of a scheme which is likely to be as disastrous as it is stupendous.¹⁵

She insisted on the same level of research and reporting, in the form of statistical data, that she deployed in her own philanthropic endeavours.

¹² Mary Jeune, “‘General’ Booth’s Scheme,” *The National Review* 16 no. 95 (1891): 700.

¹³ Jeune, “‘General’ Booth’s Scheme,” 697-709.

¹⁴ Jeune, “‘General’ Booth’s Scheme,” 709.

¹⁵ Jeune, “‘General’ Booth’s Scheme,” 710-11.

Philanthropy in the Periodical Press in the 1880s and 1890s

Philanthropy, as it is generally understood, is an altruistic action that helps those in need that is devoid of egoism and selfishness. According to some social historians, philanthropy “extends through a wide range of social behaviour—from the informal expression of kindness to a dependent at one end to legislative campaigning for social justice at the other.”¹⁶ Lady Jeune’s philanthropic efforts spanned all of these areas, but was not always consistent with what other British ladies were doing. Instead, her views on and participation in helping others were largely based on her Scottish upbringing. To better understand what motivated Lady Jeune, we will rely on studies of philanthropic behavior that were conducted in the 20th century.

In their study of rescuers, Samuel and Pearl Oliner offer considerable details of how early experiences in life translate into adult behavior, especially as it relates to caretaking behavior.

Individuals fortunate enough to have experienced warm and satisfactory early attachments are more likely to form satisfactory attachments as adults. Having observed models of responsible caretakers, they are more likely to have learned the skills associated with such roles. Moreover, they are also more likely to have experienced vicariously the rewards of such behaviors. Adults whose behaviors are consistently and dependably responsible communicate the message that such behaviors are self-rewarding, making children more likely to internalize standards of responsibility, caring, and dependability and to adopt them as their own.¹⁷

Having grown up in the Highlands, Lady Jeune and her siblings spent a great deal of their early childhoods living in the homes of the tenants on the family estate; this was a traditional practice between clan leaders and their kinsmen. This experience benefited

¹⁶ Brian Harrison, *Peaceable Kingdom: Stability and Change in Modern Britain* (London: Clarendon Press, 1982), 220.

¹⁷ Samuel P. Oliner and Pearl M. Oliner, *The Altruistic Personality: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe* (New York: Macmillan, Inc, 1988), 172-3. Note that this observation is based on a study of children done by Anna Freud and Sophie Dann.

both the chosen caregivers and the children and instilled the standards of caring and responsibility for others in the children of the leading families. The sense of social responsibility developed in affluent Highland children was accompanied by a deep understanding that helping the lower classes meant taking action and finding practical solutions to their struggles. In contrast, wealthy families in London were more likely to be found on the list of donors for charities established by others than they were to go out into the slums and take physical action themselves. There is no evidence to suggest that land-owning families outside of the Scottish Highlands sent their children to live with the poor tenants on their properties, so Lady Jeune's childhood gave her a unique perspective from her peers in London society.

Evidence of Lady Jeune's pride in her Scottish heritage is present in her approaches to philanthropy and social activism. Nowhere is it more visible than in the articles she wrote about The Highlands, Scottish people, and her family's long history as one of the leading clans. In 1888 she penned "A Highland Seer and Scotch (sic) Superstition" where she describes the original clans as brave savages with "a spirit of poetry and imagination, that was no less full of beauty and music" than those of the Lowlanders.¹⁸ She believed that "[t]he qualities shown to be possessed by these wild people would in a higher state of civilization have produced as great men as any in the history of the world...and the softer side of their nature sought an outlet in the tales of fairies and supernatural beliefs ,which were largely stimulated by the romantic nature of the scenery and the gloomy climate of their country."¹⁹ Aside from her own romantic descriptions of a place she clearly loved, her understanding and shared sense of

¹⁸ Mary Jeune, "A Highland Seer and Scotch Superstitions," *Murray's Magazine* 3, (Jan-Jun 1888): 343.

¹⁹ Jeune, "A Highland Seer," 344.

connection between Highland peoples is vividly expressed in her perception of music that conveys “the deepest sorrow the Highlanders have ever experienced, the laments for the great clearances that took place about fifty years ago, and stirred to their inmost depths the hearts and imaginations of the Highlanders.”²⁰ This essay focuses mainly on the superstitions of the Highland people and what became of those ideas as the Highlands merged with the Lowlands in education and other civilizing factors through the 19th century while demonstrating, sometimes clearly and sometimes subconsciously, Lady Jeune’s passionate connection to her home and people as she made a life for herself in London.

From her Highland roots, Lady Jeune continued to physically work among the poor in London’s East End, the most impoverished area of the city. K.D. Reynolds study on *Aristocratic Women and Political Society in Victorian Britain* discusses the types of charity that women performed. She finds that “[t]he hallmark of personal charity was that it entailed direct contact between the donor and the beneficiary; the direct charity of aristocratic women in this period was thus almost exclusively confined to their country estates.”²¹ However, in organized philanthropy in urban areas, “was essentially part of the effort of the middle classes to define themselves as distinct from the aristocracy...Aristocratic women proffered charity to their dependents; therefore middle-class women adopted charity as one of the qualities of both femininity and social status.”²² There are always exceptions to prevailing social behaviors, and there were some aristocratic women like Lady Jeune, continued their practice of going out among

²⁰ Jeune, “A Highland Seer,” 344.

²¹ K.D. Reynolds, *Aristocratic Women and Political Society in Victorian Britain*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 103.

²² Reynolds, *Aristocratic Women*, 111.

the poor, but most did not. Instead, those with money gave money and it was largely middle-class individuals who went among the poor to dispense the charity. Indeed, there was a great deal of scorn levied at the upper classes for their apparent lack of action.

Philanthropy is one of the things out of which virtuous and thriving Britishers make the most moral capital. We like to put on a false face, assume attributes we do not possess, and pass current as people preeminent in the world. It is this craven craving after notoriety, this undignified, hypocritical, self-seeking, which causes us to subscribe millions sterling to exalt the moral, physical, and spiritual nature of the foreign heathen, and to be seized with spasmodic fits of philanthropy when any serious catastrophe, brought on by war, flood, or famine, is to be discovered—no matter where. The so-called upper classes, who live upon the land, and the monied folk who make fortunes out of the labourers' toil, strive to conceal from foreigners the real condition of this country. They try to cast a veil over the huge misery which abounds. They know it is not to their advantage to expose to the inquisitive gaze of strangers the dark side of the social picture. Hence it is the interest of certain favoured classes to shunt suffering out of sight. Judiciously so; for the contrast between wealth and luxury, and indigence and starvation, would be too strong to look upon were these brought into close contact.²³

This rather scathing, and anonymous diatribe takes on the superficial morality of Britishers that put on a “false face” and engage in foreign philanthropy for the sake of looking like moral upstanding citizens of the world, all while attempting to hide from view the deplorable conditions of England's own poor. In this and many other newspaper opinions of the time, the upper classes are taken to task for failing to meet the needs of London's poor, both physically and financially. They would pretend to be committed philanthropists while addressing foreign depravity but failed to take action in their own back yards. It would seem from these columns that they had no real desire to get their hands dirty. There are also many columns that dispute the charges of hypocrisy leveled against the upper classes. In a discussion of the annual gathering of philanthropic

²³ Northumbrian, “British Philanthropy and Soup Doles,” *Reynolds's Newspaper*; Sunday 01, December 1878, British Newspaper Archive.

societies that take place in London each May, the author of this article believes that “[g]reat as it is, the foreign effort of voluntary zeal in England represents rather its overflowing than its substance, rather its superfluous energy than its full amount.”²⁴ Even in the articles that praise the vast sums of money raised, the actual work done among the poor is carried on by the middle classes.

For her own activities, Lady Jeune was well known. Papers frequently repeated some version of the following description: “She is an intensely practical woman, with a strong sense of the responsibilities of wealth. The waste of money in mere vulgar or frivolous ostentation is the modern social blemish at which she has always pointed her sharpest arrows of criticism.”²⁵ Criticism was only one avenue of action for Lady Jeune. Papers of the day also made clear that “Mrs. Jeune is not alone beloved and respected by her social equals, but by women of the lowest class...She does not content herself by showering financial benefits on the objects of her sympathy from far off, but goes among them, winning their personal devotion, and so raising their hearts to higher things.”²⁶ She spent her entire life going in among the poor, working with every tool she had at her disposal to make their conditions known, to help alleviate what hardships she could, and also to show more fortunate members of society that the lower classes were indeed humans just like themselves, who under better circumstances would have been as virtuous and productive as their benefactors.

²⁴ “The Month of Philanthropy,” *The Warwick and Warwickshire Advertiser*,” May 1, 1875, British Newspaper Archive.

²⁵ “Men and Women of the Day,” *The Cardiff Times*, October 17, 1896, British Newspaper Archive.

²⁶ “Politics and Society,” *The Leeds Mercury*, November 28, 1891, British Newspaper Archive.

Helping The Poor

One of the tools that Lady Jeune deployed most often in the 80s and 90s was her descriptive and often sharp pen. To raise at least a general awareness of the conditions of the lower working classes, she shared her firsthand knowledge of the housing, working, creed, amusements, and daily living conditions of those she sought to help. In two essays, “The Housing of the Poor,” published for *The Sanitary Record* in January of 1890 and then a revised version newly titled “The Homes of the Poor,” published later in the year in *The Fortnightly Review*, Lady Jeune painted an unmistakable picture of abject squalor that was, even by the lowest of standards, unsuitable for human occupation. For the *Sanitary Record*, she begins with a coroner’s inquest into a man who died from falling down a steep flight of stairs with no handrail and being too dark to see properly.²⁷ After describing some of the filth and hazards of this particular neighborhood, she is enraged that the owner of the property—the person responsible for keeping the property safe and therefore the man’s death—is given little more than a warning to clean things up, “the landlords excuse being that the houses were to come down.”²⁸ This she compares to other cases of wrongful death where the penalties are far greater, and goes on to explain why slum lords are treated so differently.

In her considerable experience, she explains how “[t]he fact is that the local authorities for dealing with such matters are hopelessly apathetic and indifferent, and they have infected the people appointed to carry out the details of their work with the same feeling...They are all local people...[who] have grown up to consider the poor,

²⁷ Mary Jeune, “The Housing of the Poor,” *The Sanitary Record*, January 15, 1890, British Newspaper Archive.

²⁸ Jeune, “Housing,” 311.

dirty, squalid, dishonest, and complaining, and they see no alternative existence for them, always forgetting that their conditions of life make them what they are.”²⁹ This particular paper goes on to discuss the new development of a County Council that is meant to oversee and resolve these problems. She worries however that the County Council, at its inception is already a political machine that will “assuredly become a stepping-stone to the House of Commons,”³⁰ and will fail to address the conditions of the poor just as other political organizations have done.

The second version of this essay serves a slightly different purpose, and thus begins on a different note. *The Fortnightly Review* was a liberal minded magazine that reached a far greater number of readers than the smaller and more specific *Sanitary Record*. For this broader readership, Lady Jeune recounted the evidence given to the Royal Commission on the housing of the poor given by Lord Shaftesbury. She then lays bare these conditions for her readers—who would also be the members of society in a position to donate money—these conditions: “In most of the wretched and horrible dwellings, where the squalor is indescribable...the bareness of the room, the famished faces of the people, and their scanty clothing...the earnings of many of the poor are, at the best, starvation wages.”³¹ To incense the outrage of would-be financial contributors, she goes into far more grotesque detail about the conditions of the houses. She moves from each neighborhood through to the next describing what might be found in any of those streets, “[t]he spectacle of that backyard was one never to be forgotten. The dirt and dilapidation, the smell and the squalor, were indescribable; and the ruined closets without

²⁹ Jeune, “Housing,” 311.

³⁰ Jeune, “Housing,” 311.

³¹ Mary Jeune, “The Homes of the Poor,” *The Fortnightly Review* 47, (1890): 223.

doors, many without walls, proclaimed the utter absence of any sense of decency or of cleanliness.”³² The details are not mere representations of someone else’s experience walking through the neighborhoods, they are Lady Jeune’s own experience working with the poor and visiting their dwellings. Nearly every page of this essay is splattered with horrifying details that mirror the graphic descriptions of the buildings themselves.

