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978-0-521-82187-2 - Consumerism and American Girls' Literature, 1860–1940

Peter Stoneley

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## CONSUMERISM AND AMERICAN GIRLS' LITERATURE, 1860–1940

Why did the figure of the girl come to dominate the American imagination from the middle of the nineteenth century into the twentieth? In *Consumerism and American Girls' Literature*, Peter Stoneley looks at how women fictionalized for the girl reader ways of achieving a powerful social and cultural presence. He explores why and how a scenario of “buying into womanhood” became, between 1860 and 1940, one of the nation's central allegories, one of its favorite means of negotiating social change. From Jo March to Nancy Drew, girls' fiction operated in dynamic relation to consumerism, performing a series of otherwise awkward maneuvers: between country and metropolis, uncouth and unspoilt, modern and anti-modern. Covering a wide range of works and writers, this book will be of interest to cultural and literary scholars alike.

PETER STONELEY is Lecturer in the School of English at Queen's University, Belfast. He is the author of *Mark Twain and the Feminine Aesthetic* (Cambridge, 1992).

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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*To Clare and Ginevra*

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

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978-0-521-82187-2 - Consumerism and American Girls' Literature, 1860–1940

Peter Stoneley

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Contents*

<i>List of illustrations</i>	<i>page</i> viii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	ix
Introduction: “Buying into womanhood”	I
PART I EMERGENCE	
1 The fate of modesty	21
2 Magazines and money	37
3 Dramas of exclusion	52
PART II FULFILLMENT	
4 Romantic speculations	61
5 Preparing for leisure	71
6 Serial pleasures	90
PART III REVISION	
7 The clean and the dirty	107
8 “Black Tuesday”	122
Conclusion	141
<i>Notes</i>	145
<i>Index</i>	165

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978-0-521-82187-2 - Consumerism and American Girls' Literature, 1860–1940

Peter Stoneley

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Illustrations*

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| 1 Advertisement for Woodbury's Soap, from <i>Ladies' Home Journal</i> , September 1925, p. 35  | <i>page 72</i> |
| 2 Publicity still by Clarence White of New York, of Ruth Chatterton as Judy in orphan costume, for Jean Webster's <i>Daddy-Long-Legs</i> , c. 1914 (reproduced by permission of Special Collections, Vassar College) | 84             |
| 3 Publicity still by Clarence White of New York, of Ruth Chatterton seated on cushions, for Jean Webster's <i>Daddy-Long-Legs</i> , c. 1914 (reproduced by permission of Special Collections, Vassar College)        | 85             |



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Frontmatter

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x

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