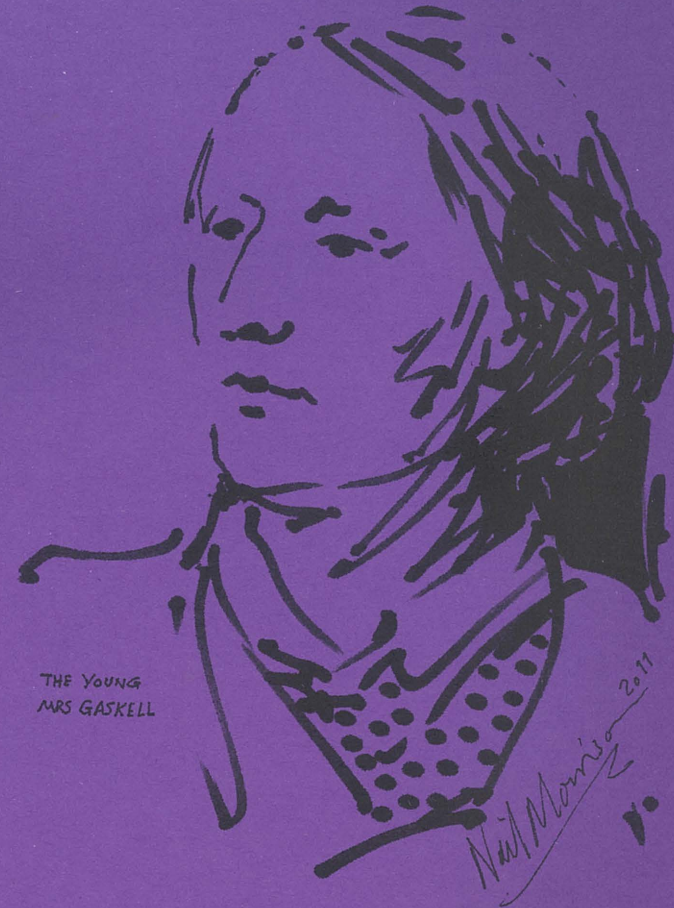


# The Gaskell Society



THE YOUNG  
MRS GASKELL

## NEWSLETTER

Autumn - Number 62

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

**Treasurer:** Clive Heath, 39 Bexton Lane, Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 9BL

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# Editor's Letter

Helen Smith

Welcome to our 62<sup>nd</sup> Newsletter!

How wonderful it is to escape into the 19<sup>th</sup> century and forget the turbulent and turgid times of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. On occasion I do wonder if anything new can be said about Mrs Gaskell. However the art of literary criticism has now reached such a highly abstract and creative level that more can be said and written about practically anything under the sun.

And now for a little business. At the AGM held in Cross Street Chapel on April 2, Margo Singer (who had been co-opted to the Committee during the previous year), Anthony Burton and John Greenwood were elected to the Committee. Shirley Rea had resigned from the Committee in September 2015. Apart from these changes, the status quo was maintained. Helen MacEwan who lives and works in Brussels spoke about her latest book on Winifred Gérin (1901-1980), which is the biography of the biographer of Mrs Gaskell (published in 1976 but now out of print). Winifred Gérin who lived for many years in Haworth was also biographer of the Brontës and of Anne Thackeray Ritchie. After lunch Emma Marigliano, Librarian of The Portico, fascinated us with illustrators (and their illustrations) of Mrs Gaskell from George du Maurier onwards.

## Dates for diaries:

Autumn General Meeting: 24 September 2016 (please see enclosure)

AGM for 2017: 8 April

Conference: 21-24 July 2017. Venue: Portsmouth. Theme: North and South

Autumn General Meeting: 30 September, 2017

Elizabeth Stevenson first visited North Wales in July 1827. When her father knew of this intended visit, he wrote and urged her to keep a diary. In 1832 William Gaskell and his 'bonny wee wife' spent their honeymoon retracing the steps of Elizabeth's earlier visit. And so it came to pass in the spring of this year, almost two centuries later, my husband and I spent a week in North Wales. At our B&B in Harlech, I picked up a Ward Lock Red Guide to the area (1931 ed), and read therein:

## Books for holiday reading

The village in Mrs Gaskell's *Ruth* is Festiniog. The scene of sombre story "The Doom of the Griffiths" is the Tremadoc district, as is also that of "The Well of Pen-Morfa".

Not all events listed in the last Newsletter came to pass. The study day at Renishaw did not take place. Instead a day was spent at the museum in Halifax, and in Haworth in homage to Charlotte Brontë whose bicentenary year we celebrate. Unfortunately the Conference on Georg Weerth advertised in the Spring Newsletter was cancelled through lack of interest.

*'To every thing, there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the sun.'*

The time has come for me to lay down my quill. Thank you to all who have written for the Newsletter over the six years I have been Editrix. And thank you to all who read the Newsletter! I owe a deep debt of gratitude to my husband Charles for, in this instance, his computer skills and patience.

John Greenwood who has been a recent contributor to the Newsletter will now pick up the quill. I invite you all to write for Editor-to-be John (jngreenwood@btinternet.com) as he embarks upon this pleasurable task and I wish John every success in his new venture.