The second version of this essay also discusses the new County Council that is responsible for inspecting property, taking claims, and upholding the laws that are supposed to hold property owners accountable for keeping the properties in livable conditions. While this version is more hopeful that the Council will do a better job than previous organizations, she offers additional measures that could be taken by the Local Government Board that in a few years’ time would create a vast positive change in the condition of slums. Knowing that work done by herself and other individuals and groups on behalf of the extremely poor must continue until such time that the government boards can or will bring about positive change in these neighborhoods, she adds more detail to evoke sympathy from her readers. The final details are about the poor themselves and not so much about the dwellings.

Work among the poor impresses one strongly with a deep sense of their wrongs, and of their inability to help themselves. There are thousands who pity and help them; but how many thousands more who only blame them...Such criticisms make one burn with indignation. There is no patience, no heroism, no self-sacrifice, so sublime as that which meets one every day among the poor...Sorrow and joy are common to all classes. Hunger, pain, thirst, and cold, are sensations we all undergo; and the love of husband and children is as deep among the poor as in the hearts of the greatest in the land. The poor know their woes, and they think there is nothing to be done...It is a sense of that and not indifference, which makes them patient with a patience beyond all praise, before which one stands ashamed.³³

³² Jeune, “The Homes of the Poor,” 228.

³³ Jeune, “The Homes of the Poor,” 243-244.

This serves at least two purposes and meets both conditions of philanthropy; she offers both time and money to the people she comes into contact with, and she advocates for legislative reform, through developing a central board to enforce existing legislation and appointing disinterested parties as inspectors, to change the material conditions of the poor. By humanizing the poor, particularly the wives and children, she connects them to her readers as fellow human beings who possess character traits that evoke a sense of shame thus encouraging her wealthy readers to donate more money and potentially become actively involved to express their own moral outrage at the prospect of fellow citizens being forced to live in these conditions. Second, by outlining the current governmental organizations that exist to resolve the housing issues and suggesting practical changes that could be made to make those committees effective, she encourages men involved in government to adapt the current policies to effect real and lasting change.

Lady Jeune did not stop with one issue in her philanthropic efforts to help the poor. Aside from her essays on the homes, she put further effort into humanizing the people of the East End by describing their beliefs and their social needs; again, making strong comparisons between them and her upper-class peers. In the first of these two essays, “The Creed of The Poor,” Lady Jeune walks step-by-step through the rapid expansion of the working poor in London to identify two classes of people before she identifies what she believes are two solutions to the problems of overcrowding. She then goes into considerable detail explaining what the poor believe in and why their patient acceptance of their position in life makes them admirable. In the second essay, “Amusements of The Poor,” Lady Jeune continues her descriptions of the daily lives of

working-class men and women from a distinct perspective. In this essay, she focuses on what can be done to get people off the streets, out of the drinking houses, and into wholesome environments for relaxation. She offers yet another solution to the problem of overcrowding that is discussed in all the previous essays.

Never one to shy away from hard truths, Lady Jeune tackles the events leading to the rapid increase in the poor population, the decent of their opportunities, and the resulting changes in their behavior before plunging into a detailed discussion of why they are still to be admired. She demonstrates a precise understanding of not just history, but also the ongoing effects that industrialization has had on urban populations. Her historiography begins with “[t]he accumulation of wealth and increase of manufactures [that] brought large importations of workmen into the towns and centers of industry...[where] for some years the position of working men in England was an exceedingly prosperous one, as a good workman could command higher wages than an artisan in any other country.”³⁴ She argues that while workmen and industry were booming, no one was concerned with the urban poor except for those who knew it would not last. The higher wages and failures of small farms in the country drew more people to urban centers, driving up the population and driving down wages. Adding to the overcrowding from people moving to urban centers, she also blames early marriages for the rapidly expanding poor population in the last decade (1875-1885). As is her habit in these types of essays, Lady Jeune identifies what she sees as the problem before then proposing practical solutions.

³⁴ Mary Jeune, “The Creed of the Poor,” *The National Review* 11, no. 64 (June 1888): 553.

Before introducing her solutions, she first divides the working poor into two categories, “those who have regular work for fair pay and those who have more or less work for insufficient pay, and who lose it when trade becomes bad.”³⁵ The way to resolve these social and economic problems, she believes, is Emigration and the elimination of early marriages. While her solutions are designed to benefit all members of the lower class, and by proxy the nation because all will be better, she recognizes why the poor do not want her solutions. On the issue of Emigration, she sees a familiar reason for why the poor do not want to leave their home country. Growing up in the Highlands, she knew that her own family had worked very hard to protect their tenants from the Great Highland Clearances that dislocated thousands of Highland people. Of the poor, she believes that “[t]hey will suffer any discomfort or privation sooner than leave their dark, dirty, and unhealthy houses; their ignorance, their dread of the sea, and the strong family feeling that exists among all classes of Englishmen, make them view emigration as banishment.”³⁶ As for early marriages, she explains that while the poor agree, in the abstract, that early marriages should not be entered into, in practice, their living conditions make such arrangements the only option for young people to find peace at home for a short time before a new baby arrives. With the two best options for reducing the population being more distasteful to the poor people’s daily existence in squalor, Lady Jeune turns her attention to the belief systems that keep them trapped in poverty.

For an active and ever practical philanthropist, the inability to convince the subjects of their benevolence to take advantage of emigration or to recognize the long-term benefits of waiting to get married until they have money saved up for a better future,

³⁵ Jeune, “Creed,” 553.

³⁶ Jeune, “Creed,” 555.

was supremely frustrating. In trying to solve the riddle of these failures and find fresh solutions, Lady Jeune attempts to first answer the question of why the proposals have failed. Connecting with her likeminded readers, perhaps to keep them from giving up on helping London's poor, she shares her knowledge of their behavior and beliefs; "[t]he prospect is dark, the task looks very hopeless. Early influences, bad education have moulded the characters of many of the poor into such grooves of life and habit that they cannot cast off their fetters, and sadly we realise that no important reform is possible, and wonder how with such miserable existences they can be fairly contented and patient."³⁷ This question is the focus of the rest of the essay. Through careful observation of both the poor people she works with and the careful reading of daily papers, Lady Jeune responds to the questions of high society with answers that will satisfy their curiosity, dispel false notions, create reasons for the rich to admire something about the poor classes, and shame them into continued financial support.

The leading question in the papers, "[w]hat is the secret of the patience of the poor, when we see men and women in the prosperous positions in life well-nigh succumb to misfortunes insignificant in comparison?"³⁸ met with a step-by-step response from Lady Jeune. In short, her answer was simple: religious faith. To prove her point, she first addressed the notion that the poor are either Atheists, that they are simply indifferent, or they are too ignorant to understand questions of faith and asserts her own authority: "[s]ome knowledge of the poor makes me deny the accuracy of any of these three opinions."³⁹ First, she acknowledges that Atheists do exist, but explains that they belong

³⁷ Jeune, "Creed," 555.

³⁸ Jeune, "Creed," 555.

³⁹ Jeune, "Creed," 556.

to specific trades, that the majority of Atheists are foreigners, and that they are too localized to be influential. To the ideas that they are indifferent or too ignorant, she spends several pages of the essay to explain that,

The faith of the poor is, I am convinced, summed up in their strong belief in immortality, and to them an immortality of happiness and peace. A belief in the justice of God and the existence of Heaven is the epitome of the faith of the poor, and the hope born of that belief makes their lives on earth bearable...and nothing has ever struck me more forcibly among the poor than their strong inherent conviction that the Kingdom of Heaven is not for the rich, but it is their inheritance. Thus the inequalities, the injustices, the hardships of life are all supportable and equitable.⁴⁰

It is through the simple belief in the teachings of Christ that the poor people find patience to endure hardships. In relying on the promise of everlasting peace, the poor help and care for each other in ways that the rich fall short. Lady Jeune elevates the belief and practice of the poor to an admirable position while drawing another comparison to her upper-class peers. She writes that, “[w]hen we look for the real simple virtues that make human nature beautiful, we find it in the poor. Nowhere, and in no record of great and noble lives have I ever come across such deeds of devotion, self-sacrifice, and heroism, as I have witnessed among the humblest and poorest inhabitants of some of the most dirty and miserable of the courts and alleys of London.”⁴¹ In establishing the religious beliefs of the poor, Lady Jeune dispels the notions that they are unworthy of pity or serious consideration to demonstrate that in some ways they are more deserving of praise than the upper-classes that shun them.

In the remaining pages of this essay, Lady Jeune continues to draw comparisons between the poor and the upper classes based on things that have been said in the papers

⁴⁰ Jeune, “Creed,” 556-7.

⁴¹ Jeune, “Creed,” 558.

and in other conversations she has heard of. She explains why the poor generally do not attend church in the daytime, it is because they are ashamed of their ragged clothing, while explaining that they do attend services at night, because it is harder to see their poor clothing in the dark.⁴² She tackles claims that poor women suffer less than their wealthy sisters at the loss of a child by pointing out the absurdity of this particular catastrophe hurting any loving mother more or less because of her economic status. Making clear that “no class distinctions, no centuries of breeding can intensify the one or diminish the other.”⁴³

To demonstrate a thorough understanding of the poor, the way they think, the way they behave, and the way they practice faith, Lady Jeune discusses what the church has done and what some say it needs to do. Instead of pushing dogmatic sermons about morality, she argues that the clergy need to spend more time going among the poor to develop stronger social bonds so that the people will come to hear the clergy to whom they are attached. She also opposes efforts to combine religious teaching with other types of education. To all of this, Lady Jeune praises the efforts of younger clergymen of the Church of England and gives detailed accounts of how they are successfully doing many of the things she suggests. Returning to the problems associated with early marriages, she explains that while the clergy often do not want to marry young persons, they understand that if they do not, those young adults may do away with the marriage all together and live in sin, thus producing illegitimate children and compounding an already bad situation for all involved. Lady Jeune believes that the reason for early marriages is that young people have no place to go at the end of a long workday to find peace and relaxation

⁴² Jeune, “Creed,” 559.

⁴³ Jeune, “Creed,” 559.

because they live at home with parents and any number of siblings. They get married so that they can move into their own home, which is usually no more than a room or two and find quiet and peace—at least until their own child is born.⁴⁴ In the last pages of the essay, Lady Jeune introduces a potential solution that was being tried on a small scale. She considers how the opening of new evening clubs for poor girls and boys will give them a place to go and the opportunity for relaxation. She believes that this may be an effective solution because there has been positive feedback from the young adults. For evidence, she shares one young woman's response about the clubs: "I come here as soon as I have cleaned myself and had my tea, for I get away from the children's crying and the noise...If there were more clubs, and they were better known, girls would come and spend their evenings here instead of walking out in the evening with their young man, and they would none of them marry so soon."⁴⁵ The success of these clubs and the entertainment of the poor becomes the focus of Lady Jeune's next essay.

A few years after the publication of "The Creed of the Poor," Lady Jeune focused an entire essay on the necessity of quality entertainment for the poor because, "[i]n the hard, dull level of their existence, which is mainly a struggle for life, there is very little that is bright or consolatory, and to those who from the cradle to the grave pass their time in making two ends meet the few moments or hours which can be spared for amusement are appreciated keenly."⁴⁶ Beginning with the children, she offers a simple story to show just how little the poor ever have the time or opportunity to play that children from better families take for granted. Explaining that "[s]ome two or three years ago, an Association

⁴⁴ Jeune, "Creed," 563-4.

⁴⁵ Jeune, "Creed," 565-6.

⁴⁶ M. Jeune, "The Amusements of the Poor," *The National Review* 21, no.123 (May 1893): 303.

was formed to get children over a certain age attending the elementary schools to come in the evening once or twice a week, and spend two or three hours, with a view to keeping them from playing in the streets, [only to discover that the children had] no knowledge of what was pure, simple, and good; of nothing having come near them to raise and elevate.”⁴⁷ Her readers would know that Lady Jeune was one of the women responsible for starting what would become known as Children’s Happy Evenings; one of the many programs that she started to lift poor children out of their squalid surroundings, even if only for a few hours, once or twice a week.

