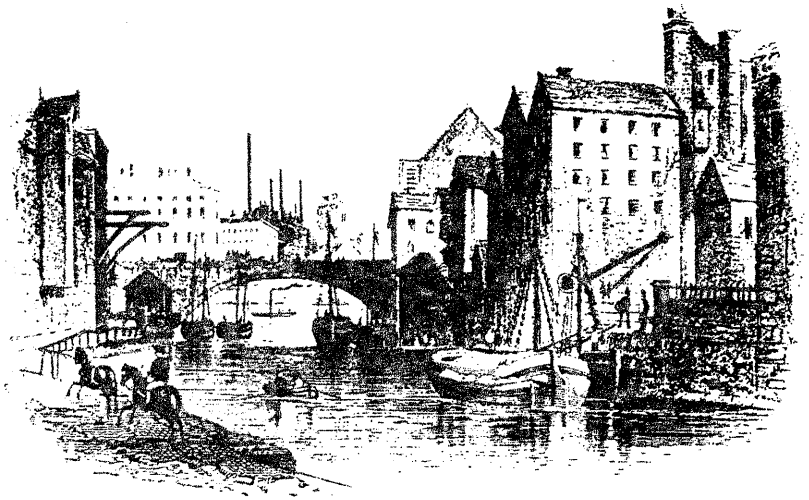
The Gaskell Society



The River Irwell & Albert Bridge Manchester

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 1991 NO. 11

If you have any material or suggestions for future Newsletters, please contact Mrs Joan Leach, Far Yew Tree House, Over Tabley, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 OHN (Tel: 0565 634668)

ISSN 0954 - 1209

EDITOR'S LETTER

Once again it is time for me to prepare and send out a newsletter and, at the same time, Alan Shelston is working on the next Journal; thank you for your encouraging comments on our publications as it makes our efforts worth while.

If this newsletter has a different appearance it is due to my attempts to master word processing, a long and painful process as I am a technological idiot and I can not be sure if the words, as I am typing them, will actually reach you in the form of a newsletter!

All our members are able to share in our activities through our publications even if they are not able to get to any of our meetings. 1990 was another successful year and 1991 promises much.

Forthcoming Events

Spring Meeting at Cross Street Chapel, Manchester on 13th April.

Our Speaker will be Professor Michael Wheeler of Lancaster University whose address will be on Elizabeth Gaskell and Unitarianism. No venue could be more appropriate for this subject, of such importance for understanding ECG's work.Lunch will be available at The Portico Library where there will also be an exhibition on the Library's early years.

ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES

It is perhaps unfortunate, though unavoidable, that the AGM is the following Saturday, 20th April at THe Birmingham and Midland Institute, Margaret Street (near to City Art Gallery and New Street Station.)

We hope some members will be able to support us as we are acting as hosts, with The Bronte Society, our joint conference at Ambleside, being the main theme.

Perhaps some members who can not travel to Manchester could get to Birmingham instead. It is very stimulating meeting members of other societies and we have planned a full and varied programme.
Booking form, with further details, enclosed.

Summer outing to Buxton, Sunday, 28th July
As part of The Buxton Festival, Robin Allan is staging Charlotte Bronte and Elizabeth Gaskell' a dramatic documentary also using slides and music. This will be at The Old Hall Hotel, and, with tea,(substantial) will cost £7.Buxton has many charms and a picnic lunch in the Pavilion Gardens would be pleasant.
If you are not coming to the April Meetings and would like to join us for this please send SAE for further details.

AGM,Saturday 28th Sept, when our speaker, on Elizabeth Gaskell and France will be Professor Philip Yarrow who has collected fascinating research material for this illustrated talk.

LONDON AND SOUTH EAST GROUP

The two London meetings have been so enjoyable that we hope to have more regular meetings as a literary circle.Richard Beckley has agreed to organised these for the present; he is also a member of The Bronte Society and retired lecturer in German at King's College, London. Please send him an SAE if you think you might be able to attend, even occasionally.
Richard Beckley
6,Rose Cottages,Tinker's Green, Nr. Finchingfield,
Essex CM17 4NR

Weekend Conference SYLVIA"S LOVERS AND OTHERS
12th-15th July at The North Riding College,Scarborough.
We still have a few spare places for this and a follow on break at Cober Hill.See insert SHEEET AND REPLY BY RETURN IF INTERESTED.

CANAL TRIPPERS

I am sure you will remember the scene from Libbie Marsh's Three Era's of the Whitsuntide outing to Dunham? There were very few bank holidays in those days so they were much enjoyed by the workers and particularly this one which fell in early summer.

"The court seemed alive, and merry with voices and laughter. The bed-room windows were open wide, (and had been all night on account of the heat) and every now and then you might see a head and a pair of shoulders, simply encased in shirt sleeves, popped out, and you might hear the inquiry passed from one to the other:-
"Well, Jack, and where art thou bound to?"
"Dunham"
"Why, what an old fashioned chap thou be'st. Thy Grandad afore thee went to Dunham; but thou wert always a slow coach. I'm off to Alderly, me, and my missus.'
"Aye, that's because there`s only thee and thy missus; wait till thou hast getten four childer like me, and thou'lt be glad enough to take 'em to Dunham, ould-fashioned way, for fourpence a-piece'.
This trip was made on The Duke of Bridgewater's Canal, built opened in 1761 to carry coal from the Worsley mines into Manchester and by 1772 it had two boats for goods and passengers with a coffee room and 'cabbins' for first, second and third class passengers.

It may have been 'ould -fashioned' in Libbie Marsh's day but in 1867 Manchester day trippers were still going to Dunham, as I found from this MSS account of an outing by St Paul's Methodist Church. Bennett Street , Literary and Educational Society.
(Manchester Central Library Archives M38/4/2/14)

'Whit Saturday, 1867

"AT Dunham spinners and weavers, mechanics and sailors, shoemakers, clerks and warehouse men some with happy smiling faces
and others who bore on their countenances traces of

scanty food and employment, results of a crisis we have not yet quite got through and the effects of which will not be obliterated from amongst us for many years to come".This refers to the effects of the American civil War and the Cotton Famine and depression.
The Manchester folk were enjoying their day ,"away from the almost constant whir of the ponderous wheels and the deafening noise of the fast flying shuttle, the heated loom and the ill ventilated work-shop . . memory dwells on scenes like this as upon an oasis in a desert".

The success of the Bridgewater Canal encouraged similar ventures and in 1766 the first sod of the Trent and Mersey Canal was cut. This was largely the enterprize of Josiah Wedgwood whose family invested £6,000, the Duke of Bridgewater £2,000 and his uncle Samuel Egerton of Tatton, £3,000. Erasmus Darwin was also involved,and there were many small investors for the £200 shares.The Wedgwoods took for their company motto,"It flows for country and people."

On August, 1990 a group of us set out for an evening cruise on this canal now a leisure enterprize but still showing signs of its industrial past with salt works, also restored as industrial history, and the unique Anderton boat lift, built in 1875 to lift boats from the canal to the River Weaver fifty feet below. We just had time to see this before rain set in for the night but we had enjoyed a pleasant canal trip.

For our AGM weekend outing I hope we will not be considered 'ould fashioned' if we visit Alderley.Mrs Gaskell must have known it well as it was close to the Winkworth's home.The Stanleys who owned it had objections to the 'Cottontots' of Manchester visiting it but the Stanleys are no longer in possession to great dog or handcuff' us as they did in the past.I will tell you more about this in the next newsletter.

BOOK NOTES

by Christine Lingard

Sex and Death in Victorian Literature edited by Regina Barreca. Macmillan, £35

A series of thirteen essays on nineteeenth-century British poetry,fiction and prose including the lot of the beautiful ignoramus:'Ruth; and the tradition of the fallen woman by Hilary Schor, assistant professor of English at The University of Southern California.

Dealing with sex rather than death this short study offer a new perspective on Ruth, and makes comparisons with the poets from Wordsworth and the romantic tradition who were such an early ionfluenc on Tennyson and Browning whom she rarely acknowledges not forgetting Rossetti and,above all, Ruskin from whom she learned aesthetics. It shows how beauty was essential in fashion ing the plot. Even though the novel is npot entirely successful it marks an important shift in gaskelll's relationship to male authority. The book also contains articles on Hardy, Tennyson, Eliot, Dickens, Thackeray, Rossetti, Ruskin, Emily Bronte and vampires.

Death and Future Life in Victorian Literature and Theology by Michael Wheeler. Cambridge University Press £35

This broad study of Victorian literature deals principally with Tennyson, Dickens, Hopkins and Newman. It makes only passing mention of Gaskell but it makes the interesting point that her treatment of death in Mary Barton is consistent with a Unitarian theology which denies everlasting punishment.

(ED. This book also explores the nature of religious experience,belief and language in the nineteenth century. Illustrated.)

THE GASKELL SOCIETY OF JAPAN : ANNUAL REPORT

IT is a great pleasure to report on the activities of our Society in 1990. Firstly, we are very glad to be able to tell you that the members are increasing year after year and now number 93; this is due to the enthusiasm and commitment of Professor Yuriko Yamawaki, the President of the Society.

In April we issued Newsletter NO. 2, a 25 page booklet mainly summarising four studies which had been presented at the last AGM (on Mary Barton,The Half Brothers, Lois the Witch and Sylvia's Lovers, `Gaskellism and Gaskellian' by Prof.Yamawaki, `Mrs Gaskell and Dickens' by Prof. S.Koike and ` My encounter with Mrs Gaskell' by Prof. M. Tougou.

On 12th May we had the second regular spring meeting with a presentation of two studies;'Feminism and North and South' by Mrs Kanamura and ' From the Sunday School Penny Magazine by Mrs Tohira. Afterwards we enjoyed a get together over tea.

In October we were honoured to welcome Professor Arthur Pollard, the President of tHe Gaskell Society of U.K., and Mrs Phyllis Pollard as special guests to the Second Annual General Meeting. Professor Pollard gave lectures on English women novelists at The British Council, The Bronte Society of Japan,Tokyo Women's University etc.

On 12th October the AGM was held at Jissen Women's University. Four studies were presented: `Cousin Phillis ' by F.Yoshizawa, `Mary Barton'by Y.Abe,` Cranford'by E.Kumuzawa, and a short story `Right at Last.Then followed Professor Pollard's lecture on 'Mrs Gaskell's Young Women'. Afterwards we had time to talk with Professor and Mrs Pollard and much appreciated this friendly exchange with one another through Elizabeth Gaskell. We were happy to have communed with their wonderful and warm human nature and hope they will return to Japan again.

As for other activities two groups are at work one translating Ruth which has never been translated till now; four eager members have already been at work for two years and have now finished one third of it.The other group,is now translating Mary Barton, which was translated in 1949 but is out of print.They are trying very hard to translate without spoiling the beauty and power of Mrs Gaskell's works. Mrs Akiko Aikawa, a member of The Gaskell Society, translated Six Weeks at Heppenheim; half of it has been published in the University magazine,`Jissen English Literature'

We are planning to publish Journal 1 this year and have some contributions in hand. We hope 1991 will be as good a year as 1990.

Mariko Tahira (Member of G.S. of Japan)

Ed. Our President, Arthur Pollard spent a very full and enjoyable nine days in Japan. Although he had a heavy lecture programme he and Mrs Pollard(who also lectured, on Katherine Mansfield) had time some of the sights of Japan , including the old capital of Kyoto and were hospitably entertained by members of The Gaskell Society of Japan. It was a most valuable exchange for all concerned and we are grateful for the assistance of THe British Council,

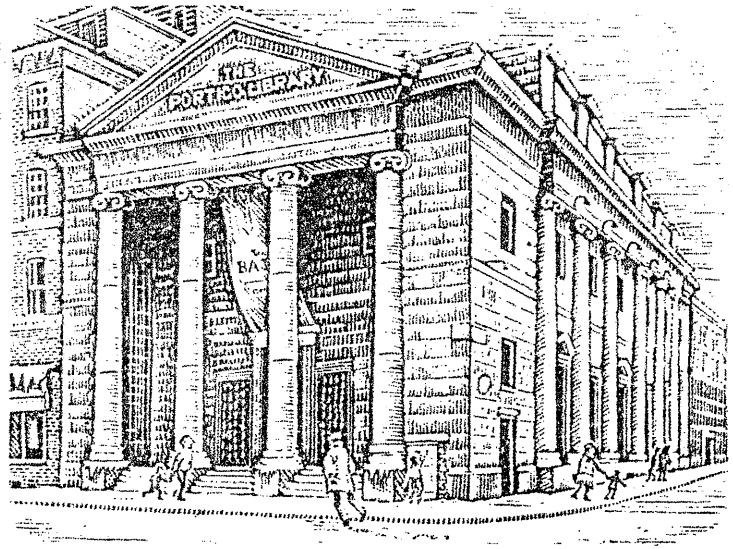
BOOK NEWS

McMillan are reprinting Themes of Elizabeth Gaskell by Dr. E. Duthie, who is one of our Vice-Presidents. We are pleased to have this comprehensive and rewarding study back in print.

O.U.P Clarendon Press
OXFORD LIBRARY OF SHORT NOVELS in 3 vols. ed John Wain
Attractive, boxed set, well bound with good, clear printing, includes ECG's Mr Harrison's Confessions.This The novellas are chronological, the firstbeing Goethe's The Sorrows of Young Werther(whichPhilip Hepburn in Sylvia's Lovers tried to interest Sylvia in).
Preceding ECG's story is Castle Rackrent by Maria Edgeworth.

THE PORTICO LIBRARY

Founded in 1806 the stated objects were `to gratify for knowledge and promote a greater degree of intercourse among the town's inhabitants'. One of the chief promoters was Samuel Kay, a secretary of Cross Street Chapel for over forty years and William Gaskell was Chairman from 1849 until his death in 1884.



The Portico in Winter
Wood Engraving by Anthony Christmas

One of Birket Foster's illustrations for "A Moorland Cottage" (December 1850)

ELIZABETH GASKELL'S AMANUENSIS

In Cambridge University Library are a number of letters from Elizabeth Gaskell to J.M.F.Ludlow. One of them has `forged'written on it, and indeed a comparison between illustrations A and B suggests that it was not actually written by her. Given the address in Bedford Row, I suspected that her young friend Catherine Winkworth had written the letter on her behalf, but at the time (see Notes and Queries,August 1982) did not know of any extended examples of `Katie' Winkworth's handwriting.

Mrs Susan Kearney has now most kindly supplied a letter of about 1854 that Katie Winkworth wrote to another young friend, Agnes Sandars. I wonder what readers think of the comparison between illustrations B and C.Are they in the same hand, both written by Katie Winkworth? And just to complicate matters a little, illustrations D and E are letters to C.E.Norton written for their mother by Marianne and Meta Gaskell respectively. All these hands differ from each other to some degree, but I find when comparing them that my eyes begin to play tricks after a while!

1854

Wednesday Morn.

My dear Sir.

Will you be so kind as to give the enclosed note to Mrs Ludlow? You would perhaps see that the note this morning was not in my hand-writing, for I was obliged to go out very early in hopes of being back in time for the chance of that call of Mr Kingsley's which seem will come to pass. But they tell me the decision of coming Sunday as the day

Yours very truly
E. C. Gaskell

A (ECG to JML)

[illegible] the inevitable shopping [illegible] and [illegible] but I have only time today that I shall be very glad to keep them as they are cheaper than in the shops anyway, and I hope will wear all the better for the extra shilling. I will send word that whoever brings or takes Aggie to Aldeburgh shall be paid for them, for you, if that will do.

I am glad you are not coming to Aldeburgh just now. I should have been very sorry to miss you. I hope to return home in the first half of next month. But Dr Fuller has been away, except for very short calls we have not seen him lately so when he has come down he has not had time for much, so there had no

C (CW to AS)

(Eng?) 1854 123

My dear Mr. Ludlow,

I find my Bradshaw is an old one so that I cannot be quite certain of the times of the trains to Wimbledon. Those mentioned in it are 8.10. 9.50. and 10.30.

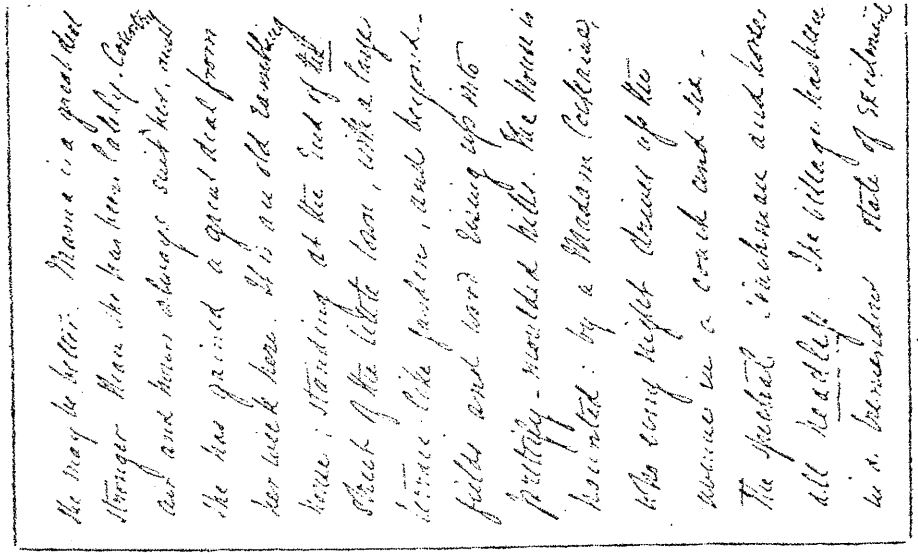
Can you tell me whether there are any alterations for this month. And also which train would suit you best, as I should be very sorry either to miss, or in any way interfere with your Sunday morning conventicle?

Yours very truly
E C Gaskell.

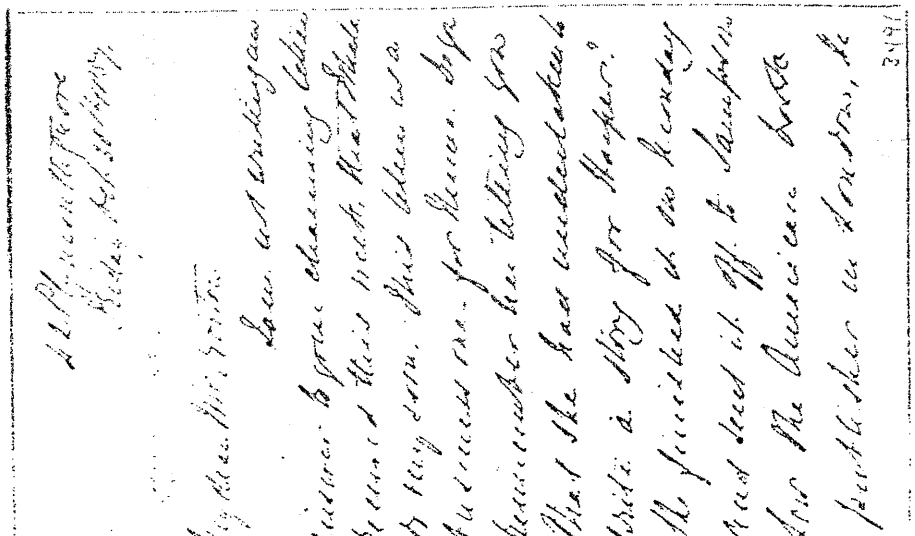
Bedford Row
Thursday.

B ('ECG' to JML)

B



E (MEG to CEN)



D (MAG to CEN)

Elizabeth Gaskell as a Historian

As I am a Knutsfordian I grew up with Mrs Gaskell, in a manner of speaking, for the town has Gaskell Avenues, Cranford Cake shops and the newest block of retirement flats has been named Elizabeth Gaskell Court. I could hardly fail to learn all about her but it was the historical background to her writing that first fascinated me for I am, firstly, a local historian.

Mrs Gaskell's interest in history is often evident in her writing and especially in Sylvia's Lovers which must have entailed much research but in at least one instance she may have drawn on local knowledge and tradition. In the closing chapters of Sylvia's Lovers there is a background of suffering caused by war and famine.

Chapter XLIV

'It was the spring of 1800. Old people yet can tell of the hard famine of that year. The harvest of the autumn before had failed; the war and the corn laws had brought the price of corn up to a famine rate and much that came onto the market was unsound . . . .Rich families denied themselves pastry and all unnecessary and luxurious uses of wheat in any shape'.

Did Mrs Gaskell know of a meeting held at the George Inn, Knutsford on December 10th, 1800?It was ten years before she was born but no doubt it was talked about long afterwards and there must have been similar meetings up and down the country. The result of the Knutsford meeting was a notice inserted in a number of papers and a thousand copies were to be printed

"Knutsford, Dec.20, 1800
We, whose names are hereunto subscribed, lamenting, in common with others, the general distress occasioned by the present high price sof provisions and being earnestly solicitous to promote the objects of His Majesty's gracious benevolent proclamation;

Do resolve unanimously,

That we will suffer no wheaten bread to be used in our respective families but such as is made of the whole flour of the wheat, the broad bran only being taken out, except for the accomodation of invalids and children ...

That we will not suffer cakes of any sort to be used in our families - as little pastry as possible. and of none but the coarsest flour - and that, as far as is practicable, rice shall be substituted in place of flour.

That we will reduce the consumption of malt liquor in our families, by every means in our power . .
(Use of oats and other grain for horses was to be restricted, and to diminish consumption of bread and potatoes) . . `until the necessary articles of provision can be purchased at a reasonable price by the lower classes . . '

In Sylvia's Lovers, perhaps more than any of her other books, ECG's love of history and tradition is obvious.She must have enjoyed doing the necessary research into whaling and the press gang. She met Rev William Scoresby,(G.L. 267a, 1855)who told her many anecdotes of Haworth from the time he was Vicar of Bradford. Did he also tell her about his days as a Whitby whaler? Might this be when the seed for Sylvia's Lovers was sown.?

From her letters it is clear that she knew all about Cheshire customs, traditions and history; legislation about buttons and salt tax aroused strong feelings in Cheshire. Six Weeks at Heppenheim involves the wine growing customs in Germany and My Lady Ludlow has a background of the French Revolution; Lois the Witch and her pseudonym of Cotton Mather (Mills) echo her interest in the American Colonies. Her historical knowledge provided an authentic backgound to her writing and had she lived longer we might have had more history and biography from her pen.

Joan Leach

Notes on Some Gaskell Stories

The growing recognition of Elizabeth Gaskell as a novelist has gradually led also to the recognition that her tales have their relevance for her total achievement.J.G.Sharps included a consideration of them in his Mrs Gaskell's Observation and Invention,they have attracted critical attention and no study of her complete work can afford to ignore them. Some are long stories, which almost approximate to short novels in a number of cases, others a sequence of interrelated episodes. Short stories of normal length are a much less frequent occurence.Until comparatively recently these tales, with the exception of Cranford, have not been too easy of access.But the complete editions of Gaskell works by A.W.Ward and Clement Shorter have now been supplemented by other publications, principally those of Penguin and OUP World's Classics.It is interesting to consider briefly the impression made by the selections of the last decade.

A collection of four stories, introduced by Anna Walters[1] reflects the sympathy Elizabeth Gaskell inspires among feminist critics, which is made clear in the introduction. She herself resisted theorising and it would not be accurateto describe her position as that of a feminist. But her compassionate nature led her to a deep understanding of the hard lot of many women especially working women, and the courage with which they reacted against it, often for the sake of others. This helps to explain the admiration she arouses today in feminist critics concerned with the Victorian women writers'attitude to "the Woman Question". As Anna Walters shows, The Three Eras of Libbie Marsh, Lizzie Leigh and The Well of Pen Morfa have heroines who differ fundamentally from the conventional pattern of her time. In The Manchester Marriage, Mr Oppenshaw, the husband, is a sympathetic character, who develops in the course of the action. But it is Norah, the faithful servant, who best represents the tradition of totally disinterested devotion, and the part she plays is

memorable in its own right.

The two main collections of Gaskell stories, those in "The World's Classics", edited by Angus Eassson and Edgar Wright, are complementary.(2) Between them they contain a cross section of the best tales, whose rich variety makes any rigid classification impossible. There is, however, a certain kinship between allthe tales of the supernatural. Elizabeth Gaskell's first Ghost story, The Old Nurse's Storywas a contribution to a Christmas number of Dickens'Household Words. The genre attracted her for more than one reason. She grew up in a country environment rich in legends and superstitions, but her deepest concern was with the malevolence of the forces of evil and the disaster they could bring if not resisted.Crime unatoned for is the most fearful of the spectres in The Old Nurse's Story. In The Doom of the Griffiths it is not the curse that is lethal in itself, it is family bitterness. The Poor Clare has a historical background. It also has with its"Doppelganger' motiv, a more obtrusive use of the supernatural. But the nexus of the situation is the struggle between the forces of good and evil.Lois the Witch, the most powerful of these tales, has a background of given historical fact, the Salem witch-hunts in New England in the seventeenth century.Lois dies rather than make a false confession of witchcraft. She is herself the most sane and innocent person in a community riddled with fanaticism and superstition.It would have been possible to expand such a situation into a full-scale novel, but that would not have been in accordance with the author's outlook. She was too much aware of the dangers of imagination when it escapes rational control and of morbid states of mind.

Not surprisingly the stories which deal with such emotions are frequently characterised by violence. It is found, for instance, in The Poor Clare and it accentuates the tragedy of Lois.

It also occurs, unaccompanied by the supernatural, inThe Squire's Story, and is one of the most obvious features in The Grey Woman, both of which can be read in the "Pocket Classics Series" published by Alan Sutton.(3) In the latter a girl discovers that her supposedly aristocratic husband is in reality the leader of a gang of brigands. Elizabeth Gaskell conveys with power the suspense and terror inherent in the situation. But it is noticeable that, as in the case of the supernatural she does not give the element of violence the same place in her novels.There the theme is treated, when it does occur, with marked restraint.

But none of her tales depends on only one source for their interest.The Grey Woman itself is much more than simply a horror story. The action,partly in France and partly in Germany, is located with precision,and withthat sense of presenceof place which has deeper significance. And the true heroine is not "the Grey Woman" herself, timid and ineffectual, but her devoted servant, the faithful Amante, The historical sense which is another of Elizabeth Gaskell's attributes shows here, too, in the suggestionof the turbulence of a region of frontiers and post-revolutionary chaos.

The historical sense is, however, shown much more subtly in those leisurely chronicles anticipated in Mr Harrison's Confessions and of whichCranford is the finest example,where time moves so slowly and yet so inexorably. Ite progress is more obvioous in My Lady Ludlow, where Hanbury still appears a feudal village and yet even the liege lady has gradually to accept a degree of change. The French aristocrats who were her close friends encounter change in a starker force. Unfortunately Elizabeth Gaskell's attempt to link the two situations by an over-long story of revolutionary France does not succeed, but her instinct to do so was a sound one.

Where mode of narration is concerned, the Gaskell tales share in general the type of construction preferred by their author and common to the majority of

her stories.Even when she did not use the episodic sequence, she liked to allow herself plenty of space, and a number first appeared in serial form.This suited her preference for narratives centred not around a single crisis but round the decisive experiences which determine the shape of a whole life.The only really short story in the selections, The Half-Brothers, is less effective by comparison.Libbie Marsh has three eras, which give purpose to an outwardly drab existence, There ar five acts in the life of the Westmoreland daleswoman Susan Dixon of Half a Lifetime Ago. to the young Susan, who has just given up her lover to look after her idiot brother, the future appears unending, but the old servant Peggy sees time in another perspective:"Lass, thou hast done well. It is not long to bide, and thenthe end will come".The Crooked Branch also presents the successive acts of a drama, this tme starkly tragic in its ending, when a father is finally obliged to bear witness in court to the crime of the son who had long been idolised by both parents.Cousin Phillis, though the narrative is divided into four parts, ends while its heroine is still young. We only know that she has outlived the golden era of the pastoral, and survived its loss, and in what is probably her artistic masterpiece her creator seems content to have it so.

Dr. Enid Duthie

Notes

(1) Elizabeth Gaskell: Four Short Stories, introduced by Anna Walters. (Pandora Press,R.& K. Paul, 1983)

(2) Cousin Phillis and Other Tales. edited with introduction and notes by Angus Easson. (O.U.P 1989) My Lady Ludlow and Other Stories edited with introduction and notes by Edgar Wright (O.U.P 1989)

(3) The Manchester Marriage and Other Stories (1985),My Lady Ludlow and Other Stories (1985), Lois the Witch and Other Stories (1989). Pocket Classic Series. Pub. Alan Sutton.Short biographical introduction by Sheila Michell. No textual notes.

Book Review

N. Prasad, Fission and Fusion: A thematic Study of Mrs Gaskell's Novels Wisdom Publications, New Delhi. 227 pp Rs 200

Dr Prasad's inelegantly entitled volume focuses our attention on his proceeding by isolating a series of opposites and then suggesting how Mrs Gaskell reconciled them. They are set out in the various chapter-titles:- man and man (Mary Barton), woman and God (Ruth),woman and man (Cranford),stasis and flux (North and South),nature and culture (Sylvia's Lovers), instinct and fact (Cousin Phillis), and self and society (Wivers and Daughters). It hardly requires me to point out, the titles themselves make clear', that some of these pairs more evidently relate to theie novels than do others.

Not only are some of the couplings appropriate only in a limited way, but the contrivance shows too in the coercion that is sometimes necessary to enforce them in detail.Dr Prasad also claims that he is making the reassessment that Edgar Wright called for in 1965, an assertion hardly borne out in the outcome, but one also less easily acceptable in the author's failure to mention, much less consider, any of the burgeoning criticism of Mrs Gaskell that has appeared in the last twenty-five years. All this is not to say that this study is lacking in intelligent perceptions. the overall thesis is at once too simple and too ponderous, but, like the proverbial ecclesiastical egg, the book isgood in parts.

Arthur Pollard

A DARK NIGHT'S WORK AND OTHER STORIES

I am preparing an edition of five of Elizabeth Gaskell;s short stories for the World's Classics series published by Oxford University Press, the volume will be called A Dark Night's Work and Other Stories and apart from the title story will include 'Libbie Marsh's Three Eras','Six Weeks at Heppenheim',` Cumberland Sheep-Shearers'and `The Grey Woman'.

I have developed a particular interest in Elizabeth Gaskell's short fiction during the course of my research for a PhD on her work. While trying to obtain copies of Gaskell's short stories I relaised how many were out of print. Oxford University Press has so far reprinted two collections , Cousin Phillis and Other Tales (1981)and My Lady Ludlow and Other Stories (1989) These two collections make available to the general reader thirteen of the forty or so stories and sketches Gaskell wrote for periodicals such as Household Words and All the Year Round, and provide a tantalising introduction to the wealth of Gaskell material originally published in this form. The purpose of reprinting a further five stories in A Dark Night's Work and Other Stories is to make available and to increase awareness of the great range of Gaskell's work.

In my introduction to the collection I stress both the diversity and quality of Gaskell's short fiction, and suggest that she often used this particular form to explore in a more radical way issues treated in the novels. One such issue is the place of women in Victorian society; another is the way in which unconventional 'families', which often include servants, are often more loving and supportive than the conventional patriarchal arrangement of dominant father and husband, and submissive wife and child.

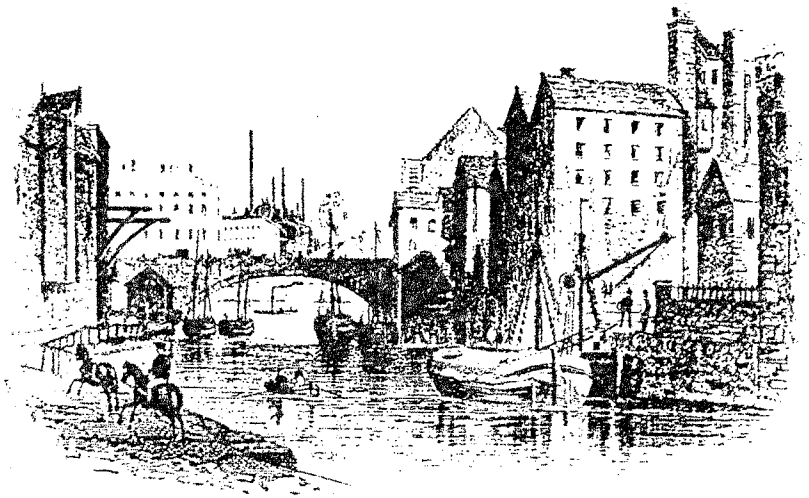
I hope that the reprinting of these five stories will offer a perspective on her art not revealed by the novels. Further, I hope that the collection will also help to place Gaskell in the wider context of Victorian periodical literature, a huge body of work of great significance to its age but less accessible to today's readers due to the impermanent medium of its original publication.

Suzanne Lewis,
Department of English,
University of Sydney.

ED. I am pleased to note that Suzanne Lewis and two other members have met several times to talk over Gaskell matters. Might we foresee a Gaskell Society of Australia?

I am particularly pleased to see that Six Weeks at Heppenheim is to be included in this collection. I had not read this until Professor Yamawaki mentioned it as one of her favourites.Perhaps some member with a knowledge of Germany would like to study the story for its setting and use of custom and tradition.

The Gaskell Society



The River Irwell & Albert Bridge, Manchester

NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 1991 NO. 12

If you have any material or suggestions for future Newsletters, please contact Mrs Joan Leach, Far Yew Tree House, Over Tabley, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 OHN (Tel: 0565 634668)

ISSN 0954 - 1209

EDITOR'S LETTER

'A trouble shared is a trouble halved', so it is said, but surely it should follow that a pleasure shared is a pleasure doubled?

In the last six months members of our Society have shared several most enjoyable and instructive events which usually end with my regretting that more members were not able to join us in person. We hope you are able to share them through the pages of our publications.

Some literary societies exist by and for their journals and publications, and as 'reading maketh a full man' and members are all readers that is, perhaps, as it should be, but there is much pleasure in gathering together socially to share our interests and exchange ideas.

The AGM of the Alliance of Literary Societies which was held in Birmingham in April enabled this exchange and we acted as hosts with The Brontë Society, taking our 1990 Ambleside Weekend as our theme and residential conference organisation in general. The Chairman of The Brontë Society, who is also a member of our Society, rounded off a full programme with a talk about Haworth and the tourist, which might well have been entitled 'A literary shrine for the masses'. You will have heard, no doubt, about the problems this is causing for The Brontë Society and we hope they will be able to resolve them.

I did wonder whether we could relieve some of the pressure by developing Knutsford's literary potential. Heathwaite, the house in which Elizabeth Stevenson grew up, is for sale and we wondered if some benefactor might buy it for us, or even if we should start a trust to acquire it, but it is beyond our means. All we can hope for, I think, is that the new owners will be Gaskell fans, as Mr & Mrs Roberts have been, kindly allowing us to see the charming garden with its wonderful Himalayan cedar which must have been there in Elizabeth's day.