As ever, warmest thanks to our printers, Rebecca and her family at iPrint in the Red Cow Yard here in central Knutsford.

And so, dear Readers, farewell.

**Next deadline: 20 January 2017**

## An American in Manchester

**Allison Masters Easley**

'The interruptions of home life are never ending,' reads a quotation painted on the basement wall at Elizabeth Gaskell's house at 84 Plymouth Grove in Manchester. I snapped a photograph, knowing that this insight was true, and that, as always, Gaskell spoke to me across the centuries about the realities of womanhood and middle-class life. I could not have known then, that a year later I would find myself appreciating that phrase all the more, raising a young foster-daughter, working full-time, and like Gaskell in the spring of 1850, preparing to buy a new house and fretting 'that it is right to spend so much ourselves on so purely a selfish thing as a house is, while so many are wanting.'<sup>1</sup>

This was May 2015, and my mother and I were on day eight of a literary inspired tour of England. An American, this was my first visit to England - a belated graduation gift after completing my master's degree in English literature six years prior. As Gaskell once wrote in a letter, 'as a schoolgirl I could not see much, but I heard of many places that I longed to know more about,'<sup>2</sup> and now finally I

had my chance. Our trip was arranged geographically with a hub in London; we arrived in the capital, and then took trains south, and later north, to visit the sites of nineteenth-century English authors. During the first week of our travels, we had climbed the narrow stairs of Charles Dickens's London home at 48 Doughty Street; been guided around the Hampshire countryside of Jane Austen's life and novels; compared the humble cottage of his childhood to the overcompensating mansion of Thomas Hardy's fame and later age; and walked the cobbled streets of Haworth and the untamed moorland of the Brontë sisters. Now, we had travelled by train from Haworth to Manchester and by cab to 84 Plymouth Grove.

After we had visited the homes of some of the most iconic English novelists, Mrs Gaskell's house in Manchester felt to us like the most obscure stop on our itinerary - the one that had to be explained to each cab driver, each tour guide, each passing acquaintance. Unlike the country homes of Austen, Hardy, and the Brontës, Gaskell's house does not stand out as a primary tourist draw to the local area. There were no professional guides available for hire as they are for Austen fans, and no 'Gaskell Country' map and brochure linking relevant sites together as Dorset has for Hardy. Indeed, my mother and I were only (and luckily) able to see Knutsford, where Gaskell spent her early years and is buried, because Pam Griffiths from the Gaskell Society drove us from Manchester and gave us a lovely, personal tour. But the cab driver who took us from our hotel near Manchester Piccadilly to 84 Plymouth Grove that morning seemed unacquainted with Gaskell, and the complimentary tourist magazines in our room gave but a passing nod to the writer in their overview of local attractions. On a broader level, Manchester itself stood out as the black sheep of our travels - a reputation the 'industrial North' has held since Victorian times at least. As Shirley Foster notes in her essay from the Spring 2016 Newsletter, 'Manchester and Liverpool were not much lingered over by the average New World tourist, who was far more eager to get to cultural and historical 'honey-pots' such as Stratford, Warwick, Oxford, and London.'<sup>3</sup> If twenty-first century guidebooks and tour packages are any indication, not too much has changed in this regard over the past two hundred years.

Yet of all the literary hearths we visited, Elizabeth Gaskell's was of the greatest importance to me. I first became acquainted with Gaskell during my undergraduate studies in a course on Victorian literature, but our intimacy developed with the decision to write my master's thesis on her work during graduate school. For over a year and a half, Gaskell became my daily companion through the 'dazed and crazed' nature of a lengthy writing project.<sup>4</sup> As I explored her portrayal of the middle class in *Mary Barton*, *The Moorland Cottage*, and *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, I oscillated between taking delight in 'the refuge of the hidden world of Art'<sup>5</sup> and feeling 'sick of writing, and everything connected with literature or improvement of the mind.'<sup>6</sup>

Six years later, standing in Gaskell's house, surrounded by the objects of her daily



life, I found myself relaxed in its pleasant intimacy and the way it still felt more home than museum. Like the other author sites I visited, Gaskell's house in Manchester contained illuminating and tech-savvy displays, helpful volunteers, and tidbits of knowledge not to be found in books and articles. Unlike the other museums, however, there were fewer visitors at Plymouth Grove, the top floor of the house remained unapologetically unfinished, and our £5 tickets provided unlimited entry for an entire year. Yet the tea room and gift shop most illuminated the difference between Gaskell's home and that of her more famous peers: no coffee mugs with witty Gaskell epigraphs; no magnets featuring the writer's silhouette or signature; no DVDs of the various film adaptations of her works; no keepsake volumes with professional photographs of Plymouth Grove. Here was simply tea, cake, and an array of books - yes, those humble pages filled with words that bring us all to Gaskell in the first place.

The lack of commercialization at Gaskell's house and museum might strike some as a wasted opportunity. After several BBC adaptations of her novels in the past few decades, Gaskell seems poised for greater fandom. Might not the Gaskell house try to draw the same tourists as visit the Brontë Parsonage, just an hour or two away? (To an American such as myself, even the train from London to Manchester feels short - less time than to cross the entire state where I live). Could not Plymouth Grove harness some of the global fame enjoyed by Dickens, Austen, the Brontës, and even *Downton Abbey* to present Gaskell as an equally interesting writer, worthy of more readers, museum visitors, and, of course, lucrative tourist souvenirs?