The essay goes on to discuss why other charitable organizations—primarily those run by the church—did not pay attention to amusements when assisting the poor. Those who did offer some form of entertainment combined it with education, a point she takes issue with, arguing that “[t]he modern craze for education is in reality injuring the usefulness of many schemes for the well-being of the working classes. The atmosphere of culture and information which pervades them is no attraction to the tired mechanic and working girl.”⁴⁸ She spends a considerable amount of time discussing how the poor working class do not have homes of more than two or three rooms, (if they are lucky, most only have one or two shared by the entire family) and so they have no place to rest and relax at night. She uses candid descriptions of their meager homes and compares them to the spaces inhabited by the middle and upper classes to show her readers how terrible it was to have no room or opportunity for relaxation and entertainment after a long day of work.

⁴⁷ Jeune, “Amusements,” 304-305.

⁴⁸ Jeune, “Amusements,” 306.

What is available to the poor is often distasteful music halls and public houses (pubs) for men to go to, but these places are not of good character because the poor who run them cannot afford better, more wholesome entertainers. Of course, the public-houses were places for men to go drink and were not suitable for women or children, thus excluding them from the only entertainment venues in their neighborhoods that would be open in the evenings. To resolve these issues, Lady Jeune suggests that they use museums and exhibits that already exist but are closed at night. She points out that,

nothing is more interesting than the keen delight with which the National Gallery and Kensington Museum are visited by working people. In some of the poorest parts of Whitechapel and Lambeth the exhibition of pictures is one of the most popular of amusements, while it is needless to speak of the interest and education that the Benthall Green Museum has afforded to millions of working people in that, perhaps the poorest, part of London. There is an instinctive love of what is beautiful and elevating in every human heart. It is the chord we can all touch. Beautiful sights, beautiful sounds, strike the same note in the heart of the great master as in that of the poor stonemason.⁴⁹

By reminding her readers that poor people also like beauty, she is humanizing them in yet another way to convince her audience of the need for recreational activities for poor people that are supported by their donations and the state. She argues that the exhibitions and the museums should be open in the evenings and on Sundays so that the poor can better take advantage of them. Lady Jeune is careful to give credit to both the City of London and to the many charitable organizations that work hard to support the poor of the city before pointing out that the massive, centralized buildings, such as the People's Palace, while beautiful and enjoyed, could have been divided into several smaller building and spread across the city to benefit more people due to greater access.⁵⁰ She also suggests opening libraries with reading rooms that are open to families before

⁴⁹ Jeune, "Amusements," 307.

⁵⁰ Jeune, "Amusements," 308.

returning to a discussion about women and girls having no place other than the streets to go for entertainment. Each of her solutions incorporates the existing infrastructure of the East End and other poor neighborhoods and follows her formula for building bridges between the wealthy and the poor: she introduces a particular problem, establishes her own authority to speak on the problem, draws careful comparisons between all classes to humanize the poor, she then acknowledges what has been done in a complimentary fashion before explaining why it is not sufficient or successful, and then offers specific practical solutions.

Based on her extensive knowledge of and work among London's poor, Lady Jeune's philanthropy did not remain focused on the problem as a whole. While all charities that relied on monetary donations frequently asked for money, few of them gave the graphic descriptions that Lady Jeune deployed. She did what she could to inform her readers of the overall conditions of the poor working classes, but she focused most of her own energy on two fronts: how to make the lives of poor children better, and how to make the lives of poor women better and save those who had fallen into prostitution.

Saving the Innocents

From her very first set of essays in 1885, Lady Jeune made it clear that she would become a lifelong champion for poor children. From her first publications through her latter ones in early 20th century, Lady Jeune would spend her career as a formidable member of Society putting her weight behind causes for these two groups. Countless society articles laud her work and reputation as a philanthropist and commend her for "sacrificing so much time, money, and energy in the business of opening Children's

Evening Societies at Clapton and London Fields,”⁵¹ along with a lengthy list of other charities and activities. Each of these endeavors required large sums of money to be successful. What she did not give herself, she put her literary skills to work earning.

Parliament passed the 1870 Education Act which established non-religious schools run by locally elected school boards making education more widely available to children.⁵² Then, in 1880 another Education Act made school attendance for children between the ages of five and ten compulsory. While there was a great deal of controversy over religious teaching, as in who would teach what, and considerable skepticism over forcing people to send their children to school, most children were sent to classes. As will be discussed in this chapter, Lady Jeune understood the value of education in helping children of the poorest classes to know that there could be a better—at least more productive and respectable—way of life than their birth would otherwise suggest. She was also acutely aware of the material needs of those children, especially their need for nourishment, if they were to be able to take advantage of the new compulsory education.

In newspapers and magazines such as *Truth*, *The Fortnightly Review*, *The Pall Mall Gazette*, and even the satirical paper *Punch*, Lady Jeune would publish countless paragraphs asking for donations to support her organizations. Like some of the most popular papers of the time, she was sure to reach a large audience. For the Penny Dinners that Lady Jeune started, the earliest plea is found in the *St. James's Gazette* in December of 1884. After a description of the overcrowded and destitute conditions the children of King's-cross can be found in, Lady Jeune lays out the plan that she has already put into

⁵¹ “Notes on News,” *Myra's Journal*, February 1, 1893, British Newspaper Archive.

⁵² “The 1870 Education Act,” UK Parliament, Last modified, 2023.

<https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/livinglearning/school/overview/1870educationact/>.

motion. She explains that “[a] room has been promised, with the necessary appliances for preparing the dinner; and it is proposed, should a sufficient response be made, to begin next week...Each child is to pay a penny, as it is undesirable to give the dinners entirely free...till the end of March will cost about £30,...to the readers of the *St. James’s Gazette* we cannot believe the cry of the little starving souls we plead for will be in vain.”⁵³ This would be the type of request she would send to the newspapers on a near monthly basis for more than 20 years. Her charities for poor children consisted of the Penny Dinners, and later a lunch program for school children, Children’s Happy Evenings that consisted of light hearted games and fun for the children, and perhaps her most expensive project, Country Holidays for Poor Children, that would send the poorest of children into the country for three or more weeks at a time to get them out of the putrid air of the inner city and into the fresh air of the country side where they would be well fed and entertained like their more privileged counterparts. *Punch* often repeated the requests published in *Truth Magazine* with its own special turn of words, “*Truth* states, that in consequence of the funds forwarded by charitable readers to aid in sending poor London Children for a few weeks’ country air in summer-time, Mrs. Jeune was able to give four hundred and seventy-four of them a real country treat. Out of compliment to this lady’s admirable exertions, the month of their holiday should be, evidently, June. The fulfilment of Jeune is better than the promise of May.”⁵⁴ From its small beginnings in 1887, sending roughly 500 children to the country in the summer, the program grew to sending over 1,000

⁵³ “Penny Dinners: An Appeal,” *St. James’s Gazette*, December 9, 1884, British Newspaper Archive.

⁵⁴ *Punch*, May 7, 1887, British Newspaper Archive.

children a season in 1890⁵⁵, and continued expanding to nearly 2,000 children per season in 1899.⁵⁶

To supplement the straightforward requests for donations, Lady Jeune wrote several essays focused on the lives of poor and unwanted children. In the 1880s, she began with “Saving the Innocent,” “The Children of a Great City,” parts I and II, and finished the decade with “Children in Theatres.” In the 1890s, she focused her essays on the children’s charities that she was most involved in: “Children’s Happy Evenings,” “Holidays for Poor Children,” and “Child Labor.” She believed that “[t]he time for closing our eyes has passed; and we are bound now to face the matter bravely, and admit that we owe a duty, as a community, to those children, by recognizing their claims to our protection.”⁵⁷

As with all of her essays on philanthropy, Lady Jeune follows a clear formula: she describes the conditions of the children’s lives, she compares them to upper-class children to show what they have in common with her own economic and social class, she details the most pressing problems, acknowledges what others have done, and then offers practical solutions to those issues that are different from the programs in place. Everything she writes is grounded in her own first-hand knowledge from working in the East End slums. For the countless numbers of illegitimate children, Lady Jeune proposes a mandatory birth registry from the workhouses and lying-in hospitals to keep track of the number of children being born. She appeals to the existing Board of Governors and Poor Law system for a state-run organization that will care for the children while charging the

⁵⁵ “A Holiday Appeal,” *Punch*, August 16, 1890, British Newspaper Archive.

⁵⁶ “Lady Jeune’s account of the receipts and expenditure in connection with her Holiday Fund for Poor Children,” *Truth*, July 13, 1899, British Newspaper Archive.

⁵⁷ Mary Jeune. “Saving the Innocent,” *The Fortnightly Review*, no. 38, (1885): 193.

mothers a percentage of their wages.⁵⁸ She points out that a system of payments based on the mother's earnings is already successful for the Church of England Home for Waifs and Strays.⁵⁹ Working with the women is only one part of her plan. The second looks for the system to find the fathers and hold them equally responsible for the support of the children. She is indignant that "[t]he man escapes altogether, [arguing that] such an immunity from punishment is monstrously unjust...[and] nothing really practical can be done to stop the evil until we make both sides realise that the same law applies to them equally, and that no means will be left untried to bring the consequences home to both."⁶⁰ Considering that men were not socially and economically ruined for extramarital affairs, and enjoyed far greater rights and freedoms than women, her opening essay makes a bold argument for some measure of equality between the sexes; even if it is only in the case of child support.

After laying out a program to house and pay for illegitimate and poor children, Lady Jeune lays out plans to protect, care, and educate these children so that they may become productive British citizens. In the two essays published in *Woman's World*, "The Children of a Great City," parts I and II, Lady Jeune builds her argument for what she believes is the only way to affect lasting change in the conditions of London's poor classes—that is saving the children from repeating the lives of their parents. She argues that to effect real and permanent good, philanthropists should focus "on those whose lives are still before them, and who with the vigour and elasticity of youth may, if properly helped, grow up into good and healthy men and women."⁶¹ She makes clear to her upper-

⁵⁸ Jeune, "Saving the Innocent," 193.

⁵⁹ Jeune, "Saving the Innocent," 192.

⁶⁰ Jeune, "Saving the Innocent," 193-194.

⁶¹ Mary Jeune, "The Children of a Great City I," *Woman's World* 1 (1888): 27.

class readers that it is absolutely imperative that in helping the children, people do not give food and clothing indiscriminately because it will make drunken parents even more lazy and neglectful.⁶² Instead, she urges them to lead by example so that the children see them and work toward a better life than the ones they were born into. She acknowledges that education is doing this type of work, slowly, but surely before a long discussion of the boys' and girls' homes that have been successful in saving and training children for adult life. One of the places that destitute children are sent after losing parents or being removed from their homes due to abuse, was the workhouse, or they wound up alone in the streets. To combat this problem, Lady Jeune promotes the Cottage House system that "is much better in all ways, when possible, that ten or fifteen children should live in a house small enough to enable the home feeling to be retained, than be herded in large schools of 400 or 500, or even more, where each child represents only a number."⁶³ Constantly aware of population growth and overcrowding in London and other cities, part of a common solution among officials and philanthropists was to encourage emigration to one of England's many colonies. Lady Jeune joined in this theory and argued that "[t]he first object of Homes where children are received too young for the evil influences of their former life to have impressed them permanently, should be to create emigration centers, where the technical education and training the children receive will enable them to start with a knowledge which in their new life will make them practically independent."⁶⁴ This plan offers a future for these children that will not require further

⁶² Jeune, "Children I," 27.

⁶³ Jeune, "Children I," 29.

⁶⁴ Jeune, "Children I," 29.

financial assistance from the state or Lady Jeune's generous donors, and adds to the building of Empire.

The first of these two essays focuses on neglected and abused children. This class of children suffer horrid abuses that "make one's blood run cold with horror and shame to know that in our country such evils can exist."⁶⁵ She works with reports collected by the London Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (of which she is a member)⁶⁶ to paint a picture of absolute cruelty dealt at the hands of drunken parents, some of which were sent to prison. This essay methodically lays out Lady Jeune's different charity organizations for the care and education of these children and ties it to patriotic issues that were dominating headlines. Knowing the mindset of her audience, she recognizes that "[w]hile Imperial questions of vital importance are engrossing the attention of the Government of the country, it is difficult to excite interest in what seem very petty and inferior ones in comparison; and yet the future greatness of Great Britain depends in no small degree on the goodness of the educations she gives her children."⁶⁷ Tying the safety and education of abused children to national affairs insures that Lady Jeune's readers will not lose sight of the value philanthropy adds to the Empire. After establishing a clear benefit to the nation, Lady Jeune moves on to her specific programs. She compares the daily conditions of poor children to her readers by pointing out that:

It is impossible for children with weakly constitutions, under-fed and badly clothed, to be equal to the same mental efforts as children that are healthy and cared for...We all know the strain any mental exertion requires if, from some cause or another, we are overtired or weary, and we can easily picture to ourselves the condition in which hundreds of poor little children find themselves during the

⁶⁵ Mary Jeune, "The Children of a Great City II," *Woman's World* 1 (1888): 254.

