Forget the Devil and keep your Pink Lamps Lighted: The Metaphysics of Frances Hodgson Burnett’s The Secret Garden

Michael Francis McCarthy

INTRODUCTION

Few children’s novels have been analyzed as much as The Secret Garden. Critical readings of the novel have filtered Frances Hodgson Burnett’s classic story through the lens of sexual awakening, class conflict, feminist and post-colonial theory, primitivism, and paganism. Although the approaches have been different, none deny its enduring qualities. If we accept C. S. Lewis’s maxim that “a children’s story which is only enjoyed by children is a bad children’s story,”¹ then part of The Secret Garden’s longevity and “classic” status is that it appeals to adults. This novel is more than a children’s book — it is a summation of an author’s belief system aimed at readers of all ages. Indeed, when the novel was published in 1911, it was initially marketed to adults.


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I am writing in the garden.
To write as one should of a garden one must write not outside it or merely somewhere near it, but in the garden.

Frances Hodgson Burnett, “In the Garden” (1925)
The metaphysical aspects of Burnett’s story give it a resonance that makes it appealing, enduring, and aspirational. It is also prescient. In many ways, Frances Hodgson Burnett (1849–1924) foresaw the dawn of the “Age of Aquarius” and its stepchild, the New Age/Self-Help era. More than one hundred years ago Burnett rode the first wave of mind-body theory; she began incorporating “New Thought” ideas into her writing and became one of its leading proponents. The author led an intriguing life in the spotlight, saw the connection between the mind and body, and tried to use her fame to popularize the New Thought in the latter part of her career. In a frank interview with The New York Times in 1913, she boldly asserted:

“One thing is certain. The occult — the unknown (call it what you will) of to-day is the certain knowledge of to-morrow. We are on the eve of marvellous revelations. The air is surcharged with the thought of it. Ten years ago the word occult, to the masses, was a meaningless term; to-day it arouses intense interest. Think of it! The concentrated interest of millions of minds. What a vital force is there! What marvellous things may not this concentrated thought accomplish! (“Mrs. Burnett and the Occult.”)

The present paper explores the author’s life through her belief system(s) and how she incorporated her ideas about life and death in her masterpiece, a “Beautiful Thought” fable that has endured because of its essential truthfulness in characterization and message.

**“DEAREST”**

Burnett’s life was as riveting as that of any of the characters she imagined. Born Frances Eliza Hodgson in Manchester in 1849, her biography is full of the reversals of fortune that would feature in so many of her writings. The death of her father when she was five years old led to the Hodgson family’s impoverishment and eventual emigration to Tennessee. Her mother died when she was eighteen, leaving Frances as the breadwinner for her four siblings.

Writing was the ticket that allowed Frances to break away from the poverty of the post-Civil War years. It brought her fame and fortune: after the success (craze, really) of Little Lord Fauntleroy (1886), she became the highest paid female of her era. 2 Success, however, came at a steep personal price: two failed marriages, the loss of her firstborn, and a lifetime (ironically) of chronic illness, often brought about by her writing.

Her first marriage, in 1873, to Swan Burnett, gave her two sons, Lionel (1874) and Vivian (1876). She insisted that her boys call her “Dearest” — a gesture (or affectation) towards the ideal of the “Beautiful Child.” 3 Their union dissolved into a show marriage and Swan and Frances divorced in 1898. Two years later, she married her business manager, Stephen Townsend, who was ten years her junior — a scandal at the time. That marriage lasted less than two years. In a letter to a friend written the year she married him, Burnett confided: Stephen “never for an instant seems to recall the fact that I was dragged & threatened & blackmailed & forced into this marriage.” 4 Although she had her flirtations, it is safe to say that the author of The Secret Garden was unlucky at love.

Burnett was devastated by the death of her eldest son, Lionel, from tuberculosis in 1890. To cope with her grief, she delved deeper into the “occult” after previously exploring the tenets of Spiritualism, Theosophy and Mary Baker Eddy’s Christian Science, amongst other late-nineteenth-/early-twentieth-century millennial philosophies. She told The New York Times in 1913: “As a race, it would seem that we had reached the mental plane of existence. The masses are beginning to think.” (“Mrs. Burnett and the Occult.”) We can therefore view The Secret Garden as a tribute to her dead son and as a wake-up call to the world about the “Beautiful Thought” (as she preferred to call the New Thought movement) — that people can heal themselves through positive thinking and affirmations, and that “all is one.” After Lionel’s death, it became part of her life’s mission to spread the “Beautiful Thought” to the masses. The Secret Garden was her vehicle. 5