Finance prevents us from other less ambitious ventures, too. We had hoped to follow up our Sylvia's Lovers and Others Conference with a published report, but have abandoned the plan, mainly because of cost. You will be able to read some of the talks in future Journals and newsletters.

Another project for the future is publication of Gaskell Letters as a supplement to the 1966 edition of The Letters of Mrs Gaskell edited by J A V Chapple and Arthur Pollard (M.U.P.), currently our Chairman and President respectively. (If you find copies of this for sale, please let us know as they are scarce and in demand).

We have discussed, in committee, raising annual subscriptions but this might deter would-be members which we would regret; instead we feel it would be advisable to start a PUBLICATIONS FUND. We invite members to contribute to this, perhaps when paying annual dues.

Our conference at Scarborough was much enjoyed and we learnt more about organising such events. Leading up to the weekend, I had a few sleepless nights and my husband wondered if I would be so rash as to take on anything like it again; I told him I would let him know after it was over!

Well, the answer was 'Yes', as members were so enthusiastic as to start making requests, like Oliver Twist, for more of the same. We are giving advance notice that EDINBURGH JULY 1993 is under consideration (see item p.5).

Our next event will be the AGM IN KNUTSFORD ON 28TH SEPTEMBER and we hope to see many of you then.

JOAN LEACH

AGM WEEKEND
28th-29th September in Knutsford

Our venue will be KNUTSFORD CIVIC CENTRE, close to the railway station and easily accessible.
Our speaker is Professor Philip Yarrow on Mrs Gaskell and France. This promises to be a most interesting talk, with slides.
An outside caterer will provide a buffet lunch - 12 noon for 12.30. Cost £7.50 to include a glass of wine.
After lunch it is hoped that we may pay a visit to The Sessions House, built 1819, and just across the road. This depends on the court sittings so cannot be confirmed. If we go it will be about 1.45 to 2.15, allowing the AGM to commence at 2.30 pm.

SUNDAY 29TH SEPTEMBER
We will have an outing to Alderley Edge and vicinity. You may remember in Libbie Marsh's Three Eras, Mr Slater saying about a day out: "Why what an old fashioned chap thou be'st. Thy grandad afore thee went to Dunham; but then thou wert always a slow coach. I'm off to Alderley, me and my missus."
Getting to Dunham was cheap via the Bridgewater Canal, but the railway had made Alderley Edge accessible, much to the displeasure of the Stanley family who owned the land; however the Cottontots were not to be deterred and we shall follow their footsteps. It is a charming area with a story to tell. We hope you will join us.

ERRATA

I take it so much for granted that items about Gaskell Letters, in the newsletters, are contributed by our Chairman, Professor John Chapple, that I neglected to append his name to contributions on two occasions. Perhaps you will amend your copies?
NL 10 'An Unpublished Gaskell Letter' p.4-8 by J A V Chapple
NL 11 'Elizabeth Gaskell's Amanuensis', also by J A V Chapple, and the letters to LUDLOW were reproduced by permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

JOAN LEACH

MANSFIELD PARK AND WIVES AND DAUGHTERS

by Dorothy F Yarrow

Although the influence of Jane Austen on Wives and Daughters has been detected (and, in particular, the resemblance between Mr & Mrs Bennet and Dr & Mrs Gibson pointed out)*, Mrs Gaskell's debt to Mansfield Park seems to have escaped notice.

The relationship between Edmund Bertram and Fanny Price is remarkably like that between Roger Hamley and Molly Gibson. Edmund and Roger are the mentors and consolers of Fanny and Molly respectively. Both Fanny and Molly have high moral principles, higher principles than those about them. In Molly's case, this is understandable: her principles are those of her father's, the wise, beneficent, affectionate and dearly-loved Dr Gibson. The virtue of Fanny, the daughter of slovenly parents, is more surprising; but may, perhaps, owe something to the respected, though awe-inspiring, Sir Thomas Bertram. Edmund and Roger are, alike, for a time, fascinated by lively and attractive women with looser principles - Miss Crawford and Cynthia, respectively, rather similar characters. Both realise in the end that the girls they have been brought up with or long known are their real mates.

Fanny and Molly are both lonely girls, isolated within the family, and attached to one man in the family - Fanny to William, and Molly to her father. Both have a bugbear to put up with, in the shape of an older, selfish, officious, and hypocritical woman: Mrs Norris and Mrs Gibson.

The basic plot of the two novels is the same. Edmund marries Fanny, and Roger Molly; and in both cases, the young man's father overcomes his original disapproval of the unequal match. There are, of course, differences: Roger and Molly are not related, as Fanny and Edmund are; Molly's home is not squalid like Fanny's in Portsmouth; and Molly, unlike Fanny, has no brother - though Cynthia, her dearly loved sister and rival, might

be considered to combine the roles of both William and Miss Crawford.

Wives and Daughters is a complex novel, bringing together elements from its author's experience - Knutsford, contacts with France, her own family life (her father's remarriage and the life of her distant relative, Charles Darwin); but it is also coloured by her reading of the works of her great forerunner, particularly Pride and Prejudice and Mansfield Park.

*See, for instance, A B Hopkins, Elizabeth Gaskell. Her Life and Work, 1952, pp 278-79, 283; and Edgar Wright, Mrs Gaskell. The Basis for Reassessment, 1965, pp 215-16

EDINBURGH 1993

Although this is a long way ahead we need to know NOW what support this plan would receive, and our overseas members, especially, have to plan well ahead; also reservations must be made. Letting us know that you like the idea will not commit you in any way.

Edinburgh: Life, Letters and Literature is our proposed theme, with a wide scope to cover items such as The Edinburgh Review and publishers, Scott and his circle as well as Gaskell, Carlyle and possibly Stevenson. At this stage it is too early to draw up a programme and we would welcome suggestions.

1992 WEEKEND?

Some members, after the weekend conference at Scarborough, stayed on at Cober Hill, a conference and holiday centre between Scarborough and Whitby. It was very pleasant and good value, with a weekend costing about £60 inclusive.

A SHORT STORY WEEKEND some time next summer? This would be an informal weekend with talk and discussion in the evenings but daytime free to explore the area. It has so much to offer and public transport is good.

If you are interested please send s.a.e. - suitable dates not yet fixed

GASKELL SOCIETY: SOUTH OF ENGLAND BRANCH

by Howard F Gregg

A letter from Richard J Beckley to members of the Society in the South of England brought ten members to an exploratory meeting at Francis Holland School, London, on 9th March. Here the idea of a branch for the South of England became a definite possibility. The generous offers of two members, Jane Wilson and Olive Bridge, have given the branch two venues near Sloane Square. Members hope to meet once per school term (three times a year) at the Francis Holland School, SW1. These meetings will be held on a Saturday and will begin at 2 pm. Other meetings will be held at the home of Olive Bridge, Lincoln Street, SW3, on a similar arrangement. Those attending are asked to give 50p per meeting towards the costs of refreshments.

It was agreed that the branch should be a reading and study group to discuss the life, works and times of Elizabeth Gaskell, and that this should be interpreted in the broadest possible way, so that any member may feel free to propose any subject that he or she is interested in. It is hoped that this will offer something for everyone, whatever their level of interest or degree of involvement.

Two meetings have so far taken place. On 11th May at Francis Holland School there was a wide-ranging discussion of different aspects of Sylvia's Lovers in preparation for the Scarborough Conference. These included the structure of the novel, characterisation, the historical and regional setting and moral and religious themes in the story. Members were also able to look at copies of George du Maurier's illustrations for the second edition.

The meeting at Lincoln Street on 22nd June made arrangements for a summer outing on 2nd August, and then went on to discuss themes and the use of time and place in Anne Brontë's The Tenant of Wildfell Hall and A S Byatt's Possession.

A postal chain has also been created by which relevant material on topics of interest can be circulated for reading and further discussion.

Future meetings arranged so far will take place on:

16TH NOVEMBER at Lincoln Street when MRS GASKELL'S LIFE IN THE LIGHT OF HER LETTERS will be explored. The suggested reading is J A V Chapple's Elizabeth Gaskell, A Portrait in Letters.

1ST FEBRUARY 1992 at Francis Holland School, when the topic will be MRS GASKELL AS BIOGRAPHER, "THE LIFE OF CHARLOTTE BRONTE"

Branch members are grateful to Richard J Beckley for facilitating its activities to date and to Jane Wilson and Olive Bridge for enabling us to have such a firm base for our meetings.

Meetings have proved both friendly and stimulating and we hope more members will feel able to join us. For further details of branch activities and venues, please send s.a.e. to Dudley J Barlow, 44 Seymour Road, London SW18 5JA (tel: 081-874-7727).

LONDON MEETING

We plan to have our THIRD LONDON MEETING in Chelsea on 2ND NOVEMBER at the FRANCIS HOLLAND SCHOOL, only ten minutes' walk from Sloane Square underground station.

ED. PLEASE WILL MEMBERS WHO HOPE TO COME SEND S.A.E. FOR DETAILS which are not finalised at time of going to press. We would also like to draw up a mailing list for members who would like to go on a London/S.E. mailing list to receive information of London group meetings, etc. Please write to Dudley Barlow or me.

THE LAWN, HOLYBOURNE

by Barbara Brill

"Mrs Gaskell had planned to have her own pony carriage in order to enjoy the drives around to such places as Selbourne, the birthplace of Gilbert White, and to Chawton, associated with Jane Austen. "So wrote Mrs Chadwick, recounting Mrs Gaskell's last days in chapter XX of her book Homes and Haunts.

It was by car, not pony carriage, that I visited Selbourne, Chawton and Alton, on my way back to London, after a holiday in Dorset, last spring. During our holiday my friend had driven me and my sister to many places of literary interest. These included Thomas Hardy's home, Max Gate, Dorchester; the Dorchester Museum with its replica of Hardy's study; the church at Bemerton where George Herbert, poet and hymn writer, had been vicar; Lyme Regis and its Cob, where Jane Austen's Louisa fell, in Persuasion, and John Fowles' hero, Charles, met The French Lieutenant's Woman; the Laurence Whistler glass engravings on memorial windows in St Nicholas Church, Moreton; the effigy of Lawrence of Arabia in St Martin's Church, Wareham. But the day most packed with delights was the day of our return journey through Hampshire.

The first stop was the Gilbert White Museum and garden at his home, The Wakes, where I bought as a memento some sweet pea seedlings of Gilbert White's own cultivation, a particularly sweet-smelling strain. In July I picked in my Bramhall garden some sprays of these deliciously fragrant pink and white flowers and was reminded of that day at The Wakes.

The next call was at Jane Austen's home at Chawton, open to the public, but happily free of a museum atmosphere and retaining a domestic aura as though Jane had just walked through these rooms, looked through the windows, sat at this table to write or to stitch this patchwork quilt.

The Lawn, Holybourne, from Homes & Haunts of Mrs Gaskell by Ellis Chadwick, 1913

Then we were bound for Alton and The Lawn. The house is now a home for the elderly and we found it without difficulty, being directed to a pedestrian crossing with sign to drive carefully. On the way we passed several roads with Gaskellian names and knew we were in the right vicinity. We were not expected by the Warden at The Lawn, so I had armed myself with a copy of the Gaskell Journal as a proof of my trustworthiness.
We could not have received a warmer welcome. We were ushered into the entrance hall where the open door of a sitting room showed a gathering of residents, relaxing, reading and talking in comfortable spacious surroundings and on the wall was hanging a portrait of Mrs Gaskell.
Then we were ushered into the drawing room where Mrs Gaskell had sat, taking tea on that last day. This was a beautiful room of stately proportions, white-walled, with a pretty fireplace with tiled surround, a white corner-cupboard with ornaments displayed and cretonne covered easy chairs all angled to face the long windows

for a view of the smooth sloping lawn, the feature of the garden that gave the house its name.
How happy Elizabeth and William would have been if they had known that this, their retirement home, in which they never lived, is now being enjoyed by retired folk in the twentieth century. The Lawn is the property of the organisation known as Friends of the Elderly and Gentlefolk's Help, who own eleven houses in the South of England, in all providing accommodation for 450 residents, its aim being to enable the elderly to pass their declining years in peaceful and dignified surrounds, providing everyone with a bed-sitting room furnished with his or her own possessions. The Lawn has 30 residents each with a private room, and among the communal rooms is one for crafts with facilities for pottery, painting, weaving, sewing and some indoor gardening. It is a pleasing thought that the Gaskells' other home in Plymouth Grove, Manchester, is also being put to good use for the younger generation, as the headquarters of the International Society for Manchester's Overseas Students.
The Lawn became Mrs Gaskell's property in 1865, purchased from the existing occupant, Mr White, who became its owner shortly after its conversion to a private residence from an inn known as the White Hart, once a coaching inn. Mrs Chadwick tells of a footpath once running through the grounds of The Lawn which the owner of the property closed and then gave a party for the villagers to appease them.
The circumstances of Mrs Gaskell's purchase of the property after the offer of £1,600 from Smith, Elder, for the novel and serialisation of Wives and Daughters is too well known by Gaskellians to give details here, as is her decision to keep the purchase a secret from William who disapproved of mortgages. It was not until I re-read Elizabeth's letters after I had visited The Lawn and followed in detail the whole story of the house-hunting, the purchase, the furniture-buying and the search for a tenant that I was aware of the immense strain that she was under during those months. How was she able to cope with the writing of 24 Cornhill pages for each instalment of Wives and Daughters at the same

time as travelling back and forth between Alton and Manchester by train, stopping off in London to buy curtains, carpets and furniture? She had a low opinion of Mr White's furniture which she pronounced 'hideous'! There was always the unsuspecting William's welfare to be considered as he remained at home in Manchester, so it must have been an immense relief when he went off on his annual holiday in Scotland at the same time as Mr White announced the date for vacating The Lawn, as September 29th. So Elizabeth was able to get away with an easy mind to stay at The Lawn to supervise the final furnishing in readiness for the tenant she had found, a Mrs Moray. How appropriate that on the day that the new owners took over, Elizabeth's birthday, the Alton Church bells were rung in welcome.

The sound of the church bells should have helped to dispel Mrs Gaskell's doubts about the wisdom of buying the house. She had written to Marianne on August 22nd (G.L.575a) "it's an unlucky house and I believe I was a fool to set my heart on the place at all". As it proved, this presentiment was not without substance for after her death The Lawn was labelled by the residents of Alton 'the haunted house'. Mr C W Hawkins, a local historian of Alton, wrote in his private papers "Mrs Gaskell died suddenly, after which "things" began to happen. But this is true and must not be discounted, it was a house of ill omen. To every family who lived there came some trouble, death or sickness or financial disaster, until in the 1920s people by the name of Stokes bought The Lawn. Mrs Stokes' health began to fail, and Mrs Stokes learned the story. They packed up and went. No girl in the village would ever go there and work. The house was sold again, and this time the house was rebuilt with complete internal alterations, and from that time all went well."

What a story Mrs Gaskell might have woven about "these happenings", perhaps entitled "Footsteps on The Lawn"? But all traces of the haunting surely vanished after The Lawn was officially opened as a home for the elderly by Princess Margaret in 1959.

THE FRENCH MASTER

by Joan Leach

A fascination for France may well have been imparted to the young Elizabeth Stevenson by her French master at Knutsford; though he is just as likely to have taught her to dance a minuet as he had done to the young William Pitt, finding it puzzling that there was nothing in his dancing to indicate the great man he was to become.

It must be admitted that there is no direct evidence that Monsieur Rogier played any part in Elizabeth's education, but he was a colourful character in the Knutsford society of her youth. His father claimed descent from a Parisian Count of the Roman Empire and had been a figurante dancer in Garrick's company, so it was that Charles Rogier also took to the stage as a dancer until the age of twenty one.

In Knutsford he "had the honour of instructing respectable families and scholars in the science of dancing, so as to promote a genteel, personal address; and likewise a useful bodily exercise, which may be innocently attained to be a health exercise".*

A genteel personal address was certainly one of the characteristics of M. de Chalabre of My French Master (Knutsford Edition Vol II p.509)

> 'Another little ceremony which we had to get accustomed to, was his habit of taking off his hat as we approached, and walking by us holding it in his hand. To be sure, he wore a wig, delicately powdered, frizzed, and tied in a queue behind; but we always had a feeling that he would catch cold, and that he was doing us too great an honour, and that he did not know how old or rather how young we were, until one day we saw him far away from our house hand a countrywoman over a stile with the same kind of dainty, courteous politeness. lifting her basket of eggs over first; and then taking up the silk-lined lapel of his coat, he spread it on the palm of his hand for her to rest her fingers upon ...'

Such detailed, graphic description and the Knutsford type setting seem evidence of the writer's personal experience so it is tempting to think of M. Rogier as the model for M. de Chalabre. And would not the dancing master have been light on his feet?

The narrator in the story is taught French, with her sister, by M. de Chalabre. They are allowed to go and meet him, being warned by their mother, '... give him the cleanest part of the path, for you know he does not like to dirty his boots ... This was all very well in theory; but, like many theories, the difficulty was to put it into practice ... when we got home, his polished boots would be without a speck, while our shoes were covered with mud'.

Henry Green, the Unitarian minister of Brook Street Chapel, Knutsford (from 1827-73) wrote in his History and Traditions of Knutsford that Charles X of France, then 'the Count D'Artois, for he was not yet a king, had a rage for rare plants, and his floral passion was known to a French Dancing Master, then resident in Knutsford, Rogier was his name. The Professor waited on the Count ...' who told him about the rare marsh saxifrage which grew on the Moor, 'together they set out exploring,-ditch after ditch they successfully cross,-when, lo! one wide and deep with peculiarly unctuous mire of the locality, arrested their eager progress; Rogier being light and a dancing master pirouetted across the abyss; but the Count being heavy and not a dancing master, floundered in ...'

Green related that when he first took up his post in Knutsford he knew Rogier who 'was in truth an original of the purest water. He was one who delighted in obtaining introductions to persons high in authority, or in writing long letters to them upon most extravagant projects ...'

A WORD

For my King and Country.

A TREATISE

ON THE UTILITY OF A

Rocket Armament,

ASSISTED BY BALLOONS,

Where Ships of War cannot be accessible;

BOTH

DEFENSIVE AND OFFENSIVE,

TO THE

ANNOYING OF THE ENEMY'S HARBOUR.

That are stubborn and delight in War.

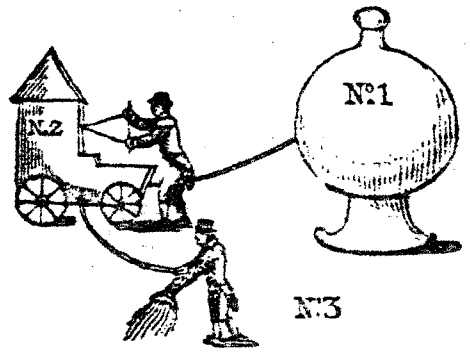
By CHARLES ROGIER, Sen., Projector,
KNUTSFORD, CHESHIRE.

SECOND EDITION.

MACCLESFIELD:
PRINTED BY J. WILSON, AT THE COURIER OFFICE.

1818.

A new Plan of defence for Gibraltar.



Happy he that escapeth me.

EXPLANATION.

No. 1 is the reservoir of boiling water, to supply the engine, No. 2; the sentinel or engineer, No. 3, is to play from the port hole in the rock, to prevent the enemy from scaling the rock. Sea water may be easily communicated to any part of the rock. The Author's motive for proposing so cruel a plan was to prevent their being scalded; for the enemy knowing such a defence to be at Gibraltar Rock, they would not attempt it. As the Rock may be seen from the Spanish lines, the engineer might rehearse, now and then, the engine from the port hole, to deter them from their own destruction.

According to Green (Knutsford: It's Traditions and History, 1859), Rogier approached the Prime Minister, Earl Grey, who "in a spirit of waggery or whiggery referred him to the War Office", but his novel schemes were never tried!

Unlike M. de Chalabre whose loyalties remained in France, Rogier schemed to defend England in the Napoleonic wars with fantastic and entirely impractical ideas which he published in a pamphlet*. Perhaps he held these opinions from a revulsion at the treatment of the French royal family which he shared with M. de Chalabre.

They were both inventive though the Monsieur showed talent and practicality: 'He turned silk-winders for my mother, made a set of chessmen for my father, carved an elegant watch-case out of a rough beef-bone, dressed up little cork dolls for us ...' (Knutsford Edition Vol.II p.515) Captain Brown's invention of a wooden fire-shovel to please Miss Jenkins because 'the grating of an iron one annoyed her' is more akin to Rogier's impractical ideas.

History affords us one more glimpse of Rogier through the memoirs of Reverend Harry Gray, Vicar of Knutsford (1809-24), who found him 'weak in secular matters and so improvident that I was at length obliged to raise an annual subscription, a little scanty income sufficient for himself and his wife, and dole it out to him by periodical payments'. 'A Cranfordian solution; Rogier's teaching days must have been over by then and Rev Gray warmed to him because he had been converted by hearing Whitfield preach and was 'wise and understanding in Scripture truth and experience and remarkably apt in illustrating Scripture truths by Old Testament history. His political vagaries wearied me ...'

Monsieur Rogier was almost larger than life and what part, if any, he played in the young Elizabeth Stevenson's life or awakening her interest in France cannot be known, but I hope you will pardon me for introducing him.

*A Word for My King and Country 1818

If you have any material or suggestions for future Newsletters, please contact Mrs Joan Leach, Far Yew Tree House, Over Tabley, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 OHN (Tel: 0565 634668)

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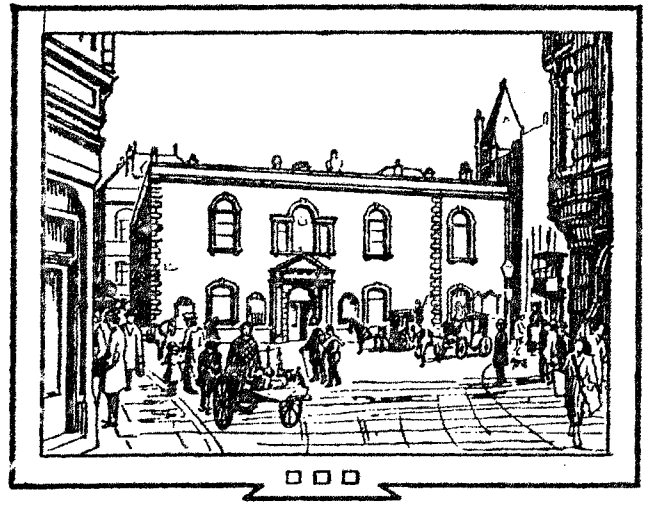
The Gaskell Society



CROSS STREET CHAPEL

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 1992 NO. 13

Editor's Letter

I have tried to get this newsletter to you a little earlier than usual as our spring meeting is on 28 March, instead of at the end of April - Easter dates and Cross Street Chapel commitments make this necessary. All meeting details are on the loose sheet.

The Society has its usual programme of events, but Knutsford's 700th anniversary of its town charter is keeping me very busy in various ways. Our AGM weekend has been put on the official programme for the year and we hope Knutsford will be en fete. I am struggling to turn myself into a medieval scholar!

Elizabeth Gaskell enjoyed meeting people and having a sociable life, and we in the Gaskell Society like to get together when possible; we hold meetings in Knutsford, Manchester and London, and also take part in The Alliance of Literary Societies meetings in Birmingham. After the success of our first residential conference, with The Brontë Society at Ambleside, then Scarborough, we hope to go on to other similar events.

EDINBURGH 1993. We were planning this for the end of July and were told that our venue was available then BUT recently found that a language school takes place then so we must re-think. Please let me know if the first weekend in September would be a good alternative. How would this suit OVERSEAS members? There would be an option for members to add days before or after our weekend so that more time could be spent in Edinburgh.

We do not understand how it has happened, but we find a shortage of 1991 JOURNALS; we would be grateful for any returns and also for any Vols 1 and 2.

PLEASE return slip from loose sheet so that our address list can be updated.

Thoughts on Mrs Gaskell's 'Life of Charlotte Brontë'

by Brenda Colloms

I must start by confessing that I had not read this biography before, although I respect Mrs Gaskell as a writer, and am interested in her as a woman set in her time, and in her circle of family and friends. The explanation is that I have never felt in tune with the novels of Charlotte and Emily Brontë, and indeed found myself happier with Anne Brontë, although she is a minor writer compared with her powerful sisters.

As I am a biographer, I approached the 'Life' with a personal interest. And there are two points where I found myself very close to Mrs Gaskell, one concerned with my first biography, of the Rev Charles Kingsley, and the second concerned with a later one, 'Victorian Visionaries', which is a group portrait of the Founders of the Working Men's College. I shall return to this later. Another coincidence, which I mention in passing, is that the Rev Patrick Brontë is one of my collection of clerics in 'Victorian Country Parsons'.

Indeed, I recall that when I was researching him, rather than his children, I was somewhat surprised to find him a highly interesting and even sympathetic character; surprised because obviously I had a general impression that he was a bizarre, even sadistic father. Much of that must, I am afraid, be owing to Mrs Gaskell's compelling story of her heroine, Charlotte Brontë.

Here we come to the nub of what makes her biography so interesting. It is a novelist's book, and although she did all the right things a careful researcher should do, the biography reads like a story. Indeed, Mrs Gaskell was blessed among biographers in that first, she had a passionate desire to write a memorial to her dead friend - not a literary criticism, we note, but a tribute to Charlotte's nobility of character. This would once and for all remove the imputation of 'coarseness' which had been raised by critics and readers. Mrs Gaskell, of

course, had smarted painfully under similar remarks for her first three novels, 'Ruth' especially. Second, Charlotte's father welcomed her as a biographer, Charlotte's friend, Ellen Nussey, showed her masses of letters, and even the Rev Arthur Bell Nicholls, the grieving widower who did not like Unitarians, was prepared to let Mrs Gaskell have use of Charlotte's letters, which at her death had become his property.

Mrs Gaskell journeyed to Yorkshire, soaking herself in its atmosphere, its past and the traditions and customs of its inhabitants. She went to Brussels, and saw Madame Heger, although not the Professor.

All this was in the spirit of a loyal, if not religious, duty to her friend, a gifted storyteller paying tribute to a writer of genius. However, it is the woman, and not the writer, who is the subject of this book. And what so impresses Mrs Gaskell is the religious quality of the duty which Charlotte feels, especially to her widower father. It is even possible to see that her marriage to Nicholls (and we should remember that at least two other men proposed to her, three if we guess that the curate, William Weightman, wanted to propose) was predicated on her father's consent, first, but also on Nicholls' promise to live in the parsonage, as Mr Brontë's curate, until the old man died. As it happened, Charlotte died first, and Nicholls did stay until his father-in-law died, upon which Nicholls returned to his native Ireland and began a second life. He remarried, and died in 1906.

Mrs Gaskell cannot bring herself to make Nicholls an attractive character, partly I think because she feared that with his strong Evangelical beliefs he would disapprove of her friendship with his wife, and Charlotte Nicholls would - of course - obey her husband. We know from Mrs Gaskell's letters that she was not a feminist - she believed that men had superior judgement in all serious matters, and that obedience to a husband was a sensible and natural matter.

She also believed utterly that the best chance of happiness and fulfilment for women came with marriage and children. In a letter to Charles Eliot Norton, she writes - 'I think an unmarried life may be to the full as happy in process of time, but I think there is a time of trial to be gone through with women, who naturally yearn after children.' *(Collection of Gaskell/Norton letters. Ed. Jane Whitehill. p.44, No.16. London 1932)*

I cannot help wondering whether part of Mrs Gaskell's admiration for Charlotte Brontë's devotion to 'duty' was partly due to a suspicion that she, Mrs Gaskell, might not have been able to bear to immure herself in a lonely, gloomy, bleak village, and to lead a poverty-stricken life with so few companions, duty or no duty.

At the same time, Gaskell the story-teller cannot help but be fascinated by the unusual, dare one say melodramatic, family background of the Brontës. All that set against the lonely moorland houses; the dour people taking a pride in harbouring lifetime grudges; the winter winds; the damp stone parsonage set practically inside the graveyard.

There is a special quality about this biography which its readers were quick to perceive and to praise. Let me quote Charles Eliot Norton writing to his friend, James Russell Lowell, and he says -
'... "The Life of Miss Brontë", which is almost as much an exhibition of Mrs Gaskell's character as of Miss Brontë's - and you know what a lovely and admirable character she has - - I know no biography that has so deep and touching an interest as this of Miss Brontë - none other written so tenderly, sympathetically and faithfully.' *(Whitehill collection. p.xxiii)*

Once started on her book, and assured of assistance from Patrick Brontë and Charlotte's friends, Mrs Gaskell set to work with a will, travelling wherever necessary, and writing fluently and rapidly. Deeply involved as she felt with her friend, it was inevitable that she would

have been indignant towards the 'villains' of the story - the adulterous wife who led young Branwell astray, and the owner and manager of the school which she believed was responsible for the deaths of the two eldest Brontë girls. Moral indignation led her to paint them in dark hues, throwing into sharpest contrast the shining purity of Charlotte Brontë.

After Mrs Gaskell's visit to Brussels, where apparently Madame Heger showed her some of Charlotte's letters to her husband, Mrs Gaskell became aware of the extent of Charlotte's emotional attachment to Clementin Heger, the 'crush' of a clever pupil for her professor. (Incidentally, one of the features which Miss Brontë admired so much about her professor was his voluntary social work. Was she looking for a father figure? Did she see likenesses between the Belgian and Patrick Brontë?)

After much deliberation, Mrs Gaskell decided to tell the truth, that Charlotte wrote him some letters, but not the whole truth, that is, any comment on the tone of the letters. Here Mrs Gaskell behaved exactly as a nineteenth century biographer was supposed to behave - with discretion. Literary figures, knowing the temptations which could beset future biographers, sometimes took steps to confound them, by destroying letters and papers, leaving instructions to heirs that such things should be done, or writing to correspondents demanding their letters back, so that they could be destroyed. Harriet Martineau had done the latter. Mrs Harriet Grote destroyed all letters in her possession because of her disapproval of contemporary trends in biography - and she died in 1878, over twenty years after Mrs Gaskell wrote the biography. Among the Grote collections were a number from Sidney Smith, who once said, speaking of her eccentricities, that Mrs Grote was the origin of the adjective 'grotesque'.

At this point I might make a personal point. The Kingsley book was my first attempt at a full-scale biography, and I learned that an old lady, a descendant

of Kingsley had some interesting letters, but that she did not want them used in a biography. At the time I was busy on other things, and by the time I was free to visit her, she had, alas, died, and the letters had gone to a younger relative, a niece who placed no such embargo upon them.

It so happened that I was dealing with Kingsley as much from a social history point of view, as from a personal one, whilst unknown to me at that time Susan Chitty was writing a psycho-biography of Kingsley the man. She visited the niece, obtained permission to publish, and revealed to her readers that Kingsley, a highly-sexed man, frustrated by his long courtship of Fanny Grenville, flagellated himself every Friday night. (The equivalent, I suppose, of the English cold bath. Incidentally, according to a television programme, certain members of the Catholic organisation, 'Opus Dei', are instructed to flagellate themselves regularly. It is, I take it, only one step further than a hair shirt?)

The reason I mention it is because had I seen the letters before Lady Chitty, I should have had to decide how much to disclose. It would, I feel, have been impossible not to mention the flagellation, but I certainly would not have made a song and dance about it. Faced with a similar dilemma, Mrs Gaskell in the mid-1850s, effectively concealed both Charlotte's need for love, and her attachment to M Heger.

Here I would like to quote George Orwell, from a passage used by Michael Sheldon in his recent biography of Orwell. Orwell in 1944 is reviewing a new biography of the French poet, Baudelaire -

'What is one to think of a "life" of Baudelaire which never once mentions that Baudelaire was syphilitic? ... This is not merely a piece of scandal: it is a point upon which any biographer of Baudelaire must make up his mind. For the nature of the disease has a bearing not only on the poet's mental condition during his last year

but on his whole attitude to life.' *('Orwell' Michael Sheldon. London 1991. p.5, Introduction)*

For those interested in reading fine print, the disagreement between Charlotte Brontë and Harriet Martineau about 'too much love' in Charlotte's books, a disagreement which pained Miss Brontë excessively, is part of the Belgian experience. And anybody reading 'The Professor' can see that the need for love was a crucial part of its author's make-up.

Discretion by biographers has not been confined to the nineteenth century. I have been reading a new biography of Barbara Leigh Smith, later Madame Bodichon, by Sheila Herstein, originally her PhD thesis for Yale University. In 1949 Hester Burton had published a biography, entitled 'Barbara Bodichon', and in the 1970s Burton wrote to Herstein, confessing that the Smith family had prevented her from mentioning the illegitimacy of the Smith children (an open secret at the time, and one of the factors which made Mrs Gaskell hesitate to like Barbara); Barbara's long-drawn out love affair with John Chapman; or the mental instability which apparently troubled both Barbara, and her Aunt Julia.

Let me touch upon what some late twentieth century women might regard as self-sacrifice taken to an impossible degree - Charlotte's 'duty' to her father. Here is Mrs Grote, writing to a friend in 1856 - almost exactly when Mrs Gaskell was writing the 'Life' -

'Many a time have I reflected upon the usefulness of Protestant Sisterhoods, whose lives at least could wear away without perpetual conflict with worldly temptations. What more unfair than to tie a living being to a post in sight of all manner of enjoyments and various curious objectives! Yet this is what happens to a single woman in civilized society. Accordingly, self must be crushed if she would avoid anguish. The safe course is to engage in a course of self-sacrifice, which supplies lively emotions, even though they be of an ascetic character, and thus the individual escapes the

pitfalls which beset the paths of pleasure. *(Elizabeth Rigby's 'Life of Mrs Grote', p.150)*

Poor Branwell. He certainly did not escape the pitfalls. His sister, Charlotte, made sure that she did.

I quote Mrs Gaskell. 'Her life at Haworth was so unvaried that the postman's call was the event of her day. Yet she dreaded the great temptation of centring all her thoughts upon this one time, and losing her interest in the smaller hopes and employments of the remaining hours. Thus she conscientiously denied herself the pleasure of writing letters too frequently, because the answers (when she received them) took the flavour out of the rest of her life; or the disappointment, when the replies did not arrive, lessened her energy for her home duties.'

(I am reminded of Barbara Pym's splendidly reserved novels of Christian ladies with a sense of duty.)

In with my own book, 'Victorian Visionaries', I was, like Mrs Gaskell, writing for a cause - to introduce the founders of the Working Men's College to the general public, so I can well understand her cause of wishing to introduce the 'true' Charlotte Brontë to the general public.