⁶⁶ See: "The Prevention of Cruelty to Children" in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, July 18, 1885, British Newspaper Archive.

⁶⁷ Jeune, "Children II," 255.

cold days of winter when their badly-nourished brains refuse, after the most earnest efforts on their part, to master the task allotted to them.⁶⁸

Always acutely aware of her audience's sensibilities, Lady Jeune paints a vivid picture that humanizes the masses of dirty faces and encourages her readers to support the seemingly obvious and practical solutions that she goes on to offer. With laser focus, she immediately asks, "[t]he question often rises in our minds, if we insist on educating our children, and make their attendance at school compulsory, ought we not logically to go a step further, and insist on their being fed, and if we find that, from want of work and unforeseen circumstances, their parents are unable to feed them, what should we do but provide nourishment ourselves!"⁶⁹ At this point, Lady Jeune has skillfully guided her audience into first emotional and second logical justifications for supporting her Penny and Half-Penny meals, playrooms, and Poor Children's Holiday funds that feature prominently in her essays in the next decade.

In the last decade of the 19th century, Lady Jeune's essays and philanthropy for children zeroed in on children's entertainments to keep them off of the streets and on holidays in the country to promote their health. In "Holidays for Poor Children," she begins by acknowledging that there are several organizations busy helping children and that she will only speak of her personal experience. Even then, in a rare instance of her use of first person narrative, she shares credit with those she works; "I owe so much success of the work to the help and kindness of my fellow workers...My work owes its existence entirely to the kindness of Mr. Labouchere, [the editor of *Truth*] whose love for children is well known, and who has allowed me for some years past to make the pages

⁶⁸ Jeune, "Children II," 255.

⁶⁹ Jeune, "Children II," 255.

of *Truth* the medium of communication between those who wished to give ...and someone who had the means of carrying out their wishes.”⁷⁰ She emphasizes her relationship with the donors before moving into her considerable experience developing and working the programs she champions.

After commending other organizations, she points to her different approach. Where other organizations insisted that the parents of the poor children they sent on holiday were required to pay for part of the expense, Lady Jeune differed believing that the rule eliminated the children most in need, “for the poorest classes are those whose children are underfed and badly clothed, and in whose constitutions the early seeds of disease are undermining and destroying their health. I have always, therefore, made the necessity of the children their qualification, taking any assistance the parents can give, but not insisting on their sharing the expense.”⁷¹ Unlike direct requests for donations, these essays give a great amount of detail about Lady Jeune’s approach to charity work and the outcomes of her work specifically. She goes to great pains to provide her readers with hard numbers to justify their continued support before providing a long narrative of amusing stories about the children that are sent into the country. To the weakest of all objections that it is unfair to give poor children a taste of a happy country life where they are well fed and allowed to romp and play, she offers a list of the three benefits the holiday gives, “health, memory, and hope. Memory of a time so absolutely happy, and hope that it will return another year...in the children’s memories there is no pain; the bright blue of the skies, the whispering of the winds in the trees, the joyous songs of the birds...For the voice of nature to many of the children is the voice of God, speaking to

⁷⁰ Mary Jeune, “Holidays for Poor Children,” *The National Review* (1890): 456.

⁷¹ Jeune, “Holidays for Poor Children,” 456.

them for the first time in their dark little lives.”⁷² Similar stories were told in another essay on “The Poor Children’s Holiday” in 1893, and in smaller versions, a paragraph or a short column here and there throughout the 90s, to keep this particular charity in her readers minds.

The evening amusements that Lady Jeune first asked for donations to in 1885 became The Children’s Happy Evenings by 1890. In an essay of the same title, Lady Jeune draws careful distinctions between her program and that of the Evening Recreation Classes in Board Schools. The school’s evening activities were grounded in continuing the education of students who had to leave class in the middle of the day to earn money. Her program on the other hand if focused on teaching children how to play and find some innocent enjoyment in their otherwise bleak little lives. Based on the understanding that “while the children of the rich are taught to play as well as to work, the children of the poor are only trained to labour...when brought into the schools to play, knew nothing whatever of any games or amusements, and had really to be taught to enjoy themselves.”⁷³ To make sure her upper-class readers connected with the idea of this program, she handed them a logical way to feel, “[i]t is obvious that wholesome recreation is a much more necessary and important element in the education of the poor than among the rich, for their chances of amusement are so reduced when left to their own resources, that they are often of the lowest and most demoralizing kind.”⁷⁴ This essay is clearly designed to create a sense of parental concern for the wellbeing of children that are similar to the ones in the homes where this magazine is read. The games

⁷² Jeune, “Holidays for Poor Children,” 459-465.

⁷³ Mrs. Jeune, “Children’s Happy Evenings,” *English Illustrated Magazine* 8 (1890: 92.

⁷⁴ Jeune, “Children’s Happy Evenings,” 93-4.

that Lady Jeune describes harken back to her own Scottish childhood and are rendered in the artwork by H.S. Percy that illustrate the essay.

Beyond the sentimentality of the games and enjoyments that are described and illustrated in the essay.⁷⁵ Lady Jeune offers a full breakdown of the program in hopes of supporting her own branches and encouraging the development of more across the city.

Perhaps it was spending so much time with the poor children in London slums that reminded Lady Jeune of the pleasures of her Scottish upbringing, or perhaps it was a short essay she cowrote with her sister, Julia Marchioness of Tweeddale about the history of Brahan Castle, her ancestral family estate in the early 1890s, that kept Scottish traditions alive and at the front of her mind as she worked among the poor. One thing is for certain, Lady Jeune did not just offer money or go along with the church programs to help some distant group of children. True to her upbringing, she went out and among the poor, the same as she had done as a child and young woman in the Highlands, and not only saw the poor as people deserving of consideration and help, but she made sure through her essays that the people of London also saw them as humans who were very



similar to themselves. In one of the many society essays, an often-repeated description of Lady Jeune's care for children fairly sums up her dedication: "the Honorable Mrs. Jeune is one of the very few society women of to-day who really consider the poor, not only relieving their necessities and giving alms, but in being what I call wisely charitable. She...labours

⁷⁵ Image is in the public domain and is Google-digitized.

incessantly among them for their advantage: and there are few little slumikins in London who do not know the name of Mrs. Jeune, and who have not learnt about her love and care for them.⁷⁶ Highlighting that her constant time in the slums sets Lady Jeune apart from other philanthropists of her rank was only part of Sala's description. Curious about her work and methods, Mrs. Sala learned that when Lady Jeune first came to London in the 1860's with her father, for her first season out in Society, while she enjoyed the balls and entertainments, her time was "marred by the sight of the wretched little children about the streets of our big city, with no one apparently to care for them. 'I always loved children ...the sight of their sufferings in the streets and elsewhere, and their wants, made me feel I should like to do something for them.'"⁷⁷ From the time she came to London as a privileged young woman of rank, to the end of her long philanthropic career, Lady Jeune promoted the causes of and cared for the poor children of her city with every resource she had available to her.

⁷⁶ Mrs. George Augustus Sala. "Famous People I have met," *The Gentlewoman*, August 9, 1890, British Newspaper Archive.

⁷⁷ Sala, "Famous People," 18.

Chapter 4

The New Woman or The Woman Question or What to do with Women at the Fin de Siècle?

In an 1894 interview with the Strand Magazine, Lady Jeune told the reporter that “I have always been deeply interested in my own sex, and for the last thirteen or fourteen years particularly so...Yes, and the little ones, too.” Her numerous essays dealing with nearly every aspect of the Woman Question demonstrate just how invested she was in making life better for her own sex. This chapter merges close analysis of Lady Jeune’s essays on women with feminist critical approaches that seek to place the voice of the subject on equal par with my own. By relying on Lady Jeune’s narrative voice as she participated in the groundswell of activity in the waning years of Victoria’s reign, I hope to add a more nuanced understanding of the women who fought for better education, access to meaningful employment outside the home, and eventually equal political rights. Susan Lanser explains that:

Narrative voice, situated at the juncture of ‘social position and literary practice,’ embodies the social, economic, and literary conditions under which it has been produced...both narrative structures and women’s writing are determined not by essential properties or isolated aesthetic imperatives but by complex and changing conventions that are themselves produced in and by the relations of power that implicate writer, reader, and text.¹ Lady Jeune’s social position is the product of her Scottish upbringing and her marriages into prominent British families. This multicultural site moors her

¹ Susan Lanser, *Fictions of Authority: Toward a Feminist Poetics of Narrative Voice* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2018), 5.

literary contributions to the rapidly evolving debates surrounding the role of women in fin de siècle London.

Bluestocking and hysterical at the start of the 19th century, to mannish, unsexed, new, and shrieking, then on to redundant, supernumerary, and superfluous at the end of the century, these are all labels used to describe women throughout the 19th century. In a century that saw Great Britain become a global empire by fighting near constant wars to colonize every continent and piece of land it could, a significant number of the nation's men were constantly deployed to far off lands never to return. Meanwhile in England, women had finally gained better access to education and marital rights while also coping with enormous economic, population, and cultural shifts that led to rapidly evolving social conditions. The woman question moved past education and theoretical ideas to dire economic questions for the growing population of women who would not be able to marry because of the decreased population of men. There were also women who simply did not want to or saw no reason to marry because they were able to earn a living and make their own decisions.

Women of all positions then began debating what to do with the newfound educational and economic parity with men. A sizable number of women used these advances to argue for full equality in all areas of life. Other women agreed with some ideals of equality, but not all. On all levels, the groups of women navigating these changes at the end of the century were not uniform but fractured. The concept of the New Woman was named in the 1880s, but it was not a new concept. Nor was it a simple concept. As the debates in the papers shifted to fictional characters, the real women living in London had complex—often contradictory—ideas about how to move forward. Lady

Jeune is one of the women who, championed women's rights to education and employment, but who also advocated for traditional gender roles, and then proceeded to vacillate between political and social equality and traditional gender roles in her own writing. On paper she was at times conservative, but in life she embodied the concept of the New Woman in many ways and at various times. In short, the last two decades of the 19th century were ideologically messy for women and the lived experience was often contradictory.

With the 1909 publication of her memoir, Lady Jeune reflected on the changes that had taken place in women's lives since her first marriage:

I cannot help thinking, when I read the catalogue of women's disabilities now set forth by the extreme suffrage party as a reason for the action they are taking, how enormously improved the position of women is to-day to what I remember it when I first married in 1871. At that time, the Married Woman's Property Act had just been passed, but had not come into operation, and my marriage settlements were drawn up in conformity with the old law. What money I had was settled on my husband, and no part of it was reserved for my private use. The amount was not large, but still I did not even possess a cheque-book, nor was I able to get any money except by asking my husband. He was kind and generous, but he acquiesced in the position then existing that a woman's property when she married belonged to her husband. Within these limits, he endeavored to minimize the anomalies of the position. He paid all my bills, he kept my bank-book, and gave me a small allowance for my personal expenses. I cannot remember that I considered this a grievance, as it was the custom, and till then had been recognized by law, that no woman should possess any property apart from her husband. The law, which has since been altered, in relation to the guardianship of children was another hardship. Women were just then beginning to feel their way a little towards the emancipation which has followed rapidly, but which would never have been so complete had it not been for the ability, determination, and tenacity of those who were the pioneers of the woman's movement.²

Indeed, there were major advances in women's education, independence, employment, and public life throughout Lady Jeune's life. When she married in 1871, she had very few rights as a woman independent of her husband. By the time she passed in 1931, women

² Lady St. Helier (Mary Jeune). *Memories of Fifty Years* (London: Edward Arnold, 1909), 341-342.

had gained rights to their own property and children, the full right to vote in all elections, the right to hold office, and full educational opportunities. As a philanthropist, Lady Jeune worked tirelessly in the East End to improve the lives of poor people. She started many programs that would help house, feed, and care for families with a special focus on children. While there is no evidence that she was a teetotaler, she did believe that women, especially poor women, should avoid drinking at all costs because it led to a life of unreclaimable vice. Like the temperance movements that were common in the nineteenth century, she argued in several of her essays on the dangers of drinking for poor men and women. Notably, she did not comment on the drinking habits of her own peers. As a woman, she became a strong social activist for all disadvantaged women starting with fallen women and working through to the many women who need respectable jobs to support themselves and fair treatment of female workers and, eventually, a supporter of women's right to vote in most elections and to hold office.

