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*Literary Encyclopedia* Research Travel Award Report

With the support of *The* *Literary Encyclopedia*’s Travel Award, I spent 10 days in Toronto consulting the Osborne Collection of Children’s Books. The focus of my research was on the Osborne’s holdings of books published between 1805 and 1825 by the Juvenile Library owned and operated by William and Mary Jane Godwin. By the time it folded in 1825, this firm had published over 60 original works by 16 identifiable authors. Many of these works are now extremely rare so my visit to the Osborne enabled me to see volumes that are not available elsewhere. The prevailing critical consensus is that Godwin’s subversive politics of dissent are reflected in works published by the Juvenile Library, which he established and used as a vehicle for social reform. My research in the Osborne confirmed my suspicion that show that far from promoting political dissent and social reform, the firm’s publications were generally conservative in tone, with many promoting unquestioning acceptance of bourgeois values and others promoting rote learning. That is largely because several Juvenile Library books were advertised as being suitable for use in schools, and the Godwins realised that teachers, rather than students, chose the books to be used in class. Nevertheless, some Juvenile Library publications were radical, either in terms of narrative technique, illustration and/or content.

In addition to carrying out the research for which the *Literary Encyclopedia* Research Travel grant was awarded, I took advantage of my time in Toronto to look at the Osborne’s holdings of handmade books for children, which include the heavily illustrated “Silvia Cole” manuscript (created 1719-20), which recounts the day-to-day events expereinced by a young girl on a visit to her aunt and uncle’s house in London, and *The Adventures of Tommy*,a story written by H. G. Wells for a young girl whose colour box he borrowed to pass the time during a debilitating illness. These manuscripts open new scholarly avenues for research into the origins and development of children’s literature as a distinctive branch of print culture.

Since my return from Toronto, I have written entries on the three children’s books co-authored by Charles and Mary Lamb that were published under the imprint of the Juvenile Library, and completed two chapters of a study of the firm. My visit to the Osborne could not have been undertaken without the support of *The* *Literary Encyclopedia*’s Travel Award, and I am grateful to all involved for enabling me to further my research into the Godwins’ Juvenile Library and for opening up new areas of research that focus on handmade books for children.