

**THE FIRST FAMILY HOME:  
25 HATTON STREET, MARYLEBONE  
(1853–c.1875)**

The Vollers' first family home was in one of the rows of small terraced houses that were built in the 1830s and 1840s on land to the east of the Edgware Road. This land had previously consisted of market gardens between the old village of Lisson and St John's Wood to the north; it had been part of the ring of gardens, orchards and small farms that supplied fresh food to the capital. Open country could still be reached to the west, but over the next 50 years London steadily expanded across the fields of the Notting Barn and Portobello farms towards the village of Ealing.

Number 25 was the last house at the south-west end of Hatton Street. The four rooms of the 'two up, two down' house measured about 3.6m (12ft) square each<sup>(3)</sup> and at the back was a small yard. It was a crowded house. Henry Voller's earnings as a cabman were probably low and variable, so he sublet to another family to help pay the rent. Eventually four adults and 13 children shared the house. In such crowded living conditions the chil-

dren would have spent much time on the streets, exploring yards and stables, dodging chickens and horse dung, peering into the windows of the hat shops, tailors and furniture stores on the main Edgware Road. Two blocks to the south on Church Street was the Marylebone Theatre, later reported as '*rather rough on a Saturday night*'. According to surveys conducted in the 1890s by social researcher Charles Booth and his colleagues,<sup>(4)</sup> Little Church Street was a haunt of prostitutes, known locally as 'Little Jampot Street'. In the other Hatton Street houses lived bricklayers, plasterers and carpenters. Those women who had jobs were dressmakers and laundry women.

These back streets away from the main road were poor, with cramped housing. Many children died young and cholera epidemics could kill thousands. There was a serious outbreak in 1854, the year of William's birth. The last major outbreak of the disease in 1866 killed 10,000 Londoners. What little money families could save was put to providing decent funerals, or used to avoid the workhouse. However, the conditions of the poorer classes improved steadily during the next 50 years, and the Voller family shared these improvements as they migrated to better housing.

North Street, Marylebone  
c. 1904

On the right is George Garnham's Coffee House ('*a good pull-up for cabmen*') and beyond the Lord Chancellor pub is the turning right into Hatton Street