**THE PROTYPICAL GARDEN OF HER YOUTH**

Gardens played a pivotal role in the author’s development. It is no surprise that she would eventually employ the garden-as-metaphor in one of her works. The question is why it took her so long to write her “garden” story. Unlike most of her other works, Burnett left few papers outlining the genesis and development of The Secret Garden. The story’s path to publication therefore remains fittingly shrouded in secrecy.
In 1893, at the age of forty-four, Burnett published her autobiography, *The One I Knew the Best of All: A Memory of the Mind of a Child*. In the somewhat precious retelling of her childhood (she refers to herself throughout as "The Small Person"), we learn of her first secret garden, behind a house (named, of all things, Seedly Grove), which bewitched her as a young girl. In Chapter III of her memoir, "The Back Garden of Eden," Burnett romanticizes her adult memories of that garden: "But the Back Garden was full of beautiful wonders. Was it always Spring or Summer there in that enchanted Garden, which, out of the whole world, has remained throughout a lifetime the Garden of Eden? Was the sun always shining?" (Burnett, 1893, 27). Thus began her passion for horticulture and a connection was made in her mind between good health and nature. For the rest of her life, Burnett would find succour and joy in the world of plants, and the optimism resulting from the joy of gardening would be a leitmotiv throughout her life. As she wrote in her final article, "In the Garden" (1925): "As long as one has a garden one has a future, and if one has a future one is alive." (Burnett, 1925, 30). The metaphor of "the garden as a place of healing" in what would prove to be her most enduring novel was a perfect fit between the "Beautiful Thought" and her own life. Lionel’s death and a wish that he, too, could be made whole again, is the unspoken element in what makes this book so powerful.

Frances Hodgson Burnett

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When Mary Lennox asks her uncle, Archibald Craven, "Might I have a bit of earth?" (*Secret Garden*, 87) the stage is set for Burnett the narrator to explicate her beliefs.

**THE SPIRIT OF THE TIMES**

Burnett portrays the healing nature of the garden in a subtle fashion. That is, until the reader reaches Chapter XXVII. At this point, the previously understated voice of the narrator becomes overtly, indeed heavy-handedly, sententious as she addresses the children born around the turn of twentieth century:

> **IN THE GARDEN**
>
> In each century since the beginning of the world wonderful things have been discovered. In the last century more amazing things were found out than in any century before. In this new century hundreds of things still more astounding will be brought to light. At first people refuse to believe that a strange new thing can be done, then they begin to hope it can be done, then they see it can be done — then it is done and all the world wonders why it was not done centuries ago. *One of the new things people began to find out in the last century was that thoughts — just mere thoughts — are as powerful as electric batteries — as good for one as sunlight is, or as bad for one as poison*. To let a sad thought or a bad one get into your mind is as dangerous as letting a scarlet fever germ get into your body. If you let it stay there after it has got in you may never get over it as long as you live (*Secret Garden*, 194-195, my emphasis).

This passage lies at the heart of the story. It is Burnett’s benefaction to the children of the early 1900s: the mind and body are intimately connected, she tells them. This paragraph shocked me when I first read it. How prescient and radical it seems nearly a century later.

> ‘You didn’t feel a lump!’ contradicted Mary fiercely. ‘If you did it was only a hysterical lump. Hysterics make lumps. There’s nothing the matter with your horrid back — nothing but hysterics! Turn over and let me look at it!’.
>
> She liked the word ‘hysterics’ and felt somehow as if it had an effect on him. He was probably like herself and had never heard it before.  (*Secret Garden*, 126)
Burnett was in good company as she rejected traditional religion and explored alternative “realities.” What makes her particularly fascinating was her ecumenism: “I am not a Christian Scientist, I am not an advocate of New Thought, I am not a disciple of the Yogi teachings. I am not a Buddhist. I am not a Mohammedan. I am not a follower of Confucius. Yet I am all of these things,” she told a reporter two years after she wrote The Secret Garden. ("Mrs. Burnett and the Occult.") That she felt disparate beliefs were compatible made her an avant-garde thinker, going against the masses who tended to accept the creed they were born in to without question. Reviewing Ann Thwaite’s 1974 biography of Burnett, Alison Lurie saw in The Secret Garden foreshadows of the counter-culture that would evolve in the 1960s and 1970s:

> When it appeared in 1911, The Secret Garden was only moderately successful — perhaps because it was ahead of its time, for since then its fame has grown steadily. Lately in fact it seems to have become something of a cult book among high-school and college students in America. (More of my students had read it than had read Alice or The Wind in the Willows.) And it isn't hard to see why, considering that The Secret Garden is the story of two unhappy, sickly, overcivilized children who achieve health and happiness through a combination of communal gardening, mystical faith, daily exercise, encounter-group-type confrontation, and a health food diet (Lurie, 1974, 40-41).