Her journey as a social activist was not linear or clean. It was complex and often contradictory. She held to class distinctions and often believed that women from the upper-classes should have different rights to those of the lower-classes. She also held upper-class women responsible for the better treatment and advances of the lower classes. As in her other endeavors, she was a practical woman who looked for solutions to problems that different women faced. Ironically, where she believed that women should strive for private domestic lives, her passion for helping made her a public woman. The work that she did and the public respect that she earned made her one of the first women to be appointed as a London County Council Alderman in the early 20th century, which made her, in every meaningful way, a New Woman, even though she would have never

called herself that. To explore the lived experience of this New Woman, I have divided her work and essays into categories: women at the end of the century, working conditions for women, fallen women, the New Woman, and women in politics.

Women at the End of the Century

In considering the changes in women's lives throughout the 19th century, Lady Jeune recognizes a lack of coherence in the long march forward from the industrial revolution that started in the 18th century and what she calls the educational revolution of the 19th century. She argues that these two major events "have taken women out of their purely domestic sphere and placed them in competition with men as bread-winners and fellow workers in many occupations and professions. The progress of woman has not been an unbroken evolution. There have been interruptions which have given the impression that the changes in her position were spasmodic and uncertain; but on the whole the movement has been upward."³ To these two causes, she adds that, "the existence of a rapidly increasing class of superfluous women was in reality the cause. The recognition of their numerical superiority destroyed at one blow the doctrine that marriage was the object of every woman's life, and with the destruction of that important belief, it was necessary to create a new ideal and a fresh career."⁴ Bringing women's education to a higher standard had been the fight that began with a previous generation, but one that clearly benefited the women of the Victorian period as they continued to fight for full access to equal educational opportunities. When the population demographic shifted dramatically in the middle of the 19th century, society had to figure out how to

³ Lady Jeune, "A Century of Women," *The Anglo-Saxon Review*, 4 (March 1900):197.

⁴ Jeune, "A Century of Women," 198.

address the economic needs of single women. On this front, there was only one answer: women had to be allowed to join workforces that were previously only open to men.

To begin their march toward greater occupational equality, women worked in traditional fields such as charity work and philanthropy. What began as religious work for women missionaries promoting Christianity shifted to ministering to the needs of the poor as urban populations exploded in the last half of the century. Of this move Lady Jeune pointed out that “[t]here is no slum in our large towns, no den of wickedness or sin, no fever-stricken street, that cannot bear testimony to the glorious work done by the sisterhoods in England...and out of the example of these communities of women has grown nearly all the civilizing and humanizing movements which have revolutionized the social life of England and labor.”⁵ Added to these thoughts, in another essay on some of the phases of social life in the last half of the century she admitted the less earnest fascination with charity work that became fashionable for a time: “for we can nearly all of us remember the wild delights of “slumming.” For our own credit let it be said, it grew out of a genuine feeling of sympathy and sorrow for the poor in London and the big towns... and so for a time “slumming” was all the fashion, and smart women and men, eager to probe the mysteries and horrors of the East-end, gave up time and legitimate amusement to dwell on pictures of suffering, vice, and wickedness.”⁶ In this reflection, Lady Jeune clarifies her own position, as one of genuine care for the poor and not just a passing fancy. Out of this charity work came the opening of many organizations that would not only help women but would also employ as many as could be paid.

⁵ Jeune, “A Century of Women,” 199.

⁶ Lady Jeune, “Women: Some Phases and Crazes,” *The Gentlewoman*, January 5, 1901, The British Newspaper Archive.

Into even higher positions, philanthropy “laid the foundation of what has become one of the most popular, as well as the most useful of their occupations, namely, nursing.”⁷ Prior to the Crimean War, there was no official training for female nurses in England. As more devastating weapons of war were developed in the last half of the century, warfare became far more gruesome and required nursing staff in numbers never before needed. A large group of women, led by Florence Nightingale, “who had gone through a course at Kaiserwerth⁸, then the only nursing training school of any importance, was requested by the Secretary for War to organize [sic] a nursing staff for the hospital at Scutari. Her achievements there form part of the history of our century, and she crowned her noble enterprise by giving the sum of £ 50,000, subscribed for her by the country, towards founding a training school for nurses.”⁹ While the recognition of women’s capacity for and the development of training schools for nurses was a huge leap forward in employment opportunities to women, progress in the field did not stop at nursing. Because of their clear talent in nursing, it was not long before women demanded full entry into the medical professions. This was not an issue new to the end of the century, it had been debated earnestly since the mid-century:

A few women in different countries were interested in medicine, had studied it, and written books on it, but no practical progress was made until 1858, when Miss Elizabeth Blackwell and Miss Garrett resolved to begin the study of medicine, with a view to practicing in England. The struggle was a long and bitter one, and nothing but the ability, courage and tenacity of the women who fought it, could have ensured success. The story is too well known for us to repeat it here; but after rebuffs, disappointments, defeats, the Government passed a Bill conferring the same powers on women as men, and in 1876 the victory was won. The bitterest opponents of medical women cannot deny that they have justified the stand they made, for not only has experience shown that there was a distinct demand for women doctors, but these ladies, by their wisdom, tact and ability,

⁷ Jeune, “A Century of Women,” 199.

⁸ Kaiserwerth, in Germany, was one of the few nursing schools in Europe.

⁹ Jeune, “A Century of Women,” 200.

have won the respect of the community, and are occupying positions of responsibility, not only in England, but all over the world.¹⁰

This one field shows the monumental change in both the educational and employment opportunities for women at the end of Victoria's reign. Beyond employment that stemmed from charity work and philanthropy, the need for women to earn their own living only increased with the population shifts. Using census records, Lady Jeune explains the massive shift; "[t]he Census returns of 1831 showed an excess of nearly half a million of women over men, while those of 1891 show that the difference has increased to nearly a million."¹¹

From superficial educations in the early days of Victoria's reign, to necessary advances at the fin de siècle, "[i]t is impossible to exaggerate the effect the woman's educational movement has had on the community, for it has brought into existence a vast army of women as well educated as men. Keen for employment, hardworking, persevering, and capable, they have invaded every profession, and hold their ground everywhere."¹² Lady Jeune focuses most of her discussion on educational advances for women of the middle and lower classes because they were the women most in need of employment to survive, whereas women of the upper classes benefited from university training, they did not need to support themselves.

Not all of the advances in women's access to a better education were complete by the turn of the century. Lady Jeune pointed out that,

Cambridge first granted a special examination for women over eighteen, and its example was followed by Oxford and London, and other universities, though the privilege of granting degrees is still wanting. London, Dublin, Victoria have alone generously granted degrees, but Oxford, Cambridge and St. Andrews give

¹⁰ Jeune, "A Century of Women," 200-201.

¹¹ Jeune, "A Century of Women," 199.

¹² Jeune, "A Century of Women," 200.

honours with great reservations. It may be ungenerous to withhold a university degree from those who have passed the same examinations as men, but women may well rest content with the position they occupy.¹³

The last line of this thought is one of Lady Jeune's Freudian slips. As a member of the upper-class who was not in need of a higher education or employment for her bread, she often made comments about women being happy with what they had achieved and not needing more. It is as if she loses sight of how important these advances were for all women—particularly those below her class—and does not see the need for full equality because it will not change her own living conditions. In one breath she complains that the major universities are refusing to grant degrees to women and in the next, she says those same women should just be happy with what they have. This may be because she believes that, [t]he University training of women has, however, affected one class only, while the high schools throughout the country have benefited every class, enabling women to enter any profession, in which a good sound education is the foundation of success."¹⁴ Despite her sometimes contradictory ideas, Lady Jeune saw a clear improvement in lives of working women at the end of the century, "The women of the upper classes were never shut in by tradition and custom, and while the change of ideas has touched them, they have not been swept away into an entirely new life. The middle and the lower classes found it impossible to stand still, the altered conditions of life offered them a new existence, and a means of making a living, which the knowledge that they could not all marry, had made a vital necessity."¹⁵

¹³ Jeune, "A Century of Women," 202.

¹⁴ Jeune, "A Century of Women," 203.

¹⁵ Jeune, "A Century of Women," 204.

Working Conditions for Women

By the late 1880s, it was clear that the field of teaching was fully saturated, and women would need other skills to find employment. Where higher education succeeded in making women better teachers, it failed in giving them any practical or technical training which would have prepared them for careers in domestic service, industrial service, or household management necessities like cooking and sewing. When put to finding a solution to this problem, Lady Jeune turned to research done by The Royal Commission on Technical Education. After detailing her findings of over a dozen technical schools in nearly as many countries, she returns back to England and argues that while there are several small institutions to train young girls and children in industrial work, the government has made no effort to supplement primary education with technical training or the create a national system of technical schools.¹⁶ She acknowledges the importance schools at The People's Palace and the new Polytechnic, but they are run privately and do not reach enough of the girls and women to make a big difference.¹⁷ She explains that "[w]hat has been done in England to aid the industrial education of women is infinitesimal when compared with what is done abroad, and, when also compared with what advantages they enjoy from technical instruction in America, it is not worth considering. But the necessity for such training is becoming every day more apparent."¹⁸ As is her usual writing style, Lady Jeune offers both the type of training—primary education, technical training, and agricultural training—and a location for a national program in London could be started. She believes that "it is by industrial rather

¹⁶ Mary Jeune, "Technical Education For Women," *The National Review* 12 (1888): 739.

¹⁷ Jeune, "Technical Education," 745.

¹⁸ Jeune, "Technical Education," 748.

than by intellectual employment that the majority of women in England must in future earn their living.”¹⁹ Based on the census data offered in other essays, she is correct because there was no way that one million women could earn a living as teachers. Her proposal for a college that would teach subjects such as dairy school, horticulture, natural history, drawing and design, mechanical subjects, laundry work, carpentry, and more would give women a professional certificate that she believed would be a guarantee of competence that would better situation the women to find future careers that might actually support them.

On the working condition of some women in London, Lady Jeune finds horrifying conditions known as “sweating,” which was a type of sub-contracting that took advantage of the most desperate and vulnerable members of the poor working class.²⁰ This essay goes into graphic detail about the swarm of “half-starving, demoralized human beings preying on each other”²¹ in London’s East End, with women being forced to accept starvation wages simply because they are women when the overpopulation creates a supply of workers willing to take any work they can get. In Darwinian terms, she explains that “Nature repeats herself there as elsewhere—the strong make war on the weak, the weak are crushed out in the fight; the ‘survival of the fittest’ is the inevitable rule. The struggle is one of the most terrible. Endurance, affection, courage, determination, some of the noblest qualities of humanity, are pitted against avarice, immorality, dishonesty, and cruelty, and slowly one watches their gradual defeat, while

¹⁹ Jeune, “Technical Education,” 750.

²⁰ Mrs. Jeune, “Competition and Co-operation Among Women,” *The English Illustrated Magazine* 7 (January 1890): 293.

²¹ Jeune, “Competition,” 293.

the forces of starvation and competition are victorious.”²² To account for the full scope of the problem, she lays out several issues that contribute to the perpetuation slums and “sweating.”

The first issue is one of housing in the East End and other impoverished areas. The descriptions are designed to shock and anger readers into action against the owners of the buildings. She argues that “[w]hat tends more than anything to aggravate their hardships are the wretched dwellings in which they are forced to live and for which they pay a third of their scanty earnings in rent...For the use of small, dirty, broken-down rooms like these from 3s. to 4s. a week is paid. No repairs are ever made...[and] the floor space given is less than eight feet square.”²³ Into these tiny spaces are crammed families, not single persons despite the fact that “[t]he rule laid down by the Local Government Board ... is that four hundred cubic feet is to be allowed to each person.”²⁴ The argument she makes is that organizations responsible for inspecting the buildings and enforcing space requirements often hire friends and family members who have a vested interest in turning profits instead of enforcing the laws and because of this and the fact that the poor are afraid of being kicked out if they complain.

