Examining Victorian middle-class fatherhood from the fathers’ own perspective, Valerie Sanders dismantles the persistent stereotype of the nineteenth-century paterfamilias by focusing on the intimate family lives of influential public men. Beginning with Prince Albert as a high-profile patriarchal role-model, and comparing the parallel case histories of prominent Victorians such as Dickens, Darwin, Huxley and Gladstone, the book explores the strains on men in public life as they managed their private relationship with their children and found a language for the expression of their pleasure, grief and anxiety as fathers. In a context of cultural uncertainty about the legal rights and moral responsibilities of fatherhood, the study draws on a wealth of unpublished journals and letters to show how conscientious Victorian fathers in effect invented a meaningful domestic role for themselves which has been little understood.

Valerie Sanders is Professor of English at the University of Hull.
Nineteenth-century British literature and culture have been rich fields for interdisciplinary studies. Since the turn of the twentieth century, scholars and critics have tracked the intersections and tensions between Victorian literature and the visual arts, politics, social organisation, economic life, technical innovations, scientific thought – in short, culture in its broadest sense. In recent years, theoretical challenges and historiographical shifts have unsettled the assumptions of previous scholarly synthesis and called into question the terms of older debates. Whereas the tendency in much past literary critical interpretation was to use the metaphor of culture as 'background', feminist, Foucauldian and other analyses have employed more dynamic models that raise questions of power and of circulation. Such developments have reanimated the field. This series aims to accommodate and promote the most interesting work being undertaken on the frontiers of the field of nineteenth-century literary studies: work that intersects fruitfully with other fields of study such as history, or literary theory, or the history of science. Comparative as well as interdisciplinary approaches are welcomed.

A complete list of titles published will be found at the end of the book.
THE TRAGIC-COMEDY OF VICTORIAN FATHERHOOD

VALERIE SANDERS
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For my own father

Dr Michael Sanders
My eldest boy – married not particularly to my satisfaction – is in business as an Eastern Merchant in the City, and will do well if he can find continuous energy; otherwise not. My second boy, with the 42nd Highlanders in India, spends more than he gets and has cost me money and disappointed me. My third boy, a good steady fellow but not at all brilliant, is educating expensively for engineers or artillery. My fourth (this sounds like a charade), a born little sailor, is a Midshipman in H.M.S. Orlando now at Bermuda, and will make his way any where. Remaining two, at school; ... and Francis Jeffrey (I ought to have counted him as the third boy, so we’ll take him in here as No. 2 and a half) in my office, pending a vacancy in the Foreign Office. Now you have the family bill of fare.

Charles Dickens enumerating his children in 1862
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5 Edward White Benson, Archbishop of Canterbury. Photograph by William Downey; by permission of the Mary Evans Picture Library.  176
The initial idea for this book came from a conference, *Father Figures: Gender and Paternity in the Modern Age*, held at Liverpool John Moores University in 2003, which opened up a fabulously rich field for researchers from all disciplines. The paper I gave on Kingsley, included in the book of conference essays, *Gender and Fatherhood in the Nineteenth Century* (2007), edited by Trev Lynn Broughton and Helen Rogers, has been expanded for this current book. The chapter on Dickens and Macready was given as a research paper, first at Hull University and then for a seminar at the University of Sunderland: I am grateful to colleagues past and present for their comments on each occasion. Further topics, such as the ‘idle son’ theme, Thomas Arnold’s attempts to make his daughter curtsey to her mother, and patterns of godfathering, were prompted by other conference opportunities: the British Association for Victorian Studies in Liverpool in 2006; *Gendering the Subject*, University of Wales, Gregynog in 2004; and *The Politics of Domestic Authority in Britain* at King’s College, Cambridge, in 2006. I owe much to people I met at these events, who are unaware that they had a hand in producing this book.

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The book is dedicated to my own father, Dr Michael Sanders, who took me to my first day at school, cured me of many childhood illnesses, and still worries about my walking home alone. My mother, Patricia Sanders, like all the wise wives and mothers in this book, has provided constant support, and more hot dinners than I care to mention.

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