Lastly, and very briefly, coming to the book as a whole, which is what my local library would call 'a good read', I found so many deft touches, so many set-pieces, so many sudden surprises, that I do not know where to start. Take the first chapter - the matter-of-fact description of what Mrs Gaskell calls a 'common-place' church - and then suddenly, the reader is faced with a facsimile layout of that tragic Brontë family history given by the sparse memorial tablets on the wall at the side of the communion table.

After that initial shock, Mrs Gaskell uses the device of 'flash-back' to build up interest as sympathy for her

heroine. And what could be 'stranger than fiction' than the amazing literary creations of the young Brontë children, politicised at an early age by their Tory father, and devoted to public heroes like the Duke of Wellington?

I also remember some touching lines when the biographer-friend counters Charlotte's own description of herself as 'small and plain' with the remark that 'the grave, serious composure which, when I knew her, gave her face the dignity of an old Venetian portrait.' *(Chapter VI, pp.124-5)*

Lastly, I enjoyed immensely all the descriptions of the Yorkshire countryside, and its inhabitants and past history. These, I felt, set the Brontë family very firmly in a realistic background.

Visit to Holybourne

by Howard F Gregg

On Friday 2 August, after some of us had visited Jane Austen's Cottage at Chawton, 8 members of the South of England branch met for lunch at the White Hart at Holybourne. We were pleased that John Chapple was able to join us from Hull. After lunch we walked to the Church of the Holy Rood where Mrs Gaskell went for afternoon service on the day she died. The bells had been run some weeks before to welcome the new occupants of The Lawn. By the church we saw the pond, much overgrown, which is the source of the Bourne, which flows through the grounds of The Lawn, to which we re-directed our steps.

We were given a warm welcome by the Manager, Mrs Septekin, who allowed us to wander round the lovely grounds, enhanced by a beautiful summer day, and see the Bourne with miniature cascades and footbridges and

complete with ducks - an anxious mother seeing three young ones into the water at our approach. Roses were still in evidence and the lawn, parts of which were left wild, swept up to the house.

We were given a splendid tea in the drawing room where Mrs Gaskell died, at afternoon tea, on 13 November 1865. There is a reproduction of the Richmond portrait with Elizabeth Gaskell's signature underneath on one wall of the room. The spacious room had lovely views of the garden to the Bourne on one side and to the 250 year old cedar tree on the other. This last inspired a poem by Victor Brydges, "To Mrs Gaskell", written on the centenary of her death which Brenda Colloms was able to copy. It was easy in this setting to see why Mrs Gaskell so liked the house and poignant to recall, in Thurstan Holland's words, 'she had just got everything into order and readiness and was rejoicing in the carrying out of her wish.'

The photograph of the house in Winifred Gerin's biography, opposite page 239, shows the drawing room with three large windows on the lower storey of the building. The two on the left look down to the Bourne and the third, facing the lady in the photograph, looks towards the cedar tree. The house is now a home for the elderly with much new building added, recently visited by Princess Margaret. We were shown around and were impressed by the accommodation and facilities and the care and affection which exists there. Mrs Septekin showed us a portrait, possibly of Elizabeth Gaskell, but none of us could identify the artist.

We were glad to be encouraged to visit The Lawn again and are going to present Mrs Septekin with a copy of Winifred Gerin's biography as a mark of our appreciation for a happy and moving visit. The brief association of the house with Mrs Gaskell is clearly cherished. Our thanks to Richard J Beckley for arranging the visit.

William Gaskell's Peaceful End

On 12 June 1884, Beatrix Potter wrote in her diary:
'Papa heard from Mr Steinthal (minister at Cross Street Chapel) that Mr Gaskell died at five yesterday morning. Dear old man, he has had a very peaceful end. If anyone led a blameless peaceful life it was he. There has always been a deep child-like affection between him and me.'
When she was 8 she had knitted a scarf for his birthday present and he wrote to thank her: 'Big as I am I could not have done it one-tenth as well. Every time I put it round my neck, which during the winter will be every day, I shall be sure to think of you.'
On 14 June 1884 she added to her diary:
'Four o'clock Saturday afternoon. Mr Gaskell is just being buried beside his wife. We have sent some flowers.'*

This was the scene on that day:
'The earthly remains of the late Rev William Gaskell were buried on Saturday in the grave-yard of Knutsford chapel, beside those of Mrs Gaskell. Only a few friends had been asked to attend, but a large number, including many members of the Cross-street congregation, were present; among whom were Unitarian ministers from all parts of the northern district, the Mayor of Manchester, and several prominent citizens, as well as deputations from a number of institutions and public bodies. The hearse, followed by a single carriage in which were the Misses Gaskell, left the city early, proceeding by road to Knutsford. The other mourners went by a train which arrived about half-past four. The funeral carriage was upon the railways bridge when the train come in, and as the mourners passed into the road it went slowly by, the people falling in behind it. The hearse was open and admitted a view of the coffin, which was covered with white flowers. It is only a few yards from the railway gate to the Unitarian chapel. In the small burying ground which adjoins it Mrs Gaskell is buried. It is a quaint old-world place. The little chapel, built 200 years ago, is covered to the eaves with ivy. Scarcely

BROOK STREET CHAPEL
1947 *by John Carsberg*

anything of it is visible but its grey sloping roof. The burying ground is shut in on all sides with green branches, and a great plane tree in front of the chapel overshadows almost the whole of it. When the funeral party entered the air was vocal with the singing of birds, and an odorous breeze rustled in the sun-lit leaves. The coffin, with its load of flowers, seemed hardly to forbid this gladness of the summer. The chapel was soon filled. There was, indeed, room only for a small proportion of the mourners. In the dimly lighted edifice a solemn feeling rested on the silent congregation. The bare white walls seemed cold and sombre in the pale green light which came upon them through the trees. The silence was broken by the organ, and as "O rest in the Lord" was softly filling the chapel the coffin was brought in and set down in front of the pulpit.' (From the Unitarian Herald, June 1884)

*Information from William Gaskell 1805-1884 by Barbara Brill. Manchester Literary & Philosophical Publications 1984

An Oxford Ghost

by Barbara Brill

Augustus J C Hare was a prolific Victorian writer, with travel and guide books being his speciality: Walks in Rome was widely read (it went into 22 editions). Wanderings in Spain, Florence etc and he also wrote autobiographical works including Memorials of a Quiet Life and The Story of My Life* from which the following extracts are taken. He was related to the Stanleys of Alderley and Leycesters of Toft and was nephew of Archdeacon Julius Hare. His taste for continental travel and his Cheshire connections may have encouraged a friendship when he met Mrs Gaskell at Oxford in 1860 and they continued to correspond.

He wrote, "Everybody liked Mrs Gaskell. I remember that one of the points that struck me about her at first was not her kindness but her extreme courtesy and deference to her own daughters.
While she was at Oxford the subject of ghosts was brought forward for debate at the Union; she wished to have spoken from the gallery and if she had she would probably have carried the motion in favour of ghosts at once. Here is one of her personal experiences:"

Hare goes on to relate how Mrs Gaskell was staying with Quaker cousins at Stratford-on-Avon when they took her to Compton Winyates. They stopped at Eddington for tea on their return and talked about spirits; Mrs Gaskell asked if there were any ghost stories associated with the village and she was reproved by the father of the house for light and vain talking. After tea she went for a walk with the cousins and was told about a former resident of the village who had gone as a lady's maid to London leaving behind her fiancé, a carter. In London she met and married another man.

After his death some years later, she returned to her native village, re-met the carter and, after a fortnight's short courtship, they married. A few weeks later she returned to London to sell up her property.

Her husband did not like London so did not accompany her but she did not return home and shortly the husband heard that she had been found dead in the street.

The carter husband became unaccountably ill and told people it was because his wife sat beside him moaning and lamenting all night long so that he could not sleep.

Mrs Gaskell asked to meet the man and hear his story. She and her cousin called at his cottage. They got no reply at the front door but saw through the window a woman in a lilac print gown looking out. As they could get no reply at the back door either they called on a neighbour who told them the man was out for the day and there was no one in. 'Oh!' said Mrs Gaskell, 'we have seen a woman in the house in a lilac print gown'. 'Then' said the neighbour, 'you have seen the ghost. There is no woman in the house but that is she'.

*The Years with Mother by August J C Hare
Paperback edition by Century Publishing. In Century Lives and Letters series.
This is an abridgement of the first 3 vols of The Story of My Life

Ed. As we said, Hare was prolific! His first guide/travel books were for Murray's Handbooks - Berks. Beds. and Oxfordshire, and Northumberland and Durham. 1861-3. Many others followed with a number on Italy and France, also Holland, Scandinavia and even Russia.
He also wrote a two volume Life and Letters of Frances, Baroness Bunsen 1879; Life and Letters of Maria Edgeworth (2 vols) 1894. His own autobiography The Story of My Life took 6 volumes and was his final work completed in 1900.

He also throws light on the remark in GL 108a:
'How are the Dickens? Wretch that he is to go and write MY story of the lady haunted by the face; I shall have nothing to talk about now at dull parties.'

Hare was at a house party at Birtles Hall near Macclesfield in Cheshire, in 1866, when Mrs Birtles related the story of 'the lady haunted by the face' as 'it had been told to her by Mrs Gaskell the authoress, who said that she felt so greatly the uncertainty of life, that she wished a story which might possibly be of consequence, and which had been entrusted to her, to remain with some one who was certain to record it accurately. Three weeks afterwards, sitting by the fire with her daughter, Mrs Gaskell died suddenly in her amchair.' (The Years with Mother p.246) Hare dutifully records the story at length. Please can a Dickens scholar identify this story?

If Hare is correct about Mrs Gaskell having told this story in 1865, then Dickens' plagiarism did not deter her from continuing to relate the story in drawing rooms and who can doubt that she did it with memorable effect?

Sir Henry Holland, Mrs Gaskell's cousin, moved in high society in London (and was one of Prince Albert's doctors in attendance at his death). He is said to have refused a title several times but accepted for the pleasure of his second wife, Saba, daughter of Sydney Smith. She used to say jokingly that she was not the real Lady Holland as, of course, the name was familiar to all from the Holland Park set. Hare recorded in his diary 'the bon mot of Mrs Grote, when asked how this Lady Holland was to be distinguished from the original person of that name said, "Oh, this is the New Holland, and her capital is Sydney".'

COBER HILL. SHORT STORY WEEKEND
26-28 June

This is now fully booked unless we double-up on single rooms.

Book Notes

by C Lingard

'Countries of the mind: the meaning of place to writers' by Gillian Tindall. The Hogarth Press, £18.00

A study of the use of place in a wide range of nineteenth and twentieth century British and French novels. The author is, herself, a novelist and biographer, setting several of her books in France. Novels discussed in her book were written from personal experience and show that the varying use of place is a metaphor crucial to the writer's aims.

In the chapter Those Blue Remembered Hills she discusses novelists who appear to present a nostalgia for a romantic rural ideal. Gaskell, however, while seeming to fall into this category in North and South is in fact much more realistic and honest in dealing with the changes of her time.

Sex and Subterfuge: women writers to 1850 by Eva Figes. Pandora Press, £8.99

This book, also written by a novelist is a reprint of a book originally published in 1982. It discusses the reasons for the increase in the early nineteenth century of the number of novels written by women. Fanny Burney marked the beginning of a movement in which women came to dominate the novel and created a new classic form. Books were shorter than in the eighteenth century and much less likely to be restricted by the serial format used by men. Mrs Gaskell was particularly unhappy using this method.

In fact, she marked several new departures. She was not restricted by the home as the centre of her world, for her experiences as a minister's wife gave her a broader view of life. She was unique among her contemporaries in giving her working class characters a voice of their own.

She believed problems were caused by the inability of the rich to communicate with the poor and used women as an instrument of change. Mary Barton is compared with Shirley to make the point. Though laying themselves open to accusations of political naivety both authors identify with their characters and do not patronize.

'Problems for feminist criticism' edited by Sally Minogue (of the University of Kent). Routledge, £35.00

This is a collection of essays by several authors intending to analyse and challenge feminist critics as well as providing a critique in its own right. It also includes essays on Shakespeare, Milton, Dickens and Laurence among others.

In her essay Gender and Class in Villette and North and South the editor herself makes several similar points as Ms Figes - giving the working classes a voice of their own and the use of women as an instrument of change. By discussing books in terms of one oppressed group - women and excluding the class issue, modern feminist critics have failed the novels justice and have missed the universal truth they contain.

If you have any material or suggestions for future Newsletters, please contact Mrs Joan Leach, Far Yew Tree House, Over Tabley, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 OHN (Tel: 0565 634668)

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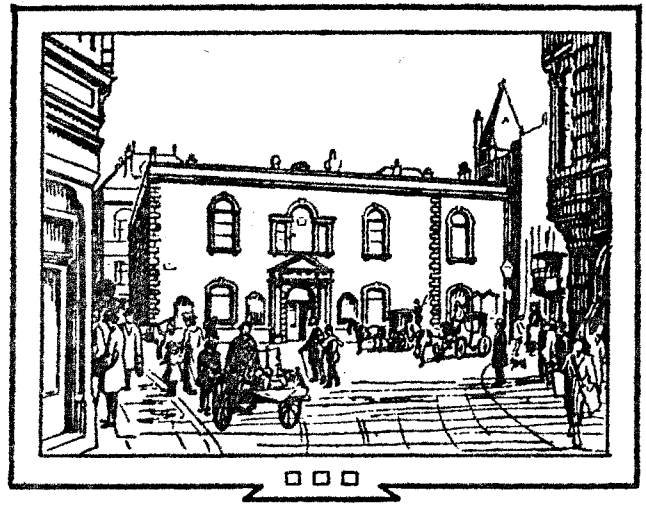
The Gaskell Society



CROSS STREET CHAPEL

NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 1992 NO. 14

EDITOR'S LETTER

I think this is going to be a very full Newsletter and, like the Journal, there is more good material than we can find space for at present.

PLEASE LET ME KNOW IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE NOT RECEIVED THE 1992 JOURNAL; we are sorry that it was delayed this year, but hope to revert to the usual May publication next year. It was worth waiting for, was it not?

If you are short of space on your bookshelves we would be grateful for the donation of any back numbers. We cannot afford to print a large overrun but our Society continues to expand and our new members, academics particularly, then wish to have a complete run of the Journal.

Several of your committee members will be travelling to Scotland shortly for an on-the-spot planning meeting for Edinburgh '93 weekend; expect our programme details soon. It promises to be an excellent occasion. We will take full advantage of Edinburgh as 'The Athens of the North' and aim to have a variety of talks, visits and entertainment. You may also wish to take advantage of The Edinburgh Festival.

This year our AGM weekend is linked to Knutsford's 700th Charter Year, so others besides members will be invited to some events.

We hope all members who are able to do so will support some of these events and bring a friend to share them with us.

CRANFORD is being staged by Knutsford Amateur Dramatic Society from 14-17 October, and we hope to support this.

You can expect an extra Newsletter for Christmas so that I can print material I am having to omit this time. I am sure you will read Marjorie Cox's article on Kossuth, Hungary and Mrs Gaskell with special interest in the

light of the troubles in that region now.

Our Chairman, John Chapple, sends us a rare William Gaskell letter; John has been researching steadily for his book on Elizabeth Gaskell's early years, which we can look forward to.

Jenny Uglow also has a Gaskell book at press; I forgot to ask her when this is to be issued - perhaps you will be able to ask Father Christmas for it!

We regret to announce the death of John Nussey, a founder member of our Society and a much valued link between us and The Brontë Society. He will be sadly missed and fondly remembered.

JOAN LEACH

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ELIZABETH GASKELL AND LONDON

It is probable that most people who have some knowledge of Mrs Gaskell but are not members of this Society believe that she was born in Knutsford, the original of the much-loved Cranford. She was of course a Londoner by birth, a phrase which she used in a letter to Mary Howitt in 1838, though she left the capital when her mother died in her first year, the prototype of many motherless daughters in her fiction. Her father remained there with her brother John, twelve years her senior. It is for the psychologist rather than the literary student to penetrate the possible effect of a sense of severance from one's roots. Certainly her visits to London in childhood and adolescence do not seem to have been exceptionally happy or unhappy. She retained a certain ambivalence about the city of her birth, one which was not at all unusual among her contemporaries.

The metropolitan dominance over wealth and culture which London had exercised for centuries was diminishing in

the early part of the nineteenth century. Although provincial cities were gaining respect among their own citizens, and more gradually in the world at large, London was still regarded as the centre of trade and fashion. The presence of the court and the migration of titled families for the 'season' were factors that could not be ignored. The coming of the railways made London more accessible to the rest of the country; it led to the death of Captain Brown as he was 'waiting for the down train'. There were many like Mrs Goodenough in Wives and Daughters who could 'remember it being a three days' journey'.

Yet the division between north and south which gave her one of her titles was still strong. It is a division, sometimes a tension, that often appears in Elizabeth Gaskell's fiction. A character in the novel of that name knows that Hampshire is 'beyond London', and shows himself better informed that Jem Wilson's mother who only knows that America is 'beyond London a good bit'. The trauma suffered by the Hale family in leaving the south is sympathetically followed as they walk in London through 'well-known streets, past houses which they had often visited'. Arriving in Milton, Margaret finds the people 'well-dressed as regarded the material, but with a slovenly looseness which struck [her] as different from the shabby, threadbare smartness of a similar class in London'. Her attempt to comfort her mother with the reminder that 'the fogs in London are sometimes far worse' than the smoke of Milton receives the reply, 'but then you knew that London itself and friends lay behind it'.

Although Mrs Gaskell could feel for the Londoner, she was herself fully a citizen of Knutsford. Mary Smith can be proud of the peculiarities of Cranford - 'Have you any red silk umbrellas in London?' she teasingly asks - and she knows that the pride if Mr Hoggins were sent for by Queen Adelaide or the Duke of Wellington would be tempered by the fear, 'if we were ailing what should we do?' When her marriage took her to Manchester, she gave herself with equal loyalty to its

life and traditions. Manchester was by 1832 a place of some importance, with a civic pride justified by its industrial and commercial position. Her husband became increasingly committed to local affairs and stayed in the city when Manchester New College moved to London in 1853. He was proud of Manchester, as Mrs Thornton is of Milton, 'dirty, smoky place as I feel it to be' her daughter Fanny comments. Perhaps with something of the same sense of loyalty, Mrs Gaskell herself professed her ignorance of 'people working for their bread with head-labour ... in London'.

She sometimes chafed against the restrictions of Manchester and took opportunities to travel within Britain and abroad. A visit to Oxford in 1857 prompted the reflection 'I believe I am Mediaeval, - and unManchester'. It was to Alton in Hampshire that she looked for a retirement home. She was certainly not limited in knowledge of the world or in her interests. She read widely, was acquainted with the affairs of the day, and knew many famous contemporaries either personally or by correspondence.

Her visits to London in adult life were frequent enough to keep her abreast of life in the capital. Some were for domestic reasons, as when she found a school for her eldest daughter in Hampstead after seeing for herself 'the various school-mistresses that have been recommended to us'. Her social conscience was exercised in London as well as in Manchester; in 1851 she visited the Convent of the Sisters of Mercy in Bermondsey, which she describes as 'a very bad part of London'. In the following year she was obliged to decline an invitation to go to London for the Duke of Wellington's funeral - 'a sight I should dearly have liked'. While she often went quietly as a private person, her growing reputation as a writer brought her into the more public area of London life. She visited Dickens, Carlyle, Samuel Rogers, John Forster and Richard Monckton Milnes, among others. She came also into the Pre-Raphaelite circle. 'I think we got to know Rossetti pretty well', she wrote to Charles Eliot Norton in 1859; 'I went three times to

his studio. and met him at two evening parties - where I had a good deal of talk with him'. But she records drily that Rossetti rushed away from her when a woman with 'a particular type of reddish brown' hair came in and concluded that 'he is not as mad as a March hare, but hair-mad'.

London as seen through her fiction is generally less attractive than the reality which she knew. It may lead in the world of fashion; she always had an eye for both style and value in clothes. The humble choice of Ruth is 'for white linen and soft muslin, which she had chosen in preference to more expensive articles of dress when Mr Bellingham had given her carte blanche in London'. Margaret Hale's London-bought dress attracts the admiration of Mary Higgins, and Mrs Thornton is sorry that Fanny refuses her brother's offer 'of having the wedding clothes provided by some first-rate London dressmaker'. Cynthia in Wives and Daughters comes back from London 'looking fresher and prettier than ever, beautifully dressed'. London also still has superiority in other matters of taste and culture. The ladies of Cranford are pleased that the comedies written by Lady Anne's husband are 'still acted on the London boards' and advertisements for them 'made us all draw up and feel that Drury Lane was paying a very pretty compliment to Cranford'. Margaret, 'with her cultivated London taste, felt the number of delicacies to be oppressive' at Mrs Thornton's table.

On the whole, however, the disadvantages and perils of London seem to outweigh the good things. It is a fast-moving and bewildering city. 'London life is too whirling and full to admit of even an hour of that deep silence of feeling which the friends of Job showed', she comments in North and South. Squire Hamley regards his wife as 'all that was worth having out of the crowd of houses they called London'. The importance of the capital could be inconvenient, as Mrs Gaskell discovered in 1860: 'it was Cup Day at Ascot. a thing which in my ignorance I did not know would fill up every possible & hirable bed in London'. It was chronically expensive as

compared with the north - a complaint which has never ceased to this day. When her daughter Florence was married, she remarked, 'They will have to live in London ... and will have to begin economically'; and when Thurstan was starting his career at the Bar she confided, 'the 300£ a year his father allows will not keep house in London, and pay law-expenses too'. Miss Browning's opinion of London is that 'it's no better than a pickpocket and a robber dressed up in the spoils of honest folk'.

There are graver perils than overcrowding and high prices. Mrs Goodenough hopes that Cynthia's going to London 'won't turn her head'. Richard Bradshaw's head is certainly turned by his time in London; he deteriorates from deceiving his father about going to the theatre to forging Mr Benson's name on a share certificate. It is in the area of sexual morality that London is particularly menacing. It is the scene of Ruth's seduction; Mr Bellingham's appeal: 'Ruth, would you not go with me to London?' seals her fate for the contemporary reader. In 1854 Elizabeth Gaskell sent her servant Margaret Preston to seek a sister who had fallen into evil ways in London and to get advice from a friend who is 'a solicitor and agent for some protection Society which ... makes him well acquainted with what snares to avoid in London'.

She was ahead of her time in compassion for sexual frailty. Her sterner mood is kept for political corruption. The novel Mary Barton which first brought her into public notice contains a strong indictment of the mischief done by London influences in the north. The 'gentleman from London' who comes to address the workers' meeting is described satirically but with disapproval:

> 'You would have been puzzled to define his exact position, or what was the state of his mind as regarded education ... The impression he would have given you would have been unfavourable'

Bad things can come from London, and honest men can be ruined by going there. John Barton is pleased to be chosen as a Chartist delegate, with his 'childish delight of seeing London', but he comes back bitter and disillusioned from a city 'as big as six Manchesters', having policemen who speak in a 'mincing way (for Londoners are mostly tongue-tied and can't say their a's and i's properly'. The refusal of Members of Parliament to receive the delegation is 'not just as a piece of London news ... [but] will bide in my heart'. And the sympathetic author tells us, 'Poor John! He never got over his disappointing journey to London'; and it is after this experience that he turns to violence.

Elizabeth Gaskell is essentially a regional novelist, never dwelling for long on life in London. She made the capital city into a metaphor for many of the perils which threatened the honest people whom she loved and often succoured. She always claimed to write about the places and people that she knew best. Her own experience of London was at the comfortable level and she did not come close to its darker side as she did in Manchester. Like Margaret Hale in North and South she was wise enough to know what she did not know:

> 'There might be toilers and moilers there in London, but she never saw them; the very servants lived in an underground world of their own, of which she knew neither the hopes nor the fears.'

RAYMOND CHAPMAN

Ed: The first LONDON meeting of the Gaskell Society was held at Clerkenwell Church when Professor Chapman gave this talk in November 1989. Note Journal Vol 6, p 42, is not quite correct; however the 1990 meeting saw the establishment of the South East group and regular meetings.

WILLIAM TO ELIZABETH GASKELL

How did William Gaskell get on with his wife after some twenty-seven or more years of marriage? We must thank Rutgers University Library for this full text of a letter hitherto printed only in part by A B Hopkins, Elizabeth Gaskell (1952). Mrs Gaskell was in Heidelberg' staying at Müllar's Hotel with Florence and Julia, whilst Marianne was at Kreuznach with Eleanor Bonham-Carter and Hearn.

Plymouth Grove
July 25 1860

My dearest Lily,
I'm not writing because I've much to say, but because of a melancholy piece of intelligence which Mary Ewart has had from Knutsford. You would perhaps hear at Kreuznach that Frederick [Holland] had got worse instead of better, and had returned to England. He was not able, however, to reach Ashbourne, and died at the Victoria Hotel, Euston Square, on Saturday. I have not heard any particulars, except that he had suffered very much before. It seems sad to died in an Inn, and sad that his poor wife should be left with the charge of 7 children, and the prospect of another in September. But he had fought his life-battle well, and borne his sufferings with wonderful resolution and patience. I'm glad he came over to our Work[ing] Man's College Meeting, and that we saw him for a short time before he went. He will be very much missed and mourned at Ashbourne. This news, and Polly's illness didn't make my birthday a very bright one, but I tried to take right views of both. I had quite forgotten it was my birthday, till a letter from Nancy came to remind me of it in the morning. They were remaining at Barmouth another week, and would be sorry to leave it, they liked the place very much - 'such nice sands for bathing, pleasant boating excursions, & plenty of nice inland walks'. They intended to return home by Bettws & Conway, calling at Llandudno, to see what it is like. Nancy says she is wonderfully improved in health, but Mr Robson has not derived so much benefit from the change. Miss Remond and Miss Meyer were there with them.

Your notes didn't arrive till evening. I suppose Chelius is a clever man; and he seems to have hit at once on the truth of the matter. The one point which I demur to is his saying that she 'must be the best judge of what agrees with her best' - or rather, perhaps, that she consults her judgement. If I were asked, professionally, I should say that the 'cakes and coffee', of which letters have made mention, were not the most fit and proper diet - and that I had my doubts about 'sour milk'- especially remembering that when I was travelling with Mr James he durst not touch wine that was the least acid, because it brought out pimples. I dare say Kreuznach will set all to rights, if properly tried - The 'iodine and bromine, and iron' sound promising. But I'm convinced, from what I have heard, that the root of the evil has been what I referred to once before - irregularity' in a point which would render me uncomfortable through the day. Of course, the idea of compressing the time of cure, by taking two baths a day, was sheer nonsense. If a thing is to be tried, let it be tried fairly.

About the home-coming - I shouldn't feel easy in Hearne[sic] taking charge of Flossy and Julia, because of her ignorance of German, and they might be placed in circumstances of difficulty, where she would scarcely know how to act. And I don't like the plan of getting H.W. to advance money. I would much rather send it myself - if you would tell me how much it is to be, and what is the best way of getting it to you. I shan't be sorry when you are all on English ground again. Can you give me any idea when it is likely to be. I ought to fix when I am to go to Scotland, as the Potters are getting their beds filled, and my holidays are slipping away. What I said to Mr P. was that I would be with them at the beginning of August, but I hear of a great number who are going up then. I don't see how you can be here by that time, if Kreuznach is to be taken properly. Another thing is - to see that you don't knock yourself up, with scientific pursuits, and soaring too high, and trying to make out what the sun is made of. (Tell Polly it is strontium, not sium). With

respect to your gout, I never knew you wished it to be a secret - though it might shew a want of goût in me to mention it - but Polly's pimples shall be sacred. Thank the children all for their notes and good wishes -)but, between you and me, their spelling is a trifle too phonetic, and we must try to reform it.)

And now can you keep a secret? Mr Greenwood is going to be married! Who to? Why, Miss Taylor - sister of the one whom his brother married. Of course, you mustn't let out to Dr [Henry] Roscoe that you have heard this - though, perhaps, Mr G. may inform his friends before long. that is my only piece of news. I went to Dukinfield on Sunday, and dined at Mr David Harrison's, with Mr Bass, who, though a Churchman, always comes to hear me when I am in his neighbourhood. Mr Aspland, surgeon, was there too, but going to dine afterwards at the Jas Worthington's here. I heard that Lord Hatherton had been staying at Sam Brooke's and that there had been grand dinnerings, and visits to his great tunnel, and land jobbings &c. I got home a little after 6, and ran tea and supper into one. They wanted me to stay at Dukinfield, but it was rainy and cold, and I felt I was 'a-whom'.

On Monday I dined at the Edmd Grundy's - Mr Wildes, Shuttleworths - to meet me. I fixed my own day. Mrs S. told me that Pilkington Jackson's marriage is put off, in consequence of the illness of some relation of the lady's, but you will probably have heard from Loui. Mrs Grundy said she had written to you some time ago, asking if you wd allow your name to be on a Committee of ladies, who are providing help for Garibaldi's sick and wounded - F. Nightingale, Ldy Shaftesbury &c in London, are taking it up. And, on learning that Mrs Pender and some others belonged to the Committee, I gave Mrs G. permission to use your name, though I said you would not be able to do any thing. She said that was all she wanted. She had already got £50 herself.
They mentioned that Mr Schmidt had been coming back from the continent with his wife and children, and an old gentleman had said to him that they had placed a

state-room at his disposal, but as he didn't want it, it was quite at the service of Mrs S. and her belongings. Very much obliged to him, of course, and took his offer. When, however, they were approaching Engld, a great bustle began on deck, and much preparation, which turned out to be for the plain old gentleman, who turned out to be Lord Clyde. He is gone to visit the QUEEN at Osborne, and they are going to give him a military dinner in London, Duke of Cambridge in the Chair. Herbert Grundy has just come down from his Examination for B.A., and was feeling a little uncertain about his fate, as his mathematics had been rather weak. He seemed gentlemanly, and I liked what I saw of him. The evening ended with a few Christy Minstrel songs, in which Mrs G., two of the girls, and one of the sons took part. I walked home in the rain. Mr Wildes wanted me to go with him in his cab, and take it on - Not very likely, was it?

There was nothing of special note occurred yesterday beyond what I have referred to. I made one or two calls, and did a little reading, and wrote to Mr Ham about the Barnett bequest, having first had an interview with Mr Baker - and that was pretty nearly all. Mr Drummond came in this morning just to know about Sunday, and when the young Brahmin convert (Gangooly) is to be here. He has been educating for two years in America, and is returning to India in about two months. He preached in Liverpool last Sunday, and seems to have produced a very favourable impression there. He is a Bengalee, and, I believe, of the highest caste. H.A. B[right] wrote to me about him. He was going to dine at Sand Heys. Did you get the two Newspapers I sent last Saturday? The schoolmaster Hopley, who flogged the boy Cancellor to death, has been sentenced to 4 years' penal servitude. The half sister, Constance Kent, has been taken up and put in prison at Devizes, on suspicion of having murdered the poor child at Roade [Rode], near Frome. One hardly like[s] to let one's suspicions rest on her, and yet several circumstances seemed to point to her as the most likely to have done it. It is said, she preserves a dogged silence. Her mother and grand

mother, it appears, as well as an uncle, were deranged; and her own conduct at times has been strange. And now I've nothing more to say. I hope Polly will go on well at Kreuznach, and that you will keep well wherever you are. With best love to all the children,

Ever your affectionate husband
Wm Gaskell

J A V CHAPPLE

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THE RYBURN LIBRARY EDITION OF MARY BARTON

A new high-quality hardback library edition of Gaskell's Mary Barton, edited by Angus Easson, will be published by Ryburn in September. It is available in an Imperial Bonded Leather 250-copy limited edition with superior matt coated paper and head and tail bands (ISBN 1 85331 040 9 for £28) as well as in Hardback (ISBN 1 85331 020 4 at £25). Both editions are sewn in 16-page sections and promise to be of interest to the library and academic markets as well as to Gaskell enthusiasts.

The text of this edition of Mary Barton has been carefully researched, employing the fifth edition as Gaskell's final and most careful overseeing of her work but incorporating 74 substantive variants. The edition also includes William Gaskell's "Two Lectures on Lancashire Dialect", three appendices and comprehensive explanatory notes which, together with Angus Easson's stimulating introduction, place the novel firmly in its regional, topographical, historical and literary contexts.

To order copies of the new Ryburn edition of Mary Barton, please send your order - clearly indicating which binding you require and your name and address - along with a cheque for £25 (Hardback version) or £28 (Imperial Bonded Leather version). Orders and payment - in sterling please - should be made to The Gaskell Society and sent to Mrs B Kinder, 16 Sandileigh Avenue, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16. For arrangements to pay in dollars, please contact Mrs L Magruder, Box 1549, La Canada, CA 91012.

BOOK NOTES

A Dark Night's Work and Other Stories by Elizabeth Gaskell. Edited by Suzanne Lewis, World's Classics: Oxford University Press, 1992. £4.99*

World's Classics continues its publishing venture with this volume of some of Gaskell's neglected short fiction. A superficial glance at the publishers blurb suggests a collection of stories of the macabre but the only unifying theme in this volume is the wide variety and range of her writing.

The Dark Night's Work (1863) deals with the effect of a murder of a family while The Grey Woman (1861) is indeed a Gothic tale of terror and suspense On the other hand Libbie Marsh's Three Eras (1847) is a touching story of a working girl's devotion and self sacrifice and Six Weeks in Heppenheim (1862) - the story of a loveless marriage.

Also included is the much shorter Cumberland Sheep Shearers (1853)

As Lewis's introduction also compares Gaskell's treatment of her female characters in a range of class and environments. Libbie Marsh is a Manchester seamstress; Thekla - a German servant girl - while Elinor Wilkins and Anna Scherer are of the middle classes and not required to work, but all have to fight their own battles.

*The Short Story Weekend at Cober Hill in June was much enjoyed by members, using the above as a course book

Elizabeth Gaskell: the Critical Heritage. Edited by Angus Easson, Routledge. £100

This long established series now adds Elizabeth Gaskell to its list of over a hundred authors. It comprises an anthology of 135 pieces of literary criticism aiming to show the author's reception from 1848 to 1910. Most of it is expressed in formal magazine critiques but the more personal comments from private letters, including some of her own reactions to the critics, are also quoted.

The controversial nature of her work and her publishing policy result in something of an imbalance. Mary Barton and Ruth and Life of Charlotte Bronte, which were first published in book form to a mass of publicity comprise the biggest sections; while Cranford went almost unnoticed by the critics. The later novels were serialised and were less controversial. There are no reviews of the shorter fiction.
The book is also a valuable reference tool. Many of originally anonymous reviewers have been identified, such as Charles Kingsley and Henry James. There are copious biographical notes and brief descriptions of the journals.

