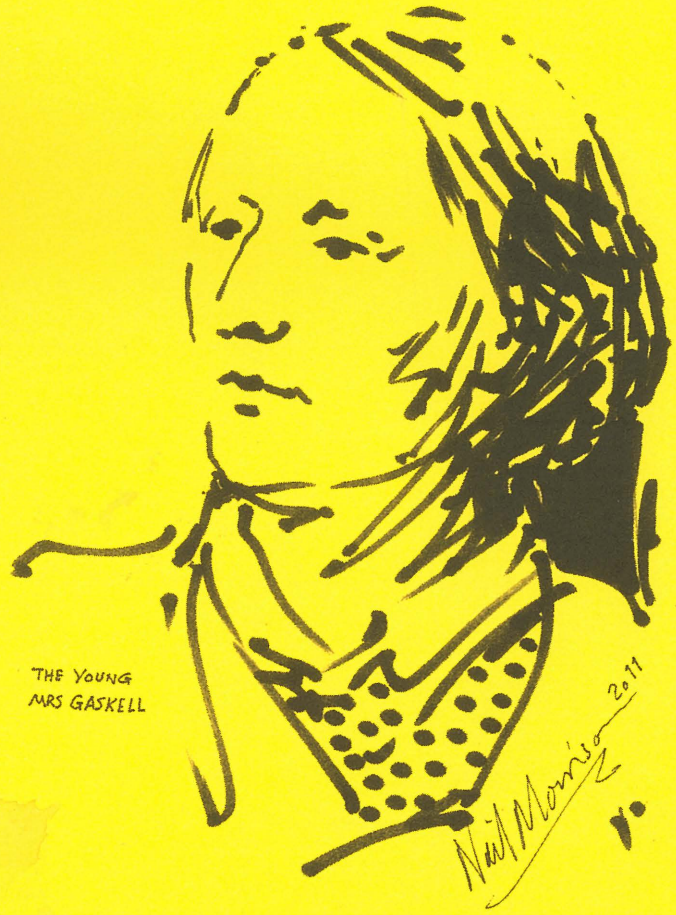
The Gaskell Society



NEWSLETTER

Spring 2013 - Number 55

THE GASKELL SOCIETY HOME PAGE has all the latest information on meetings.
http://gaskellsociety.co.uk

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ISSN 0954 - 1209

Editor's Letter

Helen Smith

Enclosed with this Newsletter is information about the AGM (13 April) and the Conference (19-22 July). Please read, digest carefully and then send your replies to Christine Lingard by 31 March.

The US study tour in September 2012 leaves us quite breathless. Christine Bhatt leads us through the adventures and shows us the sights of this visit in her comprehensive report. Fortunately all the Brits returned safely and in time for the Autumn General Meeting in Knutsford on Mrs Gaskell's 202nd birthday.

Back in Knutsford we have been busy studying *Ruth* under the skilful and expert guidance of Elizabeth Williams and we have celebrated the New Year with a lunch at Peover Golf Club (We do not believe ECG played golf!) on Wednesday 16 January. After we had indulged in more than adequate sustenance, Shirley Foster entertained us with tales of Mrs Gaskell and food. Gourmand and gourmet Mrs G was certainly not 'clemmed', and how ostentatious many of the wealthy Victorians were in their greed and conspicuous consumption. Our thanks to Shirley for permitting her talk to be printed in this Newsletter.

http://www.lang.nagoya-u.ac.jp/~matsuoka/EG-Newsletter.html

At this Japanese website the contents of all Newsletters from number 20 (August 1995) to date are listed. This is a very useful, and possibly not generally known, tool. The first 19 Newsletters also contain items of interest but must be searched, when located, individually.

Often I invite friends and members to write for the Newsletter. The most frequent reply to this heart-felt plea is: "I don't know what to write about" or, "What shall I write about?" (Other members do produce the goods, for which most grateful thanks). May I suggest some possible topics for your consideration:

- Mrs Gaskell and the Brothers Grimm
- Mrs Gaskell travels to Silverdale
- Mrs Gaskell visits Florence
- Mrs Gaskell and Warrington
- Mrs Gaskell: Dover Street, Upper Rumford Street and Plymouth Grove
- Mrs Gaskell and servants
- Miss Stevenson in Knutsford

The scope is endless: please exercise the imagination and start writing. Fortunately you do not need to ask your daughters to sharpen your quills although our children may well prove to be helpful with technology. And snail mail is also accepted.

As I trot along the cobbles in Red Cow Yard to discuss the printing of the Newsletter with Rebecca, I often wonder if Elizabeth, hand-in-hand with Aunt Lumb, may have toddled along this very path 200 years ago. We shall never know.

As ever, I wish to thank everyone who has written for this Newsletter; please continue to do so and I look forward to contributions from new authors. Our thanks to Rebecca Stuart at Lithotech Print in Knutsford for her hard work and patience in producing our Newsletter.

Happy New Year to all our readers! We are really looking forward to meeting many members at the Conference (19-22 July) which, we hope, will be the highlight of the Gaskell Year.

Just desserts for Shirley Foster and Alan Shelston? New Year lunch

Elizabeth Gaskell and Food

Shirley Foster

Having just enjoyed an excellent lunch with all of you, I thought it might be appropriate to this occasion to consider some aspects of Mrs G's relationship with food, both how it featured in her own life, and also its function in her writings.

From her letters, we gain the impression that she enjoyed her food, took note of what she and others consumed, and was ready to complain if she didn't have enough to eat. Her relish for the luxuries of country fare is evident in a letter from Sandlebridge of May 1836, in which she describes 'cream that your spoon stands

upright in, & such sweet (not sentimental but literal) oven-cakes and fresh butter' (6). This contrasts with her grumble, many years later when they were living at Plymouth Grove, that, with a houseful of guests they can't get enough butter: the butter woman doesn't come, and, with their own cow, they can make only about 4lbs a week, 'at the *very* outside' (636). One also suspects that the Manchester butter was not as good as that from Cheshire. The problems of planning menus and having enough food prepared for the many guests who came to Manchester is a frequent topic. Such concerns, she claims, also exercised her when she was away from home. She notes how difficult it is to get provisions in 'wild' Silverdale (505), adding that there is no bread nearer than Milnthorpe (her guests apparently had to make do with shrimps on their own for tea). At Auchencairn, where she stayed in July 1859, there is a similar difficulty with basic foodstuff: there is plenty of meat available 'but potatoes [are] a delicacy not to be purchased nearer than Castle Douglas, nine miles away' (565), There is, though, a note of self-irony in these complaints; she probably enjoyed 'roughing it' – or, rather, giving her correspondents the impression that she was doing just that.

Gaskell, it seems, was usually hungry. After she and William had walked over to Pendleton, to see their American friends, the Bradfords, she was delighted that they were offered 'such a supper' (18), fuelling them for dancing and their walk back to Manchester in the early hours of the morning. For her, restrictions on food intake were particularly disagreeable. She describes a visit to a Miss Nancie Smith, for instance, where they have 'a very scanty lunch' (600). One place where this was an especial problem was at the Paris house of her friend Madame Mohl ('Clarkey'). Mohl was a kind and lively woman who wanted her guests to enjoy themselves, but it seems that she and her husband, Julius, had little appreciation of healthy English appetites. On a visit in 1855, Gaskell describes how she and Meta go to a 'great soirée got up in my honour', which, although fun, failed to provide adequate sustenance:

> [...only] cups of rich chocolate and cream cakes, which made Meta wish she could have kept either her good dinner or her good tea to another day, for she is perpetually hungry. We hardly ever have more than twice to eat in the day. Breakfast, tea and bread and butter. *Then* 6 o'clock dinner, and *nothing* whatever after, not even when we go to [the] theatre. (333)

Ten years later, things haven't improved, as is clear from Gaskell's description to Emily Shaen of their daily diet chez Mohl: they have breakfast coffee at 8.00; then a second breakfast around 11.00 – cold meat, bread, wine and water, and sometimes an omelette, 'what we should call lunch, in fact, only it comes too soon after my breakfast, and too long before dinner for my English habits'. Dinner at the Mohls' is at 'six sharp' – 'Soup, meat, one dish of vegetables and roasted apples are what we have in general'. Afterwards, everyone falls asleep, then 'at eight exactly M Mohl

wakes up and makes a cup of very weak tea for Mme Mohl and me, nothing to eat after dinner; not even if we have been to the play'(750). Sometimes after dinner she goes to an evening party, where she enjoys talk and listening to music, and 'I come home hungry as a hawk about one a.m.' (751). Presumably she then spent a restless night, kept awake by her rumbling empty stomach! Though her tone here is light-hearted, she attributes a fortnight's illness and weakness to 'the real want of food and lowness of diet' in Paris (753).

As well as telling us about Gaskell's own attitudes, references to food and eating in the letters also help to give a picture of the diet and eating habits of an average middle-class Victorian family; they give, too, glimpses of higher social class habits (as I shall show, details of the diet of the poor are chiefly found in Gaskell's fiction). The magnificent supper that she and William enjoyed at the Bradfords' produces a naïve admiration as well as bodily gratification: 'I suppose the Bradfords are very rich, - for [there were] wine and grapes, and pines, and such cakes my mouth waters at the thought, and ducks and green peas, and new potatoes and asparagus and chickens without end, and savoury pies, and all sorts of beautiful confectionery' (18). This is clearly 'how the other half lives'. (Among other things, if the Bradfords grew their own pineapples they would have need a hotbed and a heated glass house, items of some expenditure). Again, the provisions prepared for the Shaens' Christmas dinner at Crix, in December 1847 – 40lb sirloin of beef and two turkeys, for ten in the parlour and thirty-two in the servants' hall – gives some idea of the prosperity of this well-to-do Unitarian family. Gaskell notes more extravagance on a visit to the Behrens at Worleston, where dinner consisted of 'turtle soup, green peas (at half a guinea *a quart*), iced pudding, ducklings, chickens, lamb etc. etc.' (546). In contrast, references to the Gaskells' meals suggest a simpler, less ostentatious diet: lunch could be ham sandwiches and beer (William also eats sandwiches on the train), and one quickly prepared tea included 'eggs filled with anchovy, à la Mrs Shadwell [wife of their friend Col. Shadwell]' (652). Boiled sole is offered for dinner to the children and Old William (not WG), not apparently wholly to the latter's liking (839). Of course, Gaskell had a cook who actually prepared the food, even if she herself chose it. On the rare occasions when she cooked, the result was perhaps less than perfect: she mentions frying ham and eggs at home, and setting fire to the fat in the pan so that someone had to rush out into the garden with it. She adds humorously: 'The toast was not so first-rate. We were like thorough cooks and only did the best dish well' (857).

Gaskell's experiences of eating abroad (in addition to the Mohls) are also referenced in the letters. Foreign travel was of course much less common than it is now, and Gaskell's response to unfamiliar diet is surprisingly tolerant. Unlike William, who disliked foreign food 'like poison' (506) [1], she was prepared to find at least some enjoyment in difference. On her first visit to Germany, she itemises the oddities of lunch (lasting an hour and a half) at Frau von Pickford's: 'soup, boiled meat and potatoes, sausages and pancakes (no bad mixture), RAW pickled fish and kidney

beans or peas stewed in oil, pudding, roast meat and salad, apricot or cherry open flat tart about one and a half yards round, desert cakes, apricots, wild strawberries, coffee' (44). Apart from the raw fish, and perhaps the curious order of courses, the meal seems to have met with her approval – though surely she must have been struck by how much the Germans eat! She experiences another strange foreign meal in Paris, where she goes to 'a real Russian dinner'. Her reactions are mixed: 'First soup made of mutton, and sour kraut, very nasty and horrible to smell. Then balls and rissolles very good; fish, rice, eggs and *cabbage*, all chopped up together, and cased in bread. Then caviar and smoked fish handed round with bread and butter. Then sweetbreads done in some extraordinary fashion, then eels, chopped up with mushrooms, lemon juice and mustard. Then roti of some common sort; then gelinottes or Russian partridge, which feed on the young sprouts of the pine trees, and taste strongly of turpentine. Then a sweet soup, ball of raisins and currants like plum-pudding, boiled in orange-flower water'. That was probably all, she says, adding demurely, 'it was all I took at any rate' (751). There was also far too much food at a dinner she went to in Heidelberg, including large amounts of soup, baked potatoes with no butter, cabbage which she left untouched (probably more sauerkraut), passable sausages, unacceptable beef, and – surprisingly – a good rice pudding. More to her taste was the (this time adequate) food she and Julia had at a French hotel in Dieppe in October 1865. Here, they could have breakfast (coffee, bread and butter) in their own room, lunch (chocolate, cold meat, bread and butter, Neufchatel cheese and grapes) in the salle-à-manger whenever they liked; and a table d'hote dinner of soup, fish, two meats, pudding and desert' [sic] (778). All this was nine francs inclusive, obviously a bargain.

