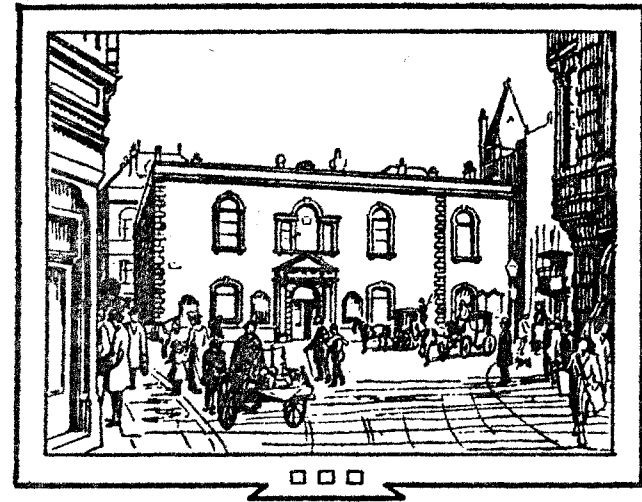


The Gaskell Society



CROSS STREET CHAPEL

NEWSLETTER

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

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

+ + + + +

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 & hireable 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 Müller'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 die 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

+ + + + +

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 Sandleigh 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 - overridden 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)

+ + + + +

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 joint 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