Fictions of Modesty: Women and Courtship in the English Novel by RUTH Bernard Yeazell, (University of California, Los Angeles), University of Chicago Press, 1991, £19.95
Discusses how women's modest delaying tactics are a central feature of English fiction, in particular Richards (Pamela), Cleland (Fanny Hill), Burney (Evelina), Austen (Mansfield Park), Bronte (Villette) and Gaskell (Wives and Daughters) with a chapter 'Molly Gibson's Secrets' - and speculates on their influence on Charles Darwin and Havelock Ellis. In particular comparisons are made with Mansfield Park.

Reaches of Empire: the English novel from Edgeworth to Dickens, by Suvendrini Perera (University of Newcastle, Australia) Columbia University Press, 1991. £29.85
Draws complex parallels between the rise of English novel with the growth of the British empire, and challenges the conventional distinctions between domestic and colonial novels. She justifies the allusions to Margaret Hale's sailor brother Frederick and defends the book's happy ending. The ending of Mary Barton is discussed in comparison to Carlyle's 'Chartism'.

CHRISTINE LINGARD

SOUTH OF ENGLAND BRANCH REPORT

So far in 1992 the branch has had two meetings. The subject of the meeting on 1 February was Mrs Gaskell's "Life of Charlotte Brontë" and Brenda Colloms' introduction has since been published in the March Newsletter of the Society. On 25 April, Sylvia Burch led a consideration of Mrs Gaskell as a short story writer, reminding us of her range and achievement in this field, and concluding with a detailed look at "Half a Life-Time Ago". Members shared the reading of extracts from this moving story in a Wordsworthian vein.

On 12 September we shall be meeting at the Francis Holland School, 39 Graham Terrace, London SW3 8JF (near Sloane Square) when Gillian Cumiskey will give an address on "Mrs Gaskell and the Visual Arts". Gillian is completing a doctoral thesis on this subject. The meeting will be at 2 pm.

The Annual London Meeting of the Society will also take place at the Francis Holland School on Saturday 7 November at 2.15 pm. John Chapple, our Chairman, will speak on the same theme as he addressed at the Brontë Society earlier this year: "A Sense of Place: Mrs Gaskell and the Brontës". All members are welcome.

Full details of next year's programme are yet to be finalised, but the Annual London Meeting of the Society for 1993 has been arranged. This will take place at the Francis Holland School on Saturday 6 November 1993, when Edward G Preston, the Honorary General Secretary of the Dickens Fellowship and a member of the Gaskell Society, will speak on some aspect of Dickens and Mrs Gaskell.

For further details of meetings and venues please contact Dudley J Barlow, 44 Seymour Road, London SW18 5JA (Tel: 081 874 7727)

HOWARD F GREGG

MRS GASKELL, LOUIS KOSSUTH AND THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION

In this article I want to relate Mrs Gaskell to an unusual context, not that of the social and economic 'condition of England', but to the Europe of the revolutions of 1848. She showed her awareness of this contemporary background and of its relevance to her own work in a letter of April 28, 1850 to the American critic, John Seely Hart. In it she wrote of Mary Barton that 'A good deal of it's [sic] success I believe was owing to the time of it's publication, - the great revolutions in Europe had directed people's attention to the social evils, and the strange contrasts which exist in old nations.' Elsewhere, in her Life of Charlotte Brontë, she touched on English provincial awareness of these revolutions. Writing of the characteristics of the West Riding of Yorkshire, she observed: 'The class of Christian names prevalent in a district is one indication of the direction in which its tide of hero-worship sets. Grave enthusiasts in politics or religion perceive not the ludicrous side of those which they give to their children; and some are to be found, still in their infancy, not a dozen miles from Haworth, that will have to go through life as Lamartine, Kossuth, and Dembinsky', names of heroes of the revolutions respectively in France, Hungary and Poland. Closer to home, William Shaen, the husband of her friend, Emily Winkworth, meant to call his first-born child after Joseph Mazzini, but it proved to be a girl. In a letter to Emily Shaen in 1853 Mrs Gaskell expressed enthusiastic interest in Mazzini, and she wrote a preface to a translation of Col Vecchj's Garibaldi in Caprera, published in 1862, though she declared the task 'imposed on me by force, not adopted of my own free will'.

Here, however, I am concerned with one of the 1848 revolutions - that in Hungary against the Habsburg autocracy, led by Louis Kossuth and the Magyars. What is called the 'lawful revolution' of March 1848 secured for Hungary from the Habsburgs, beleaguered by risings

in Italy, Prague and Vienna, parliamentary government, freedom of religion and the press, and the abolition of serfdom. But Habsburg determination to reimpose their rule from Vienna made use of the nationalism of other ethnic groups in Hungary - Croats, Slovaks, Serbs, Romanians - overriden by the proud, historic Magyar race. From September 1848 a bitter war was fought across Hungary for almost a year, with 50,000 killed on each side. Kossuth defiantly, unwisely, proclaimed Hungary independent, with himself as governor, and his followers fought heroically and desperately. Ultimate Habsburg victory was achieved by the military intervention of the classic autocrat, the Tsar of Russia, and followed by brutal Austrian reprisals. Kossuth fled into what is now Bulgaria, which was then part of the Ottoman Empire.

The Hungarian struggle caught the imagination of liberals and radicals in England and the USA: to them it was an echo of their own countries' constitutional conflicts and they were ignorant of the ethnic complexities. One such was Professor Francis Newman (brother of John Henry), a friend of the Gaskells from his time in Manchester (1840-46) as Professor of Classical Literature at Manchester New College. He was a member of the Hungarian Committee in London and saw Hungary as a nation whose liberties 'as ancient as those of England, were crushed by the conspiracy of two Emperors'. A lead in the Manchester Examiner and Times in November 1856, recalled the feelings of 1849: 'Every mind was preoccupied with it. Every despatch was awaited with intense emotion. Every Austrian defeat was welcomed with universal joy'. Mrs Gaskell shared this emotion: to Eliza Fox she wrote in ? early November 1849, 'I wonder if you ever see Mr Newman's papers on Hungary or if you care to; - Kossuth is coming here to visit a friend of ours, so I mean to see him by hook or by crook'. This is a curious statement since Kossuth was then a refugee in Turkey: possibly the fact that in November the Austrians ceased to press for his extradition may have led to rumours that he might be free to travel to England.

Kossuth was a charismatic figure - handsome, idealistic and energetic, and a great orator. In Hungary his portrait was said to be in every peasant cottage and in England he and his cause inspired over 100 books and several thousand articles. In England it was to his advantage that he had been born a Protestant, and even more that, during a two-year imprisonment in Budapest, he had taught himself English from the Bible and Shakespeare. This was the foundation of that oratory which captured Anglo-Saxon audiences: his English admirers later presented him with a splendid copy of Shakespeare.

The Sultan, bolstered by the British Government, refused to extradite Kossuth to Austria, but shelter meant internment in 'Asiatic Turkey'. Only in September 1851 was he allowed to leave Turkey, carried on a US frigate, for safety, to Marseilles. It was the start of half a lifetime's exile: he had left Hungary at 47 and he died in Turin 45 years later. In exile he never ceased to campaign against Austria and Russia and for the causes of Hungary and the Italian Risorgimento.

Kossuth arrived in his 'Paradise England' at the end of October 1851. He was besieged by requests for visits from towns all over Britain and in the next few weeks he made numerous speeches. From December 1851 to July 1852 he was in the USA. There his popularity waned, but on his return it was still strong in Britain, where he lived until 1860. Though based in London, he naturally, in view of its importance, paid a number of visits to Manchester, notably in November 1851, November 1856 and May 1859.

There are signs in Mrs Gaskell's letters that Hungary was a topical subject before Kossuth came to Manchester: even a joke shows this. Writing to Eliza Fox on April 26, 1850, she retails a series of riddles of which the first is 'Why is the Emperor of Russia like a beggar at Xmas? Because he's confounded Hungary and wants a slice of Turkey'. Socially she met Hungarian refugees: in

February 1852 she was at a gathering where 'the party consisted almost entirely of Germans, it being Ash Wednesday when many English don't like to visit. There were several Hungarians'. One family she mentions several times - the De Merys - whom she and Mr Gaskell met in August 1851 at a 'sociable tea' at Mr Leisler's.

M. de Mery (Mrs Gaskell's spelling) or de Mérey (the Winkworths' spelling) was a wealthy nobleman, a staff officer and a friend of Kossuth. All his property had been confiscated and as his only accomplishments were soldiering and music, he gave lessons in Manchester on the violin and in Hungarian. His wife, who had fled to Paris with the children, joined him in Manchester in October 1850. Mrs Gaskell's friends, the Winkworth sisters, thought her 'a most interesting person, very clever and highly educated'; she gave lessons in French and German. For safety's sake the De Merys lived at first under the assumed name of Marton. Their true identity was a source of intrigued speculation among their Manchester acquaintances, who read the 'Memoirs of the War of Independence in Hungary' by Klapka, one of Kossuth's generals, to try and solve the mystery. Furthermore, an article in Bentley's Miscellany on 'Kossuth's Domestic Life' was known to have been written by Mme Marton. Stephen Winkworth wrote to Catherine (October 16, 1850): 'I am almost inclined to think with you that M. Marton cannot be C.C.B. [Count Casimir Batthyani] as Mrs Gaskell guessed, because she [Mme Marton] praises him so, and if he is not, what "well-known" name is there left to guess?' Mme Marton apparently planned to write accounts of other distinguished Hungarians.

Mrs Gaskell clearly tried to help Mme de Mery, originally in a literary way: to Grace Schwabe c. May 1852, she wrote 'Mme de Mery has just called; and I have persuaded her to let me try Her Hungarian Legend at Household Words. I think they will take it'. She asks Grace to send it off to W H Wills with her compliments 'just that they may know which MS to open, when I write to them about it'. (A footnote remarks the absence of an

article of this title but the appearance of 'The Golden Age of Hungary' in Household Words on December 25, 1852.) After her husband's death in 1853 Mme de Mery ran a successful millinery business, with Mrs Gaskell among her customers, until her death in 1855.

As early as October 1850, M. de Mery told Stephen Winkworth that he thought Kossuth would come to England and, if he did, 'of course to Manchester'. In fact Kossuth came in November 1851, just over a fortnight after his arrival in England. He came to the Manchester of the 'Manchester School' of Cobden and Bright, where the Anti-Corn Law League had triumphed. Kossuth's visit in 1851 was an event in a class by itself. 'The stirring intellectual city of the Irwell was in a ferment' wrote a supporter, and the radical Manchester Examiner and times devoted a special supplement to it. Even The Times, which was hostile to Kossuth, covered it fully, giving a vivid account of his progress through the town. 'Carts, waggons, omnibuses, cabs, stage-vans and cotton trucks were ranged up by the footpath, 2, 3 and 4 deep, piled up with human beings who cheered as if for their lives'. At the Examiner and Times office a large flag was hung out with the words 'Free Trade, Free Press, Free People, Welcome Kossuth'. At the evening meeting in the Free Trade Hall The Times correspondent felt the enthusiasm equalled even the [Jenny] Lind mania and that the hall was 'crowded as it never was even in the palmiest days of the League'.

It was this meeting, on November 11, that Mrs Gaskell attended, and her friends, Mrs Fletcher and Mrs Davy came down from Lancrigg and Ambleside to stay with her on purpose to go to the Kossuth meeting. Emily Winkworth observed a remarkable link (which Mrs Gaskell would surely not have missed) between 1848 and the French Revolution. She reported to Susanna (writing from London later in November 1851) 'I wonder if Mrs Fletcher met Kossuth after all? She had not done so before that evening, because Mazzini, who had seen her, was telling him about her, and how she was eighty-six, and had known Brissot and somebody, and had now come

after Kossuth, all across England, to hear his speeches'. Brissot had been one of the leaders of the Girondins and was guillotined in 1793 during the Terror.

The occasion was full of emotion: Kossuth spoke with superb, impassioned oratory for 1½ hours, ending with the appeal: 'People of Manchester, people of England speak - speak with manly resolution to the despots of the world'. He spoke, too, as the Examiner and Times noted, with 'wonderful sagacity', showing grasp of 'the political tone that prevails in Manchester'. Such a declaration as 'commerce is the locomotive of principles' was calculated to appeal to his Manchester audience.

Mrs Gaskell's great friend, Catherine winkworth, gave a detailed account of the meeting to her sister, Emily, on November 13. She described the press at the door nearly an hour before it opened: the stewards allowed ladies in early and protected them from being knocked down. Catherine and her friends got 'very good seats just in front. Lily [Mrs Gaskell] was close to us, with Mrs Fletcher and Mrs Davy, and behind them Mr and Mrs Forster - Jane Arnold that was'. (These were W E Forster and his wife, the sister of Matthew Arnold.) Kossuth was cheered by everyone at the beginning and end of his speech, given in 'wonderfully fluent English for a foreigner'. (Elsewhere she speaks of his 'very foreign accent'.) 'Unfortunately, he could not make his voice heard through that immense hall ... We could hear every word, but it required close attention to keep up with him'. 'His speech was magnificent, an absolutely satisfactory speech; not a word that one could have wished altered, not an atom of rant or clap-trap'. In another letter she declared 'I thoroughly liked all that Kossuth said ...'. Altogether, Catherine Winkworth was a most enthusiastic admirer.

Mrs Gaskell's reaction to the occasion is in a letter to Eliza Fox of Monday (? 17 November 1851). It is much briefer and less factual than Catherine Winkworth's, but throws light on her personality. She was fully aware of

the charisma of Kossuth, but head as well as heart were at work, and she retained a degree of analytical detachment. 'What do you think of Kossuth [;] is he not a WONDERFUL man for cleverness. His speech was real eloquence, I never heard anyone speak before that I could analyze as it went along, and think what caused the effect but when he spoke I could only feel;- and yet I am not quite sure about him, that's to say I am quite sure about his end being a noble one, but I think it has so possessed him that I am not quite out and out sure that he would stick at any means, it's not for me to be poking into and judging him ...'.

Did she wish to follow up her interest in Kossuth and Hungary? In 1852 (see Gaskell Society Journal, 5) Mr Gaskell borrowed from the Portico Library, of which only men could be members, Kossuth and Magyar Land, published in 1851 by Charles Pridham, former correspondent of The Times. But Mr Gaskell, too, was enthusiastic for Kossuth: he had attended a large private meeting, for gentlemen only, on the day after the Free Trade Hall meeting, at the house of the Mayor of Manchester. There he had been moved almost to tears (as he told the Winkworth sisters) by Kossuth's speech, and saw 'many of the hard Manchester faces covered with tears'.

Kossuth's later visits to Manchester in 1856, 1857 and 1859, though enthusiastically received, had not the succès fou of 1851, when he had been a novelty, fresh from his heroism in war and his detention in Turkey. But he could still fire audiences of thousands, especially when, in 1856, he attacked the papal concordat with Austria, telling his audience that Hungary had enabled Luther and Calvin to carry on the Reformation, and when, in 1856 and 1859, he united the causes of Hungary and Italy. Mrs Gaskell, however, makes no further reference to him in her letters, and the Winkworth letters confirm that the peak of interest in Kossuth in these Manchester circles had passed.

MARJORIE COX

Quotations from letters are taken from The Letters of Mrs Gaskell (1966), ed. J A V Chapple and Arthur Pollard, to whom and to Manchester University Press I am grateful for permission to quote, and from Letters and Memorials of Catherine Winkworth ed. by her sister (1883)

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DICKENS AND THE GHOST STORY

Letter to the Editor:

You raised the question in the new Gaskell Society Newsletter No.13 of a version by Charles Dickens of a story of Mrs Gaskell's recounted by Augustus Hare in "The Years with Mother".

This story of the lady haunted by a face, and its various versions, was discussed in The Ghost Story Newsletter No.9 of December 1991. I began it myself by asking, in the previous newsletter, about a Victorian story I remembered vaguely which was obviously the source of E F Benson's "The Face", included in his "Spook Stories" (1928): he gives it an English setting. Hugh Lamb identified this source as "The Man with the Nose" by Rhoda Broughton, from her "Twilight Stories" (1879): he included it in his anthology "Victorian Nightmares" (1977): the setting is Lucerne. Kev Demant further stated that Rhoda Broughton's story is a fleshed-out version of "To be Read at Dusk" by Charles DICKENS, which has a Genoese setting. Peter Haining included it in "The Ghost Stories of Charles Dickens" (Volume 2, 1985) and stated that it originally appeared in "The Keepsake" of 1852.

MURIEL SMITH

THE DRAGON OF WANTLEY

The Gaskells spent their honeymoon in North Wales in September 1832. In a join letter William described their movements to his sister, Eliza (NL 9 gives this text), then the bride continued the letter (GL 2). After saying that the Welsh mountains agreed with them and they were very well, Elizabeth added:

> "You would be astonished to see our appetites, the Dragon of Wantley, 'who churches ate of a Sunday, Whole dishes of people were to him, but a dish of salmagunde' was really a delicate appetite compared to ours."

She would be quoting from memory.

I happened to come across this charming woodcut in a book (? collected magazines) called The Reliquary, for April 1878. The original broadsheet was entitled 'An Excellent Ballad of that most Dreadful COMBATE fought Between Moore of Moore-hall and the Dragon of Wantley. To a Pleasant Tune much in request'.

It is believed that the setting of the story was the Derbyshire/Yorkshire borders.

JOAN LEACH

If you have any material or suggestions for future Newsletters, please contact Mrs Joan Leach, Far Yew Tree House, Over Tabley, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 OHN (Tel: 0565 634668)

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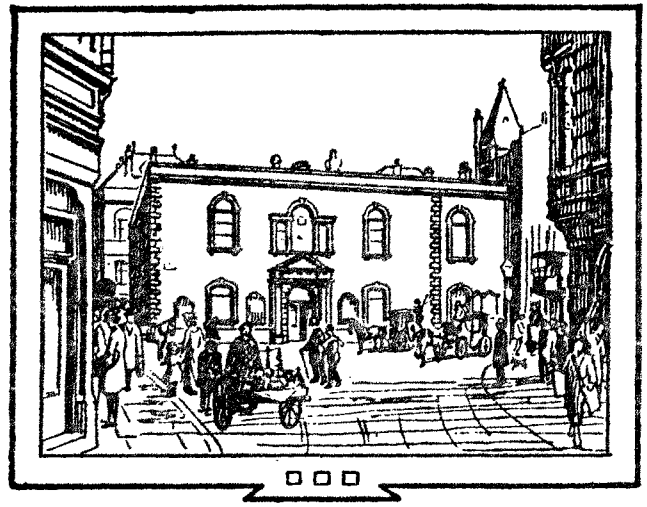
The Gaskell Society



CROSS STREET CHAPEL

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 1993 NO. 15

EDITOR'S LETTER

As there is very little space to spare in this newsletter and with pressures mounting as Christmas rushes on me, I am not in a cool, collected state, so I will be brief.

We manage to keep our membership fees down by economising on printing, which is a major expense and postage costs rise steadily. It is a great help if membership dues are paid promptly.

We hope to surprise you with a special publication during the year but it is too soon to reveal our plans.

Our meetings in 1992 were well attended and it is good to meet friends; you will always find a welcome. We are very much looking forward to 1993.

Our thanks are due to Arthur Pollard for his sterling service as our President in our first seven years. Also retiring is our librarian, Mrs Mary Thwaite. Both become honorary life members. We welcome Geoffrey Sharps as our President.

Joan Leach

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EDINBURGH WEEKEND CONFERENCE

This is proving very popular and WE MUST HAVE YOUR BOOKINGS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE OR THERE IS LIKELY TO BE DISAPPOINTMENT.

We have put together a most attractive and varied programme and allowed time for exploring Edinburgh. There is also the option of extra days, eg B&B at £18.65.

There are some flats, 3 bedrooms at £265, and 4 at £330 a week, but this does not include conference charges. There is a very convenient bus service into town. The College has spacious grounds and a swimming pool etc.

Some of use hope to travel by train from Cheshire on Thursday 19 August, benefiting from group travel rates. If you need more information or a copy of the programme, please write to the Hon Secretary.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

New Year Lunch in Knutsford on 4 January at The Methodist Rooms, Princess Street, 12.45 for 1.00 pm
This is an informal lunch, to mark the retirement of Mrs Mary Thwaite from our committee. We are having the services of the caterer we had for our AGM meeting in 1991. Cost £5. Please book with Secretary, Joan Leach. Pay on the day

Spring Meeting at Cross Street Chapel
20 March at 2 pm. George Eliot and Elizabeth Gaskell from the Biographer's Point of View by Jenny Uglow. We hope to have copies of Jenny Uglow's new book on sale. This meeting is earlier in the year than usual for various reasons; firstly The Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society are holding a seminar on The Literature of Manchester on Saturday 17 April, which we think some of our members will wish to attend and, secondly, the Alliance of Literary Societies has its AGM in Birmingham on 24 April.

Annual Outing
As it is several years since we went to The Lake District, we hope to go to Morecambe Bay, Silverdale and Cartmel, on Sunday 23 May (to be confirmed)

Further details of our year's events will be sent out with the Journal which will be ready for distribution at the Spring Meeting.

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THE BRONTE SOCIETY

Christine Sumner was elected Chairman of The Brontë Society at the last AGM in June. Sadly she died suddenly and will be greatly missed for her total commitment and tireless work for the Society.
J G Sharps represented us at the funeral on 4 November and offered our condolence.

AGM WEEKEND
2-4 October 1992

by Muriel Easter and
Alice Reddihough

Since joining the Gaskell Society two years ago, we have had it in mind to visit Knutsford; the programme for the AGM weekend seemed to be a good opportunity.

In spite of heavy rain, Society members and Knutsfordians gathered on Friday evening for Mrs Joan Leach's talk, with slides, on "Mrs Gaskell's Knutsford and Cheshire". This was a fascinating account of the community which Mrs Gaskell would have known, and the town as it is today. As we walked round Knutsford next morning, the slides and interesting anecdotes fell into place.

On Saturday, about seventy Members gathered for a very good lunch at the Royal George. This was a suitable venue as the eighteenth-century assembly rooms, referred to in Mrs Gaskell's fiction, are still in use here.

At the AGM, we all regretted Professor Pollard's announcement that he had decided not to stand again for the position of president. The Society is considering registration as a charity, which will involve some changes in the constitution. Some points were raised immediately, and there will be much discussion to come.

Mrs Akiko Aikawa then gave a talk, "Nursery Rhymes in 'Wives and Daughters'". To us, apart from the opening of the book, these had gone unnoticed. Perhaps because nursery rhymes are not part of the Japanese tradition, their use struck her more forcefully, and this will shed new light on our re-reading of the novel. The talk was delivered in excellent English, and Mrs Aikawa participated enthusiastically in the whole programme.

As the Australian speaker was unable to be present, Professor John Chapple then gave an address, "Place and People in Elizabeth Gaskell's Work". He had recently

been researching German records of Mrs Gaskell's visits to Heidelberg and the surroundings. On their first visit in 1841, she and her husband were welcomed into a wealthy and artistic circle. He emphasised the contrast between Manchester in 1841 and Heidelberg, a medieval town in a romantic setting. He illustrated this with evocative slides of contemporary paintings and lithographs. He also commented on Mrs Gaskell's use of German customs in her story, Six weeks at Heppenheim. She showed an accurate knowledge of the neighbourhood, but was ready to depart from actual scenes to suit her fictional needs. In his inimitable way, Professor Chapple shared with us his erudition and enthusiasm.

On Saturday evening, we visited Tabley House. Mrs Gaskell remembered the old hall, and picnicking in the park. We were shown a series of rooms with interesting family portraits and other paintings from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This was complemented by "An Evening with the Victorians at Tabley House". Joan arranged and presented readings, including extracts from privately published diaries, giving a picture of the family living in the house, and of outstanding Victorians such as Tennyson and Gladstone. We were privileged to have the extracts read by Delia Corry, who evoked such varied characters; and we were grateful to the museum staff for sharing their enthusiasm with us. It was a memorable evening.

On Sunday morning, the sun shone. We were invited to share in the service held at the Brook Street Unitarian Chapel, an interesting building erected in 1689, where Mrs Gaskell worshipped as a girl. The readings and hymns were carefully chosen, the words of one hymn being by William Gaskell, and one of the readings from "Ruth". The address stressed the divergences of Christian thought, and the importance of works to Unitarians. This was exemplified by the Gaskells, and is as relevant for us today.

After the service, Joan laid flowers on the grave in which Mr & Mrs Gaskell and their two unmarried daughters

are buried. It was fitting that just then a skein of calling geese flew overhead.

On Sunday afternoon, Joan led a "Cranford" walk, starting from Aunt Lumb's house, which was surprisingly large. Although the owners were absent, we were allowed to explore the garden, dominated by an unusual Himalayan cedar.

Knutsford is celebrating the 700th anniversary of the granting of its charter. It is a friendly town, and we were grateful to the ladies who offered refreshments on every occasion. Our warmest thanks go to all those who contributed to the success of the weekend, especially to Joan, who was involved in every activity, but still had time for us individually. We spent a happy and stimulating weekend, meeting old friends and making new ones. We look forward to visiting Knutsford again.

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SE GROUP PROGRAMME FOR 1993

6 February at Francis Holland School, 39 Graham Terrace, SW1W 8JF (a few minutes walk from Sloane Square underground station). 2 pm Gaskellians of a Past Generation by J G Sharps, President of the Gaskell Society

8 May at 15 Lincoln Street, SW3 2TP (also close to Sloane Square). 2 pm Cousin Phillis introduced by Brenda Colloms

17 July at Francis Holland School. Ruth introduced by Howard Gregg

The Annual London Meeting to which members of the Dickens Fellowship will be invited will be on 6 November at Francis Holland School at 2.15 pm. Edward Preston, Secretary of The Dickens Fellowship, will speak on Elizabeth Gaskell and Charles Dickens.

If you have any queries about the meetings in London, please contact: Dudley Barlow, 44 Seymour Road, London SW18 5JA (081 874 7727)

Another letter from William Gaskell, traced by J A V Chapple, printed with the kind permission of Rutger's University Library:

Plymouth Grove
April 15, 1857

My dear Miss Nussey,
Among a huge heap of letters awaiting me on my arrival from Newcastle last night (where I had been since Thursday) was the enclosed. As you may suppose, it was any thing but agreeable to think what you must have been setting me down as - an unlettered, unmannered, ungrateful, good-for-nothing sort of brute. I send the envelope by way of exculpation, though perhaps it leaves me open to the charge of defect - but I was obliged to write in a hurry, and was not sure whether to put on Halifax or Leeds. I hope your copy of the Life, and the one for Miss Wooler came safe.
All the notices that I have seen have been favourable, and some of the best exceedingly so. I have had a considerable number of letters too from distinguished men expressing high approval. Mr Brontë too, I am happy to say, is pleased, and I can only hope that Mr Nicholls will (as Sir J.K. Shuttleworth says) 'learn to rejoice that his wife will be known as a Christian heroine, who could bear her cross with the firmness of a martyr saint.'
I have not time to give you any long account of the travellers. They were to leave Rome for Florence yesterday, after going through all the crushing, and excitement of the Holy Week. I only hope they won't be kilt and spilt entirely. They intend to go as far as Venice, and then, I suppose, will turn their steps homeward. My two chickens here are very well, and if they were not gone to School would send their love.
Hoping your weather is better, I am, my dear Miss Nussey, Yours very hastily, but sincerely
Wm Gaskell

Ed. Mrs Gaskell, with her two elder daughters, Marianne and Meta, left Manchester on 13 February 1857. In a letter dated 8 February she was still sending 'copy' (presumably proofs) of The Life of Charlotte Brontë to her publisher, George Smith.

THE CHARM OF BARBARA BODICHON

by Barbara Brill

In recent months I have fallen under the spell of Barbara Bodichon, whose name I first met with when reading Mrs Gaskell's letters. In July 1850 (GL 73) she wrote to Eliza Fox, "Do you know I've a great fancy for asking Barbara Smith" (Mme Bodichon was born Barbara Leigh-Smith) "to come and pay us a visit. Do you think she'd come?" I think Mrs Gaskell had got wind through mutual friends of Barbara Smith's charm.

Perhaps it was because I share Barbara Bodichon's initials that the name penetrated my memory, as it proved to be a name that constantly was thrusting itself out at me from the pages of books on varying subjects. I seemed to be haunted by her as I pored over books on late nineteenth century celebrities whose paths seemed so often to cross hers: Gertrude Jekyll, famous woman gardener; the novelists Trollope, George Eliot and 20th century Virginia Woolf; the Pre-Raphaelite painters - all seemed to be impressed by Barbara. I became charmed by her and felt I had fallen under her spell, and I hope when I tell you a little about her you will feel the same attraction.

Her claim to fame is in her work for women's rights, founder of Girton College and instigator of the Married Women's Property Act. She was a pre-cursor of the Suffragettes but never actively joined them, preferring to wage a solitary and earnest battle for the equality of the sexes with her pen, her paintbrush, her power of oratory, her personality and presence, and her purse.

She was born in 1827 and was able to date her earliest meeting with one of her feminist friends, Bessie Parkes, to the day of Queen Victoria's coronation, when as children they both attended a family party to celebrate the occasion.

Barbara's family background hardly conformed to accepted Victorian middle-class standards. She was the eldest of

five illegitimate children of an unmarried member of Parliament, Benjamin Smith. Mrs Gaskell referred to the circumstances of her birth in a letter to Charles Norton (GL 461) written on April 5th 1860, when she referred to her as "an illegitimate cousin of Hilary Carter, F. Nightingale, - and has their nature in her; through some of the legitimates don't acknowledge her. She is - I think in consequence of her birth, a strong fighter against the established opinions of the world, - which always goes against my - what shall I call it? - taste - (that is not the word) but I can't help admiring her noble bravery, and respecting - while I don't personally like her."

Barbara inherited her father's fighting spirit. He was an active anti-Corn Law campaigner and dedicated Unitarian, holding strong views on the importance of education particularly with regard to equal educational opportunities for both sexes. He had all his children taught at home and in addition had a large carriage, like an omnibus, in which he took his children with tutors and servants on long journeys throughout the British Isles and later on the Continent, as part of their education. When Barbara came of age, as with all his sons and daughters, he made her an allowance of £300 a year which Barbara used to found a school, open to both sexes, to all classes and all religious creeds. In addition she started evening classes for ladies to learn drawing with the exceptional opportunity provided of an undraped nude model. The Royal Academy Schools were not at the time open to women, so Barbara got up a petition to campaign for women's acceptance and was successful, though she had to wait until 1894 before the first painting by a woman was accepted at the Royal Academy Exhibition, and even this was due to an error, the artist's sex not having been revealed.

Barbara herself attended life-drawing classes at Bedford College and soon displayed an exceptional talent as an artist. Her paintings were bold and vivid and her water colours particularly showed a touch of genius. Mrs Gaskell was attracted by her paintings of the American

scene and referred to them in her letter to Charles Norton (GL 461) previously quoted. "What gave me the best idea of America, or a piece of it, was an oil painting of Mme Bodichon (née Barbara Leigh Smith) ... She married two or three years ago a Dr Bodichon, of Algiers, a Breton by birth - and they went for their honey-year to America, - and in some wild luxuriant terrific part of Virginia? in a gorge full of rich rank tropical vegetation, - her husband keeping watch over her with loaded pistols because of the alligators infesting the stream. - Well! that picture did look like my idea of America."

Barbara married Eugène Bodichon in 1857 at the Unitarian Chapel in Little Portland Street, London. They met in Algiers where Barbara spent several winters on account of her health, Algiers being at that time a favourite centre where the sick ladies of Europe retreated to recuperate. Barbara found much to appeal to her artistic tastes in this new French colony, painting the scenery, collecting the pottery, studying the wild flowers and wearing the native Moorish costume. Most important of all was her meeting with Dr Bodichon, a resident there for many years. He was skilled at the treatment of patients wounded by wild animals during hunting expeditions and made a special study of the treatment of malaria, then rife in the colony, tracing the cause of the illness to the lack of trees. He was a keen anthropologist, studying the habits of Arab tribes.

With their mutual concern for their underprivileged brothers and sisters and desire to reform the world, Eugène and Barbara were drawn to each other as fellow idealists and eccentrics. Their respect ripened into love. Barbara described him to a friend at the age of 46 as "being very young for his age; has black hair and eyes, the brownest skin you ever saw and a magnificent head. I think him the handsomest man ever created. He is tall, grave, almost sombre in aspect and very eccentric in dress. He never wears a hat and has black hair as thick as a Newfoundland dog's coat. Some people think the docteur ugly and terrific." Bessie Parkes

believed the marriage was made in heaven and said, "I have never regarded her marriage to that singular man with any regret".

They must have made a striking couple. Barbara was robust and healthy and was described by Rossetti as being "blessed with a large portion of tin, fat, enthusiasm and golden hair. She thinks nothing of climbing up mountains in breeches and wading through streams in none." Barbara rebelled against the tightly corseted fashions of the day and always went uncorseted in simple free-flowing clothes. Her golden hair was her crowning glory and it captivated George Eliot, who chose to base the character of Romola in her novel of that name on Barbara. Romola is introduced in chapter V of the novel in these words:

"The only spot of bright colour in the room was made by the hair of a tall maiden of seventeen or eighteen who was standing before a reading desk. The hair was of a reddish gold colour enriched by an unbroken small ripple, such as may be seen in sunset days on grandest autumnal evenings. It was confined by a black fillet above her small ears, from which it rippled forward again, and made a natural veil for her neck above her square cut gown of black serge. Her eyes were bent on a large volume placed before her, one long white hand rested on the reading desk and the other clasped the back of her father's chair."

What a charmer!

For further details of Barbara Bodichon, refer to BARBARA BODICHON 1827-91 by Hester Burton, published by John Murray 1949.

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AN INTRODUCTION TO ELIZABETH GASKELL'S SHORT STORIES

by Sylvia Burch

Talk given to South of England Branch of the Gaskell Society - 25 April 1992

This talk was given in two parts, the first consisting of a general Introduction to the Short Stories for which I am indebted to Angus Easson's chapter in his biography Elizabeth Gaskell (1979) and to Geoffrey Sharps' Mrs Gaskell's Observation and Invention (1970). The second part was a reading and discussion by the group of one of the stories - Half a Lifetime Ago (Ed: There is only space for the first part)

Mrs Gaskell's reputation with modern readers rests securely on the foundation of her full-length novels, and it is for these that she is most appreciated. But, if we are to realise the true wealth of her creativity we have also to consider her short stories. These come to us in great variety of form and subject matter and the best of them hold the reader's attention in much the same way as they did over a century ago. Elizabeth Gaskell delighted in story telling; her friend, Susanna Winkworth, said:

> "No one ever came near her in the gift of telling a story. In her hands the simplest incident - a meeting in the street, a talk with a factory-girl, a country walk, an old family history - became picturesque and vivid and interesting."
> (Quoted by A Easson in "Introduction to Cousin Phillis")

There are about thirty short stories in all, and it was not for nothing that Dickens dubbed their author "Scheherazade". She, herself, wrote vividly about her story-telling experiences while visiting Heidelberg in 1841 -

> "We all told the most frightening and wild stories we had ever heard - some such fearful

ones - all true - "
(Letter to Eliza Holland, August 1841)

Certainly 'frightening and wild' are apt descriptions of her ghost stories - especially The Old Nurse's Story and The Poor Clare with its supernatural curse! Although we use the term "short stories" it quickly becomes obvious that some of them are really novellas. With the exception of The Moorland Cottage (published as a separate Christmas Book) they all appeared first in periodicals.

