



The Victorian Governess

By Kathryn Hughes

Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, United Kingdom, 2003. Paperback. Book Condition: New. New edition. 230 x 156 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. The figure of the governess is very familiar from 19th-century literature. Much less is known about the governess in reality. This work explores what the life of the home schoolroom was actually like. Drawing on original diaries and a variety of sources, the author describes why the period 1840-80 was the classic age of the governess. She examines their numbers, recruitment, teaching methods, social position and prospects. The governess provides a key to the central Victorian concept of the lady. Her education consisted of a series of accomplishments designed to attract a husband able to keep her in the style to which she had become accustomed from birth. Becoming a governess was the only acceptable way of earning money open to a lady whose family could not support her in leisure. Being paid to educate another woman's children set in play a series of social and emotional tensions. The governess was a surrogate mother, who was herself childless, a young woman whose marriage prospects were restricted, and a family member who was sometimes mistaken for a servant.



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