Given Gaskell's interest in food, and also the fact that almost all her writing belongs to the genre of social realism, it is not surprising that we find many references to eating and customs associated with it in her work. As with the Letters, such details provide the social historian with valuable information about contemporary behaviour. Further, though, they can be used as part of the mechanics of narration, a means of illuminating character or furthering the plot. In many of the novels and short stories, local names for foodstuff – for example, 'clap-bread' – tell us of regional differences and specialities. The immense meat pie that is the supper dish for the Holman household in *Cousin Phillis* gives an indication of what a prosperous Cheshire farmer would offer his workers after a hard day in the fields. In one of Gaskell's early short stories, *Christmas Storms and Sunshine* (1848), she tells us what two lower middle class couples might buy for their Christmas meal: the slighter better-off pair choose turkey and sausages, while the other pair make do with roast beef; they also have plum-pudding or mince pies (both choices are consumed when the couples are reconciled and share their celebration meal). *Cranford*, of course, provides delightful details of eating habits among the respectable middle class and gentry. Oranges are special, but are too messy be eaten in public (and distastefully associated with a certain action associated with young babies); tea-time treats include Savoy biscuits and seed-cake; Betty Barker

(who wants to impress) offers scalloped oysters, potted lobsters, jelly and 'little Cupids' (macaroons soaked in brandy – was the name itself partly their attraction?) for supper; bread-jelly is an invalid food. Mr Holbrook belongs to an earlier generation, so when Miss Matty and Mary go to lunch with him, they are presented with two-pronged forks with which to eat peas. Interestingly, too, Holbrook himself adverts to the current custom in which '"folks begin with sweet things, and then turn their dinners topsy-turvey"', whereas he sticks to his father's rule of broth, followed by suet pudding, followed by meat (similar to the Yorkshire habit of eating Yorkshire pudding before the roast?). And of course much of the humour of the novel derives from the clash between the characters' healthy appetites and their 'gentility' which forbids them showing a vulgar interest in food.

One of the texts that most interestingly pictures local eating habits is the 'factional' piece, *Cumberland Sheep Shearers* (1853), which describes the meal offered to the narrator and her family at a prosperous Lake District farm. Hot and weary from their walk up from Keswick, they are presented with a huge tea which includes berrycake (puff-pastry filled with gooseberries), currant bread, plain bread and butter, hot cakes with honey and cheese, green and black tea with sugar and a little 'rich yellow fragrant cream'. The poor children have 'sweet butter' (rum butter) forced on them to put on the 'clap-bread' or oatcakes, a substance which the narrator says 'is altogether the most nauseous compound in the shape of a dainty I ever tasted'. They are also not given enough milk, because the farmer's wife thinks visitors should have 'grocer's stuff' rather than ordinary farm produce – a common misreading of tastes. In contrast to these sweet things, the main meal for the shearers, seventy in all, consists of 'rounds of beef, hams, fillets of veal, and legs of mutton bobb[ing], indiscriminately, with plum puddings, up and down in a great boiler', while ovens disgorge endless berry-pies and 'rice-puddings stuck full of almonds and raisins'.

There are various instances of Gaskell's more symbolic use of food in her fiction, but I have time here to mention only two examples. *Mary Barton* uses social realism to reinforce its message of the sufferings of the poor and the ills of social inequality. At the opening, when times are relatively good, we see the Bartons and their guests enjoying the luxury of eggs, Cumberland ham, bread and tea with milk and rum; when conditions have deteriorated, they often go hungry or eat merely a little bread (butter is very expensive), with perhaps a scrap of cold bacon. One of Gaskell's direct interpolations in the novel concerns the overall weakening effect – psychological as well as physical - of hunger. When Margaret has started to do well with her singing, she offers Mary a sovereign to buy food for her and her father, and the narrator alerts readers to the Lancashire saying that 'food gives heart'; as she shows, there is a world of difference between having something to eat (even the very basic of foodstuffs) and having nothing. The contrast between the poor and the well-off in this respect is also used to further the plot. John Barton's anger at the sight of a wealthy woman buying food for a party – 'haunches of venison, Stilton

cheeses, moulds of jelly' – while his son lies dying of starvation at home both validates his outrage at this social inequality and hints at the coming violence which such resentment will generate. Similarly, the rather obvious contrast between the ghastly cellar in which Davenport lies dying and the plenty in the Carsons' kitchen, where the cook is preparing breakfast as Wilson goes to get an infirmary order, stresses the huge gulf between the 'two nations'. Gaskell highlights the contrast by stressing the good smells, and the lavishness of expenditure and consumption (Mrs Carson has said that she can't afford more than 2/6 a pound for salmon, and demands cold partridge, a well-buttered roll and coffee with cream for her breakfast).

One other, rather more subtle, symbolic use of food consumption is to be found in the early pages of *Wives and Daughters*. Here it is an indicator of character, as well as foreshadowing future events. When Molly is inadvertently left behind at the Towers' fête, Clare (Mrs Kirkpatrick) is instructed by Lady Cuxhaven to take her some food. Molly however is too faint and ill to eat, and passively allows Clare to eat it instead:

> Molly...leant back, picking languidly at the grapes, and watching the good appetite with which the lady ate up the chicken and jelly, and drank the glass of wine. She was so pretty and so graceful in her deep mourning, that even her hurry in eating as if she was afraid of someone coming to surprise her in the act, did not keep her little observer from admiring her in all she did. (Penguin, 17)

The narrative viewpoint is skilfully manipulated here – Molly is cast as the 'little observer', but most of the passage replicates her consciousness – in order to indicate, without direct commentary, Clare's selfishness and deceit, traits which will surface much more during the novel and cause Molly much distress. Here, the contrast between the delicacy of the food itself and the greed with which Clare devours it, is used to excellent effect. Later, too, Molly's slight resentment at Clare's failure to own up to Lady Cuxhaven that it is she, not Molly herself, who has eaten the lunch, subtly reinforces the older woman's innate deviousness. Her refusal, too, to allow Mr Gibson to eat bread and cheese when he returns from his rounds, because cheese is 'vulgar', indicates her false sense of 'gentility' which impacts upon her behaviour as a whole.

Much more remains to be said on this topic, but I hope that this has given some idea of its fruitfulness for future research.

NB Numbers in brackets refer to page numbers in *The Letters of Mrs Gaskell*, Chapple and Pollard.

[1] She was always anxious about William's eating habits while she was away: she tells the elder girls' governess, Barbara Fergusson, that he must have egg beaten up with milk and sugar in the morning; meat or eggs for tea, 'Kidneys, sweet breads and such tit bits – and fowls by way of variety, and devil the legs etc' (FL, 31-2)

George Richmond 1809 -1896 and his portrait of Elizabeth Gaskell

(bequeathed by Meta to, and now in store at, the National Portrait Gallery)

Pat Barnard

George Richmond belonged to a family of artists. In 1831 he married Julia Tatham, the daughter of the architect Charles Heathcote Tatham at Gretna Green and of their 15 children, their son William Blake Richmond became a painter, sculptor and designer. From this, it will be ascertained that George was a follower of William Blake! However it was through portraiture that he made his living, and, of course, of special interest to members of the Gaskell Society he made chalk portraits of Elizabeth Gaskell and of Charlotte Brontë!

Letter 100 to Marianne Gaskell 13th July 1851:

> Wednesday I did not go to Richmond, it was too bad a day for him to draw - Tuesday [Thursday?] a long piece of Richmond again, I think it is like me; I hope Papa will think so but I am most doubtful ....

George Richmond, Elizabeth Gaskell, 1851
© National Portrait Gallery, London

Letter 115 to ?George Richmond February 24th [?1852]:

> Dear Sir,
> I must plead indisposition as an excuse for not sooner having written to tell you that some time ago my husband placed £31-10s to your account at Masterman's; he says you will know where the bank is so I daresay my having forgotten the more exact address will not signify. With many pleasant recollections of the time I passed in your studio, I believe to remain
> Yours truly, E. C. Gaskell

Letter 166 to John Forster Sept 1853:

> Visit to Haworth - in the sitting-room - there was her likeness by Richmond given to her father by Messrs Smith & Elder.

Letter 241 to George Smith, May 31st 1855:

> Dear Sir,
> I believe you have a copy of Richmond's portrait of Miss Brontë. I want to know if there is any probability of its ever being engraved; or if you would ever object to a daguerreotype being taken from it at future for my own self. I can not tell you how I honoured & loved her.

At the request of the Gaskell Society, and for the 200th anniversary of the birth of Elizabeth Gaskell, the National Portrait Gallery retrieved from storage the two portraits of Elizabeth Gaskell and Charlotte Brontë and displayed them with accompanying titles. (Pastel drawings are subject to deterioration in the light of day so are now back in storage but arrangements may be made to see them. The Gallery also has some interesting papers associated with ECG in a box called Elizabeth Gaskell Sitter Box of which Gaskell Society member Marjorie Darlington has copies)

The portrait of Elizabeth was positioned along one corner of a room with that of Charlotte Brontë alongside the adjoining wall. Charles Darwin's portrait in oils (still on view) was in the same room.

Perhaps you know whether William approved of the drawing! I know most of us were enchanted by this pastel and in my view it is the best portrait of her, but did Elizabeth herself think so? I wonder!

Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot :

siblings, spoilt dogs, cream-jugs, torn dresses, farm labourers, the judgment of Solomon, and the outward gaze

Barbara Hardy

As she gained her position as the greatest woman novelist of her day, even challenging the position of the dominant men, Dickens and Thackeray, George Eliot may have had reasons for feeling what Harold Bloom has called 'the anxiety of influence', not only as the common *jalousie de métier* but with the extra pang of sisterly emulation. Elizabeth Gaskell was her most successful woman rival, born ten years earlier, first established in popularity and talent; like her beginning under cover of a male pseudonym, like her turning nostalgia into art, like her blending

pathos and fun, but unlike her emerging into a stable social position as writer, married woman and mother. The mention of Gaskell in Eliot's anonymous essay *Silly Novels by Women Novelists*, first published in the Westminster Review, 1856 [1], before George Eliot the novelist came into existence, is often cited, but the brief comment merely brackets Gaskell with Harriet Martineau, very much her inferior as a writer, and Currer Bell, who was dead, as excellent women novelists 'treated as cavalierly as if they had been men'.

Gaskell and Eliot have been often associated in the discussion of *The Moorland Cottage* (1850) and *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), because of some obvious resemblances, and also perhaps because Eliot denied knowing the book when Swinburne accused her of plagiarism in his hostile *Note on Charlotte Brontë* (1877). *The Moorland Cottage* is not one of Gaskell's best stories, inferior to *Mary Barton*, *Cranford*, *Ruth*, and *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, which Eliot and Lewes read, and its lack of depth have been an extra reason for Eliot's irritated disclaimer, if this was disingenuous or if she recalled what she had forgotten. Gordon Haight asserts that Eliot had never seen Gaskell's book, apparently accepting her own word (*George Eliot: A Life, p. 525* [2]).

Gaskell had earlier written an amusing letter about happily accepting the authorship of *Adam Bede* – she laughed at herself in a way Eliot never did, because Eliot could joke, but not about her art – though the gossipy and intrusive part Gaskell played in the Liggins scandal is less admirable. Eliot had replied amicably to Gaskell's famous letter expressing admiration and rueful regret that she was not 'Mrs Lewes', saying she knew her writing showed an affinity with the feeling that inspired the early chapters of *Mary Barton* and *Cranford*.