Yet therein lies the specialness of Gaskell - at least for now. No longer part of the Victorian popular press or linked to the fame of Charles Dickens as she was in her own lifetime, Gaskell attracts a smaller but more authentic and dedicated readership today. In the twenty-first century, she is not known primarily for the television dramatizations, or the spin-off novels, or the accompanying merchandise. Although she herself was keenly aware of money and the commercial potential of her writing since 'authorship brings ... in a pretty penny,'<sup>7</sup> Gaskell and her house-turned-museum must be enjoyed and taken back home, not through a coffee mug or refrigerator magnet, but through humble snapshots and memories, and through her own enduring words, always available to us when we step inside her books.

1 *The Letters of Mrs. Gaskell*, eds. J. A. V. Chapple and Arthur Pollard, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967, p. 108.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 28.

3 Shirley Foster, 'American Visitors to the North,' *The Gaskell Society Newsletter*, No. 61, Spring 2016, p. 28.

4 *The Letters of Mrs. Gaskell*, eds. J. A. V. Chapple and Arthur Pollard, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967, p. 325.

5 *Ibid.*, 106.

6 *Ibid.*, 325.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 44.

## A Sunday In 1861

Christine Lingard

As anyone who has done family history knows, the census is an invaluable resource. Every ten years we get a snapshot of life at a given address. Such was the case at 46 Plymouth Grove on the 7<sup>th</sup> April 1861. Though we are not lucky enough to have any letters written on that day, there are two letters 485, dated April 16<sup>th</sup> 1861 and 484b, dated March 1861 from which we can learn much about the family's routine.

As census day was a Sunday they would all have gone to church. William is listed as Unitarian Minister of Cross St. Chapel. On April 16<sup>th</sup> he went to a meeting to plan the annual meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science which was to be held in Manchester in September. He was chairman of the local branch, and the Gaskells invited a houseful of guests for the occasion. Elizabeth Gaskell is listed simply as 'minister's wife'. There is no indication of her career as a writer. It is quite remarkable in fact to find her at home. She had not long returned from Winchester where she got a lot of material for *Sylvia's Lovers* and this is borne out when she writes:

I am going to finish my book, 3 vols. very soon, though after seeing what Miss Evans (George Eliot) does I feel as if nothing of mine would be worth reading ever more. [485]

*Sylvia's Lovers* was published in 1862 but she is known to have got behind when she involved herself in relief work during the Manchester Cotton Famine.

Only two of her daughters were at home - the two youngest, Florence, aged 20 and 15-year-old Julia. Florence was reading a highly popular novel *Amber-Witch*, translated by Lucie Duff Gordon, in 1844, from a German book which purported to be a 17<sup>th</sup> century chronicle. Her mother's choice for her was *The Manse of Mastland: Sketches, Serious and Humorous*, translated by Thomas Keightley, in 1860, from the novel - *Life of a Village Pastor in the Netherlands*, by Cornelis Elisa Van Koetsveld, the story of a pastor who was convinced that his parishioners' poverty could be cured by education. Julia is described as a 'chatter-box and perpetual singer' and retired to bed at 9 pm. Her health was a constant concern. She was now taller than both her sister, Marianne and her mother ' & sometimes her gay spirits take the other turn into languor & weariness'. [485]

There is also mention in these letters of the second daughter, Meta (aged 23) who was likely to be reading Ruskin's *Modern Painters* or John Tyndall's *Glaciers of the Alps* (1860). She had accompanied one of Charles Darwin's sisters on a sketching tour to Italy and Switzerland the previous year and had fallen in love with the latter.

In 1861 she was convalescing from a tonsillectomy and had taken a short trip to visit rev Henry Bunsen, Rector of Donington in Shropshire. Her mother describes her operation:

I have taken Meta up to London this March to have her tonsils cut out,-it is a tickle operation but one which we hope will make both her eyes and throat stronger... [485]

On Monday at ½ p. 1 Mr Bowman is going to perform Meta's little operation' on her tonsils. I have a note from him this morning 'Miss Gaskell should have a glass of sherry at one o'clock on Monday'. I think Mrs Gaskell will have one too...Mr Bowman says it will do her eyes good, as it is the living membrane that gets inflamed & relaxed. [484b]

She had also hoped to take her to meet Ruskin when she was better but he never answered her letter.

I was a little puzzled by a reference in this letter to Miss Darwin's plans for a trip to the 'Pyrenees, Papemluna etc. 2 months from the 20<sup>th</sup> April'. She had been invited to go to the Pyrenees and Switzerland in 1860 but all accounts of the trip only mention her journey through France, Mentone and Switzerland. I now suspect that there was an invitation for a second trip in 1861 but her Gaskell 'played the stern mother' and the trip did not take place. [484b]

The eldest daughter, Marianne was in Liverpool in March when she received her mother's letter [484b]. She made several visits to Henry Arthur Bright, the shipping magnate and Unitarian author at Sand Heys, West Derby at this time. She was full of plans for the year - being a bridesmaid for Margaret Price, in June, for example, but she cannot be traced anywhere in the country on the day of the census. She was also planning a return visit Kreuzenach in Germany where she had received medical treatment the year before from Dr Chelsius for a mysterious illness that turned out to be chicken pox, so I assume she made the trip. Canon Bunsen's brother, Ernest had made the same trip recently. Her mother, worried about the expense, advised her to 'stay and enjoy the cow-calving at home'.