One can almost hear Joni Mitchell singing “We've got to get ourselves back to the garden” (Mitchell, 1969) in the background as we imagine Lurie’s seventies’ students discovering The Secret Garden for the first time. Mary Lennox’s metamorphosis from being “as tyrannical and selfish a little pig as ever lived” (The Secret Garden, 9) to an agent of healing is a journey that invites revisiting and analyzing.

The Secret Garden is the quintessential bildungsroman. It is unique because it was the first novel children read that featured an unlikeable protagonist. To put it bluntly, Mary Lennox is a pill. Unsympathetic characters typically evoke antipathetic emotions in readers. Mary is an exception; her transformation is compelling. When her parents (a party-loving mother and sickly father) die in a cholera epidemic, Mary becomes a free agent (oh, how children love stories of orphans and the possibilities for reinvention they imply!). She is shipped off from colonial India to her uncle’s estate in Yorkshire. As she begins to feel the “magic” of the moors and the restorative (indeed, re-creative) power of a forbidden garden with a tragic past, she undergoes a metamorphosis. As she transforms, Mary challenges her cloistered cousin, Colin Craven (“a hysterical half-crazy little hypochondriac”) (The Secret Garden, 195) to heal himself too.

**“MAGIC”**

The "magic" at the core of The Secret Garden is a major factor in The Secret Garden’s timelessness. Magic enchants children, but as we grow up the concept disappears from our vocabulary. Burnett used the word to entice and proselytize: she gave “Magic” a chapter title and employed it ninety-six times (usually capitalized) in her novel. Mary wonders about the magic that brought the robin “at the right moment;” indeed, the magic that brings her friendship for the first time:

> She was a great believer in Magic. Secretly she quite believed that Dickon worked Magic, of course good Magic, on everything near him and that was why people liked him so much and wild creatures knew he was their friend. She wondered, indeed, if it were not possible that his gift had brought the robin just at the right moment when Colin asked that dangerous question. She felt that his Magic was working all the afternoon and making Colin look like an entirely different boy (The Secret Garden, 153).

In interviews with the press, Burnett made no compunction about her belief in magic and a wide range of mythologies:
I believe, of course, in magic. Magic is the bringing about of unbelievable things through an obstinate fact that nothing is too good to be true, and many things are too idiotically bad to be able to stand up on their own feet if you charge right at them laughing aloud and with your lance in rest. (quoted in Gerzina, 2007, xii)

I believe that all, everything, is possible, and I am sure that I shall live a million years, if for no other reason than that I am so interested in seeing all of these possible things come true. ... What, more than all else, seems to me indicative of vital mental life is the existence of the different cults that have sprung up, new twigs from an age-old root of thought ... There is a grain of truth in all of these various teachings, and the essential thing is that there is something vital about them, a something that the people who accept such creeds believe without doubt to be true because it corresponds to the present condition of their development ... The occult! What a big, sweeping word it is — and a perfectly safe one for us to use because no one really knows what it means. That is always really the very safest topic to discuss, one that no one really comprehends ("Mrs. Burnett and the Occult.")

*The Secret Garden* has been cited as the first modern novel for children for many reasons. Burnett opens her novel with death, an odd choice for a children’s book of its era, attesting to its “ahead-of-its-time” nature. In her novella, *The White People* (1917), dedicated to Lionel, Burnett explored the metaphysics of love and what she believed happens when we die:

> ‘Perhaps the whole mystery is as simple as this,’ said her son’s voice, ‘as simple as this: that as there are tones of music too fine to be registered by the human ear, so there may be vibrations of light not to be seen by the human eye; form and color as well as sounds; just beyond earthly perception, and yet as real as ourselves, as formed as ourselves, only existing in that other dimension.’ (Chapter 6)

Vibrations and different dimensions. Burnett, although part of “society,” remained on the fringes of it, exploring what it meant to be human and expressing her thoughts on paper. (She also wrote a diary for Lionel long after his death.) Burnett infused *The Secret Garden* with the magic of belief. She opened her novel with death and closed it with rebirth. She rendered the impossible possible, indeed realized, through indomitable faith.

