

“THE LITTLE WOODCUTS FOR STRAHAN KEEP TURNING
UP AND MUST BE DONE”: ARTHUR HUGHES’S
ILLUSTRATIONS FOR ALEXANDER STRAHAN’S
PERIODICAL *GOOD WORDS FOR THE YOUNG*

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In 1860 the Scottish publisher Alexander Strahan launched *Good Words*, a magazine targeted at the burgeoning middle-classes, with a mixture of poetry, fiction, and religious and secular articles, and with good-quality illustrations by reputable artists. By 1868 *Good Words* was an established success and Strahan expanded his range of publications with a magazine specifically aimed at children. *Good Words for the Young* was initially a great success (fig. 1); well designed and illustrated, with contributions from established writers, it set a standard for periodicals for children in the nineteenth century. Paul Goldman has described it as “one of the finest magazines ever aimed at youth” (*Victorian Illustrated Books* 48).

The first issue of *Good Words for the Young* was advertised in *The Athenæum* on 24 October 1868, at sixpence monthly, with Norman Macleod as editor, but Macleod remained for only one year because of the pressure of other work and his existing commitment to *Good Words* (October 1869: 590). In November 1869 the novelist George MacDonald took over the editorship at a salary of £600 a year (MacDonald 361). Strahan’s advertisement for the new magazine referred to fifty illustrations engraved by the Dalziel Brothers, with Arthur Hughes heading the list of illustrators (*Athenæum*, 24 October 1868: 518).

A review of the first issue, in the *Spectator*, was encouraging:

Good Words for the Young ... is ... sure of a large circulation in the thousands of families who already enjoy the genial, generous, and religious spirit of his