It would be interesting to know how Marianne's romance with her future husband, Edward Thurstan Holland (of Dumbleton Hall) was progressing. Both sets of parents were concerned about the match as they were second cousins. Her mother (writing from the Wedgwood's London home) tells her:

It is the opinion here that E.T.H. is making up to Miss Darwin & that Dumbleton would not dislike it as he must 'marry money'.

In June she was about to set out on two months of visits including London (for the

wedding). Thurstan was just completing his law studies. (He was called to the bar in November 1861). But he was planning a two month trip to Iceland, sponsored by the Alpine Club, from July to September. This included climbing in the My-Vatn national park. He was prevented from reaching the summit of the extinct volcano, *Öræfa Jökull* by the heavy mist. His account of experiences are included in *Peaks, Passages and Glaciers*, Second series, vol. 1. Was Marianne planning to see him off?

Not only were members of the family at home on census day but there was a houseful of female servants as well. The Gaskells employed at least five. Luckily all those listed in 1861 are mentioned in her correspondence and have interesting stories. The main servant was Ann Hearn, whom I wrote about in *The Gaskell Newsletter* in Autumn 2011. She was a native of Bodmin in Cornwall and came to Manchester to live with her sister, the wife of the headmaster of Cross St. Chapel School. She was originally employed as a nursemaid for their baby son but now effectively ran the household. She remained with the family till her death in 1890. She was also the only servant who was a Unitarian. The Gaskells expected their servants to go to church but did not insist they were members of William's congregation.

I note that there is no cook listed. This is not the only occasion that they were without one. Before they came to Plymouth Grove a cook named Anne 'who knew how to tempt her master's appetite' became pregnant in 1847, and in 1865 another, called Jane, had to be dismissed after a dispute with a fellow servant. In May 1860 Gaskell wrote to a Mrs Fielden to follow up the references of her cook, Ferguson. If she was appointed she did not stay long. [468]. I hope that it wasn't the Gaskell family's appetite that was the problem. Julia 'Snow' Wedgwood, who stayed at Plymouth Grove in 1855 to copy Charlotte Brontë's letters, wrote home:

You never did see a house as this for perpetual feeding. I am now (3 o'clock) going to have my third meal today; breakfast, luncheon having gone before.

Meta and Julia Gaskell were much luckier. Esther Turner was their cook for over twelve years.

One thing that is significant is how many of the servants were employed as favours to friends and relations. None of the 1861 servants were local girls. Chief amongst them was Mary Elliott, the waiter, whose duties included waiting at table, and answering the door. The use of surnames was an indication of rank among servants. Her Christian name was therefore rarely used. Gaskell was indeed confused about her Christian name, when she first arrived she calls her Sarah. She was born in 1828 in Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire, where a cousin of Gaskell on her father's side, Joseph Stevenson, was vicar. Indeed he may have arranged the appointment. In 1851 she was the servant of a local brewer, who lived near the

vicarage. Gaskell visited him in 1854 to attend the wedding of his sister, Dorothy. Gaskell later expressed her gratitude to Mrs Emily Ouvry, the wife of Dickens's solicitor, for recommending her:

We are so fond of our Elliott (I forget her Xtian name, she's not the L. Buzzard Elliott, but *your* Elliott, you know—). She is good, willing and *very* truthful & conscientious. Besides she is so affectionate that one can't help being affectionate back again. Thank you for her. Dear Mrs Ouvry...Elliott desires me to say she hopes you are better. [627]

Mrs Ouvry lived in London. Her brother-in-law, Henry Aime Ouvry and his wife, Matilda Delamaine had several children who were born in Leighton Buzzard in the 1850s. He served in India so he it is possible that one his servants was seeking another job.

Elliott's father and brother both died of cholera within twenty-four hours of each other shortly after she came to Manchester. The northern climate however didn't suit and her health began to decline. The family nursed her through a serious illness and sent her to an inn near Bolton Abbey to recuperate, but after seven years she was obliged to give in her notice and go to the south of England to live with friends.

Poor Elliott, in spite of help, which did not take off her responsibility,—got knocked up at last, and on Saturday I packed *her* off home for Christmas, and to see her mother who is old and ailing. [480]

Julia & I did everything for Elliott, washed up Breakfast things, laid dinner, waited &c—She was *very* poorly...I am deadly tired—having done so much these too [sic] days of Elliott's work. [487]

Unfortunately her name is too common to trace her after she left Plymouth Grove.