**METAMORPHOSIS MARY**

If Colin Craven is Lionel reborn, then Mary Lennox is partly autobiographical, for Burnett’s life was one of great transformation. “Mary, Mary Quite Contrary’s” metamorphosis is built on a foundation of self-love. It is also based on transcending the beliefs that she accepted from others and made her own. Mary and Colin are neurotic with reason — their parents imposed their thought patterns on them. Mary’s mother, a flippant, party-loving woman, completely ignored her child, leaving her to be raised by a doting yet fearful servant class. Such were the prerogatives of the *Raj*. Burnett would often do the same with Lionel and Vivian — shunting them off to pursue her social and professional life. Perhaps this was part of Burnett’s inner turmoil, which manifested itself in a series of chronic, and oftentimes debilitating, illnesses for which she sought relief in an unorthodox-for-the-times ways. She and her compatriot, Louisa May Alcott, both suffering from nervous and physical exhaustion brought on from their writing, visited a Boston metaphysical healer named Mrs. Newman who specialized in the “Boston Mind Cure.” A Cleveland journalist compared the two:

> Frances has in her a very rare degree the inspirational temperament. She has something of the mystic in her disposition. She is poetic, impressionable, receptive. Miss Alcott, while imaginative and creative, has the practical rather that the romantic and poetic temperament. (quoted in Gerzina, 2004, 104)

Burnett’s “inspirational” temperament left its mark on *The Secret Garden*. It is one of the reasons why readers bond with the story. Mary Lennox plays the role of little memsahib to perfection because the colour of her skin and her social class allow her to. Martha, the first of a trio of picture-postcard peasants bluntly challenges Mary on her imperious ways:

> ‘How does tha’ like thysel?’ she inquired, really quite as if she were curious to know. Mary hesitated a moment and thought it over.
> ‘Not at all — really,’ she answered. ‘But I never thought of that before.’
> Martha grinned a little as if at some homely recollection. (*Secret Garden*, 78)
Michael Francis McCarthy – “Forget the Devil and keep your Pink Lamps Lighted: The Metaphysics of Frances Hodgson Burnett’s The Secret Garden”

In Burnett’s universe, self-healing begins with self-love. Martha instills that bit of magic in Mary; she is so important to Mary’s quickening that Burnett named Chapter IV after her. With self-love, the way is paved for Dickon, a picture-postcard-perfect Pan figure if ever there was, to enter the story and work his peer-to-peer magic on Mary. For above all, Burnett’s story is about child empowerment; indeed that is another key to its enchantment.

As for Colin ("a hysterical half-crazy little hypochondriac"), one of the biggest whingers in children’s literature, he is the product of his father’s beliefs:

“What is the matter with him?” asked Mary.

‘Nobody knows for sure and certain,’ said Martha. ‘Mr. Craven went off his head like when he was born. Th’ doctors thought he’d have to be put in a ‘sylum. It was because Mrs. Craven died like I told you. He wouldn’t set eyes on th’ baby. He just raved and said it’d be another hunchback like him and it’d better die.’ (101)

This is not to deny Colin his imperious ways; he terrorizes Misselthwaite Manor. Yet, we understand the problem: he has internalized his father’s angst and worst fears. With Mary’s newfound magic touch, Colin becomes whole and ready to live forever and ever. Once again, the author’s didactic voice sums up the philosophy behind the Magic:

When new beautiful thoughts began to push out the old hideous ones, life began to come back to him, his blood ran healthily through his veins and strength poured into him like a flood. His scientific experiment was quite practical and simple and there was nothing weird about it at all. Much more surprising things can happen to any one who, when a disagreeable or discour-aged thought comes into his mind, just has the sense to remember in time and push it out by putting in an agreeable determinedly courageous one. Two things cannot be in one place. (195)

CONCLUSION

In 1910, a journalist named Magda Frances West interviewed Burnett. Her article has one of those wondrously long headlines from a bygone era: “Forget the Devil and Keep Your Pink Lamps Lighted: Author of ‘Little Lord Fauntleroy’ and ‘The Dawn of Tomorrow’ Tells How She Finds it Easy to Keep Happy; ‘Unhappiness Is Indecency,’ She Says.” (Gerzina, 2004, 252) Was it all just public relations?