In his Introduction to the Knutsford Edition (London 1906) of My Lady Ludlow and Other Stories, A W Ward skilfully made the connection between Mrs Gaskell's home and family life and her stories. He noted that she was as well able to date her stories "from my own apartment" as Steele had been for "The Tatler" and also that she used Round the Sofa as the title to her own Introduction. Speaking of the Stories, he observed that the all -

> "remain instinct with the human kindness and sympathy which were part of herself, and of the atmosphere breathed by her in her home life."

The frontispiece of the Knutsford Lady Ludlow volume has a picture of the Gaskell drawing room at 84 Plymouth Grove and Ward elaborates on this room -

> "Where more than one of her stories ... may have found their earliest readers, and where their writer may have first welcomed the clear-sighted criticisms of a watchful affection."

Although the range of theme and material covered by the short stories is enormous, the closeness between the work and the writer's life and experience can never be overlooked. Mrs Gaskell's own thoughts and beliefs permeate her writing, and her humanity and moral code are always clearly shown. Her first published short story was Libbie Marsh's Three Eras (1847) and it soon

became apparent that this type of writing was a useful money-maker and a great help to the family finances. The stories paid well and could be sold twice - once to a magazine and then again to a publisher in volume form. By April 1850, she is writing to Eliza Fox -

> "Do you know they sent me £20 for Lizzie Leigh? I stared, and wondered if I was swindling them but I suppose I am not; and Wm. has composedly buttoned it up in his pocket. He has promised I may have some for the Refuge."

Holidays could be paid for in this way; in July 1858 she wrote from Silverdale asking C E Norton -

> "Given £105 and 2 months (I am republishing my HW stories under the title of "Round the Sofa" - to get this money -) and 3 people, and where can they go at the middle or end of October? Now do try and answer this."

And, later in May 1862, she again proves she has her feet firmly on the ground when she writes to Marianne -

> "My dearest Polly, my story is found! And is going to bring me in a good price! £150. Only don't tell anyone."

The stories - on the whole - show great variety but there is some unevenness of quality. Also, some themes were repeatedly used or there was a re-working of the same material under a different title. The beginnings of Cranford, for example, can be traced in a piece entitled The Last Generation in England (1849) and also in Mr Harrison's Confessions (1851). Mrs Gaskell's plots were often loosely constructed and proper names bore a great deal of repetition. the brother and sister motif was one which went through much of her work - we can observe it in The Moorland Cottage (1850) and later in North and South (1854-55). However, this seems generally to have been a favourite topic in Victorian literature and was used by George Eliot in The Mill on the Floss, Dickens in Hard Times, etc. In all these tales, the main woman character (or the sister) shows great inner growth and spiritual development, in

contrast to the more worldly aims of the man (either brother or lover, as the case may be). The Crooked Branch is another example, where the son of the elderly couple is shown totally lacking in any moral scruple while the adopted niece displays true virtue and Christian compassion.

All Mrs Gaskell's stories demonstrate the same splendid evocations of time and place and detailed observation of life and feeling as we find in the novels. Throughout, she makes us aware of her belief in a guiding power greater than that of her individual characters. We sense her own firm religious beliefs forming her guidelines for the way life should be lived. Based on love, kindness and tolerance, such guidelines still have validity for us today. But, she also builds on the Romantic as well as the Christian tradition. Wordsworth was always an inspiration for her, from the earliest days when writing of The Poets and Poetry of Humble Life she quoted (or slightly misquoted) from "The Old Cumberland Beggar" -

"We have all of us one human heart"
(Letter to Mary Howitt, August 1838)

And it is this feeling of the "oneness" of the human race that provides so much of her writing, from the novels like Mary Barton and North and South right through the finest of the short stories and sketches such as Half a Lifetime Ago and An Accursed Race.

Five collections of stories appeared in Mrs Gaskell's lifetime; these were:

Lizzie Leigh and Other Tales - 1855
Round the Sofa - 1859
Right at Last and Other Tales - 1860
Cousin Phillis and Other Tales - 1865

and in 1861, the Tauchnitz edition of "Lois the Witch and Other Tales". Many stories were set in the recent past, while others entailed quite a lot of historical research (eg "Lois the Witch") on the author's part. Holiday experiences helped with foreign backgrounds ("Six Weeks at Heppenheim") and nearer to home the Welsh setting of The Doom of the Griffiths.

That selections of the short stories are still being published and read today (eg The Manchester Marriage and Other Stories 1985, reprinted 1990, and A Dark Night's Work 1992) is surely proof of the enduring quality of this part of Mrs Gaskell's work.

Angus Easson (see his "Elizabeth Gaskell" 1979, for a fuller elaboration) has surveyed the stories in three main groups and has usefully divided them into:

1 The earliest tales: these were published in a variety of magazines from about 1847-48 and include the first published story Libby Marsh's Three Eras and some "Sunday School" stories, eg Bessy's Troubles at Home which Mrs Gaskell wrote of later as "complete rubbish"!

2 The second and most important group of stories were those written for Dickens - for "Household Words" and "All the Year Round". This was Mrs Gaskell's main market and most of her stories (twenty) went here, although she was later to speak slightingly of it, referring to a story as "not good enough for the Cornhill Magazine - but might be good enough for Household Words" (letter to G Smith, Dec. 1859) and also to worry when Dickens became unpopular after his separation from his wife. However, from the very first issue of "Household Words" (March-April 1850) when Lizzie Leigh appeared, Dickens and his periodicals were the chief means of publication for her stories. Some of these were for Dickens' Christmas Number and he envisaged them being told to listeners around the Christmas fireside. The Old Nurse's Story came out in the 1852 Number and we can easily imagine the warmth and companionship of the hearth, forming a strong contrast to the chill and horror of that ghostly tale!

3 The third group of stories were those published in The Cornhill Magazine (founded 1860) and of these the greatest was Cousin Phillis, more a novella

than a short story - and almost perfect. This was published from November 1863 to February 1864, and has been called an idyll by countless readers and critics alike. It may deserve this title, however - if it does - it is an idyll firmly rooted in the reality of everyday rural life but which - at the same time - is pervaded by a sense of quiet calm and tranquillity. On the surface at least! Perhaps, as strong feelings and passions lie underneath Cousin Phillis as any that thread their way through the Brontës' stormy sagas!

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OBITUARY

We are sorry to report the death of John T M Nussey, who was a loyal and supportive founder member of our Society; he attended the commemorative lunch at The Royal George in Knutsford for the 175th Anniversary of Elizabeth Gaskell's birth held on 30 September 1985, and was at the inaugural meeting of our Society three weeks later.

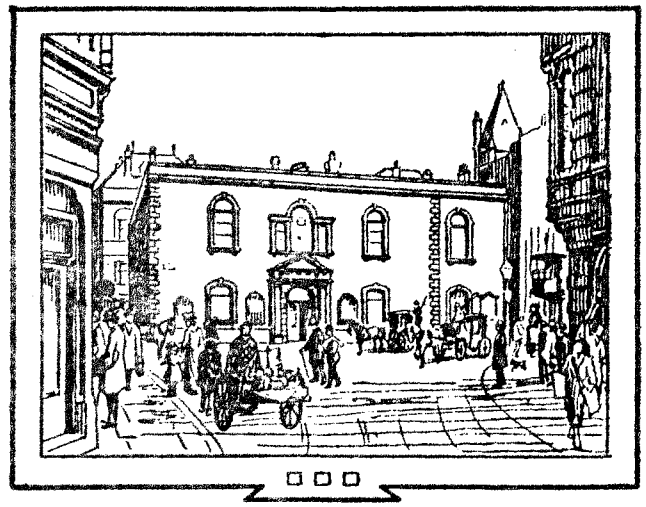
John, the great great nephew of Ellen Nussey, was a staunch supporter of The Brontë Society and an invaluable link between our two Societies. He reported, in The Brontë Society Transactions on the formation of The Gaskell Society and personally introduced me to Council members at Haworth Parsonage.

He had an encyclopaedic knowledge of South Yorkshire and Birstall in particular, generously sharing his genealogical knowledge which was the result of careful recording and research in family and Yorkshire archives over many years. He had an infectious enthusiasm which was much appreciated by fellow researchers and Brontë scholars.

With the quiet, unobtrusive courtesy, a gentlemen of the old school, John had a ready twinkle in his eye and a wry sense of humour. He will be sadly missed at our meetings, but remembered with affection.

Joan Leach

The Gaskell Society



CROSS STREET CHAPEL

NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 1993 NO. 16

If you have any material or suggestions for future Newsletters, please contact Mrs Joan Leach, Far Yew Tree House, Over Tabley, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 OHN (Tel: 0565 634668)

ISSN 0954 - 1209

EDITOR'S LETTER

As I type this letter I am trying to master my new word processor, provided from Society funds - not a very sophisticated one because I am incapable of coping with much technology, but I hope this will at least help to keep the mailing list in better order. It has taken me several attempts even to set the margins!

Uppermost in my mind is the forthcoming Edinburgh Conference, from 20th to 23rd August, when nearly a hundred members will gather to enjoy a varied programme of talks and events. This will be the climax of a busy year.

We are particularly pleased with the steady progress of our South of England branch; the meetings have been well attended and resulted in stimulating exchange of ideas. At the Annual London Meeting on 6th November we will be joined by members of the Dickens Fellowship.

Details of the AGM Weekend are on a separate sheet. Please make a note in your diary of the Spring Meeting in Manchester on 26th March.

Lucy Magruder, our USA representative, has assisted in the final design and production of our badge which we think will win your approval.

We have been trying to keep membership fees down but with ever increasing printing and postage costs a rise may be inevitable. We appreciate a grant from Manchester University to aid our Journal production.

We welcome any suggestions to improve service to members.

Joan Leach

SECOND THOUGHTS ON 'COUSIN PHILLIS'

by Brenda Colloms

Let me confess at once that I have never been a fan of 'Cousin Phillis'. The story, begun in Mrs Gaskell's usual meticulous and leisurely style, was slow in getting to the point - if indeed there was going to be a point - and dwelt far too long on the emotional and physical collapse of Phillis. Was she a heroine, or an anti-heroine? Finally, it was all suddenly and brutally ended in a page or two, like an impatient cleaner sweeping the dust away under the carpet.

Why, oh why, must Phillis, the rustic beauty, the scholar-farmer, physically strong, always busy, much-loved and an heiress to boot - (she will inherit a prosperous 50 acre farm) - be condemned to droop, dwindle and drown in unrequited love when she is not yet out of her teens? Where is the robustness of Mary Barton, of Margaret Hale, of Molly Gibson? Phillis is not a medieval princess, sheltered from the world. She is reading Dante's 'Inferno' with the aid of a dictionary. She has been taught to read the Greek and Roman classics in the original. She works hard in the fields and harder in the house. She reads the newspaper. She is aware that the railway is already planned to run through the district, near the farm.

I found it a great puzzle and abandoned Phillis to her fate until I consented to lead a discussion on 'Cousin Phillis' at the May 8, 1993 meeting of the South of England group of the Gaskell Society. This necessitated re-reading the novella, but now I had assistance. From March, when I began the enterprise, I had a modern guide, Jenny Uglow's fine biography of Elizabeth Gaskell, and on pages 551-552 I discovered why I had been so discomfited. The ending I had disliked was not the ending which Mrs Gaskell intended. Phillis was meant to recover, and face the future with confidence. So I began to read 'Cousin Phillis' with zest, searching for clues, and my 'second thoughts' have revealed a different Phillis, capable of recovering from her

disappointment over Edward Holdsworth and able to say 'I will overcome' instead of 'I will return to the old days'.

Hitherto, received wisdom, which I suspect came chiefly from male critics reared on the classics, suggested that 'Cousin Phillis' was a well-nigh perfect story, exquisitely crafted, and of precisely the right length. '... a diamond without a flaw', as a reviewer wrote after Mrs Gaskell's untimely death. Hints were even made that had Mrs Gaskell lived longer, she might have abandoned the ponderous three-decker novel in favour of the novella form, wherein she would display her true literary genius to best advantage.

A delightful fancy, but a fancy all the same. The truth belongs to the workaday world. From the outset, Mrs Gaskell had the entire plot of 'Cousin Phillis' clearly in her head, beginning, middle, end. This was her invariable habit with stories and novels. Once she began writing with the scheme already fixed, she 'lived' her novels, not in the sense of becoming her characters, but in the sense of being an objective observer, recording details seen and heard, a video camera in fact.

From Jenny Uglow's book we learn of a hitherto uncollected letter of Mrs Gaskell's to George Smith, publisher of Mrs Gaskell's later novels and also of the 'Cornhill Magazine' edited by Thackeray, and just founded in 1860. This reveals that towards the end of 1863 (the first instalment of 'Cousin Phillis' appeared in November 1863) Mrs Gaskell gained the impression that Smith wanted the story to end with the old year. She was still in the midst of it on December 10.

She felt disappointed at having to cut it short, believing it would destroy her chosen ending. None the less, George Smith was one of her good friends upon whom she relied greatly; she was also trying to amass enough money to buy a house; and she duly dashed off a hurried conclusion. Nevertheless, she could not help including

her real ending, again seen through Paul Manning's eyes, to show Smith what she meant to do. She explained that she had been planning 'a sort of moral - "'Tis better to have loved and lost, than never to have loved at all"' (p.552).

From this letter, we know that Mrs Gaskell was foreseeing Paul Manning, many years afterwards - (maybe 20 years, bringing it up to the time she was writing?) - a married man, who, finding himself at Heathbridge, makes a detour to visit nearby Hope Farm, curious to see what has happened in the long interval. He finds that Minister Holman is dead and Phillis is in charge of the farm, which of course now belongs to her. There is a summer outbreak of typhus in the district - a common scourge in agricultural districts - and Phillis is using survey plans of a marshy area made by Edward Holdsworth to help her direct her labourers in a very workmanlike drainage scheme. Paul remembers having seen Phillis and her father, being instructed by Holdsworth who was using his theodolite to survey the area.

Paul is very impressed by Phillis's competence. He is also interested to observe two little children out there with her, and learns afterwards that they are orphans whom she has adopted. So Phillis has come through her ordeal strengthened, and is coping serenely with her life, fulfilled as a mother although not as a wife.

Charged with this knowledge, I could hardly wait to read 'Cousin Phillis' again, and I found a fascinating array of subtle clues leading inexorably to this intended ending. The novella positively overflowed with hints and half-hints exhibiting Mrs Gaskell's exuberant fascination with other people's lives, joys and problems - especially their problems. Like William Gaskell, her husband, Mrs Gaskell was in her own way a teacher. The 'morals' of her stories were her lessons.

Once readers have stopped being seduced by the rich embroidery of the word pictures - Hope Farm (is it a symbolic name?) with its garden and close interiors like

17th century Dutch paintings, and always Cousin Phillis with her pale gold hair and white skin at the still centre - have stopped smiling at the minister's pawky humour in naming the grand, never-used front door the 'rectory' and the commonly-used back one, the 'curate' - have stopped enjoying the lively accounts of hay-making, corn-harvesting and apple-gathering - then they can search for familiar Gaskell themes.

For Mrs Gaskell was a realist as well as a moralist. Not for her a stream of consciousness approach. Paul Manning, the gauche young cousin, is her recorder. He is the one who notices that soon after his first visit, Phillis discards her child-like pinafores in favour of pretty linen aprons in the morning, and a black silk one in the afternoon. This is a telling point, showing Phillis silently emerging from her shell and asserting herself. Minister Holman is too busy to see any difference; her mother is too proud of Phillis's good looks to make any comment. Phillis is not sexually interested in Paul, who is young for his age but he is likeable, and he is male: she enjoys looking nice for him. Paul registers the change of attire, mainly because he thought the pinafores 'obnoxious'. He does not regard her as a potential sweetheart. She is much too clever, and besides, she is considerably taller than he is. He has to look up to her, in all senses of the word.

It is obvious to the reader that a suitable mate for Cousin Phillis cannot be found in the environs of Hope Farm. Some dramatic mechanism must produce him, a stranger, out of the common mould. Mrs Gaskell needs a pantomime device which can disclose her prince in a puff of coloured smoke, - and reality comes to her rescue with the entrance of Edward Holdsworth, chief engineer of the advancing railway line and the puffing locomotives, introduced to the Holman family, albeit rather doubtfully, by Paul, who is his assistant.

Although Paul hero-worships Holdsworth, he is not sure whether Holdsworth's kind of 'goodness' is quite up to

the standard of the Holmans' 'goodness', and wonders how they will get on together.

Come he does, the friendly, sophisticated young man who charms the Minister, and Phillis, and - to a lesser extent, Mrs Holman. Only Betty, the trusted family servant, shrewd and unsentimental, remains aloof from him. Expensively educated, travelled, a long sojourn in Italy (how Mrs Gaskell must have enjoyed including that touch!) - Holdsworth is a prime example of the ambitious, hard-working engineer. He is fast rising to the top of his profession, and holds himself in readiness to go anywhere in the world at a moment's notice if called upon to do so.

Unlike Paul, who still sees Phillis as a rather awkward girl, Holdsworth instantly recognises her as a beautiful woman. His connection with the Holmans steadily grows. Even the Minister is fascinated and Phillis falls in love. Inevitably Holdsowrth falls in love also, but only half in love because he is not a man of deep feelings. When he is unexpectedly summoned to go at once to Canada, he does not complain or protest. His job comes first.

He does, however, confide to Paul that he loves Phillis. He talks of her as he packs his bags, telling Paul that he expects Phillis to remain just as she is, untouched, an unsullied sleeping beauty, who will not change during the two years he must be away. When he returns, he will woo and win her. Like her father, Minister Holman, Holdsworth wants her to remain as she is, and where she is.

Paul's father, John Manning, who is a successful, self-educated inventor, visits Hope Farm, and becomes good friends with the minister. He is interested to meet Phillis, whom he sees differently from Holdsworth or her father. His view of the girl, however, is equally male-centred. John Manning thinks she would be an excellent wife for his Paul, who needs a strong wife behind him. Paul rather diffidently mentions Phillis's

other attributes, especially her love of scholarship, but his father brushes all that aside. She'll forget that once the babies come, says he. Paul remains silent, but he knows Phillis better than his father, and does not agree with him.

In the 1840s such ideas were commonplaces of male perception of young women. The profound and complex love of Minister Holman for his daughter, his only child, and his intellectual companion, is however far from commonplace, and represents a theme to which Mrs Gaskell returns more than once - the danger to all concerned of obsessive love. Squire Hamley's for his eldest son; Philip Hepburn's for Sylvia. Mrs Gaskell herself had once been afraid she would make 'an idol' of Marianne, her first child, such was her overpowering love. One can imagine the strength of her love if her son had actually lived, instead of dying in infancy, leaving a grieving memory forever just below the surface of her heart. (The Holmans, too, had lost their baby son.)

Another of her themes is the father-daughter relationship - Mary Barton and her father; Margaret Hale and hers; Sylvia Robson and Daniel; Molly Gibson and the ironic doctor. The paradox is that in the Gaskell family itself nothing suggests that William Gaskell was anything but a caring and intuitive father, prepared to let his daughters make their own decisions. Florence (Flossy) Gaskell, only eighteen, promised to marry her young man (an immensely suitable partner), without first going through the conventional hoop of discussing it with her parents. William Gaskell remained calm, being already acquainted with the young man, but Elizabeth Gaskell had a hard time coming to terms with the loss of her daughter. Could her use of the father-daughter relationship in the stories be a substitute for what was so important in her own life, the mother-daughter relationship?

Another theme which recurs in Mrs Gaskell's work is the notion of 'sinning' - humans are programmed to 'sin' in

one degree or another, and their natural development both as individuals and responsible members of society is therefore dependent upon their making amends - 'atonement'. This is what Mrs Gaskell, the minister's wife, believes, and what she considers to be a healthy happy ending to a story or novel. It is one of the bedrocks of her morality. Frequently the 'sin' is committed with the best of intentions. Paul Manning discloses Holdsworth's confidence, although he has no right to do so, but is driven to it because he sees Phillis's deep distress at Holdsworth's departure. Not only is Paul 'sinning' in betraying a confidence, he is also 'sinning' by making an error of judgment, having expected in his simplicity that Holdsworth meant what he said. And it is true that Holdsworth meant it at the time, but a more worldly observer would have doubted whether Holdsworth, half a world away, would really have kept to it.

Holdsworth's 'sin' was to put into words the wishful thinking which fills his heart when he is in an emotional state - and taken by surprise by the sudden call away to Canada. His remarks to Paul were private and unpremeditated. He did not expect they would be passed on to Phillis, but on the other hand he took no steps to protect her by telling Paul not to tell Phillis what he had said.

Phillis's 'sin' is similar to Paul's. As a consequence of her sheltered life, her worldly inexperience and her strong desire, she takes Paul's remarks to be tantamount to a definite proposal of marriage by Holdsworth. (Many popular Victorian novels were based on the fact that in the 1840s a very slight remark could, and often was, construed as a serious proposal, which if broken, might disgrace a girl for life.)

'Cousin Phillis' also follows other Gaskell stories with its theme of an agricultural society, hardly changed for many years, dragged by modern industrialisation and the railway network into a new and difficult way of life. Although Hope Farm appears utterly remote, in a time

warp, it is in fact near a fair-sized town. Its days of eighteenth century tranquility are numbered and not even Minister Holman with all his strength and intelligence can prevent it. Mrs Gaskell, acquainted with the ideas and policies of the great Manchester industrialists, never under-estimated their importance, and understood that stubborn opposition to factories and machines was wasted effort. That mellow sun shining on Cranford and Hope Farm is the nostalgic sun of memory.

In the months following Holdsworth's departure Phillis pines and begins to look ill. Paul becomes anxious for her sake, and to cheer her up, secretly tells her of Holdsworth's last words concerning her. Immediately she blossoms in mistaken assurance of Holdsworth's loyalty. Her father, with a blinkered view of his child, does not see her radiance just as previously he had not seen her sadness.

Finally, Holdsworth blithely writes Paul with news of his impending marriage to a French-Canadian girl. It is clear Phillis has become just one of the Holman family. He promises to send wedding card announcements to them. This puts Paul in a dilemma, but he feels it essential to tell Phillis the truth. She is stunned. Then, with great dignity, she makes him promise never to discuss it with her. Paul realises that her secret love must remain even more so. She could not bear the pain of other people's knowing.

But the arrival of Holdsworth's wedding cards in a letter to the Minister makes everything all too clear and triggers the emotional storm between Phillis and her father. This is the human equivalent of two earlier intense electric summer storms which play an important part in the development of Phillis's love. This bitter confrontation between father and daughter, watched by the conscience stricken Paul and the uncomprehending mother, is the dramatic climax of the novella. When Phillis hears her father blaming Paul for her unhappiness, she stands forth and bravely admits her love for Holdsworth, whatever kind of a man he is.

Paul, although involved in the quarrel, is still the bystander, recording the events. He realises that Betty was correct when she alleged that the minister would never have seen the growing friendship between Phillis and Holdsworth because he still saw his daughter as a child. Holman's love for Phillis has never been the measured love of a Puritan minister but the emotional devotion of a romantic scholar. The very name he gave her, Phillis, was a Greek name, a Pagan name, loved by Virgil, Holman's favourite author, a name redolent of verdant vegetation, the sweetheart of pastoral poetry. It betokened a special kind of love, and as the girl grew up to be a fine scholar, his prized student, sharing his interest in the classics, his proud and possessive love for her grew even fiercer. He could not admit she was becoming a women because that would bring closer the day when she would leave home, taken by another man.

The battle of wills and recriminations between the two, who have so much in common, and are now virtual opponents, proves too much for Phillis, who collapses, semi-conscious. The Minister, distraught, proves useless in an emergency. His wife, kind and sensible although no scholar, takes charge, helped by Paul, who rides swiftly for the doctor. The physician is out, so the message is left with the assistant. This young man, unconnected with the Holmans, knows Phillis by sight - and immediately identifies her as 'that good-looking young woman'. Paul inwardly compares that remark to the Minister's broken phrases, 'my only child, my little daughter'.

The doctor's examination confirms that Phillis is seriously ill and needs utter quiet and careful nursing to recover completely. Her father seems to grow older overnight, and his strength leaves him. When Brother Robinson and a friend, both fellow Dissenters, come to pray with him, Holman cannot join them. (One is reminded of the king in 'Hamlet'.) Holman cannot even lead the customary family prayers after supper, and old John, his trusted labourer, does it instead.

Whilst Phillis slowly and reluctantly recovers, her long golden hair cropped short during the worst of her fever - Mrs Gaskell sharpens her minor characters. I am fond of Timothy Cooper, the 'half-wit' labourer, whose independent action in keeping the noisy market-day traffic of heavy carts away from Phillis's bedroom shows that he is far from being a 'half-wit'. Paul reflects upon this incident - Paul is growing up, too. He realises that the Minister's impatient temper was so often tried by Tim's slowness and poor memory that Holman dubbed Timothy a 'half-wit' and left it at that. Paul had followed suit. The truth was that Timothy was very slow but still capable of learning. When Paul explains to the Minister what Timothy had taken upon himself to do as a contribution to helping Phillis recover strength, he was full of remorse, and changed his attitude towards the man.

An important character, whether on centre stage or in the wings, is Betty, who nursed Phillis as a baby, and gave her baby brother 'his last earthly food'. She acts as a kind of Greek chorus to Paul's narrative. In the 'Cornhill' ending to the novella it is Betty's blunt rebuke to Phillis to stop being languid, and start helping herself to recovery that has the desired effect. Phillis at once takes the first step back to health, planning a long visit to Paul's parents in Birmingham, before returning home to the 'peace of the old days'.

We are not told whether Betty was satisfied with that promise - or whether Paul was. He knew that he was also due to be moved to another railway posting. Did these two prosaic persons believe that the 'peace of the old days' would last forever, as Phillis seemed to believe? Phillis was not yet twenty. She had the rest of her life to live. Thanks to George Smith, we do not know. Cousin Phillis was a victim, not of Holdsworth, or her father, or her cousin, but of the circulation manager of the 'Cornhill Magazine'.

Finally, allow me to comment upon two introductions of one-volume editions of 'Cranford' coupled with 'Cousin

Phillis'. The first, published by John Lehmann in 1947, edited by Elizabeth Jenkins, describes 'Cousin Phillis' as 'a single thread' compared with the 'fabric' of 'Cranford'. (Mrs Gaskell talks of 'Cousin Phillis' as 'a complete fragment'. Elizabeth Jenkins, whilst admiring the 'originality' of the characters of Phillis and her father, dismisses the novella as a reworking of the hackneyed theme of the 'mutual attraction of a man of the world and an inexperienced girl'.

Paul Keating, editor of the 1976 Penguin edition of 'Cranford' plus 'Cousin Phillis', alleges that Holman, Paul and Holdsworth are all guilty of lack of foresight in their conduct towards Phillis and accordingly must take some of the blame for what happens. 'It is this, together with the passivity of Phillis and the way she is associated with natural forces and the movement of the seasons that gives a mood of inevitability to her suffering.' A fair comment, given the circumstances, but the words 'passivity' and 'inevitability of suffering' strike a minor chord. Mrs Gaskell's intended ending, however, strikes a distinctly major chord.

It is my contention that in view of what Jenny Uglow called the 'alternative ending' and what I prefer to call the 'intended ending', 'Cousin Phillis is due for a thorough reappraisal. Far from being an unexpected departure from Mrs Gaskell's other works, I submit that it is firmly in line with her beliefs, interests and literary style. 'Cousin Phillis' can be compared to an Old Master, dark with age which has for years hung in a neglected corner of the gallery. When a new director orders a thorough cleaning, the result is a bright new painting which the spectators can view with new understanding and admiration.

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CHELTENHAM FESTIVAL OF LITERATURE

Jenny Uglow is on the programme and will give a lecture on Elizabeth Gaskell at 10.15 am on Sunday 10 October

ANOTHER BIRTHDAY PRESENT FOR ELIZABETH

by C C Waghorn

In the second chapter of her book 'Elizabeth Gaskell: a Habit of Stories', Jenny Uglow deals with Elizabeth's childhood reading. She mentions a birthday present the future author received on her eleventh birthday:.

'Aunt Lumb believed in handing on proven knowledge: Knutsford Library has a well-thumbed copy of 'The Monitor, or a Collection of Precepts, Observations etc' published in 1804, fondly inscribed to Elizabeth:

"from her affectionate Aunt Hannah Lumb, Sept the 29th 1821" - her eleventh birthday. Beneath the inscription are the pencilled ghosts of another, suggesting the little book had already done service to other relations.'

As I read this, my mind went to two little volumes which have had a place in my own library for thirty years or so. They are the two volumes of 'The Female Mentor or Select Conversations' by Honoria, the Second Edition of 1798.

These were also given to Elizabeth Gaskell on the occasion of her eleventh birthday. The donor this time was her father, as the inscription on the fly leaf shows: 'E C Stevenson from her Father on her birthday Sep 29 - 1821'.

My records of my book buying all those years ago are now somewhat incomplete, but I believe 'The Female Mentor' was bought from a catalogue of an Edinburgh bookseller; the price would have been modest by the standards of today, in part a sign of the partial neglect of Elizabeth Gaskell at that time. The volumes are in the original boards, though the spine has at some time been renewed with "Mrs Gaskell's copy" on the lettering piece.

'The Female Mentor' seems to complement Aunt Lumb's present. The 44 chapters or 'conversations' fall into two categories: those, chiefly in the first volume, which deal with some well-known historical figure, and those, chiefly in the second volume, which deal with such topics as On Novels, On Learned Ladies, On Modesty, On Dancing, On Marriage, On Dissipation, On Vanity, On

THE

FEMALE MENTOR:

OR,

SELECT CONVERSATIONS.

(Mrs. Pilkington)

IN TWO VOLUMES.

THE SECOND EDITION.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL, JUN., AND W. DAVIES,
IN THE STRAND.

1798.

E. C. Stevenson
from her Father
on her birth day
Sep. 29 — 1821

Politeness, On Humane Institutions, On Female Friendship and On Maternal Affections. The historical figures are all women: they include Lady Elizabeth Gray, Boadicea, Catherine of Arragon, Anne Bolen (sic), Catherine Parr and, most interesting of all in terms of the adult Elizabeth Gaskell, Madame de Sévigné.

In her biography of Elizabeth Gaskell, Winifred Gerin writes: 'The purpose of the visit [to Paris in 1862] was to allow her to pursue her research into the project book on Madame de Sévigné, for which she had George Smith's blessing, and with which she was much more engrossed than with finishing 'Sylvia's Lovers'. It is a great loss that the book was never written, for no one was temperamentally better suited to the subject than Mrs Gaskell. She was immensely attracted to the seventeenth century 'grande dame', whose devotion to an only daughter inspired a correspondence that must rank amongst the finest in any literature ... They were two of a kind, as Mrs Gaskell obviously felt in wishing to introduce the French writer to the English public.'

One can only wonder whether that chapter in 'The Female Monitor' played some part in the beginning of the "immense attraction".

Of the history of that copy of 'The Female Monitor' between the Gaskell birthday and my discovery of it in that Edinburgh catalogue, I know nothing. I do know that in the thirty years since it has served regularly as a teaching aid to introduce my former pupils to Elizabeth Gaskell and her work. Almost without exception they have been surprised that such a 'dry' book of moral instruction should have been given to one so young, 'but at least it showed that her father had not forgotten her'. Those who were from one parent families perhaps appreciated that most keenly. 'The Female Monitor' had helped them to think of Elizabeth as a real person.

I would like to think that she would have approved of this use of her birthday present.

'SO DIFFERENT A LIFE ...'

by Anna Unsworth

Elizabeth Gaskell arrived in Oxford at the beginning of November 1857 when making the first of the round of visits advised by her doctors to escape the rigours of winter in Manchester.

As predicted by a friend of Charlotte Brontë's, Elizabeth stirred up 'a hornet's nest' about her ears with her 'Life of Charlotte Brontë' published in February 1857, and all the summer a storm had raged about what she believed to have been the truth about the Brontë family. While this was going on she had had to act as an official hostess at the Exhibition of Art and Literature held in Manchester that summer. So it was a bruised Elizabeth Gaskell who arrived in November at Teddesley Park, Staffordshire, the home of Lord Hatherton, a whig politician, and his wife, an old friend from her Cheshire girlhood (formerly Mrs Caroline Davenport of Capesthorne), to spend a few days with them on the way to some relatives who lived near Devizes. It was the Hathertons who reminded her that Oxford was a place she would pass through in her railway journey to Devizes and that she should take the opportunity of visiting the city, if only very briefly.

With many connections in the university, they at once wrote letters 'right and left' as Elizabeth put it in one of her subsequent letters, 'facilitating every pleasant arrangement'.

She and her 19-year-old daughter, Meta, were met, on their arrival at the Star Inn, by Dr Wellesley, Lord Hatherton's brother-in-law and Principal of New Inn Hall, who took them on *'a race up past X where Ridley and Latimer were burnt thro' the Radcliffe Quad to All Souls Quad into High St - back to his own house to lunch; donned a scarlet robe himself, having to attend convocation, & rushed off (with two scarlet wings flying all abroad) with me on his arm, to deposit us at the Theatre to hear A. Stanley's lecture.'*

Arthur Stanley was another old Cheshire friend and now Professor of Ecclesiastical History. She went on: *'I saw Matt Arnold who was getting ready for his inaugural poetry lecture.'* Elizabeth was a friend of Arnold's mother, the widow of the famous Dr Arnold of Rugby.