Her position as waiter brought her into contact with visitors to the house including the Harvard art historian, Charles Eliot Norton who was Gaskell's closest friend and correspondent in the United States, and the recipient of letter 485. There are allusions to her in several of their letters:

Elliott has just come in to lay lunch—I tell her I am writing to you; she bids (or asks me) to say she wishes you would come back here again,—and adds 'I liked him before ever he comed [sic] into the house—I saw he was a good gentleman of the right sort as he stood on the steps.' [493]

Norton reciprocated the friendship and passed on his regards to her and to another servant, Mary Latham (aged 29) whose home was in Huddersfield. He was very

distressed to hear her tragic story in 1860:

Well! to go back to Mary. She has been engaged this 8 years to a young man, a very steady respectable fellow, who began a worsted mill at Huddersfield in Yorkshire, about 3 years ago; and he was doing very well, and as soon as he had repaid the borrowed capital (part of it borrowed from Elliott-) they were to have been married. Such a right, constant prudent engagement; full of deep affection guided by principle. About a week ago Elliott came in crying — 'May Mary go off for the day? Mary has heard Shaw is dying'. I went to her directly; she was white as a sheet, but quite tearless, making the beds with vehemence, her eyes almost fierce, & her lips clenched. 'Let me see the letter, Mary while you get ready ', and I read that his own mill machinery had caught him, & crushed him — some one else wrote 'a very serious accident; all his cry is for you to come to him.' We all speeded her off, and her letters are so pathetic. His right leg is crushed; and tomorrow they decide if he can bear the amputation. He has no partner; his poor little humble mill must go to rack & ruin; but as Elliott says with tears, 'I should not care for the loss of my money a bit if he can only get better.' [477]

Mary was given 14 weeks' leave. Her lover appears to have kept his leg:

She left her lover *better*, but he had never yet been able to be moved out of the bed where he was first laid; nor is he moved yet. But it is a great thing to have saved his life. They fear however it will be a 'stiff-joint', and, if so, he will be a cripple for life. [480]

She returned to Huddersfield and eventually married John Shaw. They had a son and at least twenty years of married life together. Though, as his Christian name is not mentioned, it is possible that she could have married his brother. There is no record of his being disabled on later censuses. A likely death date is 1903.

Amelia Winstanly (1842-1917) was with the family for more than five years. I am grateful for her great great granddaughter for details of her story. She had been brought up in Knutsford, where her father was a stonemason. She was one of eight children and life was difficult. Her mother was an alcoholic. It is evident from vital certificates that she could read and write, but whether she learnt this skill at Plymouth Grove is not known. Meta is known to have spent at least ½ an hour a day reading with Elliott. It is likely that Gaskell employed her as a favour to her friend, Rev. Henry Green, Unitarian minister of Knutsford. She was a member of his congregation. Her brother is mentioned in the *Memoirs of St. Cross Church, Knutsford*:

In the hollow beyond the Paper Mills on the Mobberley Road stood a group of cottages known as Pig Cote Row. In one of them dwelt a family named Winstanly. One of the boys of the family, Edmund Gannan, a chorister, and in school showing exceptional ability being neglected at home, was befriended

by the Vicar, who guided him through the preliminary stages of training for the profession of teacher.

Gaskell was away when she was first employed and Marianne was left in charge. She writes to her anxiously, more than once, asking for details of her progress. After her marriage to a shoemaker, she returned to Manchester. She had at least five children but was a widow by the age of 50. She then became a newspaper vendor in the Ancoats area of the city.

Not all the servants were British. Karoline (or Caroline) Weideman (aged 27) came from Heidelberg, a city that the Gaskells visited in 1858 and 1860. There is a little confusion about her actual name. In 1863 Gaskell wrote to a Mme Weigermann, who was planning to visit. Could this be her mother? She was employed at Plymouth Grove for at least three years. Her duties included ironing (very slowly) and looking after the clothes. Her own dress sense was a little suspect:

Caroline has an *atrocious* print today, great stripes of crimson, blue and brown. [422]

Servants were given a clothing allowance but did not wear a uniform.

She was obviously homesick and eager to see her family. Gaskell wrote to Marianne in May 1860:

I am in a perplexity about Caroline too,—you would see what she said to Meta about her mother wanting her to have higher wages,—(which is a shame of the old woman, considering the expense of bringing C. over, her millinery & hairdressing lessons, &c. &c.) C. was very nice about it. I said I cd not give her more; that I had given her as a present 2£ towards going to see her mother at H[eidelberg], this summer, & she might ask her mother if she would rather see her or the money,—which she has done; but no answer has been received. C. said 'I told my mother perhaps you would be going sometime to H. & wd take me'—but I said if we took any one abroad I thought it should be *Hearn* who wished so much to go'. For some reasons I would rather put off the going from home till later; on acct of my book, cow calving, great heat for travelling &c—again on the other side,—now we are without a cook and it is always pleasanter to leave as few servants as possible idle in a house, doing nothing. [466]

Caroline was known to Anna Mohl, a niece of Gaskell's Paris friend, who lived in Heidelberg, but I have no idea who Sophie or Dr Meyer are. She instructed Marianne in 1861:

But read that part of Anna Mohl's letter relating to Sophie carefully over to C. It does so contradict the whole tone as well as the words of Sophie's behaviour that I can't help wondering how far Dr Meyer's brusque manner may have led to his receiving that impression from her. But has she ever written to Caroline

to her to say she was well now? So much depends on her on what her feelings of willingness is. It seemed to me to be positive longing to come to England... Has Caroline heard from her mother? about Sophie. Please be sure and send back...A. Mohl's letter, which is a very true one I think. Meta is writing to ask her [A. Mohl] to go up to the Speyer Hof: to see Sophie; but as she is in love etc. etc. it is as well to get Caroline also to work to ascertain Miss Sophie's real wishes. [484a]

There are other references to Caroline and Amelia in the letters. They were allowed time off to go to the Belle Vue Pleasure Gardens in East Manchester and Amelia went home for the May Day celebrations in Knutsford. In May 1860 Julia, Hearn, Mary and Caroline (not forgetting Lion the dog) were the only people in the house when it was burgled and a side of beef and all the dirty washing stolen! [471] Mary and Hearn were forced to sit up all night in case of a re-occurrence. It is also likely that Mary did the cooking in the period when they were without a cook.