Jo Pryke is persuasive in the conversation with Shirley Foster published in the last but one number of this Newsletter [3] when she says 'common sense suggests that Eliot probably had read *The Moorland Cottage*, opting for unconscious rather than conscious plagiarism' but she makes some points I find less convincing. She argues that the environment and symbolism of *The Mill on the Floss* derive from *The Moorland Cottage* and its surrounding nature, but this ignores the influence of Wordsworth: 'The Thorn' has its special link with Maggie Brown's sacred place, the knotty thorn-tree on its mound, and the poet is a strong presence, explicit and implicit, in the work of both novelists. (Gaskell and Eliot shared not only this love of the English poet, but a profound and informed affection for Dante, whom they both read in Italian and used subtly, though differently, in *North and South*, *Cousin Phillis*, *Felix Holt*, *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda*.) Though Wordsworth was a beloved model for both novelists, their common emphasis on memory need not be attributed to his insistence on the faculty in the patterns and passions of life and poetry. Gaskell's *Cranford* is a nostalgic and loving tribute to the Knutsford of her nurturing, and Eliot pointed out the sources of *The Mill on the Floss*, her own most autobiographical novel, not in a mill and a dangerous river, but in the personal

places of a 'brown stream' where she fished with her brother, and the attic in Griff House (still there) from which, like Maggie Tulliver, she looked out at distant horizons. She did not need the stimulus or influence of Wordsworth's or Gaskell's insistence on memory, given the bitter personal circumstances of her own severance from place and family, starting with the estrangement from her father when she lost her Christian faith, and culminating in the complete break with her family after she confessed her relationship with Lewes. The emphasis on emotional and social continuity is there, in personal and particular, lamented and analysed, before she read Gaskell. Neither Pryke nor Foster, who mentions 'family structures', considers the autobiographical origins of *The Mill on the Floss*: its story of the preferential treatment of the boy and the siblings' troubled relationship, has a well-documented origin in Eliot's life and is less the story of Maggie and Edward Browne than that of Mary Ann and Isaac Evans. We can read the sources in George Eliot's letters and the reminiscences she shared with her husband John Cross, which he warmly and minutely recorded in his biography. Finally, the name Maggie seems to me weak rather than strong evidence: were Eliot guilty of plagiarism, Maggie is the last name she would have chosen for her heroine. What it suggests is that Gaskell's story struck a chord in her mind, resulting neither in copy nor *hommage* but a fascinating unconscious echo.

There is no doubt about the resemblance in the sibling relationship and the drowning, and it is not the only example of a plot in which Eliot seems to be remembering Gaskell. *Ruth* and *Adam Bede* both tell the story of a young woman who is seduced and deserted by a man of higher class, contemplates drowning herself in a pool, and gives birth to a child. In *Middlemarch* Dorothea's inherited fortune is small compared to Margaret Hale's but it also enables her to marry the man she loves. One is tempted to suggest that Eliot is re-writing Gaskell, but these resemblances are broad and less interesting than more particularised small echoes.

My first example is the similarity of two domestic dramas, in Chapters VII and VIII of *Cranford* (1853) and Chapter VII of *Amos Barton, Scenes of Clerical Life* (1856), their common properties a jug of cream and another of milk, their chief characters two small spoilt dogs, Lady Jamieson's Carlo, and the Countess Czerlaski's Jet, with their lady owners. Carlo appears when Lady Jamieson insists on taking him to Miss Barker's party, where he arrives panting and rushing round his mistress, is addressed as 'poor ittie doggie' by his hostess, swallows 'chance pieces of cake', and barks with a loud snapping bark; then in a less hospitable gathering at home where 'the poor dumb creature' lies on the rug, barks ungraciously, and laps his saucer of cream which 'he knew quite well ... constantly refused tea with only milk ... so the milk was left for us'. The hungry visitors wryly observe 'the gratitude evinced by his wagging his tail for the cream which should have been ours'. Eliot's Jet also gets cream poured by a fond owner, when the maid Nanny has forgotten the jug of breakfast milk, and is bidden to get more cream, speaks out and

happily precipitates the departure of the unwelcome guest. Carlo has a small comic role, sympathetically developed when he dies; Jet is a plot-mover. Eliot's outspoken Nanny is very Gaskellian, more individual and assertive than Eliot's usual servants, who with a few other exceptions, like Denner in *Felix Holt* and Tantripp in *Middlemarch*, are subdued in behaviour, speech, and fictional role. Names are re-cycled: if the Bartons' Nanny echoes Miss Barker's Nancy in *Cranford*, another Nanny turns up later as a housemaid at the Towers in *Wives and Daughters* (1865). As for milk and cream, the dairy-wise Eliot has her own expertise: butter-making plays an erotic role in *Adam Bede*, and cream is a prominent object in the first chapter of her published fiction, in *Amos Barton*. It is a psychological as well as a social marker, as Mrs Patten's niece pours it into 'fragrant tea with a discreet liberality', Mrs Hackit abstemiously declines it, and the Reader is informed of its merits at some length. Eliot must have found Gaskell's dog-milk-cream image-chain congenial, perhaps inspirational, and Carlo and Jet are resonantly related in one of those concatenations which fascinated the ground-breaking Shakespearean image-analyst Caroline Spurgeon, who pointed out the personal and social significance of the repeated spaniel-fawning-sweetmeat image chain, itself coincidentally related to Gaskell's and Eliot's shared distaste less for small spoilt dogs than for their silly owners.

In Gaskell's story *Lizzie Leigh* (its first part published in Dickens's *Household Words* in 1850, then the whole in a volume with other Gaskell stories in 1853) there is a domestic scene with some resemblance to one in *Adam Bede* (1859). In the first chapter Anne Leigh, like Lisbeth Bede, is mourning her husband's death; she has suffered from his hard-hearted refusal to forgive their 'fallen' daughter Lizzie, but recalls early happy days, like Lisbeth who has suffered from her husband's drinking and Adam's inflexibility. Mrs Leigh has two sons, Will stern and inflexible, the younger Tom delicate and gentle, in some ways like Adam and Seth. Anne comes down from the bedroom where her husband's body is laid out to find that her sons have 'the tea-things' ready, boiled the kettle, and 'done everything in their power to make the house-place more comfortable for her'. In Chapter 10 of *Adam Bede* Lisbeth comes from the chamber of death to find the place disordered but Seth making a fire 'that he might get the kettle to boil, and persuade his mother to have a cup of tea'. He tells her he wants to put some 'things away, and make the house more comfortable'. The situation is similar and so are some words, for instance 'house' and 'comfortable'. There is no question that Eliot's scene and novel are larger and more complex, her language, affective form and ideas more original, sustained and profound than Gaskell's, but there are affinities, echoes and multiple associations - what John Livingstone Lowes in *The Road to Xanadu*, his seminal study of Coleridge's reading and sources, called 'hooked atoms' (1927).

In Chapter 2 of *Ruth* (18) there is a crucial episode in which the looped garland of a ball-dress is torn during a dance, and the dancer withdraws to have it mended by Ruth, in attendance as a milliner's apprentice: the effect of Ruth's beauty and

dignity on the lady's partner, Bellingham, who watches the repair, precipitates the love-affair and the main plot. The occasion is echoed in Chapter 11 of George Eliot's *Silas Marner* (1860) where the waist of Nancy Lammeter's is torn as she dances with Godfrey Cass, and her sister Priscilla does the repair, telling Godfrey brusquely that his presence makes no difference to her. Again, the scenes, characters and function are completely different, but here too the scene is pivotal to the plot: for Godfrey this is a moment of commitment as he recklessly decides to follow his feelings for Nancy, in spite of his secret marriage. And in each case there is a man attending an intimate occasion, a woman mending another woman's dress, a tear, the interruption of a dance, a subtle erotic charge, and some delicate symbolism.

That surely unconscious use in *The Mill* of the name Maggie is confirmed by another striking coincidence of name and character. [4] A character called Timothy Cooper makes a small but important appearance in Gaskell's narrative gem, the novella *Cousin Phillis* (1863-4), and another of the same status and name turns up in Eliot's epic of provincial life, *Middlemarch* (1871-2). The two characters share a name, and a vocation. Gaskell's farm labourer figures in a small sub-plot, as a character who is a thorn in the flesh of Holman, Phillis's father, the not always tolerant Christian minister, whose resentment shows itself in an amusing scene where he explains that he'd like to change the marital bedroom to one where Timothy's incompetence, a 'daily temptation to anger' (Part II), won't be visible from the window. Timothy's stupidity kills a fine Ribstone Pippin when he tips a load of quicklime against its trunk, but he redeems himself in the eyes of master, narrator and reader as he keeps the noisy market-day carts from disturbing Phillis in her sickness, dryly commenting to the narrator Paul, in his only speech, "I reckon you're no better nor a half-wit yourself" (Part IV).

Eliot's Timothy Cooper is a slow though not stupid farm labourer, but unlike his predecessor, who makes several appearances and in a sense develops, if not in himself then in the image he presents to the reader, is an even more important nonce character. He makes his bow once, in his single and impressive speech, when the railway survey comes to Middlemarch, and a minor but significant and historical truthful and representative riot is stirred up by dubiously motivated *agents provocateurs*, involving Fred Vincy, who finds his vocation, and Caleb Garth, who finds unexpected opposition in Timothy, who is not one of the rioters:

> "Somebody told you the railroad was a bad thing. That was a lie. It may do a bit of harm here and there, to this and to that; and so does the sun in heaven. But the railroad's a good thing."
>
> "Aw, good for the big folks to make money out on", said old Timothy Cooper, who had stayed behind turning his hay while the others had been gone on their spree; - "I'n seen lots o' things turn up sin' I war a young un – the war an' the pe-ace and the canells, an' th'oald King George, an' the Regen', and the

new King George, an' the new un as has got a new ne-ame—an' it's all been aloike to the poor mon .... This is the big folks's world, this is. But yo're for the big folks, Master Garth, yo are."

Timothy was a wiry old labourer, of a type lingering in those times ... having as little of the feudal spirit, and believing as little, as if he had not been totally unacquainted with the Age of Reason and the Rights of Man. Caleb was in a difficulty known to any person attempting in dark times and unassisted by miracle to reason with rustics who are in possession of any undeniable truth which they know through a hard process of feeling, and let it fall like a giant's club on your neatly-carved argument for a social benefit which they do *not* feel. (LVI) Each Timothy is called 'Tim' by the gentry, and Eliot's character echoes three words of Gaskell's: 'yo're', 'sin' and 'clem'. The two are minor characters – Gaskell's the centre of a sub-plot, Eliot's an impressive nonce-character – but once we imagine their omission, they turn out to be indispensable to finer meanings. Eliot, a less overtly political novelist than Gaskell, uses the name of a Gaskell character for a powerful political encounter, a single speech and a moment without which the great novel would lose something vital, the statement of that 'undeniable truth', the one radical criticism of the worthy Caleb, and his work for Dorothea's land-rights, as a 'Master's Man'. Of course Eliot was influenced by Gaskell here (as perhaps also in her mentions of the railway and the canal-system) and the influence led to a coincidental choice of name which she would never have used had she not been using it unconsciously. Had she not used it, no-one would have perceived the slight, delicate, subtle link between the two novels and novelists. His author, who would have been most fascinated by the second Timothy and recognised his name, died before *Middlemarch* was published.

The coincidence of the two Timothys draws attention to politics, and to the creative imagination of our two novelists, which brilliantly invented the nuanced and humane presence and pressure of minor characters, possessing their individual centres of self. Why always Dorothea? asks the narrator of *Middlemarch*, turning to the less sympathetic Casaubon. Gaskell and Eliot ask it also – not arrestingly and explicitly -- of a smaller presence: Why not also Timothy Cooper? The coincidence of naming draws attention to the affinity between two great novelists. and should be welcomed by those Gaskell admirers who have some justification for feeling and thinking that their novelist has been under-privileged in literary reputation, especially when compared to her more conspicuously celebrated sister and rival. It is one of several echoes I have noticed over the years, not while researching this subject but reading with other subjects in mind. Some are unconscious memories, some coincidences, others common tropes – we may argue about categories - but all show similar preoccupations and affinities, in details more eloquent of influence than the more obvious plot resemblances.

