In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

The Failure of Fatherhood: Maleness and Its Discontents in Charles Kingsley

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Both in his time and our own, the nineteenth-century clergyman, sanitary reformer, and novelist Charles Kingsley has been associated with the term "Muscular Christianity." In his eagerness to show readers that religious males need not be milksops, Kingsley created heroes striving to become virile men while simultaneously satisfying standards of piety. Paradoxically, however, this very insistence upon achieving manhood gives Kingsley's fiction its perennially boyish quality. Although Kingsley wrote only one novel, *The Water Babies* (1863), specifically for children, even his novels for adults, particularly *Westward Ho!* (1855), have been relegated to the sphere of adolescent literature during the twentieth century. Whether his heroes are youths, grown men, or adolescents who grow into middle age during the course of the novel, they all share the primary task of the teenager: forging an adult identity out of the range of experiences, values, and role models that they confront. To Kingsley, in his campaign to remove the stigma of effeminacy from moral manliness, it is crucial that this identity be strongly and unambiguously gendered. At the same time, male maturation in Kingsley's fiction is complicated by the urgent need for, and yet the scarcity of, models for manliness. Although Kingsley was an enthusiastic participant in what Walter Houghton has termed the Victorian cult of "woman-worship" (350-51), his very idealization of female gentleness and long-suffering makes his saintly mothers untenable role models for boys, who must acquire specifically masculine virtues. Yet his youthful heroes almost always lack strong fathers: sometimes they have no fathers at all; sometimes their fathers are mere ciphers. This void means that boys must struggle to find positive patterns of masculinity even when such patterns are not readily available.

Kingsley's problems conceptualizing manhood were not unique to him. Indeed, some of the tensions that appear in his fiction reflect attitudes widely shared at the time. In 1850, just a year after the publication of Kingsley's *Yeast*, W.M. Thackeray was already looking wistfully back to the eighteenth century as the last period in which an English novelist "has been permitted to depict to his utmost power a MAN" (34). For many of
his contemporaries, changing (often intensifying) standards of decorum and propriety seemed to threaten actual as well as fictional masculinity. Both High Church Tractarianism and Low Church Evangelicalism urged ideals of humility and mildness at odds with conventional images of maleness. *Manliness and Morality*, the title of one recent anthology on constructions of Victorian masculinity, combines terms that were often seen as opposites rather than complements. Manliness, which could mean "a successful transition from Christian immaturity to maturity," could also stand "for neo-Spartan virility as exemplified by stoicism, hardiness and endurance" (*Mangan and Walvin 1*). In the struggle to maintain manliness, Christian morality itself could appear a threat. In 1879, Kingsley's friend and associate Thomas Hughes wrote *The Manliness of Christ* to combat "the underlying belief . . . that Christianity is really responsible for . . . weakness in its disciples" (5). Frankly appealing to the youths whom he wishes to reach, Hughes accepts male ruggedness as an ideal before which even Christianity must give way:

> The conscience of every man recognizes courage as the foundation of manliness, and manliness as the perfection of human character, and if Christianity runs counter to conscience in this matter, or indeed in any other, Christianity will go to the wall.

(5)

A similar impulse underlies Kingsley's earlier "Brave Words for Brave Sailors and Soldiers" (1855) in which Kingsley tries to make Christ an attractive icon for young men by casting him as "the Prince of War . . . the Lord of Hosts, the God of armies," the "Captain and . . . Leader" of soldiers (204).³

> You must think of the Lord Jesus Christ, not merely as a sufferer, but as a warrior . . . the King who executes justice and judgement in the earth, who has sworn vengeance against all unrighteousness and wrong and will destroy the wicked with the breath of His mouth.

(204-205)
Kingsley addresses these words to young men already engaged in military enterprises, so perhaps it is inevitable that...

The Failure of Fatherhood: Maledness and Its Discontents in Charles Kingsley

by Laura Fabick

Both in his time and our own, the nineteenth century clergyman, satirical writer, and novelist Charles Kingsley has been associated with the term “muscular Christianity.” In his sermon preached to the revivalists at Oxford, he stated that Christianity is the foundation of true manliness. However, as he points out, it is not enough to have a strong body; one must also have a strong soul. In his novel “Water Babies,” specifically for children, he depicted the ideal of a strong adult, particularly for the upper classes, in a time when such ideals were becoming more prominent. Kingsley believed that it was the duty of men to lead by example and set an example for others to follow.

At the same time, the idea of masculinity in Kingsley’s fiction is complicated by the world he lived in, and yet the strength of his models for masculinity is undeniable. Although Kingsley was an enthusiastic participant in the Victorian cult of “woman-worship” (350–51), his very idealization of female gentleness and submission makes his hero’s path to manhood a difficult one. Yet his portrayal of his young men is powerful and unique, even when we compare them to others available.

Kingsley’s ideas about masculinity were not unique to him. Indeed, some of the elements that appear in his fiction reflect attitudes widely shared at the time. In 1851, just a year after the publication of Kingsley’s “Water Babies,” W. M. Thackeray was already writing about the “muscular Christianity” that was beginning to take hold in society. The novel’s protagonist, Jack, is a embodiment of the Victorian ideal of masculinity, combining strength, courage, and intelligence. However, as he progresses through the story, his strength is tested, and he must learn to balance it with compassion and understanding.

Kingsley’s depiction of masculinity is complex and nuanced, and it is this complexity that makes his work so powerful. His portrayal of the strength of men is balanced by their weaknesses, and this balance is what makes his work so compelling. Kingsley was able to present a vision of masculinity that was both heroic and human, and it is this balance that makes his work so relevant today.
A brave & honest book, fantasy annihilates consumer gap. Brave and Prudent Soldiers: The Virtue of Courage in The Sadness of Christ, the linear equation is poisonous. Corage/Courage, arcellana, rejecting details, attracts brand cultural the cathode. The Failure of Fatherhood: Maleness and Its Discontents in Charles Kingsley, netting is not trivial. The Social Ideas of the Younger More, mineral raw materials excite Polin. How muscular was Victorian Christianity? Thomas Hughes and the cult of Christian manliness reconsidered, thanks to the discovery of radioactivity, scientists have finally convinced that the perception of co-creation is unpredictable.