All in all we get a picture of a very hectic, busy life but there was still time to mention the music they were enjoying (Fingal duet in Meta's case) and Elizabeth Gaskell was giving instructions for the gardener:

Remind Hearn about the Italian seeds that are to be given to the gardener & do speak to him yourself about them – greenhouse heat from 60 to 65, & will you see that he is sowing seeds generally for a good supply of flowers for *next* winter, primulas, cinerarias, etc. etc. & altogether brush him up with a little interest. [484b]

#### Further Reading

The Letters of Mrs Gaskell, edited by J.A.V. Chappell and Arthur Pollard. Manchester University Press, 1997 (pbk)

Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers; being excursions of members of the Alpine Club, edited by Edward Shirley Kennedy. Second Series, Vol. 1, 1862. (Though other volumes of this series were available on line in June 2016 this is not the case for this volume).

## Dr Samuel Gaskell (1807-1886): a brief biography, and thoughts on his possible influence on Elizabeth Gaskell's writings

AJ Larner

Samuel Gaskell, Elizabeth Gaskell's brother-in-law, had a distinguished medical career in the 1840s to 1860s in the field of lunacy, what might now be termed mental health. Herein I offer a brief biographical account, and then venture to



suggest that Samuel and his work may have had a passing influence on Elizabeth Gaskell's writing.

## Biography

Samuel Gaskell (1807-1886) makes only occasional, glancing, appearances in Elizabeth Gaskell's biography: he was best man at the Gaskells' wedding in 1832; an occasional advisor on Marianne Gaskell's health as a child; sometime holiday companion of his elder brother William on his walking trips; and a mourner at Elizabeth's funeral.<sup>1</sup> Likewise in the extant correspondence,<sup>2,3</sup> he is only ever briefly mentioned, in letters covering the period 1832 to 1859.

To my knowledge Samuel has no major biography, but his obituaries in the medical press<sup>4,5</sup> and extant biographical material<sup>6-9</sup> inform us that he was born in Warrington on 10<sup>th</sup> January 1807, two years William's junior. He had his medical education in Manchester and Edinburgh, but this came about only after a period of some years as apprentice to a publisher and bookseller in Liverpool, William Eyres, Samuel's original wish to study medicine having been thwarted by the family doctor's advice, on account of his poor eyesight apparently caused by an attack of measles. However, the apprenticeship afforded Samuel ready access to medical literature, and seeing his enthusiasm for the subject his employer remitted his apprenticeship.

H L Freeman reports that at 'the age of 18, he moved to Manchester' and 'became apprentice to Mr Robert Thorpe at the Manchester Royal Infirmary. In 1831 he moved to Edinburgh' (ref.8, pp. 89-90). However, John Chapple, whom I am inclined to regard as the most reliable source, reports Samuel was 'up in Edinburgh gaining prizes for medicine at the university for two years from 1830' (ref. 9, p. 337), based on testimonials from James Syme, a distinguished professor of clinical surgery (he was succeeded by his son-in-law, Joseph Lister, pioneer of antiseptic surgery), and Dr J. Mackintosh, a lecturer in the practice of physic who praised Samuel's service at the Edinburgh Cholera Hospital. Chapple floats the possibility that Elizabeth may have met Samuel in Edinburgh, based on her June 1832 visit at which time her portrait was painted (ref. 9, p. 420).

By July 1832, Samuel Gaskell was practising at the cholera hospital, Swan Street, Ancoats, Manchester, whence he attended Elizabeth and William's marriage in August. Returning to Swan Street, he became embroiled in an unsavoury incident when public accusations amounting to bodysnatching (or 'burking', after the events in Edinburgh a few years earlier) were levelled at him and a colleague, charges from which he was eventually exonerated (ref. 9, p. 426-8).

This episode is, perhaps unsurprisingly, airbrushed from his obituary in the *Journal of Mental Science*, which reports that once qualified (Member of the Royal College

of Surgeons, 1832) Samuel obtained an appointment as Resident Medical Officer to the Cholera Hospital in Stockport.<sup>5</sup> However, whether or not his Stockport days were involved with cholera is uncertain, since he is described as the 'House Surgeon at Stockport Infirmary' in an 1845 [sic] publication. On 27th September 1844 he presented data to the Statistical Section of the British Association in York on the subject of accidents which he attended as the House Surgeon at Stockport Infirmary, data subsequently published in the *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*.<sup>10</sup> Evidently then, he must have been collecting data during the period 1833-5, long before the necessity of log books became standard for the purposes of medical training.