Another issue that Lady Jeune points out is the number of immigrants, primarily from Russia and Germany who are willing to work for any money to escape their more miserable lives in their home countries. While she uses the influx of immigrants to discuss overpopulation, her argument becomes antisemitic and classist when she describes the demeanor and work ethic of Jewish people. She blames the Government for

²² Jeune, “Competition,” 293.

²³ Jeune, “Competition,” 294.

²⁴ Jeune, “Competition,” 294.

allowing so many immigrants with a familiar claim about job security: “[o]ur national creed makes us welcome all such refugees to our country, and by so doing we have allowed them to take a great deal of the employment which legitimately belongs to our own people out of their hands.”²⁵ While this line of argument is highly problematic in the 21st century, it was frequently used in the 19th century. Considering all of the work that Lady Jeune did for the poor, she certainly helped immigrant populations, even if this essay shows that it was grudgingly. The final major issue for the deplorable conditions of women’s work and dwelling in the East End

lies in the early marriages they contract and the swarms of children they bring into the world, without the smallest sense of the responsibility they incur in having children for whom they do not, and cannot provide. The boy and girl marriages of seventeen and eighteen, and even under that age, are the direct cause of more than half the wretchedness that crowds around us, and until some sense of the criminality of bringing forth children who are foredoomed only to suffer is brought home to our working classes, the misery we see around us will not diminish.²⁶

Early marriage is an issue that Lady Jeune brings up on several occasions in her latter essays. She and several other female authors debated the issue in the newspapers and magazines. The general consensus—among middle and upper-class women—was that while it gave young people a chance to escape from large, overcrowded family rooms where they could find no peace for themselves, it brought about far more problems than the ones it solved.

With many of the problems for poor working conditions and pay and poor housing conditions, Lady Jeune discussed what she thought could never be resolved and then offered solutions that would help alleviate part of the problem. Her darkest view was

²⁵ Jeune, “Competition,” 297.

²⁶ Jeune, “Competition,” 300.

that “[t]o talk of theories and preach assistance to these is more than useless. The fact is a stern and terrible one; but, none the less, it is a fact, that there are thousands and thousands of women in London at this moment leading lives of suffering and privation for whom little if anything can be done.”²⁷ The unskilled women will not organize like skilled workers have because they are afraid of losing what little pay they have to feed their children. Lady Jeune spends a good deal of time returning to this idea in different parts of the essay to explain why each of the reasons for the problems makes it nearly impossible to help these women. All of the issues combined suggest no way to organize a union for unskilled female workers in London, even though “[i]n Scotland the question has been warmly espoused by the women who work in Glasgow and Dundee, and the prospect of combining for the unskilled as well as the skilled workers is very much more promising...Scotch [sic] women are more independent and self-reliant, added to which, though the pay is bad, their surroundings are less deteriorating than those of the London women, and their dwellings are better and the rents are lower.”²⁸ Lady Jeune again references her native land to contrast how they solve problems with the way things are done in London. She has a much higher opinion of her Scottish sisters than she does of the other women in the Empire.

The potential solutions to these problems, or at least efforts to improve the conditions of these women, would be to reduce imports of cheap products and increase domestic production of goods (even though it is primarily the poor who buy the cheap products because it is all they can afford),²⁹ next would be enforcing the existing laws

²⁷ Jeune, “Competition,” 299.

²⁸ Jeune, “Competition,” 296.

²⁹ Jeune, “Competition,” 298.

about housing by appointing people with no vested interest in slum profits to complete inspections and file reports to the authorities, to reduce the number of poor immigrants moving to London, and finally, better technical education to help more women become skilled laborers. While all of these solutions may help, Lady Jeune admits that they will only scratch the surface of the problems and will not affect major changes. For that to happen, she argues that:

[w]e can destroy one of its most important causes, if not the most important of all, in sweeping away the rookeries and dens in which their lives are passed from their cradle to their grave, and in their place erect wholesome, sanitary dwellings, not as monuments of charity, but as paying concerns; and we ought to regard doing so as an obligation to them and a confession of the grievous way in which, as a nation, we have sinned against those whose weakness should have been the strongest claim on our protection and help.³⁰

Unlike her essays that are designed to raise money for her charitable organizations, this essay, and others about helping women, focus on social justice. She blames the nation—or the members of society who have the power to do better and more—for shirking its responsibilities to care for and protect the most vulnerable members of society. Instead of asking for money, she is demanding action. There is a level of frustration in her tone that suggest she is overwhelmed with what she sees around her and having spent significant time in the East End, she realizes that the problems are expanding at much faster rates than she or other charity workers can keep up with, and is trying to force the government to take notice and action, because that is the only organization to combat what was rapidly becoming a nation problem and not just a local problem.

Another class of workers that Lady Jeune considered was servants. These working conditions affected her personally as a wealthy woman with a healthy group of her own

³⁰ Jeune, “Competition,” 301.

servants. In several essays about working conditions and responsibilities for managing servants, Lady Jeune chastises upper-class women for not paying closer attention to the social habits of servants and for overworking their female servants.³¹ In “The Servant Question,” Lady Jeune considers the possibility of servants going on strike. While she clearly supports trades unions³², she is concerned about the confusion and lack of consistency that might result from a servant’s union strike. Using numbers from the Servants’ Union, she explains that there are roughly “1,803,997, out of which 130,865 represent coachmen, grooms, butler, and footmen; 1,230,406 female servants, 92,747 charwomen, and 62,646 male and female hotel servants.”³³ It is the largest group of female servants that she is most concerned with because if they strike, households will come to a standstill. After discussing a variety of reasons for the number of servants who are out of work for assorted reasons, she focuses on the condition of the young servant girl. These girls are “[t]aken when they are very young and perfectly inexperienced because they cannot demand high wages, and beguiled by the promise of being trained so as to enable them to rise in their profession, many girls lead lives more like that of being slaves.”³⁴ Using rather coarse language, Lady Jeune believes that this class of servant is actually treated worse than a slave because they are worked as many hours as their bodies can physically perform until they are too sick to work, at which point they are dismissed and replaced with another young girl.³⁵ The ignorance of the upper-classes as to what it

³¹ One of the essays not discussed here is “Extravagance in Dress,” published in 1893, that specifically calls out women for being frivolous in their own wardrobe and setting a bad example for servants that she claims often leads to immoral behavior.

³² See: Mrs. Jeune, “Competition and Co-operation Among Women,” *The English Illustrated Magazine* 7 (January 1890): 293-304. And, “The Patterson Memorial,” *Women’s Union Journal* 167 (December 16, 1897): 97.

³³ Mary Jeune, “The Servant Question,” *The Fortnightly Review* 52, (1892): 67.

³⁴ Jeune, “The Servant Question,” 68.

³⁵ Jeune, “The Servant Question,” 68.

takes to run a household and keep it clean is a major root of the problem, and Lady Jeune's solution is partially that "[i]f people who know nothing of household work, and who blame their servants for laziness, would only set themselves to get through the ordinary routine of a servant's morning work, they would realise how very much more labour there is required than they imagine; and in the fatigue, perspiration, and general discomfort they would undergo, perhaps they might be able to make more allowance than they now do."³⁶ This essay aims to get upper-class men and women to recognize how poorly they often treat their servants, how much they do not understand about the work their servants do, and how important it is for them to change their own behaviour, so that the servants—who become a part of their extended family after years of service—don't strike and lead to chaos.

From her own household to the East End slums that she visited and worked in; Lady Jeune had an acute understanding of the working conditions of women in the last two decades of the 19th century. She was indignant about the living and working conditions of the poor women and she was careful to treat her own servants well while chastising others for not doing the same. Her essays about the working conditions of these women differ from her essays on the poor and poor children in that they call for action instead of requesting donations for her causes. She did not cease her philanthropic endeavors to become an activist. Rather, she added to her work as a philanthropist to also become an activist.

³⁶ Jeune, "The Servant Question," 69.

Fallen Women

In 1886, a newspaper's social column recounted a meeting at Lady Jeune's house and described the famous and powerful people whom she entertained on a regular basis before reporting that "Mrs. Jeune might pass as a woman who cared for nothing beyond amusement. But she has a sympathetic, ardent side to her nature, the more profound and real because never intended. It is, indeed one of the most hopeful signs of our time that the work of social reform is most ardently carried on by those whose position raises them above even the prospect of want."³⁷ From her position as a Society leader, she worked tirelessly to help the most degraded women of her city. At this meeting, and joined by The Princess Christian and the Marchioness of Tweeddale (her sister), and other women of note, "Mrs. Jeune set forth the objects of the meeting with the clearness, penetration, and delicacy which characterize her conversation, and though the workhouse home—as the institution is called—has had many difficulties during the year, and is slightly in debt, the good work, I am sure will be carried on."³⁸ This was Lady Jeune's personal rescue home for fallen women. While it may have gotten off to a rocky start financially, by 1894 included a laundry business and was running if not at a profit, then at least paying for itself.³⁹ The writers for the *Quiver*, after detailing the work she had done for poor children and in rescue work insisted that "[h]er philanthropic efforts afford an apt illustration of the altruistic work which can be conducted by ladies of leisure and of social position on behalf of their poorer brethren and sisters."⁴⁰

³⁷ "Our London Letter," *The Sheffield And Rotherham Independent*, June 1, 1886, British Newspaper Archive.

³⁸ "Our London Letter."

³⁹ "Lady Jeune's Philanthropic Work," *The Quiver: An Illustrated Magazine for Sunday and General Reading* (1894): 877.

⁴⁰ "Lady Jeune's Philanthropic Work," 877.

Her first essay on “Helping the Fallen” was published around the same time that she started her own rescue home, putting her own advice about how to set up and run these institutions to work. The detail with which she describes the hopeless condition of fallen women and the pains that she takes to outline a plan for returning the majority of those women to respectable positions is clearly demonstrated in previous chapters, so I will not repeat it here. After some years of running the home, Lady Jeune published two more essays about fallen women in 1891. She again divided the women into two classes, “reclaimables” and “irreclaimable.” These two essays also differ from her earlier essays in that she is not seeking funding for her rescue home, instead she is attempting to disabuse her readers from false conceptions. To that end, she explains that “[t]here is no social question concerning which there is more misconception and ignorance than that which affects the large class of fallen women in England.”⁴¹ What follows is a clear description of both types of women based on her own work with them.

While acknowledging that the general belief that rescue work is discouraging and unsuccessful, it can be carried on to great satisfaction if done in a timely and comprehensive manner in small rescue homes. The first step is to identify young women who have been seduced by an unscrupulous man in their own class and perhaps a drink on a holiday evening. Once identified, it is imperative to get these young women away from the workhouse as fast as possible “because workhouse influences are so bad, and because every effort is being made to prevent women from going there, that rescue work in first falls’ is more encouraging than is generally believed.”⁴² The next step she offers

⁴¹ Mary Jeune, “Unfortunates: Reclaimables,” *The National Observer*, April 18, 1891, British Newspaper Archive.

⁴² Jeune, “Unfortunates: Reclaimables.”

to restoring these young women to respectability is one she practiced herself. She makes a clear case for developing strong personal relationships with the young women to become the friend and advisor that they need to keep them from falling again. This is a difficult proposition because,

Indeed, the practical work at the home is only the beginning of a life-long work and friendship which rarely ends, and which is the power that keeps the woman straight. Thus, those who desire to succeed in the work must make up their minds to be constant guides—ready to see and be seen at any moment—to be practical, quick, full of resource, and never to fail at the moment critical to the women craving sympathy. No task ever ends where it begins, and of none is this more true than of rescue-work, for its ramifications are comprehensive enough to frighten the boldest philanthropist. But given that some are willing to undertake the responsibility, there is nothing more delightful nor more satisfactory; and the knowledge that counsel and help enable many who but for these would fall in the battle of life overcomes any feeling of weariness and dismay at the complexities which surround the question.⁴³

After spending several years running her own home, Lady Jeune was able to offer far more detailed descriptions of what would be expected of the women running rescue homes than she was in her earlier essays. The demands on a lady's time are great, but so too is the reward for both women. And, unlike the past, "now there is no difficulty in finding situations for fallen women where ten years ago none would have listened to such a proposal: indeed, applications among the middle-classes for servants of this class are largely in excess of the supply."⁴⁴ For this fortunate group of young women, Lady Jeune ends this essay with the report that many of these women go on to be respectable and happy wives and mothers.