In the morning a breakfast had been arranged at the Stanleys' house in the High Street where she met Dr Acland, Professor of Medicine, John Connington, Professor of Latin, Dr Brodie, Professor of Chemistry and Matthew Arnold again, together with the wives. She had to catch the 11.30 train to Devizes but all those present insisted that she and Meta should make another visit on their return journey and, in the time left, Stanley took them to Christ Church and *'into the meadows up to the Bridge at one end of the High St. Anything more lovely than that morning cannot be conceived - the beech-leaves lay golden brown on the broad path-way, the leaves on the elms were quite still, except when one yellower than the rest came floating down. The Colleges were marked out clearly against the blue sky and the beautiful broad shadows made the lighter portions of the buildings stand out clearly in the sunshine. Oh, I shall never forget Oxford ...'*

On her return journey, she spent three days with the Brodies, at their home, Cowley House, saw more of the University, heard Frederick Temple, newly appointed headmaster of Rugby, preach at St Mary's, was amazed at the lunch served to the students of New College, *'stewed eels, minced chicken, beef-steak with oyster sauce and College Pudding'*, saw the treasures of the Bodleian and the Pre-Raphaelite paintings at the Union. Back at home before Christmas she was once again 'desperately busy' but found time to write: *'I dearly like to call up in my mind pictures and thoughts of so utterly different a life to Manchester ...'.*

The Gaskells and Brodies exchanged several visits over the years between 1857 and Mrs Gaskell's death in 1865. The Brodies' house was situated a matter of yards from the famously beautiful Magdalen Bridge, the official

entrance to academic Oxford, crossing the River Cherwell with its background of the Botanic Gardens and lawns leading to the equally famous Christ Church meadows mentioned by Mrs Gaskell. The house is now part of St Hilda's, one of the University Colleges which I found after considerable research in year books, street maps etc. I had the pleasure of visiting the College and was shown by the librarian the part of the College which was the Cowley House visited by Mrs Gaskell. I was particularly delighted to stand in the charming drawing-room which must be much as it was in her time with its huge French windows through which one could walk down wide steps to the gardens along the river and see across fields on the opposite side the 'dreaming spires' of Oxford.
In 1893 the house was sold to Miss Beale, one of the great Victorian figures in the education of women. It was named St Hilda's College as it is still today and celebrates its centenary in 1993 when a history of the College by one of the Fellows is to be published. I was fortunate that I was able to draw her attention to Mrs Gaskell's letters and the relevant material is to appear in the books, as well as the fine sketch of Mrs Gaskell which appears as the frontispiece to Winifred Gérin's biography. The house has now been vastly extended, but the house as Mrs Gaskell knew it is still quite distinctive with its Victorian decorative brickwork.

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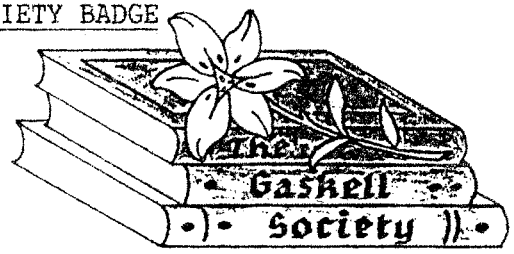
OUR SOCIETY BADGE



This MAY be available at Edinburgh, but will CERTAINLY be on hand for AGM and at the next South of England Branch meetings.

Otherwise £3.50 payable to "The Gaskell Society" will secure you one post free.

American and Japanese members will be supplied directly, please await further details.

BOOK NOTES
by Christine Lingard

ELIZABETH GASKELL by Jane Spencer, Macmillan, £9.50. 156pp.

The latest addition to Macmillan's series Women Writers whose coverage ranges from Fanny Burney to Margaret Atwood. Each volume consists of a short systematic critical analysis of the author in question and makes a good introduction to the subject for the beginner.

The biographical information is brief but stresses her relationship to her contemporaries and the problems she faced combining her role as mother and author in Victorian England. The influence of religion is also dealt with. Chapter two was previously published as Mary Barton and Thomas Carlyle in the Gaskell Society Journal, vol.2, 1988.

The rest of the book adopts a chronological approach and The Life of Charlotte Brontë is given equal treatment to the other major novels, but there is little mention of her short stories. The book is completed with copious notes and perceptive comments on critics. There is an extensive bibliography.

REWRITING THE VICTORIANS; THEORY, HISTORY AND THE POLITICS OF GENDER, edited by Linda Shires, Routledge, 1992. £10.99

This collection of essays is a rarity in that it contains an extremely scholarly treatment of My Lady Ludlow in the chapter The "female paternalist" as historian by Christine Krueger. She discusses why this novel has been comparatively neglected by critics and argues that time is ripe for feminist re-evaluation. It provides a link in the development of Gaskell's use of history between The Life and the major historical novel Sylvia's Lovers. The character of the eponymous narrator is re-assessed with full reference to a range of feminist and Marxist critics.

VERSATILE VICTORIAN; selected writings of George Henry Lewes; edited with introduction by Rosemary Ashton. Bristol Classical Press, 1992. £25

A modern edition of a selection of reviews by the Victorian critic now chiefly remembered for his relationship to George Eliot. Unlike his partner Lewes was known to Gaskell and she approached him for information during the writing of Life of Charlotte Brontë which the editor recounts in her introduction. Lewes' review Charlotte Brontë "Villette" and Mrs Gaskell "Ruth" appeared in Westminster Review of April 1853 and is reprinted here in full. It is highly appreciative -
'Ruth, then, besides being a beautiful novel, satisfies the highest moral sense by the pictures it suggests'
though he objected to the intensity of grief which the child suffers on learning he is illegitimate.

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SOUTH OF ENGLAND GROUP

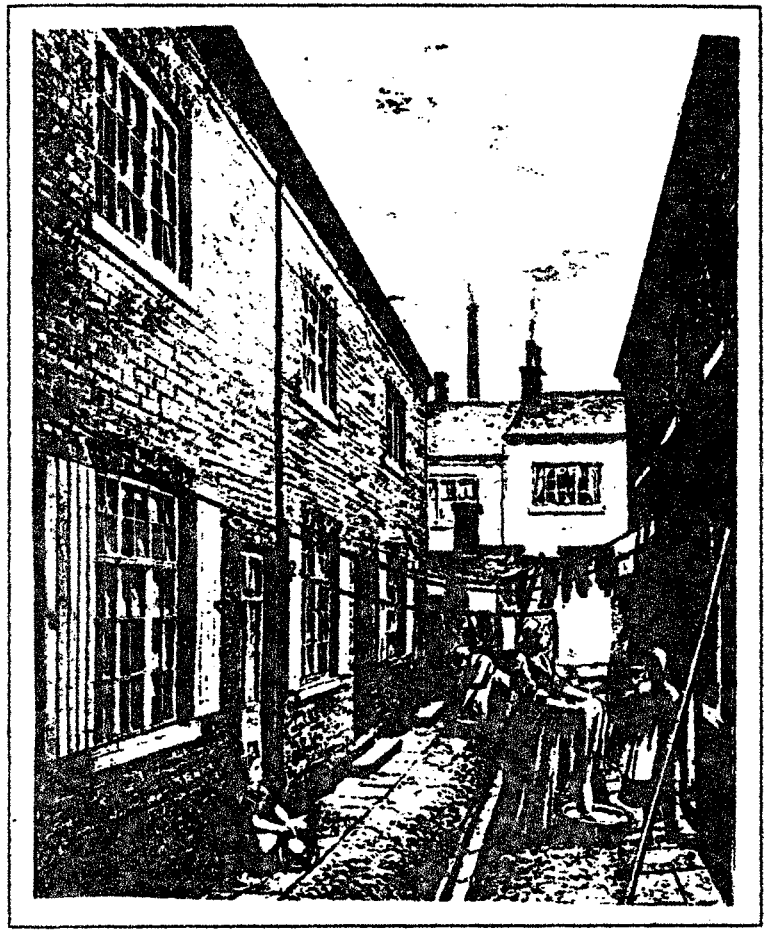
Members have enjoyed stimulating and friendly meetings and hope to meet more of you at THE ANNUAL LONDON MEETING to which members of the Dickens Fellowship will be invited. This is on 6 November at Francis Holland School, 39 Graham Terrace, SW1W 8JF at 2.15 pm. Edward Preston, Secretary of The Dickens Fellowship, will speak on Elizabeth Gaskell and Charles Dickens.

PROGRAMME FOR 1994
Saturday 5 February, 2 pm at Francis Holland School.
Hidemitsu Tohgo to speak. Subject to be arranged (he will let us know at Edinburgh)
Saturday 6 May, 2 pm at Francis Holland School.
Rev Ashley Hills: 'Mrs Gaskell's Unitarianism'
Saturday 3 September, 2 pm. Venue to be decided.
Elizabeth Hubbard: 'Mrs Gaskell and Adolescence'
Saturday 5 November
Annual London Meeting
For further details, please contact Dudley J Barlow, 44 Seymour Road, London SW18 5JA (081 874 7727)

If you have any material or suggestions for future Newsletters, please contact Mrs Joan Leach, Far Yew Tree House, Over Tabley, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 OHN (Tel: 0565 634668)

ISSN 0954 - 1209

The Gaskell Society



NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 1994 NO. 17

EDITOR'S LETTER

by Joan Leach

My life at present seems to be so involved with forward planning that I hardly feel I'm living in today; however, I hope to reap rewards eventually.

Furthest in the future is OXFORD '95 for our next conference; we hope to visit Manchester College and Wadham in March to make arrangements. The date for the conference will depend on availability of venue and speakers and it is clear that no date will suit everyone; the last week in July, or first or third in August seem likely.

AGM will be in Knutsford on 24 September; more details will be sent with the Journal mailing, which will not be before May, a little later than usual but expect a bumper edition with Edinburgh papers included.

With this newsletter you will receive last year's AGM minutes wherein you will note a forthcoming rise in membership dues, but I think you will agree that we have done well to keep it down until now with printing and postage costs rising; indeed it has only been possible because Manchester University has been generous with support for the Journal.

We are concerned about the condition of the Gaskell home at Plymouth Grove. When we noted some deterioration in 1990 we were assured by the University that it was not structural, but since then they have taken no further interest in the building. It is used by The International Society who have been informed it may be sold and they have been offered less suitable premises which they rejected. We are alarmed at this casual attitude to the Grade 2* listed building, one of the few large, early 19th century houses left in Manchester, quite apart from its literary associations. The conservation committee of the Victorian Society has been consulted and we will keep you informed.

I have just been reading the Letters of Anne Thackeray Ritchie and was intrigued to find she visited Julia and Meta at the Plymouth Grove house, in November 1891:

> 'O what kind ladies! O what a delicious dinner!
> O what a nice room! O how extraordinarily rejuvenated
> and cheered I feel', she wrote to her husband.

We hope some of you will be able to attend meetings during this year, either here in Knutsford or Manchester; the South of England group which meets in Chelsea or perhaps at the Alliance of Literary Societies AGM in Birmingham on 23 April.

A REMARKABLE GASKELL COLLECTION

by J A V Chapple

Jenny Uglow surely struck a chord when she wrote in her *Elizabeth Gaskell: A Habit of Stories* (Faber & Faber 1993) of being intrigued by Mrs Gaskell's notorious 'charm'. A birthday letter to her youngest daughter Julia in September 1854, written from the Isle of Man, provides a perfect example. It is one of no less than fifty-two letters or fragments of letters written by Elizabeth Gaskell now generously placed on permanent loan in the Brotherton Library of Leeds University by Mrs Gaskell's direct descendants, Mrs Rosemary Trevor Dabbs and her son and daughter.

The fundamental interest and value of these letters may be judged very swiftly from the standard edition of the *Letters*, in which they were originally printed by kind permission of Mrs Dabbs' mother, Mrs Trevor Jones (source 8). What would be known of Elizabeth Gaskell's early married life if Letters 3, 4, 10, 11, 13, 14 and 18 had been unavailable? There are many other remarkable letters to Marianne Gaskell in the collection, but again, the quality of their love for each other can be quickly judged by glancing at the amusing 'Precepts for the guidance of a Daughter' printed in appendix F, where a poem entitled 'Night Fancies' also appears. Both are now part of the permanent loan, together with a copy of an obituary in the *Examiner* of 18 November 1865, some unidentified verses sent by Meta Gaskell to a friend and notes on the Coppock family of Stockport (from whom Sandlebridge was inherited); also testimonials of Mr Samuel Gaskell (printed) and probate and double probate copies of the Will of Hannah Lumb.

The loan also includes seventeen volumes of Mrs Gaskell's published works, bound in red and stamped with Marianne's initials after she had married Thurstan Holland. The most important item of all, however, comes from Marianne's childhood, the manuscript notebook her mother began when she was a baby. It was published in a very limited edition of fifty copies by Clement Shorter in 1923 and entitled *'My Diary': The early years of my daughter Marianne.* Recently studied by Anita C Wilson in the *Gaskell Society Journal* for 1993, it can now be given the wider circulation it deserves.

The Society has good reason to be grateful to Mrs Trevor Dabbs and her son and daughter for making available in the Brotherton Library this exceptional collection of material.

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

EDITOR'S NOTE

Your committee invested £30 of our funds in purchasing this 'letter' complete with penny red stamp, and dated May 12th, 1852.

The correspondent Charles J Herford may be the same Charles whose wedding to Mary Robberds the Gaskells attended in May 1852 (GL 126 written 19th a day after the wedding). If so, he didn't indulge in a long honeymoon!

Brother Edward Herford was also at the wedding and your will hear more of him in the next Newsletter.

MANCHESTER AND SALFORD ASSOCIATION FOR SECURING THE BETTER REGULATION OF PUBLIC HOUSES AND OTHER PLACES OF ENTERTAINMENT.

Sir,

A Meeting of the Executive Committee will be held at the Town Hall, on Thursday Evening next, at 7 o'clock when your presence is particularly requested.

I am, Sir,

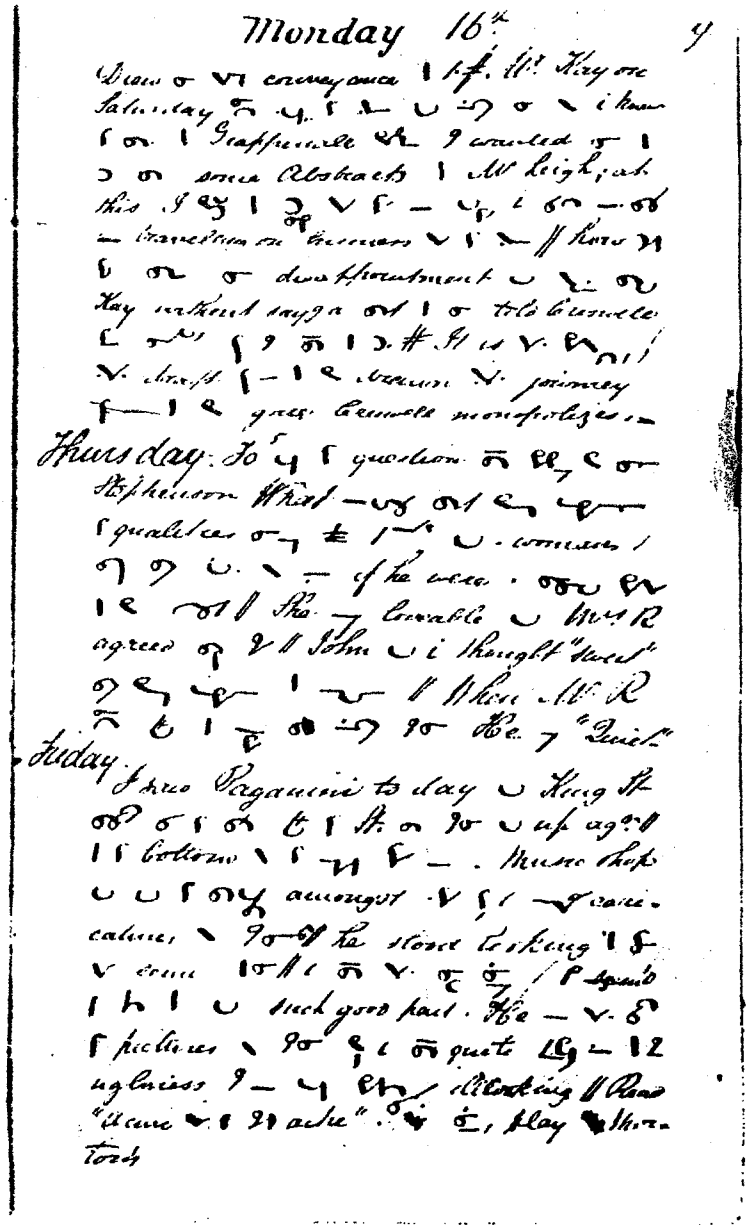
Your obedient Servant,

CHARLES J. HERFORD,
HON. SEC.

32, King Street. 11th May

Important business

EDITOR'S NOTE: Is anyone able to transcribe this 1832 version of shorthand? It is from a diary of Edward Herford then aged 17. Note entry for Thursday



Some Thoughts on Teaching "NORTH AND SOUTH" to a WEA Class

by Geraldine Wilby

Since October I have been teaching a WEA class in Skelmersdale. We started by doing a novel by each of the Brontë sisters and now we are studying North and South. One thing that has struck us has been the careful noting of materials. In the first chapter in London, Margaret goes to find the Indian shawls that are going to be part of her cousin Edith's trousseau. In Jenny Uglow's biography she tells us of Elizabeth Gaskell going to see Caroline Davenport's trousseau at Capesthorne in 1852 (Chapter 15 p.299)[1]. There were 'six beautiful Indian shawls'. Uglow refers to a letter to Agnes Sandars that describes the colours of the shawls as 'lilac, crimson and blue, embroidered and fringed with gold'. Margaret is wearing an Indian shawl when Mr Thornton first sees her in the hotel in Milton (Chapter 7). She wore it 'as an Empress wears her drapery'.

Mrs Thornton is more austere when we first see her for she is dressed in 'stout black silk' and mending a large tablecloth 'of the finest texture' (Chapter 9). When Mr Thornton goes to have tea with the Hales he sees Margaret in a 'light coloured muslin gown which had a good deal of pink about it'. Mrs Hale has been doing worsted work (Chapter 10). We wondered if this meant knitting or tapestry. Soon after Mr Thornton takes his mother to see the Hales. She disapproves of the embroidery that Margaret is doing on a small piece of cambric. It is an article of clothing for her cousin's baby. Mrs Thornton thinks, 'Flimsy useless work'. She approves more of the sensible double knitting being done by Mrs Hale (Chapter 12). In that same chapter Mrs Hale notes and admires Mrs Thornton's lace 'of that old English point which has not been made for this seventy years'. She infers that it must be an heirloom and that Mrs Thornton must have worthy ancestors.

Margaret and her father return the visit and are ushered into the Thornton's drawing room. There is a bright, floral carpet but it is covered in the centre by 'linen drugget, glazed and colourless (Chapter 15).

Bessy Higgins likes to touch the soft materials worn by Margaret 'with a childish admiration of their fineness of texture' (Chapter 13). Bessy's sister has to go to the mill to do her fustian cutting. One of our group told us that her husband always calls his corduroy trousers his fustians. We talked about the days when corduroy was a coarser material.

In all, we felt we needed a textile expert in the group. Obviously Elizabeth Gaskell was very interested in materials and used them to give reality to her characters and their settings.

[1]Jenny Uglow refers us to the Gaskell Society Newsletter, August 1990, for the unpublished letter to Agnes Sandars (p.649)

(Ed: Have you been listening to the serialisation of North and South on Woman's Hour read by Janet McTear? It would make a fine audio tape, and letters from members to BBC Enterprises might convince them to issue it.)

* * * * * * * * * * *

THE COVER ILLUSTRATION is from the KNUTSFORD EDITION (1906) OF MARY BARTON entitled: 'A court in Hulme'

THE BRADFORDS OF SEEDLEY

by J A V Chapple

'My dearest girls', wrote Elizabeth Gaskell to MA and ME some time around 3 September 1846, 'I think we shall all gladly subscribe the shilling necessary (I believe) to have the name of Laetitia altered. I don't think we should any of us like it, and I cannot think what made Papa think of it'. They were successful. Their last daughter was baptised at Cross Street chapel by the Reverend J G Robberds on 17 March 1847 and given the names of Julia Bradford.

Julia seems a fair exchange for Laetitia, but why Bradford? It is clear from the *Letters* (pages 18, 26, 38, 50 and 825) that the Bradfords were rich friends who lived in some style at Seedley near Pendleton, certainly from July 1838 and some years into the next decade - how many is not clear. He was an American who had married 'a Miss Taylor sister of that pretty Mrs W Holland'. It is tempting to chase after the latter, who 'was too pretty', according to Sam Gaskell. He said that 'he never could take his eyes off her - that in walking the streets it must be painful to her to excite the notice such beauty must' (unindexed, p.39). The former was very probably the 'dear Julia Bradford' of letter 16a who used to advise Mrs Gaskell not to kill her children with lessons. No first name appears for her husband, however.

The Plymouth Grove sale catalogue has 'Works of S D Bradford and ten others'. Is this the Samuel D Bradford, Ll.D, who can be found amongst Harvard College alumni that received honorary degrees? In 1814 he was of Middleburg. The 1841 volume of Manchester's Ministry-to-the-Poor Reports notices a donation in the previous year from S D Bradford Esq. Cross Street Chapel register lists John Henry, son of Samuel Dexter Bradford (merchant of Seedley) and Julia Emma Taylor, born 11 September 1843, baptised by Robberds 12 February 1844*. In March 1849 J E Bradford reviewed *Mary Barton* for *The Christian Examiner* (Boston). It looks as if Julia Gaskell was named after this Samuel Bradford and his wife Julia (née Taylor).

In an unpublished letter of 11 February 1857, Mrs Gaskell writes of a Mr and Mrs. Bradford of Roxbury. Acting on the advice of my Hull colleague Professor Philip Taylor, I have been able to contact immensely helpful American experts. Mrs Betty H Payne of the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society sent material from the index to

the *New York Times*: S D Bradford (Hon) died in 1866 and a Samuel Bradford in 1885. Also, much later, a Samuel Dexter Bradford married in Portchester, NY, a window, born Louise Angela, daughter of the late James Sheldon Merriam, a lawyer of New York, on 27 July 1914. (The New England Historic Genealogical Society also sent items about this marriage from *The Boston Evening Transcript* - shades of T S Eliot!)

Finally, Mariam Touba of the New York Historical society was good enough to consult a fragile copy of Bradford's *Works* (Boston, 1858) on my behalf. She writes that it has a dedication, dated from West Roxbury, January 1st 1858, to his sons, Samuel Dexter Jr, and John Henry, which contains material of an autobiographical nature. In addition, his published letters and speeches are arranged chronologically: 'Those items from 1837 to 1842 are dated from Manchester or published in the *Manchester Guardian*. The items after 1848 suggest he lived most of the next seven years in the Boston area.' He was actually raised in Roxbury, spent some time in England and together with his son begins to appear in New York city directories as merchants in 1858.

Much would have more. Had they returned to America by the time Julia was christened? Have any Gaskell letters to or from Samuel and Julia Bradford survived? Was Elizabeth Gaskell right to be so impressed by them? A combined British-American research effort might be worthwhile.

Editor's Note: The baptism record of John Henry Bradford at Cross Street Chapel is on the same page as that of Florence Elizabeth Gaskell, a year before, 11 January 1843.
Records for Meta (Margaret Emily Gaskell) baptised 28 September 1838 follow Samuel Dexter Bradford, 4 July 1838.
A six months' gap between birth and baptism was usual.
I think the shilling subscribed to change the name Laetitia to Julia Bradford would be for the official entry at the Registrar's.
Christine Lingard has found a column in the New York Times for January 7 1866 with the 'Will of the late Hon Samuel D Bradford (from Boston Traveller Dec 26) Total amount of property $1,500,000'.

* * * * * * * * *

CJ 585660

B. Cert. S.R.

CERTIFIED COPY of an ENTRY OF BIRTH

Pursuant to the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953

Registration District Manchester

1846. Birth in the Sub-district of Chorlton upon Medlock in the County of Lancaster

No.	When and where born	Name, if any	Sex	Name and surname of father	Name, surname and maiden surname of mother	Occupation of father	Signature, description and residence of informant	When registered	Signature of registrar	Name entered after registration
117	Third September 1846 121 Upper Rumford St.	Julia Bradford	Girl	William Gaskell	Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell formerly Stevenson	Unitarian Minister	William Gaskell Father 121 Upper Rumford St.	Thirteenth October 1846	PM Holland Registrar	

Certified to be a true copy of an entry in a register in my custody.

[illegible] Deputy Superintendent Registrar

25th January 1994 Date

CAUTION:—It is an offence to falsify a certificate or to make or knowingly use a false certificate or a copy of a false certificate intending it to be accepted as genuine to the prejudice of any person, or to possess a certificate knowing it to be false without lawful authority.

[Printed by authority of the Registrar General.]

BOOK NOTES
by Christine Lingard

Pilgrim edition of the letters of Charles Dickens, edited by Graham Story, Kathleen Tillotson and Angus Easson. Clarendon Press, 1993, vol 7 1853-1855.
The latest volume of this epic undertaking includes twenty letters to Elizabeth and two to William Gaskell. They chart the progress of Cranford, Old Nurse's Story, Squire's Story, Company Manners and the beginning of the serialization of North and South indicating the taut relationship of the two authors. An additional feature of this volume is an addenda to the previous six volumes of newly discovered letters not yet published in full, including a letter of 27.2.1850 in Dickens' typically flattering style praising Lizzie Leigh.

Two new editions of Gaskell novels have been published in 1993. Mary Barton, edited by Angus Easson, Ryburn Publishing £25, is the only hardback edition currently available in this country. It is scrupulously edited based on the text of the fifth edition of 1855, the last that Gaskell took a personal hand in editing, and also contains the text of William's lectures on Lancashire dialect, her own outlines of the novel, and the verse Sketches among the Poor that they jointly submitted to Blackwood's Edinburgh magazine in 1837.
North and South, edited by Jenny Uglow, Everyman £4.99, is a paperback edition with introduction and notes most notable for a supplement surveying the novel's critical reception from Henry Chorley to Patsy Stoneman.
(More Everyman Gaskell editions due soon)

Nineteenth Century Stories by Women, an anthology edited by Glennis Stephenson. Broadway literary texts (Ontario) includes stories by over twenty North American and British authors of whom Gaskell, Mary Shelley and Louisa May Alcott are the most well-known. Less familiar names include Alice Howells Frechette and Constance Woolson. Others are Kate Chopin and Mrs Oliphant. The two Gaskell stories are Lizzie Leigh and Old Nurse's Story.

WHITBY IN 1793
by Muriel Smith

Since the plot of Sylvia's Lovers turns on the activities of the press gang, the following glimpse of Whitby life has its Gaskellian interest. I found it in an unexpected place, a volume which the Society for Theatre Research published in 1984: Sybil Rosenfeld's The Georgian Theatre of Richmond, Yorkshire and its circuit: Beverley, Harrogate, Kendal, Northallerton, Ulverston and Whitby.

The theatre company concerned, managed by Samuel Butler from 1773 to 1812, worked the circuit in a two-year cycle, playing at Whitby for about three months every other winter, beginning in 1793. In that year, the season opened on 2 December 1793 and finished 14 February 1794. The whaling fleet was home and the press gang was busy, whalers being prime material for the navy. This was the first winter of the war: war was declared between Britain and France following the execution of Louise XVI on 21 January 1793. With the navy expanding from peace-time levels, laid-up ships being made ready and so forth, the need for sailors will have been particularly acute. However, the playbills for the season all bore a most unusual announcement:

> "Captain Shortland pledges his word of honour that no seamen whatever shall be molested by his people on Playnights [three nights a week] from the hour of four in the Afternoon to Twelve at night; after which time the indulgence ceases."

The point presumably was not so much to give the whalers a chance of attending as to prevent disturbances in the streets which might deter the gentry and middle classes from going to the play.

* * * * * * * *

The Writing of COUSIN PHILLIS
by J A V Chapple

Members will be interested to read the full text of the letter to George Smith so nicely deployed by Brenda Colloms in the last Newsletter (16). Some thoughts on 'Cousin Phillis'. The text was printed in Etudes Anglaises:

December 10th [1863]
46 P.G.

My dear Mr Smith,

I have followed your advice to the letter ; I have sent the (signed & dated) agreement to Mr Shaen, & copies of all the *late* correspondence since Novr 6th between Mr F.C. & me to Mr Shaen ; & begged him to call upon you ; & given him directions to write to Mr F Chapman in my name &c, exactly as you bid me[1]. I don't quite understand what you mean about Phillis ending - & my putting a few lines in addition to the Proofs, which I now return. Do you want it to *end with the year*? I shall be sorry for it is, at present, such a complete fragment ; but, if you wish it, I will send you up a line or two, or else I think I had two more nos in my head, one of which is part written & would have been wholly written by now, if I had not been so much annoyed about this Chapman & Hall business. On looking it over I cannot see how it *is* to be made to end now, even with any exculpatory "few lines". I will tell you the story in brief, as it is in my head.

I (writer) get a letter from Holdsworth saying he is going to be married directly to some Canadian lady. I have to tell Phillis. She comforts *me* at first for the blunder I made in telling her ; but becomes irritable for the first time in her life - her father gets uneasy, questions me, when every one is gone to bed. I confess my having told her, - he (irritable too) is angry with me. Phillis hearing her father's loud voice comes down, a cloak over her nightdress, & exculpates me by telling out how I had seen her fretting & read her heart. But

the telling &c &c, brings on a brain fever & she lies at death's door. Stupid brother ministers come (like Job's friends,) to *comfort the* Minister. He rebels against *them*, & is very humble in private. She recovers, asks for a change - goes to my fathers - & in a town, among utterly different people & scenery, cures herself, - but it is a sort of moral 'Tis better to have loved & lost, than never to have loved at all- last scene long years after. The minister dead, I married - we hear of the typhus fever in the village where Phillis lives, & I go to persuade her & her bedridden mother to come to us. I find her making practical use of the knowledge she had learnt from Holdsworth and, with the help of common labourers, levelling & draining the undrained village - a child (orphaned by the fever) in her arms another plucking at her gown - we hear afterwards that she has adopted these to be her own.

I think it will be a pity to cut it short but on the other side you will find the ending that I suppose *must* do if you want to end it this year. I like the illustrations to Sylvia *much* - but I must end

Yours most truly
E C Gaskell

... Alas ! this was the last time I ever saw Phillis radiant & happy ; the last time I ever saw the girlish bliss shine out upon her face. I had raised her high in hope ; it fell to my lot to dash her down from her height. Not many weeks after I heard from Holdsworth, telling me of his approaching marriage to one Lucille Ventadour - a french Canadian. I had to go, and tell Phillis this - I cannot bear to think of the piteous scene ; all the more piteous because she was so patient. Spare me the recital ...

[1]Ed: Gaskell letters 539, 540, 541 and 545 also refer to the copyright problems with Chapman

DIES CALENDONIAE

by Brenda Colloms

The 1993 Edinburgh Conference officially lasted only from 20 to 23 August, but many Gaskellians seem to have organised their stay so as to have a few days extra to enjoy the Edinburgh Festival. To accommodate nearly a hundred Society members, Joan Leach and her organising committee arranged bookings at Queen Margaret College on the outskirts of the city. This was a seven pound journey out by taxi, but fortunately this daunting fare fell to seventy or eighty pence if delegates took a bus, with a recognised stop near the College. Meals and lectures were held in the College.

Proceedings commenced with an ingathering of Clan Gaskell and an early supper, to give time for an illustrated talk by William Ritchie. His title, 'The Athens of the North', referred to the glittering epoch of Edinburgh literary, social and professional life in the early nineteenth century, before the railways extended northwards and made London more accessible to ambitious young Scots. This proved an inspired choice for an opening lecture, giving us a background which would be invaluable for the lecture of the next two days.

Lectures were slotted in to Saturday and Sunday mornings, subjects having been chosen for their variety whilst at the same time remaining firmly linked to Mrs Gaskell, or to her father, William Stevenson, or to her friend, Charlotte Brontë. The general background was early nineteenth century Scottish literature and periodical writing.

This gave considerable scope for variety and individuality, and the speakers conveyed their own enthusiasm for their selected subjects. The only real criticism of the programme was that shortage of time precluded any questions, answers and discussion, which would have allowed participation by the audience. It will be interesting to hear whether answers to the

Questionnaire suggested that one of the afternoons should have been given to lectures so as to give more time. This would have meant giving up one set of coach trips, but perhaps evening outings could have been offered instead? Choices, choices!

Recalling the lectures in random order: Ian Campbell's lecture on 'The Scottish Writers' Response to the Industrial Revolution' was fascinating by itself, but doubly so in view of Mrs Gaskell's realistic attitude to the Industrial Revolution as seen at close quarters in Manchester. The last lecture of all, 'The Novelist's Use of Dialect', by Rosalind Slater, was also a joy for Gaskell and Brontë readers. It proved that Rosalind Slater, Lancashire born, had lost none of her mastery of native dialect after years of living in Canada. Listeners became aware of the difference between the use of realist dialect to strengthen characterisation, and use of semi-humorous, often patronising, dialect to create an effect.

The first lecture on Saturday morning, 'Early Nineteenth Century Scottish Literature', by David Finkelstein, was a model of a rigorously-researched text which set the standard for the lectures to come. The information so painlessly imparted by William Ritchie the previous evening proved an invaluable preparation for Dr Finkelstein's lecture, and also for John Chapple's contribution, 'William Stevenson and the Edinburgh Literary Scene, 1800-1820', which neatly followed on. William Stevenson is rather a shadowy figure in the complex tapestry of Mrs Gaskell's life, and Professor Chapple closed many gaps in our knowledge. (Ever alive to the hunt for clues, he was overheard at Dalmeny House asking the guide discreetly, but hopefully, whether the name 'Cleghorn' had cropped up among the Rosebery papers.)

Two stimulating lectures, utterly dissimilar in content, dealt with 'Blackwood's Magazine', the famous 'Maga'. Christine Alexander made a convincing case for pinpointing 'Blackwood's' as a prime influence on the

Brontë children's juvenalia, and Douglas Mack captured his audience with a description of James Hogg, poet and story-teller, 'Maga's' 'Ettrick Shepherd' of the famous 'Noctes Ambrosianae'. (Hogg was indeed bred up as a shepherd boy and cowherd, and had almost no schooling.) Douglas Mack yearned to believe that his hero had some influence on Mrs Gaskell's stories, but he hastened to confess that there was no direct evidence as yet!

More confident was William Ruddick whose 'Scott and his Influence on Gaskell and the Brontës' brimmed over with fascinating hints and details. Sir Walter, of course, had a gigantic Romantic influence upon countless British writers, poets, musicians and artists, practically inventing the Scottish Highlands. In brief and witty contrast, racing against the clock, came Wendy Craik who grouped three writers - Susan Ferrier (who deserves to be read more widely) and Mrs Oliphant for Scotland, and Mrs Gaskell for England. Entitled 'Men, vain Men', her lecture shed a wryly hilarious light over the comments of those writers on the male sex.

Such was the formal, intellectual content of the Conference, but a Society must by definition be social and the Gaskell Society was no exception. Members came from Canada, Australia, the United States, New Zealand, Germany, France and Japan, as well as all parts of the United Kingdom. Professor Yuriko Yamawaki, President of the Japanese Gaskell Society, gave a detailed report on that organisation's work, disclosing the fact that her students are already well advanced on their task of translating the Gaskell novels into Japanese.