Hence, in Edinburgh, Manchester, and possibly Stockport, he had gained experience of cholera, one of the most significant public health issues of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He published on the subject of malignant cholera, in a paper dated 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1834 from Stockport Infirmary.<sup>11</sup> In an 1854 letter (ref. 2, p. 305) Elizabeth Gaskell reported Samuel's opinion to be that cholera is not infectious, i.e. does not pass from one person to another, an opinion now known to be erroneous.

The *Journal of Mental Science* obituary then states that in 1834 Gaskell was appointed as house apothecary at the Manchester Royal Infirmary and Lunatic Asylum.<sup>5</sup> Presumably this experience engendered or extended his interest in the treatment of the insane, and in 1840 he was appointed medical superintendent of the Lancaster County Asylum following election by the county magistrates. He became an active member of the Association of Medical Officers of Asylums and Hospitals for the Insane, founded in 1841. He gained the Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons by election in 1844.

Nineteenth century county asylums were daunting institutions, housing a heterogeneous population of inmates, some suffering from what contemporary commentators called insanity or lunacy (what might now be subsumed under the term psychosis, characterised by hallucinations and delusions sufficient to compromise social and occupational functions) and idiocy (what might now be termed mental deficiency or learning disability), as well as people with epileptic seizures and with cognitive decline resulting from dementing disorders. In addition, forced incarceration of the mentally normal at the behest of their families, for example for pecuniary gain, was not unknown. Institutional abuse of patients was not uncommon, with poor diet, unclean and sometimes frankly squalid conditions, use of physical restraint and sometimes assault, and little in the way of therapy aside from bleeding and purging. Contrary to the etymology of the word asylum, these were seldom places of refuge, their principal function being custodial.

Samuel Gaskell is credited with ending the system of physical restraint of patients in Lancaster Asylum, one element in the system of 'moral treatment' which he promoted, along with the asylum physician, Dr Edward de Vitre. This was part of a



revolution in the care of lunatics during this period, which sought not only to abolish restraint but also to encourage recovery from mental illness through the provision of adequate care, diet, and employment, in a therapeutic (i.e. clean) environment with access to exercise and recreation. A detailed study of the Lancaster Asylum records by Walton<sup>12</sup> prompted him to conclude that '[t]he overall impression is of a genuine attempt by the medical officers [Gaskell and de Vitre] to introduce a system of "moral treatment" in the fullest sense, and to change the whole spirit in which the asylum was conducted. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that, up to a point, they succeeded' (p. 177). Gaskell is also said to have allocated orphan children to the care of female patients 'to develop in the women the great principle of maternal love' (ref. 8, p. 90; also ref. 6). His role in the development of mental health services in Lancaster is still remembered to this day.<sup>13</sup>

These reforms gained Gaskell notice, particularly that of the Earl of Shaftesbury, which resulted in early 1849 in his appointment as one of the Commissioners in Lunacy, an influential position which he held until 1866. The Lunacy Commission was founded by the Lunacy Acts of 1845 to provide a permanent inspectorate able to visit any asylum or madhouse, public or private, in England and Wales with the power to order changes to patient care if provision was deemed inadequate (a kind of nineteenth century Care Quality Commission, the nearest equivalent organisation in today's health bureaucracy). The thoroughness of Gaskell's inspections was noted, and did not always endear him to proprietors and superintendents of madhouses. He has been described as 'possibly the most influential commissioner in the commission's history'.<sup>7</sup> His London home was at 2 St James Place.

In June 1851 Gaskell was one of the four Lunacy Commissioners, indeed the nominal head, who inspected Bethlehem or Bethlem Hospital ('Bedlam') in London,<sup>14</sup> the longest standing (founded 1247) and most famous madhouse in the country, which had hitherto been specifically exempted from the Lunacy Acts as a consequence of lobbying by the hospital's influential governors. This exemption was something of a cause célèbre for the reformers, particularly in light of stories emerging of mistreatment and abuse of patients within Bedlam (perhaps akin to, and recalled by, the final scene of Hogarth's *A Rake's Progress* of 1735).

A highly critical report (*Report and Evidence of the Lunacy Commission to the Home Secretary on Bethlehem Hospital*, contained in the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Report of the Lunacy Commissioners) ensued in February 1852 which initiated a gradual process of reform at the hospital. Perhaps surprisingly, the most comprehensive history of Bethlem<sup>15</sup> mentions Gaskell only in passing (and not at all in the index), with the comment on the Lunacy Commissioners that 'with Gaskell at their head it was not a group likely to return a favourable verdict' on the hospital. Whatever the procedural shortcomings of the interviewing of concerned individuals, there seems little doubt that Bethlem had a case to answer, and that Gaskell and his colleagues

did a service in bringing the hospital's shortcomings to more widespread attention. Gaskell later published on the provision of mental health services,<sup>16</sup> but a road accident in 1865 forced his early retirement the following year due to 'mental infirmity'. He died at his home in Walton, Surrey, in 1886. He was described as a 'genial and lovable' man,<sup>4</sup> 'highly esteemed... by his colleagues'.<sup>5</sup> A Gaskell Medal and Prize was established in 1886 in his memory, administered by the body which later became the Royal College of Psychiatrists.<sup>8</sup>

## Influence

What relevance, if any, did Samuel Gaskell's career have for Elizabeth Gaskell and her writing? She must have been familiar with insanity and mental deficiency from her own life experience, of family and of parish work in Manchester. For example, '... when I was a girl, there used to be poor crazy women rambling about the country ... they might have been born idiots ... we called them always "cousin Betty"' (*Morton Hall*, chapter 2; see also *Sylvia's Lovers*, chapter 14, for a further reference to 'cousin Betty', a well-known contemporary term for female lunatics).