Although cheerful on the outside, after Vivian’s birth, Burnett suffered from nervous and physical exhaustion the rest of her life. She sought relief in a belief system that focused on what she called “Brain Science,” “the notion that the human mind was the most potent force on earth, capable of limitless power that rivalled electricity, light, and sound.” (199) Yet, her belief in the mind’s ability did not extend to her healing herself.

Seen in its totality, however, Burnett fashioned her life from her thoughts. Recalling her childhood memoir, it is amazing to read that what she really wanted — what would seem to be magic to her — was to escape poverty and make a living from writing. At eighteen, what she asked for she received. The following is from her memoir The One I Knew the Best of All: A Memory of the Mind of a Child (279):
CHAPTER XV: "My Object is Remuneration"

SIR:

I enclose stamps for the return of the accompanying MS, ‘Miss Desborough’s Difficulties,’ if you do not find it suitable for publication in your magazine.

My object is remuneration.

Yours Respectfully,
F. Hodgson

"Before we decide, will you send us another story?"

SIR:

We have decided to accept your two stories, and enclose payment. Fifteen dollars for ‘Aces or Clubs’ and twenty dollars for ‘Miss Desborough’s Difficulties.’ We shall be glad to hear from you again.

Yours truly, etc.

"And they want more. And I am going to write some — as many as I can — a whole lot!"

And so she did.

After her first story was published in 1868, nothing Burnett wrote was ever rejected by a publisher. From those first two stories she went on to create the life she wanted. She was an enormously successful woman of her times; a trendsetter and a role model for other self-made women who would follow in her footsteps.

Burnett wrote that her muse came from the subconscious mind: “I know that in the instance of my own work the inspiration is subconscious, coming to me without volition; that under the fire of this inspiration the expression of subconscious thought pours forth, and that my work is at its best, is most vital, when this is the case.” (‘Mrs Burnett and the Occult’) She developed her spirituality thoughtfully and intensely over time. When she had synthesized most of it, she tried to expound the Beautiful Thought to the masses. In “There is No Devil,” she offered up the following advice:

‘Forget the devil and keep your pink lamps lighted. That’s a little by word among my friends,’ she added reflectively. ‘A pink lamp always makes everything look lovely, it is always becoming. So we tell each other all the nice things we can, whenever we can, so, always remember that please, and keep them burning. You must sacrifice everything to being happy. If you are happy you know you are bound to be good for you can’t be happy unless you are good.’

She gave my hand a splendid clasp. And I can see her yet, a tiny charming figure very much in earnest as she stood in the door and waved me farewell, calling softly, 'There is none. There IS NONE.' (West quoted in Gerzina, 2006, 252)

No devil? Frances Burnett Hodgson was a transgressive writer, yet she suffered few of the slings and arrows that the label usually attracts. In her most enduring novel, a religious fable, she promulgates a belief system that, despite the vast amount that has been written about both the novel and its author, few have competently or adequately reflected and commented on. While debate continues about the belief systems espoused by other writers for children, notably C. S. Elliot and Philip Pullman (and, more recently, Stephenie Meyer), Burnett’s New Thought novel has never, to my knowledge, been attacked.

In 1911, American Monthly Magazine’s review stated: “There is ‘white magic’ in the book and it casts its spell upon all the characters in the book and will touch with its mystic glow all who read its pages. It is, in a sense, a New Thought story, and points the curative power of right thinking.” (quoted in Gerzina 2006, 273) Ahead of its time, yet a curious relic and reflection of its early twentieth century roots, The Secret Garden endures because within its walls death and rebirth — life itself — occurs and children learn they are free agents able to shape their universe.
NOTES

1. Lewis's full quote: "I am almost inclined to set it up as a canon that a children's story which is only enjoyed by children is a bad children's story. The good ones last. A waltz which you can like only when you are waltzing is a bad waltz" (Lewis 1966, 24).

2. Gerzina writes: "Throughout her life, Frances Hodgson Burnett was known by many names to many people. Those close to her, her adult family and friends always called her Fluffy. Her sons called her Mammy or Dearest. In America she was known formally and professionally as Mrs. Burnett, in England as Mrs. Hodgson Burnett” (Gerzina 2004, xvii).

3. Gerzina (2004, 218-220) states that “Although she was careful to cover her tracks, Frances seems to have been a woman with a past, something even her descendants quietly acknowledged ... Her reputation stood so firmly on books like Little Lord Fauntleroy that ... any insinuations, let alone proof, of former liaisons, would have ruined her professionally”. Such were the double standards of her era.