The second group of fallen women are not so fortunate as their reclaimed sisters. Lady Jeune starts the second essay with, "In contrast with the encouraging side of rescue-

⁴³ Jeune, "Unfortunates : Reclaimables."

⁴⁴ Jeune, "Unfortunates: Reclaimables."

work stands that portion of it to which the word hopeless' applies; and conviction regarding it is difficult to reach as it is painful to accept."⁴⁵ Experience had taught her and other rescuers to accept those sad facts, but not without an explanation. She attributed a woman's permanent fall to three sources, "[f]irst, the love of drink; second, the scarcity of work that is congenial and not wearisome; and third, the action of heredity."⁴⁶ This essay goes into a good amount of detail about the evils of drinking, resulting in a life of drunken excitement that leads to prostitution and an aversion to more respectable work that is monotonous. But this essay also adds an idea that was not present in the much earlier version; namely, heredity, or a genetic predisposition to drunkenness and lack of morals born by children of prostitutes. To these, "[h]ereditary vice plays no unimportant part in such careers, and many fallen women are the illegitimate children of fallen women. The class of fatherless, nameless infants deserted by their mothers, either picked at workhouse doors or sent thither by their keepers, provides a-many; and in response to questions as to birth and parentage often comes the answer, I had no one to care for me, and was brought up at the parish school."⁴⁷ Lady Jeune appears to be using statistics from her own experience of talking with these women and supplementing that with conversations she has had with other rescuers to come to this conclusion because hereditary science was still in its infancy. Considering that scientific advances at the end of the 19th century were an exciting topic for people in the middle and upper classes, it is no wonder that she used these concepts in her own writing.⁴⁸ Whatever the language she

⁴⁵ Mary Jeune, "Unfortunates: Irreclaimables," *The National Observer*, April 25, 1891, British Newspaper Archive.

⁴⁶ Jeune, "Unfortunates: Irreclaimables."

⁴⁷ Jeune, "Unfortunates: Irreclaimables."

⁴⁸ See also: "Competition and Co-operation Among Women" where she uses Darwinian language to talk about life in the slums.

used to describe this class of women, she reminded her readers not to judge them too harshly because many of their faults were outside of their own control and no one had offered to help them at the first sign of their falls.

The New Woman

Much like her counterparts, Lady Jeune moved between fictional representations of the New Woman and the life experiences of real women in the shifting cultural sands of the fin de siècle. Throughout Lady Jeune's participation in the New Woman debates, she considered women in terms of age, class, and economic position, and argued that each group had primary responsibilities and opportunities based on those distinctions. Where other scholars have done considerable work on New Woman typologies, most of them have failed to include Lady Jeune in any of their anthologies or articles. William Davis is the only other scholar to publish articles about Lady Jeune. In "A New Date for the Victorian New Woman," Davis takes up the often-repeated story of the naming of the New Woman that is credited to a conversation between Sarah Grand and Ouida in 1894, and points out that five years earlier in "Women of To-day, Yesterday, and To-morrow," Lady Jeune is the first author to coin the phrase new woman, albeit in lowercase letters.⁴⁹ For some reason, she has not been included in the hundreds of conversations about the New Woman at the fin de siècle that scholars have participated in over the last century.

In adding Lady Jeune to the conversation about who named the New Woman, Davis points out that her description was highly unfavorable⁵⁰, I differ from Davis on one major point. Where he discusses Lady Jeune's disdain for the eccentricities of the New

⁴⁹ William A. Davis, Jr, "A New Date for the Victorian New Woman," *Notes and Queries* 61, 4 (December 2014): 577.

⁵⁰ Davis, "A New Date for the Victorian New Woman."

Woman in “Women of To-day, Yesterday and To-morrow,” I am putting her into a more direct conversation with Sarah Grand in her 1898 essay focused solely on the behaviors of the New Woman and the accusations against the Old Woman that Sarah Grand made in the same year. Davis mentions these two essays but does not give any detail about them.

Sarah Grand takes on the image of a “Gorgon set up by the snarly who impute to her the faults of both sexes while denying her the charm of either.”⁵¹ This is the rather harsh image of the New Woman depicted in newspapers and magazines by men and women who sought to discredit and insult any new advances in equality for women at the end of the century. Naturally, as a progressive who saw herself as a New Woman, Grand felt the need to set the proverbial record straight. To do so, she lays all the blame for feminine failures at the feet of the Old Woman. The New Woman, she claims, is a pillar of virtue, sweetness, and all-around delightful creature. She is “a young creature, slender, elegant, admirably built,...courteous, [who] enjoy[s] every hour of life...a stronger, better, more beautiful creature than the blockhead majority can conceive...always gentle and serene...magnanimous by nature...[who asks for nothing more than to] make me conspicuous for gentlehood, for courtesy and kindness to young and old, men and women, rich and poor.”⁵² In short she is near perfection, and the one crass comment about the “blockhead majority” can be chalked up to the fact that “[d]oubtless in some phases her vanity is overweening, her knowledge ill-digested, and her grammar shaky; what can you expect of the child? She will improve in time.”⁵³ Again and again, Grand

⁵¹ Sarah Grand, “The New Woman and the Old,” *The Lady’s Realm*, 4 (1898): 466-470.

⁵² Grand, “The New Woman and the Old,” 466.

⁵³ Grand, “The New Woman and the Old,” 467.

describes the New Woman as the most levelheaded, kind woman that demands and deserves the best treatment and will settle for nothing less than full appreciation and equality. Her magnanimity is called into question with her rather severe treatment of her predecessor, the Old Woman.

Grand appears to have no patients for the generations of women who came before her and lays the blame for every conceivable ill treatment and oppression at the feet of mothers and grandmothers. The Old Woman:

shrieks. Her most prominent characteristic is disloyalty to her own sex...[she] bark[s] at her (the New Woman) whenever she makes a mistake...she herself stigmatizes some of her own sex with one of the foulest epithets...she is a solemn person, and deadly dull, taking herself far too seriously...has no sense of humour...uses sentimentality...cares only for others in so far as they have it in their power to add to her own pleasure...has no sense of comparison, and is a prey to confusion of thought...she is of settled prejudices, settled virtues, settled vices, a creature of custom, who has come to a standstill...[and] she only recognized other women in their relation to men, and that only in one sense, the sexual.⁵⁴

The list of the Old Woman's faults is much longer than what is represented here, but this list covers most of the harshest accusations that Grand makes. At the end of these long lists of virtues and faults, Grand proclaims that "[w]e are the new generation mentioned by the Master, and already we are knocking at the door. Our knocking is the knell of the Old Woman. No wonder she shudders! But it is useless to resist. She must go. That is inevitable—and it is also pathetic."⁵⁵ There is a lot to be said for passion, and it is clear that Grand believed deeply in the fight for greater equality. Her approach to the fight was to be loud and aggressive. She aligned more with the militant suffragettes than the peaceful suffragists that Lady Jeune often worked with.

⁵⁴ Grand, "The New Woman and the Old," 466-470.

⁵⁵ Grand, "The New Woman and the Old," 470.

Lady Jeune was certainly not interested in militant activity; she has been accused of being an anti-suffragist in several of her essays; and at times she did appear to be. William Davis has written four essays about Lady Jeune, and in them he compares her with other anti-suffragist women. Based on the essays that were digitally available at the time of his articles, that was a reasonable impression. Now, that we have doubled the number of her essays (near 60 at his last count, and more than 125 at mine), there is a much more nuanced way to read her essays. She, like many other women, was not one or the other; her position changed over time. What remained consistent was her defense of the women of her generation and the work that they had done to secure greater opportunities for younger women like Sarah Grand.

Lady Jeune's response to Grand was a refutation of the grandiose description of the New Woman, a full-throated denial of the claims leveled against the Old Woman, and a drawing of commonalities between the two. After a brief—albeit sarcastic—introduction, Lady Jeune begins her reply by finding common ground: “If we analyse Sarah Grand's interesting paper we shall find how slight the difference is between the two classes of women; only, with the zeal of a reformer, she ascribes all the enthusiasm and aspirations which, within certain limits, are quite legitimate, to the party that she represents.”⁵⁶ After conceding that the lion's share of enthusiasm does belong to Grand's party, she points out that Grand's heroine is not actually a new woman. She argues instead that “The delightful picture of the representative of the new woman which she met in a country lane, reveling in the delights of the country, enjoying the freedom of riding her bicycle in a pair of “rationals” and yet conscious of her duties to her husband and baby, is

⁵⁶ Lady Jeune, “The New Woman and the Old: A Reply to Sarah Grand,” *The Lady's Realm* 4, (1898): 600.

not a new creation, nor a new woman, but one of many hundreds of young women who enjoy the fun and pleasure of a ride.”⁵⁷ Furthermore, Jeune argues that the woman Grand describes:

is not different to her sister in a petticoat, nor does she enjoy the country, the sea, society, leisure, or “the sacred solitude, “one bit more. Her “grammar “is no stronger, her knowledge not better digested, and she is every bit as vain; her health is as good, her wit as peccant, her morals will stand the strictest comparison with her new rival; therefore, where is the difference? We deny the terrible indictment of the old woman and we are sure Sarah Grand will modify it someday; We cannot see where the difference exists between the new and the old, except it be in the matter of her trousers.⁵⁸

As the defender of the Old Woman, Lady Jeune was in no mood to suffer insults of that nature. Instead, she insists that there is no real difference between one generation and the next, except in some fashion choices that are related to a new form of exercise and enjoyment. Instead of being anti-new woman, Lady Jeune repeatedly draws comparisons to her own generation. The biggest issue between these two essays is that they pitted women against each other at a critical moment in the early feminist movement. It was this type of public dispute that allowed anti-suffragists to dismiss women who wanted better access to education, to employment, eventually to full voting rights, and call them names like the “shrieking sisterhood.” This was neither woman’s finest hour.

Women in Politics

While philanthropy and social activism are inherently political activities, they were both areas that women could enter without running the risk of crossing masculine boundaries, so long as the activism did not cross over to propaganda. Being highly active in these areas, Lady Jeune was careful not to openly participate in overtly political

⁵⁷ Jeune, “The New Woman,” 601.

⁵⁸ Jeune, “The New Woman,” 601.

activities for most of her career. She did, however, quietly participate in political activity. This is the area of her work and writing that can be most difficult to digest because her actions often contradicted her words.

By the time she published her memoir in 1909, Lady Jeune had seen innumerable changes in the lives of women—some she openly supported and some she opposed based on her conservative views. Her own evolution from charity worker to philanthropist to manager of her own rescue home and many other organizations depicted the tumultuous journey she went through in her own mind. Some of the major moments in the women's struggle for voting rights came in 1869 when some unmarried women who owned property were given the right to vote in local government elections with the Municipal Franchise Bill.⁵⁹ The next advance came in 1894 with the passage of the Local Government Act⁶⁰ that extended the right to vote to married women unless their husbands planned to vote using the same address (which basically nullified the vote for married women). Then the Representation of the People Act of 1918⁶¹ extended full voting rights to women over the age 30 who owned property. It was not until 1928 that women over 21 were given the same voting rights as men over 21.⁶²

In the chapter titled "Church and State," Lady Jeune summarized her still hesitant stance on granting women full Parliamentary votes:

Women have more than justified the privileges gained by the excellent work they have done in whatever profession they espoused, and the universal recognition of their abilities has found voice in the fact that a woman may now occupy most public positions, and vote on any election except a Parliamentary one. Whether the eventual acquisition of the latter privilege will enable women to do better work and enter a larger arena than they do now is, I think, very problematical; and

⁵⁹ Neil Johnston, "The History of the Parliamentary Franchise." *UK Parliament*, (2013) web.

⁶⁰ Johnston, "The History of the Parliamentary Franchise."

⁶¹ Johnston, "The History of the Parliamentary Franchise."