My last conjunction belongs to a trope found in earlier and later painting - for instance, Vermeer and Caspar David Friedrich - and earlier fiction - for instance, Jane Austen. [5] In *Ruth*, *North and South*, *Wives and Daughters*, *The Mill on the*

Floss and *Middlemarch* there are many scenes where characters, almost always women, look out of a window or in one case, from a beach, out to sea, in a gaze which is morally and psychologically resonant. This outward look links *North and South* and *Middlemarch*, both psychologically and socially wide-ranging and profound works.

In *North and South* Margaret is shown in a long sequence of visions, which culminates in a successful acceptance of the world that is larger than her own existence and which stimulates her to subdue her self. [6] Gaskell's Unitarian vision sometimes suggests God or a Creator: on the beach at Cromer, Margaret looks at the sky, hears 'the psalm' of the waves, and decides to take her fortune into her own capable human hands (Chapter 49), and the emphasis is secular. But in a scene written later, and inserted as the final paragraph of Chapter 48 in the second edition of the novel, she looks from the window of her old Harley Street nursery, a sacred place where she now repents untruthfulness and prays to renew her youthful vows to live 'sans peur et sans reproche', as her night sky – perhaps a little strangely – shows 'faint pink reflections of earthly lights on the soft clouds which float tranquilly into the white moonlight', and the emphasis is on the act of prayer. In this revised version the new London scene obviously makes the whole image-set more concentrated and more sacramental in emphasis, picking up earlier religious imagery, like 'dome', the circles of Dante's Inferno, and making the later 'psalm' and perhaps even the 'east', more resonant, but the human consequence is always prominent.

In Chapter 50 a man replaces the woman, and the moral emphasis is entirely secular: after a sleepless night of conflict and crisis, John Thornton opens a shuttered window, to experience a 'ruddy dawn', where the emphasis is on sunrise but also on a east cold wind informing him that the weather will not change for his commercial convenience. Like Margaret's but more practically, though picking up resonance from the previous scenes, his outward gaze stimulates and symbolises the subjugation of self.

So does Dorothea's. Dorothea's habitual view is from her sacred place, the boudoir in Lowick which has a westerly outlook on to the grounds and trees of Lowick Manor, but on the last occasion she looks east, from her bedroom, after a night of vigil and struggle, to see 'the bending sky' and 'the pearly light' on a world beyond her own domain, on the road a man carrying a burden, a woman and child, in the field 'perhaps the shepherd with his dog': 'the largeness of the world and the manifold wakings of men to labour and endurance'. The agnostic's emphasis is humanist and secular: any religious implication in its eastward view is wide, in this novel appropriately reminding us of many mythologies. Eliot's presentation of her heroine's creative outward look is the culmination of a more clearly and systematically patterned sequence than that in *North and South*, and her final vision is more eloquently expanded as climax and culmination than Gaskell's, though with a similar theme of personal tradition and sacrament.

Ruth and Molly Gibson also share the outward look, but without such affinities with Eliot, though Molly has one image in common with Dorothea – another hooked atom. Eliot's revision of the imagery and the meanings of scenes and images from *North and South* for *Middlemarch* is confirmed by an elaborate and striking simile Eliot is unconsciously recalling from *Wives and Daughters* (1865). Molly Gibson's conquest of her barely articulate jealousy of Cynthia's attachment to Roger Hamley, as he lies 'ill and unattended in ... savage lands' is compared to that of the real mother in King Solomon's judgment, (Kings, Bk.1. Chap. 3. 16-18), who pleaded, 'O my lord! give her the living child, and in no wise slay it .... Let him live, let him live, even though I may never set eyes upon him again!' (Chap. XXXVII). In Dorothea's night vigil the comparison is repeated as she sees two images of Will Ladislaw, 'the bright creature whom she had trusted' and 'a living man towards whom there could not yet struggle any wail of regretful pity, from the midst of scorn and indignation and jealous offended pride': 'two living forms that tore her heart in two, as if it had been the heart of a mother who seems to see her child divided by the sword, and presses one bleeding half to her breast while her gaze goes forth in agony towards the half which is carried away by the lying woman that has never known a mother's pang' (Chap. LXXX). Eliot's image and Dorothea's emotion are more violent and complex than Gaskell's, but the second author is unconsciously re-imagining her predecessor's Biblical simile from one novel, seven paragraphs before she unconsciously elaborates and deepens the dawn symbolism from another. (If we compare Gaskell's experience of maternal pangs with Eliot's childlessness the echo sounds an extra poignancy.)

Gaskell was a more prolific and uneven writer than Eliot, *The Moorland Cottage* and *Lizzie Leigh* simpler and cruder fictions than *The Mill on the Floss* and *Adam Bede*, but I propose that *North and South*, *Cousin Phillis* and *Wives and Daughters* played a part in the making of Middlemarch, and stand comparison with it.

Notes:

1 Reprinted in Selected Critical Writings, p. 319, ed. Rosemary Ashton, World's Classics, OUP, Oxford, 1992

2 OUP, Oxford, 1968

3 'Controversy at Cross Street. Was George Eliot guilty of plagiarism?' and 'Moorland Cottage', The Gaskell Newsletter, pp. 23-25, No. 53, Spring 2012

4 I discuss this more fully in 'The Two Timothy Coopers', The George Eliot Review, pp. 25-27, No. 35, 2004

5 See 'Perspectives on Self and Community in George Eliot: Dorothea's Window', ed. Patricia Gately, Dennis Leavens & D. Cole Woodcox, Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, Queenston, & Lampeter, 1997

6 I discuss aspects of this subject in 'Two Women: Some Forms of Feeling in 'North and South', The Gaskell Journal, pp.19-29, No. 25, 2011

Margaret Emily Gaskell

Ann O'Brien

This year marks the centenary of the death of Margaret Emily (Meta) Gaskell, Elizabeth Gaskell's second daughter. Meta was born on 7th February 1837.

Shortly after Meta's birth Elizabeth's "more than mother" Aunt Lumb suffered a severe stroke. Elizabeth hastened over to Knutsford with baby Meta, to look after her aunt. Staying in lodgings, she spent most of the day with Aunt Lumb, returning to the lodgings only to feed Meta. After eight weeks of suffering, Aunt Lumb died, leaving Elizabeth devastated.

Despite such an inauspicious beginning, Meta seems to have thrived. She was baptised by William Turner on September 28th. (He was the Unitarian minister with whom Elizabeth had stayed in Newcastle-on-Tyne, for three winters before her marriage and with whom she maintained a close friendship.)

We have only fleeting glimpses of Meta as a baby; comparing her with Marianne, Elizabeth writes that Meta is 'far more independent than Marianne was at her age... she is very affectionate, but not so sensitive as MA was...'. Six months later a little more is revealed about Meta, as her mother writes, 'She is a more popular character: very lively, enjoying a joke...but she is passionate and wilful, though less so I think than she was.'

Meta's upbringing was typical of the Victorian middle class, the girls helping with household duties. Writing to Elizabeth Holland, Elizabeth tells her that after their lessons it falls to Meta to 'fold up Willie's clothes - Meta is so neat and knowing, only handles wet napkins *very gingerly*'. Then after tea, when the two younger children, Flossy and Willie, have been put to bed, Elizabeth read to Marianne and Meta while they 'sew, knit or (do) worsted work.'

Education followed the traditional pattern: at first, the girls were educated by a governess. Eventually Elizabeth became so dissatisfied with education provided by their governess, Barbara Fergusson, that she decided to organise it herself.

She brought in teachers, one to teach French and another to teach arithmetic and writing, while their father was to teach history and natural history. Meta was to have music lessons from their friend Rosa Mitchell (Marianne was already receiving piano lessons from Emily Winkworth). She arranged for both girls to study drawing at the School of Design. Elizabeth planned to give them 'dictation and grammar lessons.....and make myself as much as possible their companion and friend.' This indeed she did, as on her frequent trips, both in this country and abroad, her daughters often accompanied her; they also helped her both in the running of the household, and, as they grew older, by acting as her secretaries.

It is recognised that Meta was the most intellectual of the daughters. In a letter to Anne Robson, Elizabeth writes 'Meta ...is so brim-full of...I don't know what to call it, for it is something deeper, and less showy than talent' and goes on to describe Meta's musical ability and her artistic gifts and how she is able to able to appreciate any book that her mother is reading. Charlotte Brontë sent Ruskin's *The Stones of Venice* for Meta and her mother to read 'and find some passages to please you.' In fact there was quite a correspondence between Charlotte and Meta in addition to that between Charlotte and Elizabeth (Meta was only 14 years old at the start of this friendship!)

In 1850 Marianne was sent away to school in London; this was the first time the sisters had been apart for so long. Elizabeth wrote to Marianne 'Meta cried sadly last Sunday because you did not write to her'. It is evident that there was a close and loving relationship between the two girls, which lasted throughout their lives.

Two years later Meta was sent away to Rachel Martineau's school in Liverpool (Rachel was the younger sister of Harriet Martineau), eminently suitable for this gifted young girl. Susanna Winkworth wrote of it as being '... the most admirably-managed of any school I have ever known, --with regard to the thoroughness of the intellectual training imparted'. There were lessons in Latin, maths and history as well as music lessons, given by Mr James Hermann, the leader of the Liverpool concerts.

Visits to the Lakes reveal Meta's early love of walking. On one such visit, before she started at Miss Martineau's school, the family and friends paid a three day visit to the Yorkshire Dales; Meta and her father walked fourteen or fifteen miles across the hills to Airedale. Walking was a lifelong passion later to be shared with younger sister Julia.

Meta was not entirely devoted to intellectual pursuits and outdoor leisure: she also enjoyed the same social life as any girl of her age and class. She loved going to parties and balls both in London and at home in Manchester. Elizabeth writes to Eliza Fox that the military presence in the city meant that they are invited to 'more [balls] than I like, as Miss Meta and one of the officers are a little too thick in the dancing line, 8 times in one evening being rather too strong - and drawing down on the young lady a parental rebuke!'.

In February 1857 the family, minus Papa, had a wonderful holiday in Rome, taking in the sights and a full social life, with most of Roman society. On this holiday they met Charles Eliot Norton, with whom Meta corresponded regularly until his death over fifty years later. Meta also met Captain Charles Hill and so began the most traumatic period in her life. Catherine Winkworth, in her letters to her sisters back home in England, relates how Captain Hill often accompanied the Gaskell party on their sight seeing trips. Meta was swept off her feet by the dashing captain and only a month after their return to Manchester, her engagement to Captain Hill was announced. The wedding was planned to take place the following year, but after discovering that her fiancé had gambling debts and was not the honourable man she had believed him to be, Meta broke off the engagement. The effect on her was devastating. She was consumed by doubts as to whether she had done the right thing and her health suffered accordingly. However, she continued to devote herself to her work in helping the poor of Manchester and also to teaching at the Sunday school.

Meanwhile Elizabeth decided to take her daughter first to Silverdale, and then, when she had enough money, abroad, 'out of the clatter of tongues consequent on her breaking off her engagement'. At the end of September 1858, Elizabeth took Meta, Marianne and Florence, to Heidelberg where they stayed and met many interesting people who lived there. Meta and Florence had German lessons and Meta, spent much of her time sketching. By the time they reached home, in December they had been away for six months. The long holiday had achieved its purpose and Meta was much improved. Furthermore, a meeting and ensuing friendship with Charles Bosanquet had, according to her mother 'done much to restore her faith in *man*kind which Captain Hill had shaken.'

The following year Meta kept herself busy, 'with almost too many interests.... working at Greek and German; practising, drawing, teaching at the Ragged School, has a little orphan boy to teach French to, reads with Elliott every night, etc. etc. and has always more books she [is] wanting to read than she can get through.'. She spent more time travelling, though this year she did not go abroad; she visited Dumfries, London, Gloucester, Canterbury, Whitby and finally, after Christmas, Edinburgh.

In May 1860 there was an extended holiday, sketching in the Pyrénées, with a middle-aged relative, Catherine Darwin, sister of Charles Darwin. Her interest in painting and sketching led to painting lessons given by John Ruskin and friendships with other artists such as Holman Hunt and Rossetti. This was also the time when Meta considered becoming a professional artist and decided against but continued to be an enthusiastic and talented amateur.

