Evolutionary theory sparked numerous speculations about human development, and one of the most ardently embraced was the idea that children are animals recapitulating the ascent of the species. After Darwin’s *Origin of Species*, scientific, pedagogical, and literary works featuring beastly babes and wild children interrogated how our ancestors evolved and what children must do in order to repeat this course to humanity. Exploring fictions by Rudyard Kipling, Lewis Carroll, Frances Hodgson Burnett, Charles Kingsley, and Margaret Gatty, Jessica Straley argues that Victorian children’s literature not only adopted this new taxonomy of the animal child, but also suggested ways to complete the child’s evolution. In the midst of debates about elementary education and the rising dominance of the sciences, children’s authors plotted miniaturized evolutions for their protagonists and readers and, more pointedly, proposed that the decisive evolutionary leap for both our ancestors and ourselves is the advent of the literary imagination.

Jessica Straley is Assistant Professor of English at the University of Utah. She has published articles on evolutionary theory, vivisection, and Victorian literature in *Victorian Studies* and *Nineteenth-Century Literature* and has contributed a chapter to *Drawing on the Victorians: The Palimpsest of Victorian and Neo-Victorian Graphic Texts*, edited by Anna Maria Jones and Rebecca N. Mitchell.
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 organization, economic life, technical innovations, and 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, literary theory, or the history of science. Comparative, as well as interdisciplinary, approaches are welcome.

A complete list of titles published will be found at the end of the book.
EVOLUTION AND IMAGINATION IN VICTORIAN CHILDREN’S LITERATURE

JESSICA STRALEY
For Richard,

Elliott, and Julian
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7 From Lewis Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, illustrated by John Tenniel, 1865 (London: Macmillan and Company, 1866), 63. Reproduced with permission of Rare Books Division, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah.

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<td>From Lewis Carroll, Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, illustrated by John Tenniel, 1865 (London: Macmillan and Company, 1866), 35. Reproduced with permission of Rare Books Division, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah.</td>
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