For the rest, there was the book stall for browsing and buying. There was a commodious bar for meeting friends and making new ones. There were several excursions arranged round and near the city in the afternoons, and two evenings of authentic Scottish music, song and readings. A stalwart piper rounded off Sunday evening. Although some of the audience felt he would have sounded more authentic marching round in the open air instead of being confined to the cramped space between the lecture

platform and the first row of seats in the lecture hall, it must be agreed that as an octogenarian he was a living advertisement for the health-giving property of playing the bagpipes.

(Editor's Note: We will apply our learned experience at Oxford '95 by having morning sessions of three lectures followed by a discussion/question panel of the morning's speakers.)

If you have any material or suggestions for future Newsletters, please contact Mrs Joan Leach, Far Yew Tree House, Over Tabley, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 OHN (Tel: 0565 634668)

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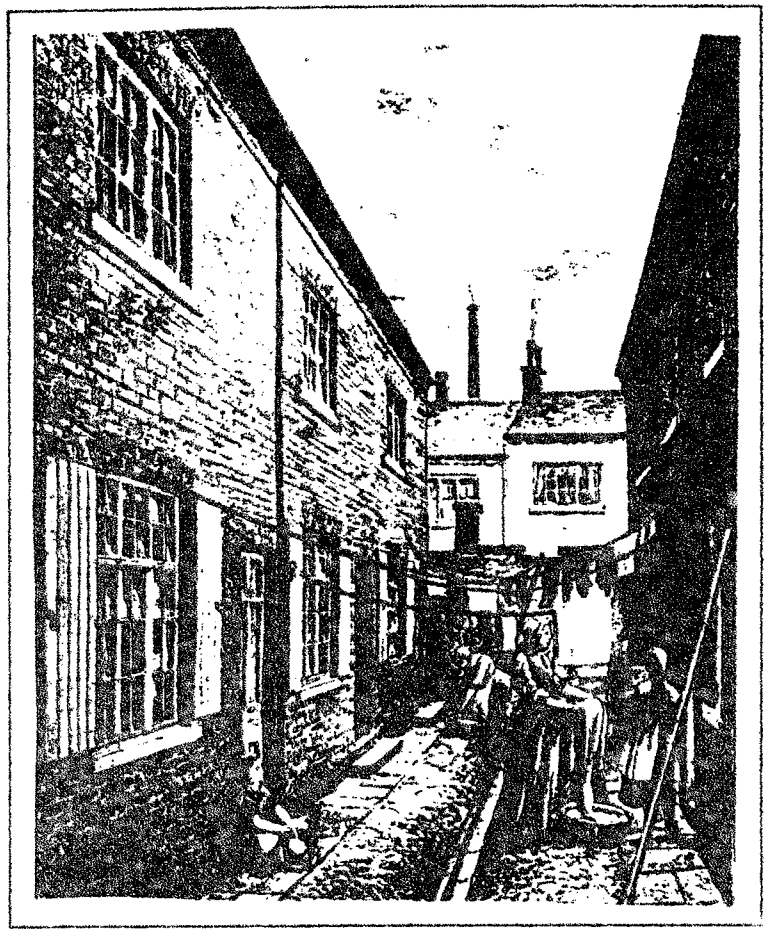
The Gaskell Society



NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 1994 NO. 18

EDITOR'S LETTER

This year's Journal was unavoidably late in publication and this has meant that the Newsletters are late, too. To avoid heavy postage costs, we have delayed it so that we can send out the information about our Oxford weekend conference in the same package; this event celebrates our tenth anniversary and we are looking forward to it greatly.

Our recent AGM meeting in Knutsford (24th September) was well attended; it was pleasant for members to meet socially, which a longer programme made possible, and we will keep to this format.

There will be no mailing at Christmas, but you can expect a Newsletter early in the New Year.

PLEASE HELP US TO SAVE 84 PLYMOUTH GROVE, THE GASKELL HOME (SEE PAGE 8).

Forthcoming Events

The Annual London Meeting will take place on Saturday 5th November at Francis Holland School, 39 Graham Terrace, London SW1W 8JF, at 2.15 pm.
Heather Sharps will speak on Elizabeth Gaskell and Sir James P Kay-Shuttleworth - a Literary Relationship.
To reach the school from Sloane Square underground station, turn left into Holbein Place, then the second turning on the left is Graham Terrace.

London and South East Group meets, usually here, four times a year. Information can be obtained from Dudley Barlow, 44 Seymour Road, London SW18 5JA (SAE please) or phone 081 874 7727.

Joan Leach

ANNE THACKERAY RITCHIE AND 'MARY BARTON'

The survival of a copy of Mary Barton belonging to Anne Thackeray Ritchie may be of interest. It is an early Tauchnitz edition with her signature on the series title-page ("Collection of British Authors", No.182) and her initials "A.I.T." on the spine of the special binding. This copy was given to me in 1954 by a previous owner who may have had it from a relative of the Martineaus. I have ascertained that it is Tauchnitz's "second setting" (Todd and Bowden p.66) of which the date is uncertain, but before August 1862, with 400pp of text as against 423 of the first (1849) which has more lines to the page. Both are rare; the British Library's only copy, though still, as was usual, including the 1849 title-page, is later than 1866 on evidence of imprint and was acquired by the Library only in 1981. The novel's great success after its publication in October 1848, with three more editions in 1849, was unexpected; there was no question of setting advance sheets, as probably with Ruth (Todd and Bowden, p.79) and as Mrs Gaskell had sold the copyright of Mary Barton to Chapman and Hall outright for £100, it is good to think that Tauchnitz had already, in 1849, made his usual payment to her.

It would add to the association interest of this copy if we knew when 'Anny' bought it or had it bought for her - evidently in Paris, as it is stamped "Seine-Colportage"; and perhaps as early as the mid-1850s when she and her sister were again living with their grandparents and had been encouraged by their father to read more novels.

Born in 1837, Anny said later that she had loved Mrs Gaskell's novels since her girlhood. In her many recollections (as Anne Ritchie) I have found no comment specifically on Mary Barton, and it is likely that Cranford for which she wrote an introduction in 1891, and Wives and Daughters, appealed to her most. She had almost no personal contact with Mrs Gaskell, but was introduced, in 1859, to her daughters, who became close friends especially after Thackeray's death.

Kathleen Tillotson

LETTER FROM META GASKELL TO CHARLES ELIOT NORTON FROM ASHBOURNE HALL, MAY 9th 1859

Dear Mr Norton

I am staying here alone with some cousins of mine. Mama went home this morning for two days. Before she went she left it in charge to me to write and thank you very much indeed for your kindness in enquiring about the price she could get for a tale in America. We hope you will not regret your trouble but forgive her having caused it you, when you hear that it has been useless. The offer that Messrs. Tickner and Fields make is so very small in comparison with what she gains here that she does not think it worth accepting. Mr. Sampson Lowe has just offered her £1,000 for a tale but little longer than the one Messrs. T. & F. bid for. Privately speaking I am so glad that she should thus give up the resolution she formed in 1857 of publishing for the future in America. It always pained me when she mentioned it. Her abandoning her natural and wonted publishing field for a new and foreign one, would I thought seem like an attempt to revenge on the English reading public (who have so warmly received and appreciated her works) the sorrow caused her by a small party - or rather by two families in consequence of the publication of her last book. C.B. I dare say that I am mistaken: and see it in too narrow a light; but I cannot help feeling glad at this termination to the negotiations which you so kindly conducted. I should so like to know what you think about it; but pray do not mention the unofficial part of what I have written, in your next letter, as any allusion to what happened in 1857 about the Life of C.B. seems to open the old wound. Thurstan Holland stayed with us for a few days in Easter week and had to stand a great deal of catechising about Shady Hill and its inhabitants. I was very sorry to hear from him how ill Mr Childs' Miss Sedgwick is. I hope that by this time she may be better. Mama is a great deal stronger than she has been lately. Country air and hours always suit her and she has gained a great deal from her week here. It is an old rambling house;

standing at the end of the street of the little town, with a large terrace-like garden, and beyond - fields and a wood rising up into prettily-moulded hills. The house is haunted: by a Madam Cockaine, who every night drives up the avenue in a coach and six. The spectral coachman and horses all headless. The village has been in a great state of excitement about the S. Derbyshire election. Captn. Holland the cousin with whom I am staying was Chairman of the Committee of Ashbourne for the election of a young Liberal member, instead of Mr Mundy, an old Tory of 70. But unfortunately the veteran has won the day; and what is most aggravating, by the very smallest possible majority - by one vote and that his own; for it seems candidates have votes as well as other men, but of this the Liberal candidate had neglected to take advantage. The Mundyites spared no pains to gain votes. They went to fetch one labouring man to the poll in a "one-horse shay" into which he indignantly refused to step, as Dick, his neighbour had just been carried off in a carriage and pair to the booth of the other party. The gentlemen who were determined to lose no vote for want of perseverance and energy, hastened back to Ashbourne to procure a second horse; and when his wounded vanity was thus appeased the man kindly consented to give his vote to Mundy. Another poor farmer was willing to go and vote as requested but said that he daredn't for shame to show his face he was so dirty with his fieldwork and apparently too lazy to remedy the defect: which however the two gentlemen sent to bring him to the booth did by acting as valets and literally with their own hands scrubbing shaving and re-dressing him .... When are you coming again to England? Ever Yours very truly M.E. Gaskell

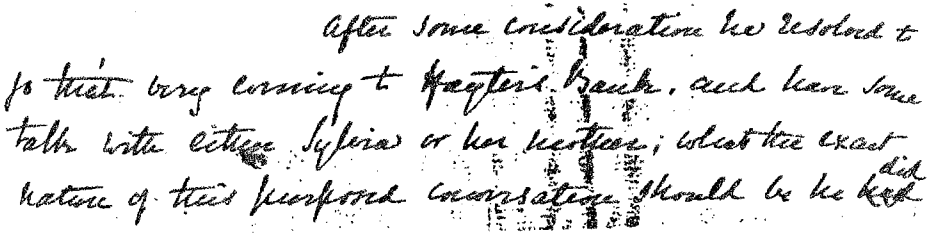
(This letter also contains an interesting description of Holman Hunt's painting of The Christ Child in the Temple with the Doctors)

Barbara Brill

A SMALL SCRAP

Meta and Julia Gaskell kept their Mother's name alive, living on at Plymouth Grove in Manchester. This brief letter signed M.E. Gaskell surfaced recently and was bought by Lucy Magruder, our US honorary secretary.

'Dear Madam,
I am sorry that I can only send you such a small scrap of my dear Mother's writing for your collection; but I have very, very little available for such purposes, and am often asked for pieces.'



Perhaps you will be able to decipher this 'autograph' excerpt from Sylvia's Lovers.

The text of the novel is held by The Brotherton Library, Leeds. Inspection might reveal an incomplete page, but it is more likely that this was from a draft copy.

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EDWARD HERFORD'S DIARY

You may remember that, in our last Newsletter (17), we gave an excerpt from Edward Herford's diary which is partly in cipher, an early form of shorthand. We had hoped that someone might recognise this and help with transcription, but John Chapple has been able to decipher it. We did promise you more details but think you must wait for the book on which John is working.

BOOK NOTES

The Woman Reader 1837-1914 by Kate Flint (Oxford University) Clarendon Press. £25
Though making only brief mention of Gaskell, this book makes interesting background reading, dealing as it does with the whole subject of women's reading and education. It describes public reaction to Ruth in particular. Working class reading is covered as well as periodicals and there are interesting surveys of the most popular reading in girls' schools where Cranford is the most popular but only Gaskell novel read.

Victorian Heroines: representations of femininity in nineteenth century literature and art, by Kimberley Reynolds and Nicola Humble of Roehampton Institute of Higher Education. Harvester Wheatsheaf. £12.95
Another general background study combining literature and art criticism. It deals briefly with Gaskell's description of her heroines' physical appearance, in particular Margaret Hale and Esther in Mary Barton, showing how dress creates stereotypes and predetermines men's attitudes to women.

North and South is now available for £1 in the Penguin Popular Classics series - a simple no frills edition without notes or modern introduction.

BRIEF NOTICES
A new edition of Mary Barton is now available published by the Everyman library at £9.99 in hardback as a companion to the recent edition of North and South. It comprises the text as edited by Angus Easson with an introduction by Jenny Uglow.

CARROLL, DAVID, A literary tour of Gloucestershire and Bristol, Alan Sutton, £8.99, contains an illustration and description of Dumbleton, the home of her cousin Edward Holland which Elizabeth Gaskell often visited.

Christine Lingard

EXTRACTS FROM CHRISTINE ROSSETTI BY FRANCES THOMAS (published Virago 1994)

After discussing the effect of marriage and family life on authorship, Frances Thomas concludes:

"Only Mrs Gaskell, a creature of superhuman energy, was wife and mother as well as writer and her early death and the flawed masterpiece of Wives and Daughters suggest that her frenetic activity diminished the potential quality of her work."

There are two references to Cranford:

i) In 1867 when Christina was 37 -
"She settled firmly and prematurely into middle age, taking the spinsters of Cranford which she admired greatly as her pattern."

ii) In 1882 shortly after the death of her brother, Gabriel, Christina met the Irish woman poet, Kathleen Tynan. Frances Thomas describes the meeting -
"They talked of Cranford and Christina laughed aloud as she read favourite passages."
"Kathleen Tynan described the house. 'Entering it you felt the presence of very old age, a silence that draped and muffled the house. It was not like any other silence and seemed to muffle sound. Christina had surprised Miss Tynan at first by her cheerfulness and her unbecoming short skirts and her boots which did not seem sufficiently poetic.'"

Mrs Gaskell never met Christina Rossetti but described her meeting with Dante Gabriel Rossetti vividly in GL.444 which is quoted in this book.

Barbara Brill

Help save 84 Plymouth Grove

The Society is extremely anxious about its future.

For over 60 years this beautiful and historic Grade II* listed building was the home of Mrs Gaskell and her family. Now its cracking fabric is in urgent need of repair and restoration.

The Gaskell Society is campaigning to persuade the University of Manchester, who own the building, to restore it.

*

In 1992 a structural survey of 84 Plymouth Grove commissioned by University of Manchester recommended immediate action. The foundations needed underpinning, and large cracks in the interior walls and the later collapse of two ceilings showed the serious condition of the building.

The University indicated to the International Society, who use the building as a centre for overseas students, that the repairs would be carried out in 1994, but nothing has been done apart from boarding up the ceilings and painting the interior. Substantial grants might be forthcoming from English Heritage and other sources, but no applications for these seem to have been made.

The University is now proposing to move the International Society to another site.

YOU CAN HELP BY:

Signing the Society's petition.

Writing letters asking that the building is restored to :

Professor Martin Harris
The Vice-Chancellor
University of Manchester
Manchester M13 9PL

Mr Richard Furter
Director, Estates Department
University of Manchester
Manchester M13 9PL

Supporting our appeal by coming to the meeting at 84 Plymouth Grove on the evening of Friday 9th December.

THE STAR INN, OXFORD

If you walk down the left-hand side of Cornmarket Street, away from Carfax in the centre of Oxford, you will soon see Littlewood's, a branch of the nationwide chain store of that name. You would be surprised, to say the least, to know that once The Star Inn stood on that site, the inn at which Mrs Gaskell and her daughter Meta 'alighted' on their arrival for what was to be a memorable first visit to Oxford in November 1857. They had been staying with Lord and Lady Hatherton at Teddesley Hall at the beginning of a round of visits in the southern parts of the country, Mrs Gaskell's annual escape from the rigours of the Manchester winter. When the Hathertons heard that their next visit was to be Devizes (they were travelling by train) it was insisted that they should break their journey at Oxford.

With many connections in the University, the Hathertons at once wrote letters 'right and left', as Mrs Gaskell put it in one of the letters she was to write later, 'facilitating every pleasant arrangement'. At The Star Inn, she wrote, they were met by Dr Wellesley, Lord Hatherton's brother-in-law and Principal of New Inn Hall, who invited them to lunch at his house in the High Street, something which entailed 'a race up past X [cross] where Radley and Latimer were burnt, thro' the Radcliffe Quad and All Souls Quad into High St'. After lunch Wellesley 'donned a scarlet robe ... having to attend convocation, & rushed off (with two scarlet wings flying all abroad) with me on his arm, to deposit us at the Theatre [Sheldonian] to hear A. [Dean] Stanley's lecture'.

Everything that Mrs Gaskell saw on this visit and on the following one a few days later, when she stayed with Professor and Lady Brodie at Cowley House (now part of St Hilda's College), can still be seen today, except for The Star Inn, which was demolished in 1863, only six years after Mrs Gaskell had stayed there in 1857. One would, therefore, think it was probably already decrepit at that time - Mrs Gaskell is known for always taking

fairly modest accommodation so long as it was respectable!

However, The Star has an extremely interesting history. Originally it was known as 'Marshall's Yard - a tenement', but in 1450 it was called The Star, in 1642 as 'The Sign of the Starre', indicating a religious origin. In 1771 it became a coaching and posting inn. When demolished in 1862 it became the Clarendon Hotel after Edward Hyde, 1st Earl of Clarendon, Founder of the Oxford University and Clarendon Press. In 1955 it became a branch of Woolworth's and, possibly in 1961, the present Littlewood's.

During the earlier part of the Civil War period the King and Queen made their headquarters in Oxford, residing at Christ Church, but eventually were driven out by Roundheads under the command of Lord Saye who made his headquarters at The Star. After the King and Queen had left Oxford, the Roundheads entered and raided Christchurch looking for silver, which they found hidden in the wainscots and carried it away 'to my Lord's lodging at the Star'; there was a large cellar there. There were duels and fights at the inn between the Roundhead soldiers, the colleges were in an uproar and nearly all the books in the Bodleian Library were burnt in the streets. In the 19th century The Star was used as headquarters for electioneering.

Near the site of The Star is The Crown Tavern, still in good condition today and doing a brisk trade in food and drink (in good weather in the inn yard which has a pump and an entrance big enough to admit a coach, and a large iron gate, still locked at night). According to John Aubrey, Shakespeare used to stay here on his annual journey between London and Stratford. Sir William Davenant, Poet Laureate and a great friend of his, had been born at the Crown and lived there with his father, 'the vintner'. Davenant had a son William, whom Aubrey says was 'contented enough to be thought Shakespeare's son' presumably by Davenant's wife, according to Aubrey 'of very light report'. Part of what was the original

Crown building is now offices and one of the upper rooms, called 'The Painted Room', where Shakespeare is believed to have slept, can, by permission, be seen.

This street has other ancient buildings, some of which have survived in one form or another and would certainly have been there when Mrs Gaskell stayed the night at The Star in 1857.

Anna Unsworth

SOURCES

The Letters of Mrs Gaskell 1966, M.U.P., ed Chapple and Pollard. 380, 383 and 384

Cavaliers and Roundheads, Christopher Hibbert, 1993, Harper Collins

Aubrey's Brief Lives, Penguin English Library, 1972

Oxford Pubs, Past and Present, Paul J Marriott, Oxford, n.d.

'So Different a Life ...', A Unsworth, Gaskell Society Newsletter August 1993

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SOUTH OF ENGLAND BRANCH TO CRIX

On a visit to her Unitarian friends, the Shaens, Elizabeth Gaskell wrote: 'Well! Crix is far more beautiful than I expected, not the house, that is only a great large red brick house. But I never saw such beautiful grounds ...' in a letter to Marianne and Meta dated Sunday [December !48?] (GL.19).

On Saturday 23 July members of the South of England Branch were given a warm welcome, by Mrs Strutt and other members of her family, to the Shaen home at Crix, Hatfield Peverel. It was a hot July afternoon and both the house and grounds could be seen to good advantage. The present house replaced an Elizabethan manor house, no traces of which survive. Through the generosity of our hosts we were able to see the principal rooms on the ground floor and some of the bedrooms above, including the bedroom it is thought Elizabeth Gaskell used. A lady from the Essex County Museum showed us a pair of Rebecca Shaen's shoes and gave us some additional information on the family and the house.

The storm of October 1987 had enabled Mrs Strutt to restore the porch, from a previous ornamental grandeur to a more appropriate Unitarian simplicity. From the porch you step straight into a spacious hall from which several main rooms are reached with ease. Some rooms have been altered in their use since the Shaen years so we began in the Billiard Room which had been their Library. The Drawing Room was cool and well proportioned but the maids slept in the attics facing the garden "where they boiled in the summer". The cube shaped Library had a splendid collection of books arranged around the room with stairs to the garden below. The spacious Lounge included a Landseer portrait of a dog and a Dolls House, from the turn of the century, to which each generation of the current owner's family had added something. The cat sleeps in its roof garden! The fireplaces elsewhere appeared to be of marble but were in fact made of wood and iron.

'Our bedrooms looked out upon a lawn ...' There was a wonderful view of the garden stretching down to two old oaks and to fields beyond in the glorious sunshine. The bedroom Elizabeth and William Gaskell are thought to have used is now occupied by Mrs Strutt's grandson who has decorated it in a highly individual but effective way. What Elizabeth Gaskell would have thought about it is an interesting speculation!

In another bedroom, with an equally lovely view, enhanced by a bow window added about 1902, we were able to look at some framed Victorian valentine cards, some by no means simple in their overall design.

The visit was concluded with a stroll in the garden and a splendid tea in the Summer House. Members subsequently showed their appreciation for the kind hospitality and generous access given to us by sending a cheque, which we are pleased to learn will enable Mrs Strutt to develop part of the grounds as 'the Gaskell garden'. We also thank Richard Beckley for making the visit possible.

Howard F Gregg

MRS GASKELL'S BONNET

Emily Shaen wrote in a letter of July 1855[1]:
'Lily in radiant spirits again, half - I say - because she has got an espiegle french bonnet, half because F.D.Maurice had asked her to see him again'. What a revealing comment on two sides of Elizabeth Gaskell's character - female vanity and social/religious concern.

John Chapple has a letter addressed to him in 1968, soon after The Collected Letters was published and the writer had received an invitation to a lecture he gave.

'Dear Mr Chapple,
I have long wanted to tell the following story to someone interested in Elizabeth Gaskell. I am nearly 80 and my mother told me the story. She spent part of her early life in Manchester - where she must have heard it....
Here it is:-
Mr Gaskell installed in Cross Street Chapel addressed the congregation as Mrs Gaskell arrived a little late and adorned with a new hat, and said, 'Here comes Mrs Gaskell with a chest of drawers on her head'.
The correspondent speculated that the hat had been bought with the proceeds of the sale of a piece of furniture, but I wonder if the hat was too flamboyant for the Rev Gaskell's taste?

Joan Leach

[1] Letters and Memorials of Catherine Winkworth Vol.1, p.346

If you have any material or suggestions for future Newsletters, please contact Mrs Joan Leach, Far Yew Tree House, Over Tabley, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 OHN (Tel: 01565 634668)

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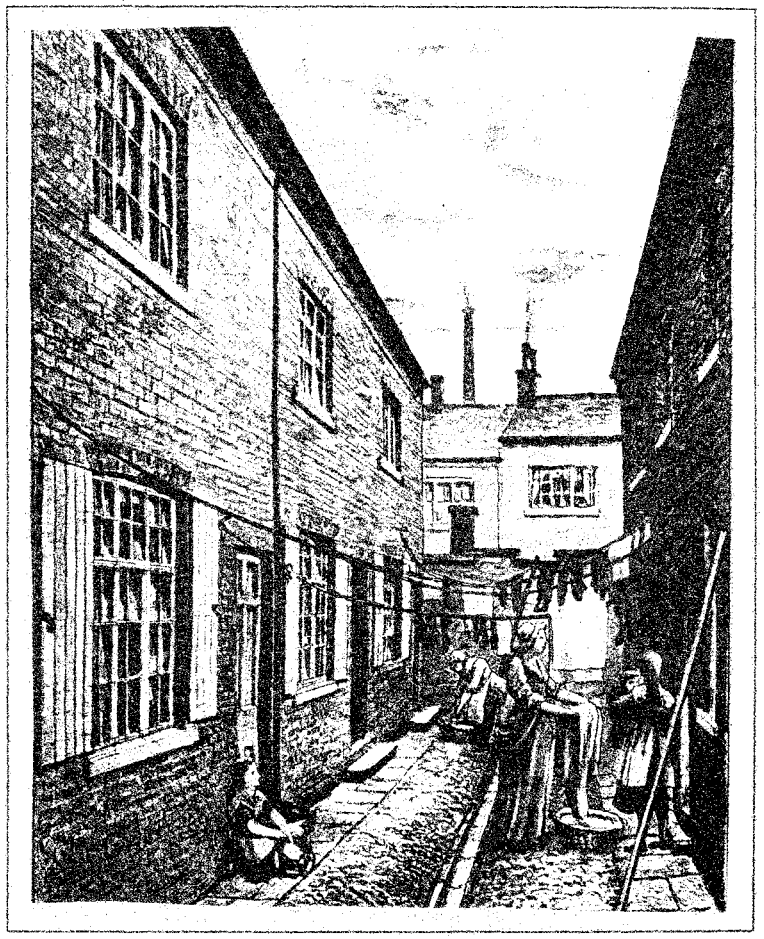
The Gaskell Society



NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 1995 NO. 19

EDITOR'S LETTER

Dear Members

1995 promises to be a full year for the Society with our Oxford Conference drawing members from far and wide to share a stimulating weekend celebrating our tenth anniversary. Though those years have passed so quickly, I think they have been a time of achievement for the Society, growing steadily and offering members an excellent Journal and a variety of events and meetings which have established many friendships.

During the winter months a group has met monthly in Knutsford for a buffet lunch followed by reading and discussion. The South of England group meets quarterly in London.

The AGM in Knutsford will be on 30th September. As this will be only a month after the Oxford Conference, there will not be a weekend of events.

The Alliance of Literary Societies AGM will be held in Birmingham, as usual, at the BMI on 29th April. The programme will be presented by The Friends of Keats House. Please let me know if you would like to attend and I will send details when available.

Please remember that an SAE is always appreciated, and that all cheques should be made payable to The Gaskell Society.

THERE ARE STILL A FEW PLACES AVAILABLE
FOR OXFORD - 25-28th August - BUT DO NOT DELAY
Further details will be sent soon
to those who have enrolled

Joan Leach

AN INTRODUCTION TO MANCHESTER COLLEGE

On 22nd February 1786[1], a group of gentlemen met in Manchester to discuss and, after deliberation, decide to establish an academy in that city. The gentlemen, who included the first Josiah Wedgwood, the famous potter, were Dissenters, whose sons were excluded from Oxford and Cambridge because of their inability to assent to the Articles of Religion of the Established Church, and the academy was intended to train such young men for the professions and the Dissenting ministry. Thus began Manchester College, one of several such institutions which provided an education much superior to most of the grammar schools and, in some respects, the universities. A high priority was given to science, business studies, the new Higher Criticism of the Bible coming out of Germany at that time and, indeed, German was taught at these academies long before it was taught at Oxford. These colleges were open to all without any religious test and several men who later became famous, such as James Mill, utilitarian philosopher; Ricardo, the economist; Malthus, theorist on population; and Disraeli, future Prime Minister, all received part of their education at one of them, while John Dalton, the famous scientist, William Stevenson, father of Mrs Gaskell, William Gaskell, Francis Newman, brother of John Henry Newman, and James Martineau, the last honoured by nine universities for his philosophical works and a former Principal, all taught at Manchester College for many years.

Financial difficulties beset all the Dissenting Academies however, and in 1802 Manchester College left the city of its birth and, for nearly a century, led a peripatetic existence until finally settling in Oxford, having inherited the valuable library of the Warrington Academy, one of the most distinguished of these institutions which had, like the others, failed for lack of financial backing.

It was in 1889 that it was finally decided that Manchester College should settle in Oxford, the University by then having been opened to Dissenters, or Nonconformists as they were becoming increasingly known. Their first

premises were the upper rooms of No.90 High Street, previously student lodgings, and in 1893 the present fine Victorian Gothic building in Mansfield Road, incorporating a row of 17th and 18th century houses in Holywell (recently restored) also student lodgings, were opened. It was in 1893 too, that the college admitted its first woman student.

Enshrined in letters of stone over the main entrance to the college are the words, Veritas, Libertas, Pietas - Truth, Liberty, Religion. These principles had been strictly adhered to through all its vicissitudes and the college itself, in Oxford, the then bastion of orthodoxy, was a place of learning freed from all dogmatic restraint. Though staffed, governed and supported by Dissenters of the Unitarian tradition, at one period, William Addis, a distinguished Anglican graduate of Balliol, held the Chair of Hebrew and Old Testament studies.

The opening ceremony in 1893 began with a procession of some 700 people, from all parts of the country, from the original premises in the High Street to the new building, where a service was held in the chapel. The latter is unusually ornate for a Nonconformist chapel, with oak panelling, benches, screen and choir stalls, a mural of the Last Supper above the Communion Table and a large number of stained glass windows designed by Edward Burne Jones and executed by William Morris which have been highly praised as amongst their best work. The organ, well known in Oxford, is by Nicholson the great organ builder, and specially commissioned communion plate was presented by former students.

The opening service was addressed by James Martineau, then eighty-eight years of age, and at the luncheon which followed, attended by the Warden of Merton and Representatives of Balliol and All Souls, mention was made of William Jowitt, Master of Balliol, who had given the college much encouragement over the past four years and had intended to be present, but had recently died.

A prominent feature of the college is its library of over

5,000 volumes which is, with the separately housed Carpenter Library of Comparative Religion, generally accepted as the best theological library in Oxford, particularly with reference to the history of Dissent. It also houses a vast collection of archive material, including the letters of Harriet Martineau (1802-76), Unitarian novelist and writer on political economy, archive material on Mrs Gaskell, globes that belonged to Joseph Priestley (1733-1804), discoverer of oxygen and Unitarian Minister, his famous portrait by John Opie, and a white marble statue of James Martineau.

Distinguished figures associated with the college have been Max Müller, pioneer in the study of Oriental language and religion, J Estlin Carpenter, the University's first Professor of Comparative Religion, and L P Jacks, philosopher and novelist. During the latter's period as Principal (1915-31), lectures were given at the college by the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore; Evelyn Underhill, eminent Anglican writer and lecturer on the religious life; Dean Inge and R Tawney. Gilbert Murray, Greek scholar, was a Visitor to the college and Sir Alister Hardy, Emeritus Professor of Zoology at Oxford, its President until shortly before his death. Sir Adrian Boult was an Honorary Fellow and one of its most enthusiastic supporters.

William Gaskell became Chairman of the College Committee when it removed from Manchester to London in 1853 (largely because of the founding of Owen's College, which eventually became the University of Manchester) and in 1859 he was also Visitor, both of which offices he performed for the remainder of his life.

Manchester College removed from London to Oxford mainly through the influence of the well-known Victorian novelist, Mrs Humphrey Ward, a great admirer of Martineau and her belief that he, and therefore the college, were insufficiently recognised in London. She proposed the vote of thanks in 1919 when the very impressive Arlosh Hall, much in demand for concerts, receptions, conferences etc, was opened by the generosity

of a gift of money from the Trustees of a Cumbrian Unitarian family. Its walls are lined with portraits of distinguished Unitarians as are those of the Refectory, one of the latter being of William Gaskell. A new music building has recently been built in memory of Sir Adrian Boult. In the ground-floor corridor are busts of Frances Power Cobbe (1822-1904), Unitarian writer and philanthropist, and the Revd J J Tayler, distinguished theologian and Principal of the College when it moved to London (1853-69). Mrs Barbauld (1743-1824), teacher at the Warrington Academy, one of the first writers of books for small children, an example of which is in the college library, poet and friend of Wordsworth and Coleridge and their circle, appears in the Warrington Academy window in the Library.

The college is now a mature student hall of the University, offering degrees and courses for students of 25 years and over, in English, Geography, History, Law, Philosophy and Economics, Theology and certain Joint Honours Schools, an Oxford University certificate in Theology and a Manchester College (Unitarian) Ministry Certificate. Places are also available for graduate degrees and Sabbatical and Research Study. Close relations have, over the years, been developed with other Oxford colleges and in 1986 when the college celebrated its Bicentenary of the actual day of the birth of the college in Manchester, the bells of its nearest neighbour, New College, were rung.

[1]Warrington Academy was in serious decline and closed in midsummer 1786. William Turner had been a student there.

Anna Unsworth

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In July 1994 an inaugural meeting of The Martineau Society was held at Manchester College. The aims of the Society are to preserve the collection of Martineau papers and 'To study and commemorate the principles of freedom of conscience, advocated by Harriet Martineau and her brother, Dr James Martineau, and to encourage their application in modern life'. Details from: Mr Alan Middleton, 49 Mayfield Avenue, Grove, Wantage, Oxon OX12 7ND

BOOK NOTES

FORMS OF SPEECH IN VICTORIAN FICTION by Raymond Chapman, Emeritus Professor of English, University of London. Longman, 1994. £30

A study of the use of dialogue by Victorian authors to describe character and the relationship between individuals. It focuses on dialect, slang, class euphemism, the use of Christian names as forms of address, and religious language. The author quotes over a hundred books to illustrate his point rather than analyse an author's work individually, so Gaskell references appear throughout the book.

DISCOURSE OF SLAVERY: APHRA BEHN TO TONI MORRISON, edited by Carl Plase and Betty J Ring. Routledge. £35

A collection of essays, one of which is "Elizabeth Gaskell, Harriet Beecher Stowe and the Iron of Slavery" by Elizabeth Jean Sabiston of York University, Toronto. It finds interesting parallels between the two authors who met in 1848 - both were mothers (a rarity amongst Victorian authors) who turned to writing comparatively late, after the death of a child. Both have suffered many decades of neglect at the hands of critics but are at last coming into their own and getting the recognition they deserve. Their work highlights the social evils and sexual exploitation suffered by the working classes.

MARY HOWITT: ANOTHER LOST VICTORIAN WRITER by Joy Dunicliff. Excalibur Press of London, 1992. £8.95

Though the connection is not expounded, this modestly produced book is the only modern account of the life of the author who played such an important part in encouraging the literary career of Elizabeth Gaskell.

CHARLOTTE BRONTE AND HER 'DEAREST NELL': THE STORY OF A FRIENDSHIP by Barbara Whitehead. Smith Settle. £19 (paperback £11.50)

This splendidly illustrated book tells the story of Charlotte Brontë's best friend, Ellen Nussey, with whom Mrs Gaskell corresponded in the writing of Life of Charlotte Brontë. There are scholarly references to their letters.