She continued to devote herself to social work and in the great distress caused by the cotton famine of the early 1860's she worked tirelessly to alleviate the suffering of

the poorest victims. This eventually led to a breakdown in health, with problems relating to headaches and severe backache, believed by Elizabeth to be as much mental as physical.

Despite her bouts of poor health, Meta took an active role in the negotiations for the purchase of the house in Hampshire which Elizabeth was buying as a retirement home for herself and William. Meta also helped in buying the furniture for the new house. It was a devastating blow for Meta when her mother died so suddenly, in her arms, in that very house. After this Meta suffered a brief breakdown in health but two weeks later she was able to write to Charles Norton, telling him of the circumstances surrounding her mother's death. Undoubtedly her strong religious beliefs helped her deal with her grief. In her letter she wrote 'For me it has changed the face of this world for ever, but thank God, one feels every day more sure that this world is but a threshold of the future where there will be no more sorrow or parting.'

Meta and Julia now devoted themselves to taking care of their father, who survived his wife by nineteen years. Whilst he continued the work of his ministry at the Cross Street Chapel, and his various other educational activities, his daughters continued to teach at the Mosley Street Sunday School and to help the poor of Manchester.

After their father's death, using the royalties from Elizabeth's books, they were able to support many charities, including the Unitarian College, Manchester College, Oxford and particularly the sick and needy of Manchester. The Manchester and Salford Sick Poor and Private Nursing Institution was a charity close to the hearts of both Meta and Julia, and for thirty-five years Meta served on its committee. Among their many gifts to the people of Manchester was a recreation ground created on a piece of land opposite their home in Plymouth Grove.

Meta was a member of The Association for Promoting the Higher Education of Women, which raised funds to establish the Manchester High School for Girls and records show that she was a generous subscriber. She became a foundation governor at the school, serving on many committees, including those which dealt with matters of art, literature and scholarship. (She also served on the North of England Council for the Education of Women, which was campaigning for women to be admitted to higher education. Her interest in education extended to Owens College, later the Victoria University of Manchester, to which she made regular donations as well as giving items from her parents' collections. In her will she made further donations to the University.)

When Julia died suddenly in 1908, Meta was heartbroken. Julia had been her constant companion since the death of their mother. Gradually, over the next five years Meta's health deteriorated, although she continued to fulfil her obligations

to the various committees on which she served. When she died, in 1913, there were many who mourned her passing. Although Meta was not as famous as her parents, for the people of Manchester her death was a source of great sorrow. There were numerous tributes in the newspapers of the day. Perhaps this from *The Daily Chronicle* best describes the high regard in which Meta was held: 'Many Englishwomen of our time have earned wider fame, but few have lived more remarkable or more fruitful lives than Miss M.E. Gaskell'.

Belonging

Doreen Pleydell

There's an old Scottish Music Hall song, 'I belong to Glasgow, good old Glasgow town'. When I first heard it, it set me thinking of what 'belonging' means. One can belong to an organisation, such as The Gaskell Society; that doesn't mean that one is owned by the organisation, but that one willingly is a member of it.

Belonging in some respects implies possession. In the Anglican marriage service, one is required to 'forsake all others and cleave only to him/her as long as ye both shall live.' The husband and wife belong to each other. Sadly, that wish is very often broken not because of infidelity, but owing to the wish to be independent - the feeling that one has lost one's independence by marrying. There is more divorce now than ever; could it be that marriage is a prison to escape from. In Ibsen's play A Doll's House, Nora has the courage to leave her husband, and less courageously, her children too.

I've been watching the TV programmes on Queen Victoria and her children. It's amazing to what extent she was able to exert power over her daughters - how she arranged their marriages and wished to control every aspect of their lives. (Nowadays she would only mourn as they go their own way.)

Even before the Second World War parents, especially fathers, had great control over their children. In my own case, my father decided that I should enter the Civil Service, because, as he said "If you don't marry, you'll get a pension at 60." It didn't occur to me to rebel.

Children certainly belong to their parents, but from a very early age wish to be independent, to think for themselves. They still belong to a family though, just as Mrs Gaskell belonged to hers. When one possesses an object, one can do so

Happy Birthday Mrs Gaskell!

Tracy Vaughan (L) and Alison Lundie, our speakers at the Autumn General Meeting in Knutsford, 29 September 2012

On the threshold... Members of Manchester Historic Building Trust, Friends of Plymouth Grove and Gaskell Society members assemble at 84 Plymouth Grove for the Heritage Lottery Fund annoucement, 13 June 2012

without a feeling of guilt. I possess a rather lovely vase - it simply belongs to me and I don't feel guilty about owning it.

Until very recently it was thought that the world was organised entirely for the human race - that we could do as we liked, without thought that other species might have a claim on it - the trees, animals, plants, insects, even the very earth itself. We are only just beginning to realise that we were mistaken, that if we continue on the same course, there will soon be no civilisation as we know it. Is it too late to change our ways?

What about belonging to a place? Elizabeth Gaskell was brought up in Knutsford, and apart from the time spent at boarding school, Knutsford was her home until she married. Then smoky Manchester became her home, but was she ever as attached to it as she was to Knutsford? Certainly she said that she always felt better when visiting "the dear little country town where I grew up."

The last line of the music hall song runs like this - 'When I've had a couple of drinks on a Saturday, Glasgow belongs to me!" I belong to Knutsford, just as did Mrs G but I can't say "Knutsford belongs to me!'

Former President, Professor JAV Chapple remembers...

In 1959 I joined the staff of the English Department at Manchester University as an assistant lecturer. Professor Frank Kermode asked me if I was then working on anything in particular. I was not, so he gently suggested that I should use my Yale experience with manuscripts (mostly from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, in fact) to join with my senior colleague Arthur Pollard in collecting and editing the widely scattered letters of Elizabeth Gaskell. At that time, she was generally known for little more than *Cranford* and *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, despite the efforts of A. W. Ward, Mrs E. H. Chadwick, A. S. Whitfield, Clement Shorter, Ross D. Waller, David Cecil, Winifred Gérin and Raymond Williams, together with books by overseas enthusiasts, Gerald DeWitt Sanders, Jane Whitehill, Aina Rubenius, A. B. Hopkins, Coral Lansbury, Edgar Wright and Enid Duthie.

Arthur Pollard discovered that too often Gaskell manuscript letters had been badly transcribed. Also, though many letters from her had survived in early printed

sources, some of them had been grotesquely mangled in ways that only became fully apparent when we were fortunate enough to find the original manuscripts to set beside them for close comparison. A number of Gaskell manuscripts seem to have been destroyed or had vanished without leaving a trace. We found that owners and holders of letters from Elizabeth Gaskell were exceptionally generous in allowing us access to unpublished material. Marianne Gaskell's descendant, Mrs Trevor Jones, gave us permission to publish without hesitation. Her own group of 51 letters was especially valuable, as one might have expected. The late Rosemary Dabbs and her daughter Sarah Prince (née Dabbs), continued this gracious tradition.

In those days, Geoffrey Sharps, an energetic, pertinacious young graduate student, was preparing his Oxford BLitt thesis on Gaskell. He helped us enormously. Manchester University Press supported us without stint, bringing out *The Letters of Mrs Gaskell* in 1966, a year later than we had hoped would be possible. The accuracy of every text in some 900 closely set printed pages had been double checked by Ursula Pollard and Kate Chapple. No more than a handful of transcriptional errors of manuscript material have been noted. The dating of texts, my special responsibility as the spider at the centre of the organisational web, was less successful, even though I sedulously recorded the various watermarks and embossed designs in their paper. 'Sunday morning before breakfast' and the like were fences at which I fell more often than perhaps I should have done.

Geoffrey's BLitt thesis was accepted at Oxford. His *Mrs Gaskell's Observation and Invention* (1970), is an inexhaustible record of his truly remarkable knowledge, still a treasure trove of unexpected, detailed information and learned commentary. That between us we had created a solid foundation for future historians, biographers, critics and commentators is shown by all those who drew upon our work and continue to do so. The letters we printed - vital, perceptive and amusing records of a busy life - justified Arthur Pollard's confidence in their quality. Not only do they display one of the most attractive personalities of the Victorian period, they allow numerous insights into the social history of her age and illuminate many controversial aspects of Gaskell studies.

More letters continued to surface after publication, but eventually Arthur and Geoffrey were sadly no longer with us. Fortunately, Alan Shelston was able to join me in preparing *Further Letters of Mrs Gaskell* (Manchester UP 2000) to take account of the many unexpected letters that reviews and publicity brought forth. The paperback reissue in 2003 even contains a few extra letters, but we recognise that the flow of material, though diminished, is never-ending. More will appear in print.

In 2007, The Gaskell Society commissioned a reprint of my favourite book, a labour

of love: *Elizabeth Gaskell: A Portrait in Letters* (1980), a selection with commentary, checked by Geoffrey Sharps. *Private Voices: The Diaries of Elizabeth Gaskell and Sophia Holland* (Keele University Press, 1996) is the fruit of another collaboration I had with an American scholar, Anita Wilson. Mrs Rosemary Dabbs and Mrs Portia Holland willingly allowed us access to the fascinating manuscripts that recorded the upbringing of Elizabeth and Sophia's children when they were little. Gaskell's diary, as Anita Wilson points out, was her first sustained piece of writing. The appendices contain relevant contextual material from similar manuscript sources, especially writings by Mary Robberds and William Turner.

On 12th October 1985, 175 years after Gaskell's birth, Joan Leach inaugurated 'The Gaskell Society' at a meeting in Brook Street schoolroom. About 45 people were present, including Barbara Brill, Tessa Brodetsky and three members of the Brontë Society. John Nussey, great great nephew of Ellen Nussey, wrote an account of this first meeting. (*Gaskell Society Newsletter* 1, March 1986). In the following April of 1986, a formal meeting at Plymouth Grove elected Professor Arthur Pollard as President and Professor Francesco Marroni as Vice-President. Joan Leach became our Secretary, Dr Ken Whalley Chairman and Geoffrey Sharps Vice-Chairman. A committee was formed: Mary Thwaite, Kenneth Oultram, Mrs I Stevenson, Mrs B Kinder and Miss M Leighton (GSN 2, August 1986).

As a busy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (1985 -1988) during a fraught time for Hull University, I missed the inaugural meeting of the Gaskell Society. I did, however, manage to contribute an article to *The Gaskell Society Journal* 1 (Summer 1987), edited by Alan Shelston with Janet Allan as his deputy. Later, I became a more regular attender at the always stimulating and enjoyable meetings of the Gaskell Society. I continued to publish books, reviews and articles upon Elizabeth Gaskell, her family, her Unitarian faith (see *The Cambridge Companion to Elizabeth Gaskell*, ed. Jill L Matus) - and her fiction, which I had not read in its entirety. My *Cranford & Selected Short Stories*, with notes and introductions (Wordsworth Classics 2006) is an example.

A visiting fellowship at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, a grant from the Leverhulme Trust and the support of hundreds of individuals enabled me to publish *Elizabeth Gaskell: the Early Years* (MUP1997). It is fittingly dedicated to Joan Leach and Geoffrey Sharps, and could not have been accomplished without the support of my wife and children.

Retirement to Lichfield in 2000 combined with increasing age now makes my attendance at Gaskell events elsewhere more problematic. Here, too, on the market square is the birthplace of Samuel Johnson. Years ago I published an article on a unique copy of Johnson's Proposals for *Printing the History of the Council of Trent* [1738], found by Moses Tyson in Manchester University Library. More recently, I edited Johnson's *Life of Dryden* for the Yale Edition of the Works of

Samuel Johnson, volume 21 (2010). I am honoured to have been chosen as President of the Lichfield Johnson Society for this year. My address on Shakespeare and Johnson will be published in its *Transactions 2012*. In the Cathedral Close is the house where Erasmus Darwin lived for a time and entertained members of the famous Lunar Society, the lunaticks. Both houses are vibrant centres of cultural activity, as members of the Gaskell Society know from a visit they made to Lichfield last year. My interest in science, stimulated by Arthur Pollard, who had commissioned me to write *Science and Literature in the Nineteenth Century* (1997), challenged me to disentangle the connections between the Willets, Wedgwood, Darwin and Holland families for GSJ 21 (2007).