⁶² Johnston, "The History of the Parliamentary Franchise."

though logically, perhaps, the refusal to give them the Parliamentary franchise is indefensible, it seems doubtful whether the majority of women in their country are very anxious to acquire it.⁶³

At this point in her life, Lady Jeune had the opportunity to vote in local elections during the two years that she was widowed, and then again—technically—as a married woman in 1894, but it would be unreasonable to assume that her husband did not vote in London elections considering he was a high-ranking judge. Even though she was highly active and served on different local boards, her own inability to vote does not seem to have bothered her. She does recognize why other women would want the right and sees the refusal to give it to them as “indefensible.”

Most interesting in the next passage of her recollections is an event that occurred in 1889. She vividly recalled that “even in those days there was a strong feeling among politicians and women who held advanced views on political questions that the moment had arrived for granting the franchise to women, and there was a chance of its being carried.”⁶⁴ In the electrified atmosphere of this round of debates, the editor of the *Nineteenth Century*, a conservative paper published “An Appeal Against Female Suffrage,” which was a strongly worded essay signed by high ranking members of the anti-suffrage movement “which was headed by a large number of women in society, led by those who were flippantly designated as the ‘Churchill lot.’”⁶⁵ Notably, the first of 104 signatures was the Dowager Lady Stanley of Alderley, Dover Street, Lady Jeune’s first mother-in-law with whom she remained close.⁶⁶ Missing was Lady Jeune’s signature.

⁶³ Jeune, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 342.

⁶⁴ Jeune, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 343.

⁶⁵ Jeune, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 343.

⁶⁶ Sir James Knowles, ed. “An Appeal Against Female Suffrage,” *The Nineteenth Century* 25, (June 1889): 781-788.

More interesting is her recollection that the women who promoted the cause “numbered in their ranks Mrs. Fawcett, Mrs. Garrett Anderson, Miss Emily Davies, and all those who had taken an active part in favor of the women’s movement.”⁶⁷ These women drew up their own petition in favor of giving women the vote, but there were so many names on the list, there was no way to print them all in the *Fortnightly Review*, so the leaders of the group decided to form a committee that would select which names were representative of each class of woman so that a smaller list could be created for publication.⁶⁸ Lady Jeune recalled that “[f]or some reason I was asked to be one of the committee, and Mr. Verschoyle, the then editor of the *Fortnightly Review*, was invited to be secretary, and generally to assist in our deliberations. A meeting took place at Mrs. Fawcett’s house in Gower Street, at which there was great difference of opinion as to the names to be selected.”⁶⁹ In this memory, Lady Jeune places herself squarely in the middle of one of the biggest political movements of her lifetime. After recounting an amusing story about the bickering that went on between the women on the committee because they did not want to add women they personally disliked, she offers another detail about the level of her own involvement with the group: “We who represented the moderates protested...I could not wait until the end of the meeting, but left Mr. Verschoyle in charge. A few days later a list of the signatories was sent me to look through and see if it was correct, Mr. Verschoyle adding to his note: ‘I have lived to learn that there are other feminine virtues in the world besides that of chastity!’”⁷⁰ Lady Jeune includes herself as a moderate member of this group of women and the final list was sent to her to make sure it

⁶⁷ Jeune, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 343.

⁶⁸ Jeune, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 343.

⁶⁹ Jeune, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 343-344.

⁷⁰ Jeune, *Memories of Fifty Years*, 344.

was correct, even though she left the meeting early and left the editor in charge, suggesting that she was an active and respected member of the group. When the essay was published a few days later, Lady Jeune's name was conspicuously missing here as well.⁷¹ For a woman who signed her name to all of her own writing, that we know of, it is frustrating to know that she worked closely with the leaders of the early women's movement but did not offer much evidence of her involvement until much later.

In 1895, Lady Jeune wrote an essay discussing the successes of women participating in pre-election campaigning events through the Conservative Primrose League. After a brief discussion of the league and its radical rivals (who she claims have failed to successfully organize) she narrows her focus to the last election to discuss women's participation in the political process.⁷² She, like public opinion, is divided on how much women should participate in elections, but rests in the idea that "both parties seem agreed that women who speak in public at election time do not have anything like the power and influence that the quieter and more unobtrusive canvasser has."⁷³ Despite her hesitations about women speaking in front of large crowds, she is exceptionally flattering about the capacities of women in political activities. She argues that,

there are many reasons why women should be very useful in political strife. They are untiring in their enthusiasm, and their resolute belief in the cause they advocate insensibly encourages and impresses those they work with. They are willing to do any work that is given them...They have no real shyness in canvassing or in approaching the voter, however rough he may be...and they are nearly always the last and most potent influence that can be brought to bear on the being whose vote may be of such vital importance.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Mr. Verschoyle ed, "Women's Suffrage: A Reply," *The Fortnightly* 52 (July 1889): 123.

⁷² Lady Jeune, "English Women in Political Campaigns," *The North American Review* 161 (1895): 451.

⁷³ Jeune, "English Women in Political Campaigns," 452.

⁷⁴ Jeune, "English Women in Political Campaigns," 454-455.

After giving such long and glowing praise to women who effectively ran campaigns, Lady Jeune offers several comments from the Parliamentary members who admitted in writing that the work of the women was invaluable to their winning office. For the remainder of the essay, she gives a few stories about particular working men who came into contact with female canvassers, some who could be persuaded, and some who could not because they were too poor to care. In all, she is convinced that it is the personal relationships that women cultivate with their candidates' constituencies that makes the most difference in canvassing success but ends by reminding her reader that "our paper is only intended to give an idea of the incidents of a general election, and the influence and effect women have had on the result."⁷⁵ This not-so-subtle reminder is a resounding endorsement of women's participation in at least some political activities.

Nearly a decade later, after the turn of the century and the ascension of a new King, Great Britain found itself in "plunged into a political crisis the like of which has hardly been known before, certainly not by the present generation; and whatever the result may be, it seems likely to be as striking as that of the Home Rule movement and the repeal of the Corn Laws."⁷⁶ Clearly, Lady Jeune decided that it was time for her to take a clear position and weigh into national politics. Whatever her past misgivings about women speaking publicly on matters of Empire, and future questions about women wanting to use the Parliamentary franchise, she put the full power of her pen to use urging other women to take both notice and action.

⁷⁵ Jeune, "English Women in Political Campaigns," 459.

⁷⁶ The Right Hon. Lady Jeune, "Women and the Next General Election," *Womanhood* 11 (December 1903): 191.

In her most powerful political statement, Lady Jeune spoke directly to her sisters, arguing that “[w]omen are going to play no small part in the coming fight... though their power is officially unrecognized, and often derided, women know well how important it is, and in speaking through their husbands, they will on this occasion be in a position to argue from personal experience and will be, therefore, an unassailable authority.”⁷⁷ While she may have gotten a bit carried away in her own enthusiasm, (she was known for making broad statements) she does impart a sense of urgency. At stake in the election was a potential new tax on corn to try and balance a trade deficit and an Education Act that would bar women from being elected to university boards. Lady Jeune mentions both but is only concerned with the economic impact of any new tax that might raise the cost of living. She uses the threat of an increased cost of living to push women –who otherwise would not be highly involved in political questions—into learning about this issue and taking a stand.

If there had been any question about Lady Jeune’s stance on women getting involved in major political concerns, this essay dispelled those notions. Protest as much as she may have in other essays, she clearly considered this issue too dire to remain neutral or private in. To carry her point, she draws in upper-class women by claiming that,

it seems a clear duty for the educated women in England, who have means and leisure to study the problem, to endeavour, before the election is on us, to give some “light and leading” to those sisters less well educated, and less able from force of circumstances to decide for themselves... We would not influence them either way, but give them the benefit of our reading and conclusions... In the Fiscal Question, while weighing every argument for and against it, they must remember how different the conditions of life to-day to those before the repeal of the Corn Laws are, that the millennium promised by the partisans of Free Trade as

⁷⁷ Jeune, “Women and the Next General Election,” 192.

its direct result has not arrived, and, above all, that in a world of Protection we are the only Free Trade nation.⁷⁸

This is not merely getting involved, this is an attempt at strong arming poor and working-class women by telling them they can make their own decisions before terrifying them with economic catastrophe. After so many years of writing detailed descriptions of the abysmal conditions that poor families, but especially poor children lived in, it is not surprising that in a new century, with a more favorable view of women's participation in public matters, that Lady Jeune's philanthropy then activism would turn to full throated political participation—even if she did not always recognize her writing and activity as such. Having watched everything around her change so dramatically, it may have been hard for her to see her own position. Either way, she participated in many of the most debated conversations of an epoch that shared its thoughts and ideas like none had before it. The Victorian period left behind the periodical press and a multitude of voices that enrich our understanding of the people and the culture in ways no century before had done.

⁷⁸ Jeune, "Women and the Next General Election," 193.

Conclusion

In the preceding chapters, I have discussed the importance of situating the study of historical feminisms in the complex web of identity through a case study of Lady Mary Jeune, a leading society hostess in London, philanthropist, and social activist at the end of the 19th century, as an example of a woman whose life and work can be understood through the lens of community and ethics of care. By understanding Lady Jeune in the context of her community, we gain deeper insight into her life, the culture of her historical moment, and the period in feminist history that saw progress in women's fight for equality.

Additionally, the importance of considering multiple sites of identity and meaning, including gender, sex, national, regional, and class distinctions, paints a much clearer picture of the complexities of women's lives at the end of the 19th century. Lady Jeune's background as the eldest daughter of a prominent Highland family, her aristocratic responsibility to care for and uplift the less fortunate members of society, her work for better treatment of women and children through philanthropy and social activism, and her position as one of the first women to hold office on the London County Council provide several markers for tracing her unique identity.

These chapters explore the evolution of her public persona from a conservative position to an active liberal position influenced by her Scottish heritage. Using life writing techniques, periodical studies, and close reading, I have sought to bring forward the complex nature of Victorian feminisms, highlighting the intersectional complexities of class and regional identities. Lady Jeune was a prolific writer for the periodical press and a well-known society hostess in London during the 1880s and 1890s. As a public figure, she used her platform to promote her views on philanthropic work and the Woman Question. The study suggests that while she opposed loud and public demonstrations, she was an advocate for better education, legal

autonomy, and recognition of women's capacity to contribute to nation-building. Lady Jeune's life and work demonstrate a continuum of approaches and ideologies for the advancement of women's equality, which provides a more thorough understanding of women's progress into the public sphere.

Lady Jeune's early work focused on helping fallen women and saving innocent children from miserable conditions. Her Scottish upbringing instilled in her a sense of duty to help those in need, and she spent time among the poor to understand their situation. Her writing and activism also contributed to the evolving debates surrounding the role of women in fin de siècle London. By relying on Lady Jeune's narrative voice, I work to bring her lived experience to add a nuanced understanding of the women who navigated through the contentious moments that propelled women out of the domestic sphere and into an active public sphere that struggled to make room for them.

This study ends at the turn of the 20th century. Lady Jeune lived through 1931. There is much less known about her life and writing in the early 20th century, but there is the possibility of continuing the study of her life and actions. What we do know is that she continued her philanthropic works till the end of her life and was recognized by the new monarchs for her lifetime contributions to society. The number of her publications reduced dramatically, especially during the war years. Most of the known essays in the earliest 20th century moved away from her earlier writings about the living conditions of the poor and shifted to public interests surrounding the new monarchs and how the royal family was adapting to the new century. We know that she was appointed to the London County Council as one of the first two women to hold the position. The evidence of her time on the Council has not yet been digitized.

Outside of biography, a complete case study such as this provides a framework for examining other women's lives and developing a clearer understanding of Victorian women and of the activities of the people who participated in the women's movement. London was the cosmopolitan capital of a massive empire, and it can be easy to forget that the people living there and engaging with these debates were not all Anglo-Britains. Studying the lives of authors and activists through a multi-cultural lens broadens our understanding of the period and the different perspectives that made up a tumultuous culture. Engaging with the periodical press can be intimidating because of the seemingly unending amount of material, but learning to use these archives as tools for literary and cultural exploration is an invaluable skill. While these studies may not have a large impact on the traditional literary cannon, they are a supplement to both literary and historical studies of Victorian people, social habits, political movements, and ideologies that make up distinct cultural epochs. The periodicals also engage with literary authors to show how their work was received by their contemporaries and how they saw themselves, providing a deeper understanding of major texts. There really is no limit to what can be done in these Archive, and if scholars use them alongside the books of the 19th century, we will develop a much better understanding of Victorian literature and culture.

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