Christine Lingard

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GASKELL LETTERS

MICHAEL SILVERMAN, dealer in autograph letters, historical documents and archives, reports that Gaskell Letters are in demand, so if you have any to sell they would be interested. But first of course make sure we know all about them and have a photocopy, at least!
Michael Silverman's address is PO Box 350, London SE3 OLZ (Tel: 081 319 4452, Fax: 081 856 6006)

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FRIEDRICH ENGELS AND MANCHESTER

A one day school on this subject is to be held on Saturday 11th March at Manchester Metropolitan University, Oxford Road. The programme includes a talk by Alan Shelston: "Family Values? Friedrich Engels and Mrs Gaskell".
After lunch there will be a short walk around some of the areas that Engels knew.
Details from Christine Davies, Room 36, Cavendish Building, Manchester Metropolitan University, Cavendish Street, Manchester M15 6BG

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PLYMOUTH GROVE - I had intended to write an article about the House, its history and current position, but now plan to produce a booklet later. Joan Leach

The Valentine, sent by George Smith to Elizabeth Gaskell, is mentioned by E S Haldane: Mrs Gaskell and Her Friends 1930 (pp.272-273).
It was then in the possession of Mrs Lamb, Stephen Winkworth's daughter. Miss Haldane describes it thus:
'It is an amusing representation of Mrs Gaskell as a dairy woman, while her would-be publisher is on his knees begging for his manuscript'.

I saw it, about 1960, when it was owned by Dr Winifred Lamb, whom I assumed to be a grand-daughter of Stephen Winkworth, albeit I never met her nor have I checked. Dr Lamb posted to me the original which I had photographed (in Oxford) before returning it. I do not know its present whereabouts. It is reproduced in my Mrs Gaskell's Observation and Invention facing p.544.

Here, it might be appropriate to correct a misunderstanding.

Jenny Uglow reproduces the Valentine in Elizabeth Gaskell: A Habit of Stories (between p.338 and 339) and implies in her list of illustrations (p.vii) that the original is in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, but it is my B.Litt. thesis, with the photograph, which is deposited there.

You might like to try to decipher some of the drawings, several seem to be from Cranford, others from Sylvia's Lovers and perhaps the castles represent The Grey Woman.

Above all, the Valentine shows the delightful relationship between George Smith and Mrs Gaskell.

J S Sharps

Ed: The bottom right hand corner depicts ECG as St Sebastian tied to a wheel; remember she said that was how she felt after the publication of Ruth.

SIR JAMES KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH, MRS GASKELL

AND CHARLOTTE BRONTE

On November 5, 1994 a stimulating lecture was given by Heather Sharps at the Francis Holland School, Sloane Square, on Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth and his literary relationship with Mrs Gaskell and Charlotte Brontë. Some members of the Brontë Society joined the South of England Group of the Gaskell Society for the occasion. Ms Sharps spoke of Sir James, the literary novelist, and drew striking comparisons between his novel 'Ribblesdale' and Mrs Gaskell's 'Sylvia's Lovers'. She also introduced us to four Kay-Shuttleworth scholars - Frank Smith, B C Bloomfield, David Warwick and R J W Sellick.

Heather Sharps kindly divided her lecture into four sections, kindly because her wealth of enthusiastic detail might otherwise have overwhelmed her more ignorant listeners. She reminded us that he was born in Rochdale in 1804, trained in medicine in Edinburgh and became a doctor in Manchester where he saw the deprivations of the poor. In 1835 he was made a Poor Law Commissioner and in 1839 became First Secretary of the committee of the Privy Council on Education. It is, of course, as a pioneer educationalist that he is best remembered. He set up teacher-training schools, widened the school curriculum, introduced school inspectors and ensured financial support for schools from local and government funds.

He also both lectured and wrote about social conditions in the town slums, especially Manchester. Friedrich Engels, who later on wrote about the condition of the English working class, quoted Kay-Shuttleworth as one of his sources. Ill-health and an abrasive personality removed him from strenuous public life in 1849, by which time he had married a rich heiress and lived in Lancashire. He continued his interests in poverty and education, combining them with a wide social life. He always maintained that education was the key to a full life.

He tried his hand at novel-writing, 'Scarsdale' published in 1860 and 'Ribblesdale' published in 1874. His literary mentors were Sir Walter Scott, the romantic historical novelist, and dour Thomas Carlyle, the romantic historian. Ms Sharps analysed the structure of the historical novel, suggesting it should take a period at least 60 years in the past; that it should include big historical events and at least one outstanding historical figure. The main characters should be seen to respond to historical changes which would shape their destinies. Both 'Sylvia's Lovers' and 'Ribblesdale' fulfil these criteria. Both are also influenced by the Whig theory of history, that optimistic belief in a natural progression towards moral improvement.

However, 'Ribblesdale', dealing with Lancashire in 1812, is far more a novel with a message than is 'Sylvia's Lovers'. The latter novel is richer in artistic values than 'Ribblesdale', which has a distinct flavour of propaganda, as Sir James details the poverty and diseases of weavers and their families, hit by the Industrial Revolution. Also, Sir James draws his characters from the outside, unlike Mrs Gaskell, who creates life by drawing from the inside. Sir James explores the class barriers at a certain period, in a certain place, whereas Mrs Gaskell, although also aware of class conflicts, deals with more universal themes.

It was in June 1850 that Sir James persuaded Charlotte Brontë, whose work he much admired, to stay with him and his wife at Gawthorpe Hall, near Burnley. the following August Lady Kay-Shuttleworth, who already knew Mrs Gaskell, invited both the Gaskells to Gawthorpe Hall to meet Charlotte Brontë. Mr Gaskell had prior engagements, but Mrs Gaskell accepted eagerly, and the two novelists liked each other immediately, in spite of having some points of disagreement. Poor Sir James came off badly. Both women appreciated his kindness and his undoubted intellect, but felt estranged by his self-importance. Charlotte Brontë suspected he had an instinctive antipathy to imaginative writers - which both she and Mrs Gaskell were.

Indeed, Mrs Gaskell seemed to prefer Lady Kay-Shuttleworth to the latter's husband. They were in frequent correspondence, both doing charitable work in Lancashire, and Mrs Gaskell was glad of brief stays in the comfort of Gawthorpe Hall when exhausted by her strenuous life. However, after Charlotte Brontë's unexpected death, and Mrs Gaskell's ready acceptance of the Revd Patrick Brontë's request that she, and only she, should write a memoir of Charlotte's life, it was to Sir James that Mrs Gaskell turned for help. After visiting Brussels and meeting the Hegers, Mrs Gaskell had become aware of Charlotte's passion for her tutor. It was the key to a new reading of 'Villette', and Mrs Gaskell feared that her novel, 'The Professor', so far unpublished, might reveal more of her secret love. Charlotte's widower, the Revd Arthur Nicholls, had the manuscript and refused to part with it.

Sir James, however, was a formidable ally as he accompanied Mrs Gaskell to Hawarth. Ignoring Nicholls' protests, he and Mrs Gaskell went off with not only 'The Professor' but also the opening of 'Emma' and the miniature 'Gondal' and 'Angria' stories. Sir James wished to edit the manuscript of 'The Professor' for publication, and although Mrs Gaskell agreed on the need for editing, as she thought it contained more coarseness and profanity than any of Charlotte's other novels, she thought Sir James was too heavy-handed to be entrusted with it. As it happened, Nicholls settled the matter by editing it himself for publication. The novel, to Mrs Gaskell's relief, disclosed fewer of Charlotte's secrets than had 'Villette'.

She always retained doubts about Sir James' literary potential. She warned George Smith, her successful publisher, that Sir James had lately finished a novel and it was bound to be mentioned when the Kay-Shuttleworths were next in London and took tea with the Smiths. Her instinct proved correct. Not long afterwards his novel, 'Scarsdale', was published by Smith, Elder & Co.

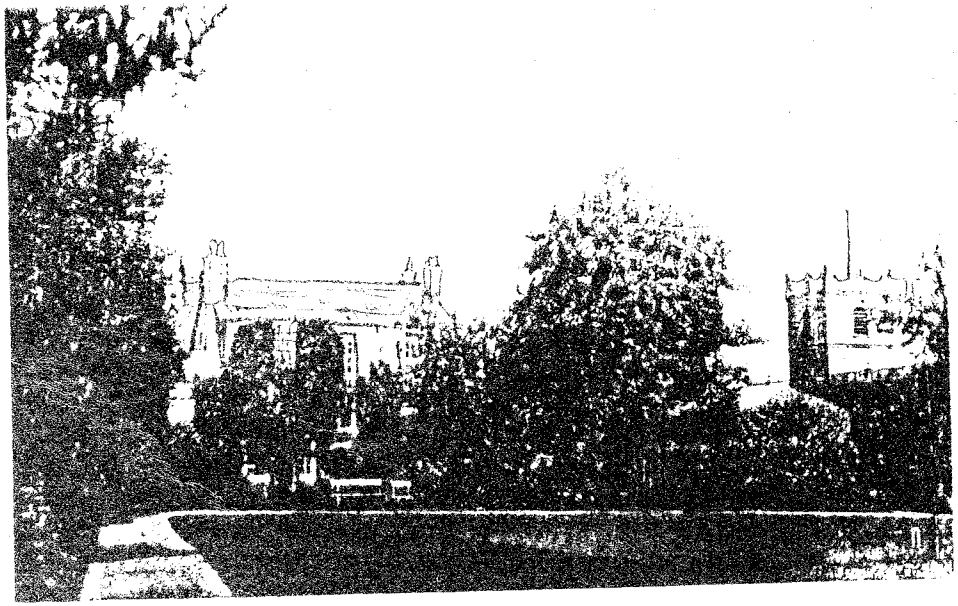
Brenda Colloms

EDMUND SHARPE 1809-1877

I like biographies. When I chanced on one in the local library with an attractive auburn-haired lady on the cover and a note on the flyleaf saying, 'This book is in demand and the loan cannot normally be renewed after 4 weeks', I had no hesitation in borrowing Jenny Uglow's recent biography of Elizabeth Gaskell. I was well rewarded by a very enjoyable and informative narrative about an attractive subject, but also, to my surprise, by coming face to face, on page 19, with my great-grandfather, Edmund Sharpe, at 5 years old, riding 'in a very nice little Carriage ... which we thought it impossible could be turned over', in company with 'a little niece of Mrs Lumbs [Elizabeth]'. In the event, the carriage could be turned over and Edmund broke his arm; fortunately 'Mr. H[olland] came home from his daily ride' at that moment and set it. As all the fuss was about Edmund, we must assume that Elizabeth, who was a year younger, escaped unhurt.

Who was this Edmund Sharpe who was a playmate of Elizabeth's in her earliest years? His father, Francis Sharpe, had married Martha Whittaker, sister of Peter Holland's second wife. The Whittakers, Sharpes and Hollands formed a close-knit group in the Knutsford society of the time and the Sharpes remained in contact even after their removal to Lancaster after Francis Sharpe's death when Edmund was 14 years old. Francis was organist and choirmaster but also earned a very good income as a teacher of music, travelling throughout Cheshire to visit his pupils, who included some of the leading 'county' families. His children were all musical, but Edmund was of a more practical bent.

After education at Runcorn Grammar School, at Dr Burney's at Greenwich and at Sedbergh, he entered St Johns College, Cambridge, where he caught the eye of that eminent Lancastrian, Dr Whewell, Master of Trinity. In 1832 he was elected Travelling Bachelor of Arts for the University and spent 3 years in the study - which became the love of his life - of architecture, particularly church



C.1900 – CHURCH HOUSE KNUTSFORD
now HOLLINGFORD HOUSE
Home of Dr Peter Holland and his daughters Mary and Lucy, and possibly Dr Gibson's house in Wives and Daughters. The garden where Edmund and Elizabeth had their mishap.

architecture, in France and Germany; in 1835 he became MA. This was followed by a year's pupillage under Thomas Rickman, architect, of Birmingham.

From 1836 to 1851, he practised as an architect in Lancaster, latterly in partnership with his brother-in-law, Edward Paley, designing about 40 churches, chiefly in the north of England, often in terra-cotta; in 1851, married with a son and 2 daughters and another son to come, he turned, in his capacity as Civil Engineer, to railway construction, in the north, in North Wales and on the continent, at Geneva and Perpignan.

In 1848 he became a member of the RIBA and in 1875 received their Gold Medal. At 60 years old, in 1869, he retired almost wholly from his practice and devoted himself to his first love, church architecture. He joined the Architectural Association, from whose members he invited small groups of young men to accompany him on architectural study tours, which he organised himself with the efficiency of a Thomas Cook. Initially in the English Midlands, these were soon extended to the continent; the last of these before his death, in Charente, was commemorated by the Architectural Association by the collation of the materials collected in a handsomely bound memorial volume.

He died in Milan on May 8th, 1877, while travelling with his younger children to study the churches of Northern Italy; his body was brought back to Lancaster to be buried beside his wife who had died the previous year.

His character was ably summarised in this extract from a paper read before the Architectural Association in 1877:

> Those who were only acquainted with Mr Sharpe in his public life could scarcely know how tender and sensitive a nature he possessed. He took the greatest interest in the welfare of others; his generous, hearty sympathy won for him the confidence and esteem of all who knew him. He had always a ready and helping hand for those who needed it. In the company of younger men he was always genial – his superior knowledge was put at their service without dogmatism or patronage.

If 'the child is father of the man', we can gain a good idea of the character of the little boy, who was Elizabeth's playmate so many years before.

Timothy Mannix

SOUTH OF ENGLAND GROUP

This active, friendly group has a programme of talks and visits very well organised. The next talk will be on 29th April at The Francis Holland School, Chelsea at 2.00 pm. Dr Gillian Cumiskey will speak on: Art and Illustrations in the Works of Elizabeth Gaskell.

Other dates for your diary are 7th September and 11th November.

A new venue is being arranged. Our thanks are due to Jane Wilson, who has arranged for us to meet at The Francis Holland School hitherto.

For any queries or details about this group please contact: Dudley Barlow, 44 Seymour Road, London SW18 5JA. SAE please.

The group very much enjoyed a visit to Crix, Hatfield Peveril, last summer (see NL18). The gardens are to be opened on two occasions this year:
22nd May from 2.00-6.00 pm in aid of the Red Cross, and
22nd June at 6.00 pm - Beating the Retreat - in aid of the Army Benevolent Fund.

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MEMBERSHIP LISTS

Keeping these up to date and accurate is difficult. Some members do not reply to reminders or send in a resignation, so one has to assume that they are no longer interested, but it does not help accuracy.

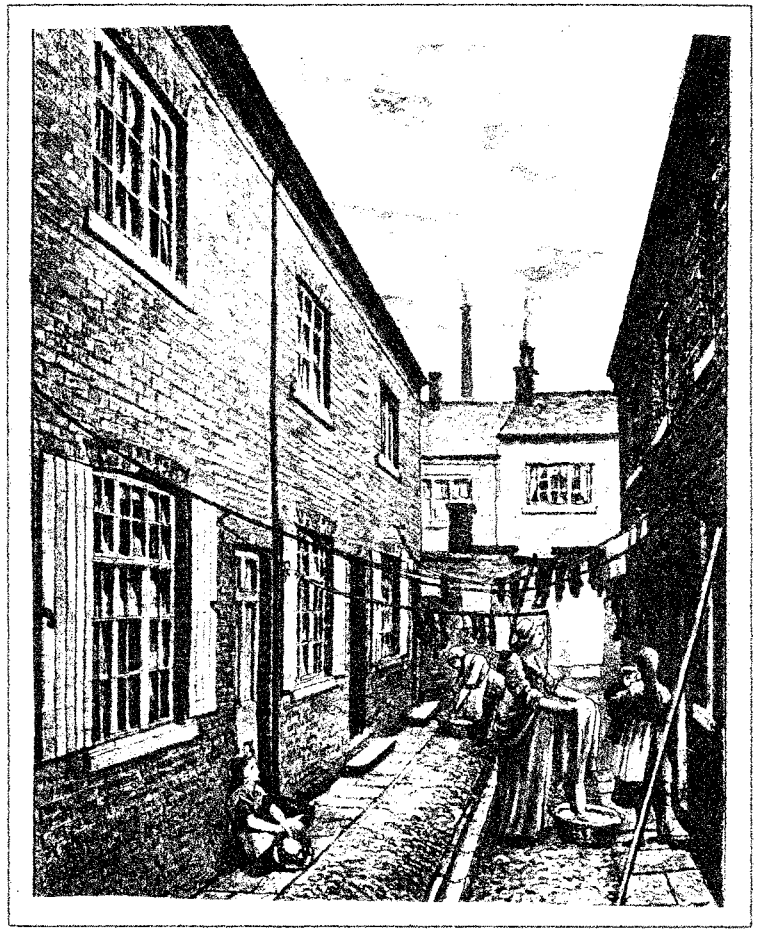
To keep down postage costs, I have two mailing lists so that distant members do not get notified of local meetings. All receive the Journal and two Newsletters.

Joan Leach

If you have any material or suggestions for future Newsletters, please contact Mrs Joan Leach, Far Yew Tree House, Over Tabley, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 OHN (Tel: 01565 634668)

ISSN 0954 - 1209

The Gaskell Society



NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 1995 NO. 20

EDITOR'S LETTER

by Joan Leach

By the time you receive this Newsletter the Society's Oxford Conference will be over. It has been over a year in the planning and over a hundred members will be joining us. The theme is Life, Learning and Literature. We hope that some of the papers will find their way into the Journal.

Elizabeth Gaskell made two visits to Oxford and packed a great deal of sight-seeing into a short time - we shall not be at a Christ Church Ball until 4.00 am! She also met some of the influential men of the University - Arthur Stanley, whose lecture she attended, Howett, Max Müller and Matthew Arnold, just appointed Professor of Poetry. She wrote afterwards of the visit 'I am Medieval and unManchester and unAmerican' (she was writing to C E Norton (GL386)).

We feel we are treading in her footsteps, especially as St Hilda's has absorbed Cowley House where she stayed with the Brodies. They later visited her several times, in Manchester. She made and cherished friendships; we hope that our Society keeps this tradition, and I know that friendships are made between members at our various events.

We are still in some anxiety about the Gaskell House at Plymouth Grove. Manchester University intends to remove the International Society to the campus and will then have no further use for the house. Our Society cannot seek Heritage or lottery funds until a viable plan can be drawn up for the restoration and future use of the house.

Before the University owned it, about 30 years ago, the Unitarians in Manchester were offered money to buy the house (£10,000 by Sir Felix Brunner, Anna Unsworth - believes). We dare not hope for such a charitable offer, but we will keep you informed.

Unitarian Ministers' widows

GHOST STORIES

Elizabeth Gaskell enjoyed telling stories around the fireside and particularly enjoyed a ghost story. (See NL13 An Oxford Ghost by Barbara Brill and NL14 Dickens and the Ghost Story by Muriel Smith)

The MSS of this story has no heading as in the form of a letter or any indication that it was to Elizabeth Gaskell's publisher; one can only guess that it was enclosed with some other item. Like the fragments of ghost stories in Vol VII of The Knutsford Edition she perhaps meant to finish and polish it at a later date, if and when a ghost story was needed.

"October 5, 1862
Midnight

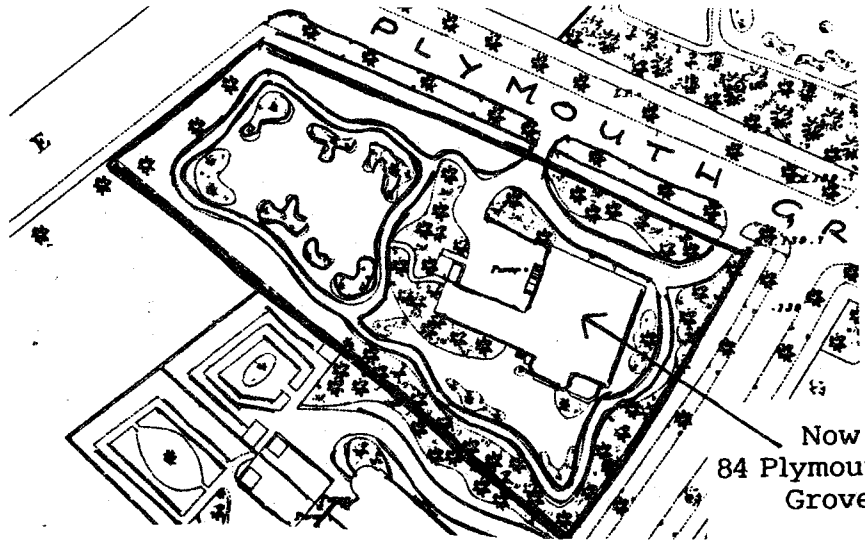
You have been asking me to tell you a ghost story: suppose I write you one, which I heard last year from very good authority; from one who had heard it from the very person by whom the apparition was seen.

A Yorkshireman, half-farmer, half-manufacturer, had been to Wakefield to dispose of his produce, and the woollen yarn, which had been spun by his wife and daughter. For this he had received a tolerably large sum of money, for him, and in that place. He had a long way to go home, over many a moor and rocky fell, and night was coming on. However he drove well; his horse was good, and his gig light; but by and by he began to feel as if some one was sitting by him on the empty seat. It was, at that moment, too dark to see even the nearest objects distinctly; but as soon as he emerged into the moonlight, he made an effort, and turned his head to look at the creature who sate beside him; and he recognized, within a foot of his own face, the face and features of his brother, dead fifteen years ago! He turned his head back to its former place, and drove straight on without a word, his flesh creeping on his bones. The road lay before them white in the moonlight, but with great pieces of rock on the fells on either side. From the black shadow of one of

these two men started forward with evident intent to stop the horse. But they drew back suddenly, one saying to the other,
By---, there are two of them!
Then the man drove one, faster than ever; and presently the wild moor was enclosed in little patches of fields here and there; and, on descending a little hill (or as they call them "brows" in that country) there were the scattered glimmering lights of a village to be seen not far off.
Then the man took heart of grace; and would fain have known how his dead brother had managed to get out of his grave in Burnley Church-yard, just in the very nick of time, so to speak.
But when he turned once again to his silent companion to ask him this question, there was nothing but vacant air and the empty seat.

E C Gaskell"

(With acknowledgements to the Berg Collection, New York Public Library)



Local Studies Unit, Manchester Public Library. O/S carried out 1849 - published 1850/1. Sheet 45 Manchester and Salford. 5 feet to the mile!

NEW LIGHT ON ELIZABETH GASKELL AND HER FAMILY

by J A V Chapple

The splendid loan deposit of Gaskell letters and other material made by Mrs Rosemary Trevor Dabbs to the Brotherton Library of the University of Leeds (NL17, February 1994) is now joined by a valuable group of papers entrusted to its care by Mrs Portia Holland, wife of the late John Swinton Holland. It is, as the Brotherton Librarian, Mr R P Carr, says, 'an imaginative way' of making such documents available to users of the special collections.

The Holland deposit contains many items, ranging from scraps of eighteenth-century Gaskell letters to the lengthy parchment will of Edward Holland, Elizabeth's cousin, and his elaborate Contract for erecting a mansion house at Dumbleton in the county of Gloucester, 9 January 1833. Payments of £19,800 in instalments are listed to 9 September 1837. Probate and double probate of Hannah Lumb's will of 31 December 1834, proved at Chester on 8 May 1837, has an obvious interest. There are several copies of such family wills.

Coincidentally, there is a diary of the infancy (from four weeks to three years) of Edward Thurstan Holland, kept by his mother, Sophia, in two small notebooks (a third is missing). This is being edited by Anita Wilson and J A V Chapple, and should appear this year along with Elizabeth Gaskell's diary of Marianne and Meta that Mrs Dabbs recently deposited in the Brotherton. The greater coincidence, we realise, is that Marianne married Thurstan Holland in 1866.

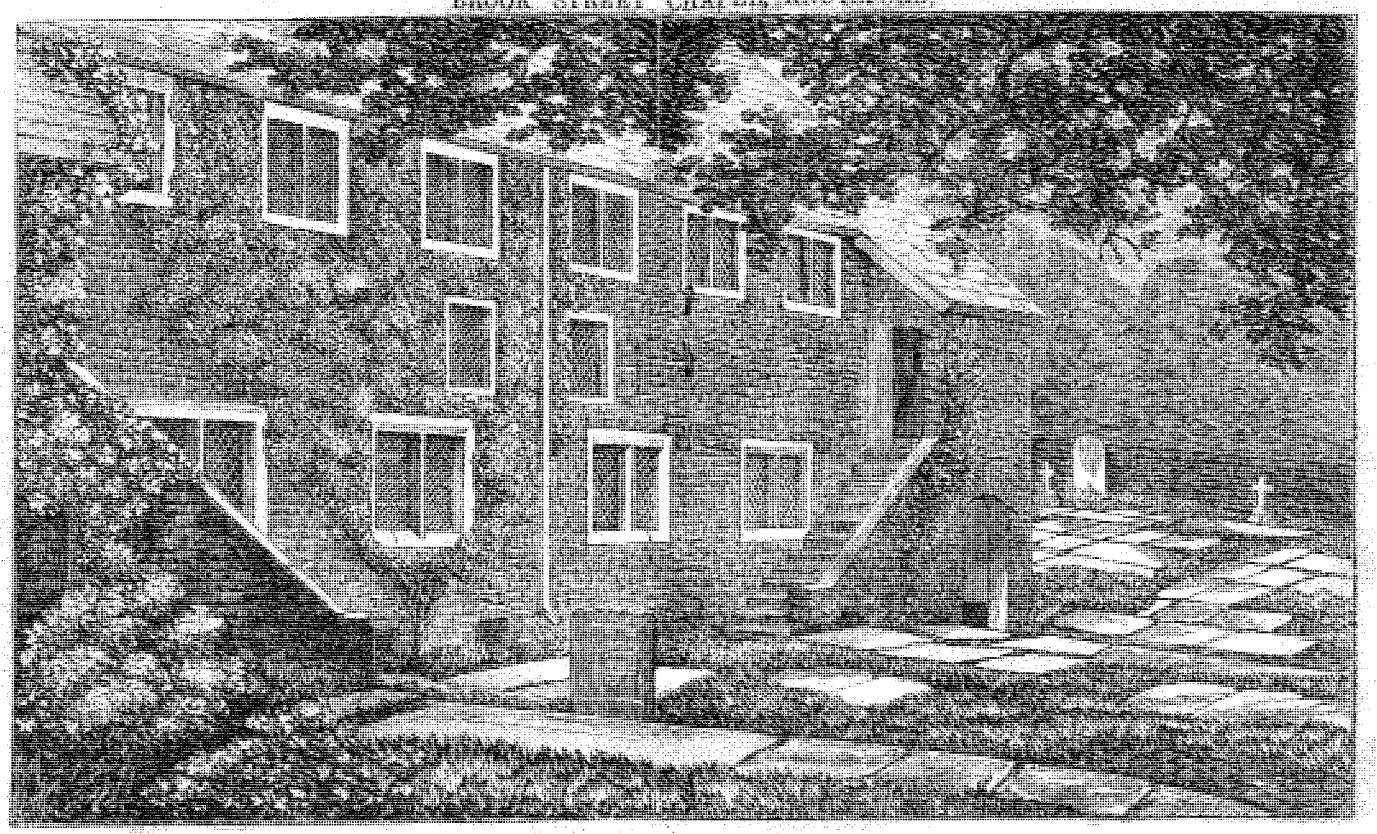
Space forbids mention of all that exists in the new collection of papers, but the 'Diary and Expences & Journal of a Voyage & Journey from Liverpool to Trieste via Hull & Toninguen in the Summer of 1805' and 'Do of Do from Malta to Falmouth and Sandle Bridge in the Spring of 1810' are particularly fascinating, as are the many documents relating to the Dumbleton estate so often visited by Elizabeth Gaskell - its printed Particulars of 1822,

Estate Survey, and the like. Once again, Gaskell Society members have cause to be truly grateful that such a collection of family papers is made available. A set of transcripts made by Mrs Holland ensure that many of the longer documents are easily consulted.

It will not come as a surprise if I add a note that a diary brought to our attention by the Society's serendipitous Secretary in NL17 is proving to be of exceptional interest. Its keeper, Edward Herford, eventually ended his career as Manchester city coroner and a churchman, but at about the age of fifteen in the spring of 1830 he had come to live with the reverend John Gooch Robberds of Cross Street Chapel and his wife Mary, William Turner's daughter. He was then a rather callow youth in his 'teens committed to the study of Greek, Latin and French with Robberds. He attended Cross Street Chapel, read assiduously, loved parties and entertained radical notions. From January 1832, there are references in his diary to a 'Miss Stephenson', and by the end of that month he had met the sister of 'Parson Gaskell'. He was in just the kind of swim we might have hoped for.

Callow he might have been, but his diary covers the period in which Elizabeth became engaged to William Gaskell and throws new light upon the lively Unitarian circles in which they moved. Not everything was professionally serious and parsonical. This diary adds immensely to the last chapter of the book I am even now concluding on Elizabeth and her background up to her marriage in 1832. The generosity of descendants, Joan Leach, Geoffrey Sharps, archivists, librarians and many others in facilitating my access to such documents means that almost every chapter has benefited from new discoveries.

BROOK STREET CHAPEL, KNUTSFORD.



BURIAL PLACE OF MRS. GASKELL.

This charming etching of Brook Street Chapel appeared, with an article on the Chapel's history, in a magazine known as The Christian Freeman; it is dated August 1868.

After giving details of the Chapel's history the article concludes:

'Nine years ago, in 1859, the chapel was renewed, the old fashioned high-backed double pews being exchanged for lower single ones; several other improvements were made. It may be added that under the cross nearest the west end of the chapel lie the remains of the late Mrs Gaskell, the well-known authoress, who passed her youth up to her marriage in Knutsford.'

A DAY WITH THE ENGINEERS

Extract from The Life of Sir David Brewster:

Thence we went to Manchester, paying a most interesting visit to Mr Fairbairn, which was shared by the late Mr Hopkins, of Cambridge, the celebrated private tutor in mathematics, whose society always afforded my father peculiar pleasure. No sight, no kind of information, ever came amiss to the latter, who was, as of old, deeply engrossed in "examining" the Manchester factories, the locomotives, and engineering improvements of his host, and the steam-hammer and numberless curious experiments and inventions of another Scotch friend, Mr James Nasmyth. One day's expedition he counted as "a white day" of his life. It was a visit to Saltaire in company with Mr Fairbairn, his accomplished daughter Mrs Bateman, and Mrs Gaskell, the popular authoress, now, alas ! no more. He was deeply interested in the alpaca factory, in the flourishing flock of alpacas, in the model town of 1000 workers and their families, in which was church and school, and not one public-house, and, most of all, in Mr (now Sir) Titus Salt, the creator and proprietor of all this well-regulated power and wealth, and in his beautiful and refined home, "The Crow's Nest".

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NORTH AND SOUTH

North and South is now available on audio tape, complete and unabridged, issued by Chivers Press Limited in a pack of 14 double sided cassettes at a cost of £18.95.

Juliet Stevenson reads in authentic Lancashire accents with subtle variations to give character identity; she also evokes emotions well - sympathy, anger, pain, tension and love - which involve the listener with the story.

This audio set will provide a 'book at bedtime' or for leisure hours, an aid to study or discussion or assist the imaginative mind during boring routine tasks such as ironing or decorating.

Gaskell fans will enjoy this sensitive production. Every library should have a copy.

There is a direct mail service, and you might like to send for the catalogue and newsletter 'Audio Times' from: Chivers Press Limited, Windsor Bridge Road, Bath, Avon BA2 3AX

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SOUTH OF ENGLAND BRANCH

Following the early retirement of Jane Wilson, the deputy head, it was thought that the Francis Holland School would no longer be available for our meetings. However, the Headmistress has generously told Jane that for the time being we may continue to use the school during termtime. We are most grateful for this.

Our next meeting will be held on Saturday 9 September 1995 at Pimlico School, Lupus Street, London SW1V 3AT, commencing at 2 pm. (For travel details telephone Dudley J Barlow 0181 874 7727). Frances Twinn will speak on "A sense of 'Place' in the works of Elizabeth Gaskell with specific reference to 'The Life of Charlotte Brontë'".

Subsequent meetings to be held at Francis Holland School, 39 Graham Terrace, London SW1W 8JF (near Sloane Square underground station) are as follows:

Saturday 11 November 1995 - "Humour in Mrs Gaskell's Letters" - Dr Graham Handley

Saturday 27 January 1996 - "Mrs Gaskell, William Fox and 'Tottie', his artist daughter" - Brenda Colloms

Saturday 27 April 1996 - "Snobbery: a light-hearted look at Class Consciousness in the novels of Jane Austen and Elizabeth Gaskell" - E Margaret Perry

All meetings commence at 2 pm

BOOK NOTES

by Christine Lingard

Reclaiming myths of power: women writers and the Victorian spiritual crisis by Ruth Y Jenkins; London and Toronto: Associated University Presses. £27

Case studies of four contemporary Victorian women - Florence Nightingale, Elizabeth Gaskell, George Eliot and Charlotte Brontë and their religious influences.

The chapter on Gaskell is entitled 'Stand with Christ against the World' and provides an extensive analysis of Ruth. It explores Gaskell's relationship to the Christian socialists and also the influence of her husband on her writing, with the aim of showing how traditional Old Testament traditions have preserved patriarchal values and Church institutions have limited female position.

There is also reference to female hymn writers and minor writers such as Sarah Ellis and Mrs Humphry Ward.

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GASKELL COLLECTION IN MANCHESTER

The Language and Literature Library, 2nd floor Central Library Manchester, has produced a leaflet with details about the Gaskell Collection there. Christine Lingard, librarian, is also a committee member of the Society. SAE to the Library if you would like a copy.

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THE CHARLOTTE M YONGE SOCIETY

The Charlotte M Yonge Society was conceived during a Barbara Pym Weekend held at St Hilda's College in 1993. There will be an inaugural conference at Friends House, Euston, on 18th November. AGM is likely to be in Birmingham in the Spring and a Northern Regional group

may meet earlier in York. CMY's best known book is The Heir of Radclyffe; there will soon be OUP and Wordsworth editions.
If you are interested in the Society (£5 membership), write to: Mrs J M Shell, 78 Sunningfields Road, London NW4 4RL

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THE MARTINEAU SOCIETY

The Martineau Society was officially launched on Saturday 16 July 1994 at Manchester College.

Mrs Gaskell knew both James and Harriet Martineau. While on holiday in Wales in 1853 she wrote 'All the James Martineaus come tomorrow ... I wish they weren't coming - I like to range about ad libitum & sit looking at views etc not talking sense by the yard.' GL163

Details of the Society (£10 membership) from:
Mr Alan Middleton, 49 Mayfield Avenue, Wantage OX12 7ND (SAE please)

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REMINDER

1996 subscriptions are now due
Please pay them promptly, either at the AGM or London meeting on 9 September, or to our Treasurer, Brian Williams, 13 Cawley Avenue, Culcheth, Warrington WA3 4DF. SAE appreciated.
£7; or £10 joint, corporate and overseas

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ERRATA, Journal vol 9 (You might like to insert this in your copy)

p.1 For Lovell, read Lowell
p.8 For (1834-1905) read (1843-1905)
p.9 For In Memoriam, read Memoriæ Positum R.G.S.
p.11, n.11 For 1987, read 1897
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