I have in all likelihood neglected to mention significant members of the Society or distinguished speakers at its meetings. I offer profound apologies to those I should have noted. Do I really recall that a friend, Julian Savory, sang to us once? In this country, Mrs Heather Sharps, John and Doreen Pleydell, Bill Ruddick, Philip Yarrow, Christine Lingard, Irene Wiltshire, Mary Syner, Brenda Colloms, Brian and Elizabeth Williams, Jo Pryke, Janet Kennerley, Marie Moss, Jean Alston, Frances Twinn, Dudley Barlow, Howard Gregg, Rosemary Marshall, Dudley Green, Graham Handley, Ian Campbell, Stephen Gill, Angus Easson, Michael Wheeler, Andrew Sandars, Patsy Stoneman, Marion Shaw, Terry Wyke, Jenny Uglow, Joanne Shattock, Josie Billington, Fran Baker, Barbara Hardy, J R Watson, Malcolm Pittock, John and Gillian Beer come vividly to mind as I write. How could I have failed to notice Lucy Magruder, Nancy Weyant, Mary Kuhlman, Jill Matus and Walter E Smith across the Atlantic; Yuriko Yamawaki, Mitsuharu Matsuoka and Tatsuhiro Ohno in Japan; Mariaconcetta Costantini, Anna Enrichetta Soccio and Renzo D'Agnillo in Italy? Then there are our translators on German visits, Peter and Celia Skrine; Caroline Arnaud, Christine Bhatt and Véronique Baudouin on French ones. How the dull brain perplexes and retards!

Nevertheless, I believe that the drive and determination of Joan Leach, Arthur Pollard and Geoffrey Sharps will inspire the Society they created with the willing assistance of so many others as it goes forward under its new President, Shirley Foster.

Editor adds: John and Kate Chapple joined the weekend of celebrations in London September 2010 when ECG was unveiled in Westminster Abbey. The Editor has not sighted him since but snail mail communication led to the creation of this article. Many thanks to John for this and for his stalwart help and support to the Society over the years.

A Tale of Two Elizabeths

Editor: Readers will remember Alan Shelston's article on the two Elizabeths in the Autumn Newsletter. Now Ann Elizabeth Sachs, (née Holland) great-granddaughter of Elizabeth (younger sister of Rev William Gaskell) and Charles Holland (cousin of ECG), takes up the tale of two Elizabeths:

I was very interested to read Alan Shelston's article on The Two Elizabeths in your Autumn Newsletter.

I am the great-granddaughter of Charles Holland, who married the Rev William Gaskell's sister, Elizabeth Gaskell, known within the family as Eliza or Lizzy. My father, Leonard Menzies Holland (1885-1967), was the son of Walter Holland, who was one of Elizabeth and Charles Holland's ten children. My grandfather, Walter Holland, became the senior partner of the shipping firm Lamport and Holt in Liverpool, which was involved with trade to South America. He died in 1915, aged 73. I was told that he was much affected by the loss of many friends who were on the inaugural voyage of the Titanic in 1912 and by the outbreak of the Great War, especially when his four sons (including my father) joined the army.

Like most children, I did not ask many questions about my father's family, but I was always told that we had a strong family connection with Mrs Gaskell, as Charles Holland was her cousin. I like to think that Mrs Gaskell would have been instrumental in introducing her cousin Charles to Eliza and encouraging the romance. I see that Charles and Eliza did not marry until 1838, six years after Mrs Gaskell's own marriage in 1832. I was delighted to read that the two sisters-in-law were good friends and many letters were exchanged between them.

I have a copy of *Poems and Translations*, published privately by Elizabeth Gaskell Holland and see that most of her poems were dedicated to members of the family, including the poem on the marriage of Elizabeth Cleghorn Stevenson to the Rev William Gaskell on 30th August 1832, mentioned in Alan Shelston's article. There is also a particular poem entitled 'Willie', which may have been written on the tragic loss from scarlet fever of Mrs Gaskell's son William in 1845. I understand it was after William's death that her husband the Rev William Gaskell suggested to his grieving wife that she should start writing.

I give the last verse below:

Then may blessings attend thee for evermore,
May peace and love on thy path be shed,
May no sorrow blight thy beauty bright,
No pain or grief shade thy gladsome life,
May angels guard thee my darling boy,
And for ever watch o'er thee with love and joy.

Of course, I am prejudiced but I think the poems are quite wonderful. I particularly like the first poem entitled 'To My Children' with the final line 'Take these feeble lines of mine, and love them for my sake',

Elizabeth Gaskell Holland died in 1892 aged 80. She spent her last few years in London leading an active and social reforming life to the end. Her obituary in The Inquirer of 2nd April 1892 mentioned, among the many tributes, that she campaigned fearlessly for recognition of the equality of the sexes, from a strict sense of justice, which implies she was an embryonic suffragette. The education of women for the medical profession was one of the schemes nearest to her heart. She was buried in the Ancient Chapel, Toxteth, Park, Liverpool.

Supplementary information

Charles Holland, born 1799 and died in 1870 aged 71. He returned to England from South America around the 1830's and continued his business career in trade until he retired in 1855. He was an ardent supporter of the Reform Bill and fought for the principles of Free Trade and the repeal of the Corn Laws. He was amongst the first to join the Financial Reform Association becoming President in 1865, an office which he held until his death. He was one of the Founders of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce and was elected President in 1856.

I quote from the History of the family of *Holland of Mobberley and Knutsford* complied by Edgar Swinton Holland: 'Charles Holland's name will be remembered especially with the measures for the application of limited liability to partnerships, and also in connection with the reform of the banking and currency system in this country.' - which seems very relevant today! He was invited to stand for Parliament in the 1860 election but had to decline 'owing to a weakness of the throat'.

From the Inquirer 2 Apl 1892

MRS CHARLES HOLLAND

LAST month took from amongst us another of those gifted women to have known whom makes us feel with Longfellow that

"Our hearts in glad surprise

To higher levels rise."

With deepest regret we record the death of Elizabeth Gaskell, the widow of Charles Holland, of Liverpool, who passed away swiftly and peacefully on March 8, in her

eightieth year. At eighty she died young, for nothing seemed to have grown old about her but the love of many friends.

Mrs Charles Holland
née Elizabeth Gaskell, aged 25

Her father, William Gaskell, of Warrington, was a member of one of the oldest Presbyterian families of the North of England. She inherited his strong Nonconformist views, and derived from them all through her life a strong sense of comfort and religious support. She was sister to the Rev William Gaskell, the well-known minister at Cross-street, Manchester, whom she resembled in the unaffected charm of manner which expressed the harmonies of a mind alike gentle and earnest, formed by nature and attuned by culture to be in all its utterance a part of this world's spiritual music. Like her brother, she had a grace of person, and was brilliant in conversation, although never talking for effect. Her wit and wisdom were always humanised by kindly sympathies and dignified by an unswerving adherence to the cause of truth and justice. Mrs Holland's power of fascination enabled her to find the good side of all who knew her, and to fill her life with the love of many friends. It made her at once the guide and cherished centre of her large family circle.

Brought up in a stronghold of Unitarianism, Warrington, Elizabeth Gaskell sought as a girl to spread her principles, and taught in the Sunday-school of the Old Cairo-street Chapel, showing even then the same large-hearted sympathy with the poor and the ignorant that" characterised her after years. She received a thoroughly classical education, which confirmed in her an intellectual and poetic tendency, and raised her high above the level of what then was thought to be the sufficient culture of woman's mind. The classical authors, both Latin and Greek, were even to the end of her life a constant source of ever-recurring pleasure. Her marriage with Mr Charles Holland of Liverpool, one of the pioneers of the Anti-Corn Law League, was entirely happy. There was between husband and wife a unity of religious and political opinions, and her fidelity to the home duties of wife and mother called forth in her the fullest energies of life. When settled near Liverpool, Mrs Holland con¬stantly interested herself in benevolent objects. One of these was the starting and carrying on of a club or drawing-room for working-men and their wives to come to of an evening; another was the superin¬tendence of a district nurse among the poor in their own homes, a charity which at that time was in its earliest infancy. She

also helped to found a cottage hospital in the low populous district of Seacombe, and while she fulfilled in the highest sense of the word her duties as a wife and mother she found time for lettered ease, and numbered among her intimate friends Hawthorne, Barry Cornwall, Professor Morley, and her sister-in-law, Mrs Gaskell. The intercourse with such minds encouraged the literary and poetical side of her nature. She translated a great deal of poetry from German authors, and wrote and published many original poems.

At this time of her life the friendship and ministerial services of the Rev. W. H. Channing influenced her strongly to work for the good of humanity. She threw her whole heart into the growing labours of the time to secure for women their right place in life. And when, after her husband's death, she settled in London she helped those who were foremost in all work tending to give women freer scope for the development and use of all their powers. Her outspoken fearless demand for a recognition of the equality of the sexes, from a strict sense of justice, has often helped the wavering to stand firm by their opinions.

The education of women for the medical profession was one of the schemes nearest to her heart. For this Mrs Holland worked indefatigably, and notably assisted the medical school for women and the building of the New Hospital for Women, both with influence and money. One of the most touching tributes to her memory was a lovely wreath sent by the medical staff and the Committee of the New Hospital for Women to be laid on her coffin. Mrs Holland was also a promoter and warm supporter of the Victoria Coffee Hall, afterwards converted into a memorial to Samuel Morley. She also founded a scholarship for the study of lunacy in memory of her brother, Mr Samuel Gaskell, who had instituted many benevolent reforms in the asylums while Commissioner in Lunacy.

But we have said enough to suggest what no words can adequately tell. On March 12 she was laid in the little graveyard of the Ancient Chapel, Toxteth Park, Liverpool, and over her will be placed the words she loved,—

" He giveth His beloved sleep."

Editor: The Inquirer is a Unitarian newspaper which has been published fortnightly since 1842. It claims 'to reach parts of the mind and soul that other papers cannot reach'.

Gaskell study tour to Boston, September 2012

Christine Bhatt

'We dare not hope ever to be sufficiently people at large with regard to time and money to go to America, easy and rapid as the passage has become.' Thus wrote Elizabeth Gaskell to John Pierpoint, Unitarian minister of Hollis Street, Boston in 1841. How fortunate were the Gaskell members who were able to make this trip and even more easily and rapidly than Mrs Gaskell would have been able to do. Landing just after sunset, as I did, the lights of the city, enhanced by the multi-coloured landing lights of the runway, gave Boston a fairy tale aspect.

The hotel which Nancy Weyant had chosen for us with the help of Boston friends, the John Jeffries House Hotel, was perfect. It was situated on the edge of the historic Beacon Hill area of Boston, within walking distance of good restaurants, grocery stores and even the harbour from where we took the boat to Salem on our fifth day. The hotel was a red-brick building, originally constructed in 1909 as housing for nurses at the local Eye and Ear Infirmary. It had a very homely, comfortable, lived-in air, breakfast was simple but plentiful, and coffee was permanently on tap, most welcome after a long day. There were eleven society members from the UK, most of whom gathered for afternoon tea American style (with wine and cheese) on the afternoon of the arrival day, September 12.

Nancy, drawing no doubt on her expertise as a librarian and bibliographer, had done a thorough and efficient job of forwarding to members of the group a very detailed itinerary, together with relevant websites, which ensured that we were all, potentially at least, well-prepared for what was to come. However, even Nancy, at the end of our first morning walking the Black Heritage Trail confessed that "I didn't know I didn't know that much". We were led by a member of the National Park Service, whose astonishingly detailed knowledge of Boston's 19th century African American community unfolded a history most of us knew little of. We began our tour at Augustus Saint Gauden's *Robert Gould Shaw and the Fifty-fourth Regiment Memorial*. This fine bas relief in bronze was, according to our guide, the first example of a realistic portrayal of African Americans in American art. In a letter to Gaskell dated 23rd April 1863, Charles Eliot Norton writes of Colonel Shaw: 'He is a fine young man; exceedingly well fitted to fill so responsible a position, and full of the true spirit of a soldier and a believer in the equal rights of man.' Elizabeth Gaskell knew Mrs Shaw and wrote to her to express her sorrow on hearing of Robert Shaw's death in action. We finished our walk at the African Meeting House, which served as an institutional haven during the nineteenth century for Boston's community of free African Americans and the self-emancipated arriving via the Underground Railroad Network.