4. Due to the enduring success of her books for children, many tend to forget that Burnett was primarily a writer for adults as well as a playwright. Her other works that include overt “mystical” elements include The Dawn of To-morrow (1906), later made into an inspirational play and a film (1915) starring Mary Pickford (a second version was filmed in 1924). In The White People (1917), dedicated to her son Lionel, she addresses the question of life after death. In her children’s story, The Land of the Blue Flower (1909) Burnett writes: "But the earth is full of magic ... most men know nothing of it and so comes misery. The first law of the earth’s magic is this one. If you fill your mind with a beautiful thought there will be no room in it for an ugly one" (Burnett 1909, 66).

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West, Magda Frances. "There is No Devil,’ Asserts Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett: Author of 'Little Lord Fauntleroy' and 'The Dawn of Tomorrow' Tells How She Finds it Easy to Keep Happy; 'Unhappiness is Indecency,’ She Says. *Kansas City Post*, October 31, 1919 (quoted in Gerzina, 2006, 252).

**IMAGE CREDITS**


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"Francis Hodgson Burnett.” Courtesy of The New York Public Library. [www.nypl.org](http://digitalgallery.nypl.org/nypldigital/id?1164534)


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Stills from *The Secret Garden* (1975), Dorthea Brooking (director). Courtesy of BBC Films
None of the many film adaptations of the novel (which range in quality from mediocre to dreadful) amplify Burnett’s metaphysical message.

The BBC has produced three versions (1950, 1960, and 1975) of the The Secret Garden, all directed by Dorthea Brooking, a pioneer of children’s television in Britain during the 1950s. The 1975 version was the BBC’s first colour production of Hodgson Burnett’s story and stars Sarah Hollis Andrews (Mary Lennox), Andrew Harrison (Dickon Sowerby), David Patterson (Colin Craven), and John Woodnut (Archibald Craven).

APPENDIX: A Chronology of Frances Hodgson Burnett and Her Ailments

1849 Born in Manchester, November 24
1854 Death of her father, Edwin
1874 Birth of her first son, Lionel
1876 Birth of her second son, Vivian. Beginning of nervous exhaustion
1884 Visits Boston mind-healer
1887 Death of her mother, Eliza (Boond)
1889 Suffers a concussion and is unconscious for three days, ill for months, after her horse car overturns in Surrey, England
1890 Fifteen-year-old Lionel becomes ill; Frances returns to America from Rome and takes the boys to European spas. On December 8, Lionel dies of consumption in Paris
1892 – 1895 Stops writing because of exhaustion and illness
1894 Vivian nearly dies of scarlet fever
1896 Begins to have heart problems
1902 In private hospital
1903 On April 10, The New York Times reported that Frances was “much run down”. In New York sanitarium
1904 Suffers from bad back and osteoporosis. Various other ailments for the next two decades
1911 The Secret Garden
1924 October 29: Dies of colon cancer, Plandome, Manhasset, Long Island, NY. Buried in Roslyn, Long Island. She was 74 years old

CHAPTER XXVII: In the Garden

When her mind gradually filled itself with robins, and moorland cottages crowded with children, with queer crabbed old gardeners and common little Yorkshire housemaids, with springtime and with secret gardens coming alive day by day, and also with a moor boy and his ‘creatures,’ there was no room left for the disagreeable thoughts which affected her liver and her digestion and made her yellow and tired.
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**FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT: A Life in Search of Truth and Beauty**

*Portrait of Francis Hodgson Burnett, 1906.* Original caption: “Mrs Frances H. Burnett, one of the most popular of modern writers ... was ranked as one of the highest paid authors in the world, her lifetime average being 10 cents a word.”

**Frances Hodgson Burnett, Full Length.** Original caption: Frances Hodgson Burnett (1849-1924), American author, ca. 1888, Photograph by Herbert Rose Barraud

“Frances Hodgson Burnett, 1849-1924”

**The Dawn of a To-morrow** (1906), a New Thought novel for adults, preceded *The Secret Garden*

“*There—is—no—death.*” Illustration by F. C. Yohn from *The Dawn of To-Morrow*


**The Secret Garden** first edition cover, 1911

“*Who are you?—Are you a ghost?*” Illustration by M. B. Kork from *The Secret Garden* first edition, 1911

*Mary Lennox* and her robin friend cast in bronze by Bessie Potter Vonnoh, The Burnett Fountain in Central Park, New York

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