On the afternoon of this first day, we had a guided tour of the Freedom Trail, led by

our costumed guide Mercy Otis, in character as America's first woman playwright. Her brother James, whose grave we visited in the Old Granary Burying Ground, was a patriot of the Revolution. Other famous graves included those of Samuel Adams, a signatory of the Declaration of Independence, Paul Revere and Judge Samuel Sewall, one of the Salem witch trial judges. Among well-known Boston landmarks, we passed the Omni Parker Hotel, the oldest surviving hotel in US, where Charles Dickens once stayed.

After a long and very warm day, spent mostly on our feet, we were delighted to gather at a convivial Italian restaurant, chosen by Nancy and only 15 minutes' walk from the hotel. On our return to the John Jeffries, the evening was rounded off in a suitably literary fashion by the reading of a poem by Roseanna Prince, written by her late father Frank, who was Professor of English at Southampton University, where a recent memorial exhibition had marked the hundredth anniversary of his birth.

Our third day began early with a coach to Hartford, where we were to visit the Harriet Beecher Stowe Centre and tour the Mark Twain House. In a letter to Grace Schwabe in 1853 Elizabeth Gaskell writes of Harriet that she is 'short and American in her manner, but very true and simple and thoroughly unspoilt and unspoilable'. In an echo of Gaskell's situation, we learnt that Harriet came to write *Uncle Tom's Cabin* at the age of 41, following the death of her eighteen month old son. By 1860 the book had sold over three million copies and had fuelled the fires of the abolitionist movement. We were very fortunate to be given access to a special collection of Harriet's documents during this tour, which included a letter from Gaskell, editions of *Cranford*, a sketch of Rome and watercolour of the Alps (by Harriet) and a volume of signatures collected by the Duchess of Sutherland while Harriet was touring England to garner support for the abolitionist movement. The Mark Twain house contrasted strongly with the Harriet Beecher Stowe residence, being much grander and more elaborate and we learned that the designer had been a church architect.

After lunch at the Japanese restaurant at the Mark Twain house, we continued by coach to Storrs, where we were to visit the University of Connecticut library to view an exhibition of editions of *Cranford*, organised by Thomas Recchio. Unfortunately, our coach driver took the scenic route, so that we were late arriving at the campus, which was set in beautiful parkland. We had an extensive tour of this very pleasant campus before locating the library, but by the time we arrived Professor Recchio and his students had departed, having decided, in our absence, not to let the afternoon tea laid out for us go to waste. As true Gaskellians, we did not let this deter us from a thorough perusal and appreciation of the many beautiful editions of *Cranford* left on display for us.

A very long and interesting day saw us back at the hotel to make our own

arrangements for the evening from the many good restaurants in the vicinity, a pattern repeated each evening but the last, when we once more gathered as a group.

After two very warm days, Saturday morning dawned a little cool and wet, but by the time our coach brought us to Lexington, the rain had stopped and the sun appeared. In Lexington and then Concord, our costumed guide, Masha Tabor, gave us a very detailed and lively introduction to the events in April 1775, which led to the American Revolution. In Concord the homes of Louisa May Alcott, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Nathaniel Hawthorne have been maintained and are open to visitors. We could also visit the Concord Museum, which proudly displays the lantern which hung in the steeple of Boston's Old North Church on the night of Paul Revere's famous ride. Sadly, there was not time to visit more than one or two of the venues available and some of us had rather a brisk walk to get back to the coach in time to be whisked on to the Sleepy Hollow Cemetery. We climbed up to the 'Authors' Ridge' section of this beautiful, peaceful, tree-shaded ground and saw the graves of Louisa May Alcott, Hawthorne, Emerson and Thoreau, among others. Our final visit on this packed trip was to Walden Pond, where we could squeeze, one or two at a time, into Thoreau's tiny cabin. After such a full day, not everyone was energetic enough for a further sortie, but a small group of adventurers was led by an American member to the 'Cheers' bar, where a table was found for us, as if by magic (it was a Saturday night) and we ate fish and chips and drank beer, presided over, perhaps appropriately, by a painting of Lord Byron.

Sunday was a lovely sunny day for the hour long boat trip to Salem. In spite of the Witch History Museum, the Witch House and the Salem Witch Trials Memorial, Salem was far from being a gloomy place. Before setting out to explore Salem, Mary Kuhlman gave the group a brief, insightful talk on *Lois the Witch*. Some members later met up with Mary and Tom in the Chestnut Road area of Salem, where Tom pointed out the significant architectural features of the beautiful houses on this tree-lined road.

Though the visit to Salem was, for many, one of the highlights of our trip, we had another treat in store on Monday, when we made the relatively short journey to Cambridge, to visit America's first rare book and manuscript library in the Houghton, at Harvard University. We were to view part of the wonderful collection given to the university by Amy Lowell. A special display featuring Gaskell first editions and her correspondence with Norton was laid out for us by Leslie Morris, but the whole of the display was truly stunning. Among the Gaskell documents were early editions, including a German version of the story *A Dark Night's Work*, which, interestingly, is entitled *A Night's Work*, a letter to Ruskin, mentioning *Cranford*, the diary of Marianne's first years and Henry James' copy of *North and South*. It was interesting and amusing to see Harriet Martineau's rather acerbic annotations of her copy of *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*. Other parts of the display included such

gems as a manuscript signed in 1523 by Michelangelo, a manuscript poem by La Fontaine, signed "Pour Mlle C" and a drawing by Sir William Hamilton of the recent eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 1793. In the beautiful, wood-panelled entrance hall to this library were to be seen many volumes, mainly religious tracts, by Cotton Mather.

Our afternoon venue, though a total contrast to the graceful buildings and beautiful surroundings of Harvard, was an elegant, modern construction set in a green, open space overlooking the harbour. The interior was spacious, calm, but crammed with history: it was the John F Kennedy Library and Museum. Here, ancient manuscripts were replaced by the full panoply of modern technology, with newsreel and audio recordings of momentous events.

Members pose at the JFK Center

Our last full day took us to the mill city of Lowell, much of which is now a designated Historic Park. By 1850 almost six miles of canals coursed through this city, which drove the waterwheels of forty mill buildings. Our trolley tour took us alongside a stretch of these canals and we could have been forgiven for thinking we were in Manchester or Salford. At the Boott Cotton Mills Gallery, we were exceptionally fortunate in being able to view the special exhibition on Dickens, co-curated by Diana Archibald, who was on hand to explain and guide us through this fascinating display. Among much else, we saw the portrait of Griff, the raven, and a letter from Dickens to William Macready, in which Dickens refers to America as the 'land of freedom and spittoons'. He visited Lowell during his American tour of 1842 and was particularly impressed with this booming, industrial town.

On the evening of this last day, we gathered in a private room in one of Boston's best known fish restaurants for an excellent meal, which began with a fantastic clam chowder. At the end of the meal, Ann O'Brien, on behalf of the group, thanked Nancy most heartily for our truly wonderful visit to Boston and presented her with an illustrated publication on homes of American literary figures. Not to be forgotten was Nancy's friend Violet, who was a constant presence and marshalled us with quiet efficiency. We hope she liked the mug from the JFK Museum.

Since every hour of this trip was precious, on the morning of departure day our coach took some of us to the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. Space does not permit the recounting of the wonders of this museum, but details can be found online for anyone contemplating a trip to Boston. For those of us fortunate enough to have made the journey, the experience will linger long in the memory.

Nancy at the helm

Elizabeth Gaskell and Rome

Robin Allan

My first encounter with the work of Elizabeth Gaskell was through my love for Charlotte Brontë. When I realised that the author of Charlotte's biography had lived in Manchester, I determined to visit her house.

I moved to the north in 1973. Working off the Oxford Road I discovered that I was not far from Mrs Gaskell's house on Plymouth Grove. It was then International House and a home for foreign students at Manchester. I saw the nursery window where the Gaskell children had scratched their initials and was touched by the faded beauty of the building.

For the first time I read Elizabeth's great novels and some of her letters: letters which astonished me with their liveliness and vibrancy, so different from the stuffy pomposity of her contemporaries. The relationship between Elizabeth Gaskell and Charlotte Brontë, who had stayed with Elizabeth in this very house, led me to consider a dramatised play-reading based on their correspondence. So *Charlotte Brontë and Elizabeth Gaskell* was performed, often, in the drawing room at Plymouth Grove. We have also taken it to the Buxton Festival Fringe and many other venues.

Since then I have adapted some of Elizabeth's short stories, including *My Lady Ludlow* (2009) performed at Silverdale, the little town near the Lake District loved by both Mrs Gaskell and her daughters. In 2011 our redoubtable professional actress Delia Corrie presented *The Grey Woman* at the Gaskell Conference near Winchester, and this year she again acted, along with her professional colleague Charles Foster, and acting students from the School of Theatre at Manchester Metropolitan University, in my adaptation of Elizabeth's *The Moorland Cottage*. The versatility of this author, her work veering from domestic and political or social issues, her love of the macabre or even the sensational, made her a stimulating template for adaptation, and, of course, her letters were a constant delight.

My most recent adaptation, *Elizabeth Gaskell and Rome*, is based not on her fiction but on the letters written by herself, her family and friends. When Elizabeth Gaskell's American friend Mrs Story wrote to her in 1856 inviting her to stay with her and her husband in Rome, Elizabeth wrote back:

> My Dear Mrs Story, May I first thank you for all the kind help you have given us, and then accept your charming invitation to spend the first few days with you in – Rome. We are really and truly coming to Rome!!!!!!

The six explanation marks reveal the impetuosity of the writer – the childlike

excitement and emotional openness of the woman, which comes through in all her work. When in Rome she met Charles Eliot Norton (1827-1908), a young American scholar who had met John Ruskin and was studying art in Italy; he later became Harvard's first Professor of Art History.

Elizabeth and her daughters Marianne and Meta, along with their friend Catherine Winkworth, were profoundly influenced by the charm and artistic knowledge of the young American, who became a constant companion during the short time that they spent in Rome. He also accompanied them on their slow journey homewards and at last parted company with them in Venice. Was there any romantic attachment between the young American and the author seventeen years his senior? Of course there was attraction; who would not be attracted by the attentions of a stimulating companion such as Charles Eliot Norton, and the light, colour, music and art of springtime in Italy, after the pall of smoke surrounding Manchester, and after the painful gestation of her devoted life's work to honour her dear dead Charlotte Brontë. The nineteenth century was obsessed with other matters such as religion and morality, while the 20th and 21st centuries' infatuation with sex would have surprised Elizabeth Gaskell and her contemporaries. Her devotion to Norton and her family's delight on hearing of his engagement and marriage and later of the birth of his children, adds to the sense of bondage between the families. Meta Gaskell's devotion to Charles Norton after her mother's death is evident in her letters to him (revealed in *The Letters of Mrs Gaskell's Daughters*, ed. Irene Wiltshire, HEB Humanities-Ebooks, 2012).

The warmth of this friendship I hope is evident in the story that is told in these letters. Delia Corrie again plays Elizabeth Gaskell and the part of Charles Eliot Norton is taken by Charles Foster, while Ella Burton, who plays Meta Gaskell, acts as narrator.

We intend to present the piece as a dramatised play-reading, with many illustrations, at the August celebration of Mrs Gaskell's life in Knutsford and at different venues during the summer months of 2013. Watch this space.

Constant Moyaux (1835 - 1911)
- View of Rome from the Artist's Room at the Villa Medici 1863

Book Notes

Christine Lingard

Mary Barton has now been published in the Wordsworth edition at a recommended price of £1.99. ISBNs: 1840226897: 978-1840226898

The growth of technology now means that a number of Gaskell's shorter novels and stories which have been out of print are now available though not in edited scholarly editions. Kindle publications include *The Half-Brothers; Lizzie Leigh, Dark Night's Work; Manchester Marriage* (in the anthology *Victorian Short Stories: Stories of Successful Marriages*); *Doom of the Griffiths; Old Nurse's Story* (in the anthology - *The Lady Chillers: classic ghost and horror stories by women authors - 15 complete stories by Victorian and Edwardian mistresses of the macabre.*) It is possible to obtain these titles in paperback.

Interest in Gaskell in Europe continues to be strong. There are now translations into French of *Cousin Phillis – Ma Cousine Phillis* by Béatrice Vierne, with photographs by Véronique Chanteau. L'Herne, ASIN: B008AX788G and *Mr Harrison's confessions* by the same translator *Les Confessions de Mr Harrison*. Seuil.

From Spain comes the first ever translation of *Ruth* into Spanish: Coleción Tesoros De Época. ISBN: 978-84-938972-4-6; as well as *Sexton's Hero* and *Christmas Storms and Sunshine - El héro del sepulturero, seguido de Tormentas y alegria navideñas.* Jose J Olañeta (editor) Centellas ISBN 978-8497167482 ; and a translation of Charles Dickens' Christmas anthology for *All the Year Round - Mrs Lirriper's lodgings. La señora Lirriper* by Miguel Temprano García: Alba Editorial which contains Gaskell's rare short story *Crowley Castle*.

There are also two academic studies available in French which make mention of Gaskell. *Le Pasteur anglican dans le roman victorien. Aspects sociaux et religieux*, by Louis J. Rataboul. Didier erudition, 2208032640 [The Anglican clergyman in the Victorian novel, which deals with *North and South*, *My Lady Ludlow* and *Cranford* in particular] and *Poésie et identité féminines en Angleterre: le genre en jeu* (1830-1900) by Fabienne Moine, which discusses *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* and Gaskell's poem *On Visiting the Grave of my Stillborn Little Girl*. L'Harmattan (Kindle and paperback ISBNs 2296114148: and 978-2296114142).

Academic studies:

Atonement and self-sacrifice in nineteenth-century narrative by Jan-Melissa Schramm, (Fellow in English at Trinity Hall College, Cambridge); Cambridge studies in nineteenth-century literature and culture, no. 80. ISBNs 110702126X; 9781107021266. Contains the essay 'Standing for the people: Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell and professional oratory in 1848', which explores the conflicting

attitudes of the Victorian novel to sacrifice, as shown in the fiction of novelists such as Dickens, Gaskell and Eliot, at a time of Chartist protest, and national sacrifices made during the Crimean War.

Giving women: alliance and exchange in Victorian culture by Jill Rappoport. Oxford University Press, ISBNs 0199772606; 9780199772605. Discusses gifts made by Victorian women at a time when property rights were nonexistent to show how this defines contemporary culture; with reference to Charlotte Brontë, Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh*, and Christina Rossetti's Goblin Market. She also mentions a number of literary, political and Salvation Army pamphlets, and includes a chapter: 'Conservation in Cranford: sympathy, secrets, and the first law of thermodynamics.'

Literature and authenticity, 1780-1900 - essays in honour of Vincent Newey (Emeritus Professor, University of Leicester) edited by Michael Davies: Ashgate, ISBNs 0754665992; 9780754665991. Contains the essay: 'The authentic voice of Elizabeth Gaskell', by Joanne Shattock, editor of the Pickering Chatto edition of the Works of Elizabeth Gaskell.

Queer Others in Victorian Gothic: transgressing monstrosity by Gothic literary studies by Thomas Ardel, (City College of San Francisco). University of Wales Press, ISBNs 9780708324646 (cased) 9780708324653 (pbk.) (Originally published by the University of Chicago.) Includes a chapter 'Escaping heteronormativity: queer family structures in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Lois the witch* and *The grey woman*'. This book explores intersections in nineteenth-century British literature of sexuality, gender, class and race using gothic horror, in the works of authors such as Wilkie Collins, Elizabeth Gaskell, Sheridan Le Fanu, Florence Marryat and Vernon Lee.

Rewriting the Victorians: theory, history, and the politics of gender: Women, feminism and literature, edited by Linda M. Shires, (Professor of English Stern College, Yeshiva University, New York). Routledge library editions, vol. 12. ISBNs 0415521734, 9780415521734. Contains 'The "Female Paternalist" as historian: *Elizabeth Gaskell's My Lady Ludlow* by Christine L. Krueger. This collection of essays, both feminist and historical, analyses power relations between men and women in the Victorian period, and is influenced by Marxism, sociology, anthropology, and post-structuralist theories of language and subjectivity.

Victorian unfinished novels: the imperfect page, by Saverio Tomaiuolo. (Lecturer in English Literature and Language at Cassino University, Italy). Palgrave Macmillan, ISBNs 1137008172; 9781137008176 . Contains 'Becoming Ladies and Gentlemen in W. M. Thackeray's *Denis Duval* and Elizabeth Gaskell's *Wives and Daughters*.'

Women and literary celebrity in the nineteenth century: the transatlantic production of fame and gender, by Professor Brenda R. Weber, (Indiana University).

(Ashgate series in nineteenth-century transatlantic studies), ISBNs 1409400735; 9781409400738. A discussion of biography in particular *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, and stresses the physical frailty of Charlotte's body in contrast to her genius.

Writing Britain: wastelands to wonderlands, edited by Christina Hardyment. British Library Publishing Division, ISBNs 0712358749; 9780712358743; (hbk.) 0712358757; 9780712358750 (pbk.) published to accompany the exhibition *Writing Britain: wastelands to wonderlands*, May 11-Sept. 25, 2012 at the British Library, featuring Elizabeth Gaskell's industrial northern towns.

The Gaskells' House Report

Janet Allan

On 13 June last year the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) awarded just under two million pounds for the restoration and conversion of 84 Plymouth Grove, a triumphal end to our long campaign to rescue the House which started in the 1990's. Professor Hannah Barker, a member of the HLF's Manchester committee, joined members of the Manchester Historic Buildings Trust and the Gaskell Society in the celebration on the steps of the Gaskells' Manchester home.

Work on the first stage, the construction of the disabled ramp and improvements to the servants' quarters in the basement, will be completed in February. The second stage, the main works, will start in March.

By late 2014 the whole house should be open to the public for the first time. We should have a beautified but friendly ground floor, much as it was in the Gaskells' time, with their drawing room and dining room, William's study (the bookcases appropriately filled) as a resource centre. Downstairs the original kitchen will become a tearoom, also selling books our established tradition. Next to it the servants' hall will become a meeting room, there will be a modern kitchen, loos and a lift. The bedroom floor, which contains some very large rooms, will become meeting rooms or offices. The garden setting will be in the style of the 1850s, when the family moved in.

The transformation has already started. Members of the Friends saw the work going on in the old kitchen, which now has its original flagged floor rescued and restored, and got a sense of the spacious lobby entrance. The outlines of the flower beds and carriage sweep in the front of the building, together with the changes in gradient up to the front steps, give an exciting glimpse of what is to come. And the disabled ramp, tucked discretely at the side of the building, will be of great use without spoiling the overall impression.

In 2012 the Friends were very active and we have had concerts, dramatic presentations, a day school and many specialised visits and tours. But our job is not over! Although we cannot use the House during the conversion, we are planning events and excursions, and working with Victoria Baths on their Open Days. The Baths have also very kindly agreed to store those things, including books and our beloved tea sets. A newsletter will be issued shortly, and we are revising and updating our website so please follow the story!

Annual General Meeting 2013

Saturday 13 April, at Cross Street Unitarian Church, Manchester. All members are welcome.

10.30am Coffee and tea

11am Dr Margaret Lesser will deliver the Daphne Carrick Lecture:
Mary and William Howitt: A New Look

12noon AGM

1pm Buffet lunch

2.15pm Sarah Webb: **A love affair of long ago: Margaret Leicester (1847 - 1921)**

Autumn General Meeting

Saturday 28 September, Knutsford Methodist Church. Further details TBA.

North-West Group

Manchester Meetings

Gaskell Society Meetings at Cross Street Unitarian Church held on the first Tuesday of the month (October to March excluding January) Start at 1.00pm.

The Chapel will usually be open at 12 o'clock so that you can bring your own lunch.

This session's meetings (including lunch) will be held in the Percival Room.

The season continues with the theme **Victorian Contemporaries**.

Tuesday February 5, 2013, Ian Emberson: 3 Quartets: The Rossettis, the Mendelssohns and the Brontës.

Tuesday March 5, 2013, Dr. Patsy Stoneman: Charlotte Brontë and her relationship with Elizabeth Gaskell and the marked differences between them.

Knutsford Meetings

Meetings are held on the last Wednesday of the month (October to April excluding December) in St John's Church Centre, Knutsford.

An excellent buffet lunch is served at 12.15 (£8, pay on the day) followed by a talk and discussion, led by Elizabeth Williams at 1.30pm. Meetings end about 3pm.

We are continuing to study *Ruth* until the last meeting of the season on 24 April 2013.

A summer outing will be arranged, probably in May.

The Gaskell Society South-West

Saturday, 23 February 2013, 2.15 pm. Our first discussion group of the year will be held at Elizabeth Schlenther's house, 14 Vellore Lane, Bath, and the topic will be *North and South*. There are still places available, so Elizabeth should be contacted as soon as possible if you wish to come. A fee of £5 will cover both sessions.

Saturday, 23 March 2013, 2.15 pm. The second discussion group, a continuation of the first, will be held at Bren Abercrombie's house, 6 Vellore Lane, Bath. (Please note the change of address.)

Saturday, 20 April 2013, 2.30 pm. We look forward to a lecture by Ann Brooks, one of our members and an expert on the Portico Library in Manchester. She and a colleague, Bryan Haworth, wrote the official history of the library. Her topic will be: 'A behindhand place for books': The Portico Library Manchester and the Gaskell Connection. The lecture will take place as usual at the BRLSI, Queens Square Bath, and there will be a charge of £2 for members of the Gaskell Society and the BRLSI and £4 for non-members.

Our Bring and Share lunch will take place in late summer, and there will be more details about that at a later date.

Any queries to Elizabeth Schlenther, 14 Vellore Lane, Bath, BA2 6JQ, Tel: 01225 331763.

London and South-East Branch

Sandwich lunch will be available from 12.45pm. Meetings begin at 2pm; tea and cake will be served after the meeting. Usually the formal part of the meeting finishes about 3.30pm for those needing to catch trains.

Venue: Francis Holland School, Graham Terrace, London.

The entrance is via doors on Graham Terrace, please ring the bell marked 'RECEPTION' loudly to gain entry. For security reasons the door must be locked until opened from inside.

The school is a three minute walk from Sloane Square tube station (on the District and Circle lines) and about a 15-20 minute walk from Victoria. There are also buses from Victoria. (Please check running of the tubes as they often carry out engineering work at weekends).

Book Stall: We have a 'bring and buy' book stall (proceeds for the renovation of the Gaskell House in Manchester). Please bring unwanted books and buy replacements.

Meetings are £5.00 (including everything) payable on the day. You are warmly invited. All meetings are held on Saturdays.

Further details from Dr Fran Twinn frantwinn@aflex.net

Saturday, 9 February, 2013, Ann Brooks and Bryan Howarth: The Portico Library and the Gaskells' connections. Ann and Bryan became volunteers at The Portico, Manchester, in 1985 and Ann continued to serve for 20 years. They are the co-authors of the official history of the library, *Boomtown Manchester 1800-1850 The Portico Connection. A History of the Portico Library and Newsroom.* (The Portico Library, 2000).

Saturday, 11 May, 2013, Carolyn Lambert: Sex, Stability and Secrets: Artefacts and rituals in Elizabeth Gaskell's fiction. Carolyn will share the fruits of her PhD research.

Saturday, 14 September, 2013, Alison Lundie: Domestic Arts in *Mary Barton* and *North and South*. Alison, a founding member of the London Gaskell Reading group, is studying for a PhD at Roehampton. Her talk will focus on shawls and needlewomen in *Mary Barton* and *North and South*.

On a Saturday TBA in November 2013, Janet Allan: Developments in the renovation of the Gaskell House in Plymouth Grove