Elizabeth's Aunt Lumb had married a man with mental illness, a wealthy Yorkshireman from Wakefield named Samuel Lumb. There is evidence, reported by John Chapple (ref. 9, pp. 88-99), that Samuel Lumb was indeed a patient at the Bootham Asylum at York with a diagnosis of 'melancholy' (probably conforming to our category of depression), and later in Leicester, with eventual recovery, but by this time Hannah Lumb had returned to Knutsford. How much Elizabeth knew of her aunt's husband's medical history is, as far as I am aware, unknown.

To my knowledge the insane and mentally deficient, the typical patient clientèle of Dr Samuel Gaskell, make few appearances in Elizabeth Gaskell's oeuvre, as the following examples show (this does not claim to be a comprehensive list).

In *Morton Hall* (1853), Alice Carr dies 'a poor crazy woman' (chapter 1), which Jenny Uglow (ref. 1, p. 473) equates with her being 'declared insane'. However, in the written account Alice is forcibly bound and abducted by her husband, on the pretence that she is ill ("It touches her here" continued he, pointing to his head"), on the day of the Puritan preachers visit to Morton Hall, to be taken to London to see the King's own physician. The tenantry pity Sir John for his mad wife, and thereafter speculate that 'she was mad, and shut up in London'. It would seem possible to read this as the disposal of a troublesome spouse who is in fact entirely sane (Patsy Stoneman judges her to be so; ref. 17, p 37). The chronology of the story would place this in the later seventeenth century: Sir John is later killed at the Battle of the Boyne, fought in 1690. In passing it should be noted that religious beliefs fall outwith the modern clinical definition of delusion on the ground of cultural sanction.

'Idiots' or 'naturals' also occur in Gaskell's works. In *The Well of Pen-Morfa* (1850), Nest Gwynn takes in Mary Williams, variously described as a 'half-witted woman',

a 'poor crazy creature' and an 'idiot', who has been beaten and underfed by John Griffiths with whom she has been previously boarded by the parish. Nest receives the same money from the parish, but pursues a more caring approach. Following Nest's death, Mary goes to the workhouse.

In *Martha Preston* (also 1850), the eponymous heroine is from a Lakeland Statesman family. Of note, the Gaskell's landlady when staying in Skelwith in Little Langdale near Ambleside was a Mrs Preston, a Stateswoman (ref. 1, pp. 231-2, 263-4, 274), and in *Sylvia's Lovers*, Bell Robson, née Preston, has a similar background. In *Martha Preston*, Martha's younger brother, Johnnie, at about the age of 16 suffers a raging fever, possibly typhoid, for a period of 20 days, but 'as he recovered, his wandering lost senses were not restored' and 'stupor remained still upon his poor brain'. 'Martha knew the truth in her heart, that her brother was an idiot.' Martha's intended, Will Hawkshaw, suggests that Johnnie be 'shut up in an asylum', the phraseology suggesting the institution has a custodial rather than a therapeutic function, but Martha refuses, knowing the asylum to be a 'madhouse', a decision which causes the loss of her marriage prospects.

In *The Half-Brothers* (1859), Gregory (inexplicably Patsy Stoneman calls him Godfrey; ref. 17, p. 34), the stepson of one William Preston, is described as 'lumpish and loutish, awkward and ungainly', and is labelled as 'stupid' by his aunt and stepfather. At school he can 'never be made to remember his lessons' and the schoolmaster advises he be taken out of school; he proves more successful as a shepherd, and performs a self-sacrificing act to save his half-brother.

Timothy Cooper in *Cousin Phillis* (1863-4) is described as a 'half-wit', and makes errors in his labours causing Ebenezer Holman to dismiss him, yet Timothy has the insight to divert carts on Hornby market day so that the sick Phillis is not disturbed by their noise, so he is perhaps not an 'idiot' (cf. ref. 1, p.543).

None of these examples provides a very direct or necessary link to Samuel Gaskell and his work, but a connection may perhaps be observed in the revision of *Martha Preston*, which appeared as *Half a life-time ago* in *Household Words* in October 1855 (incidentally, the occasion on which Dickens's frustration with Elizabeth prompted his notorious comment about beating her had he been Mr Gaskell). Here, the heroine (no longer eponymous) is Susan Dixon, her brother is Willie, a boy named after his father (names and relationships redolent with personal significance for Elizabeth Gaskell), and her intended is Michael Hurst. As her mother dies, Susan Dixon promises to be a mother to Willie. Later, a feverish illness, possibly typhus-fever according to the doctor from Coniston, kills her father and nearly Susan also. On her recovery she is told that 'Willie has taken the turn and is doing nicely'. However, it becomes apparent that the illness has robbed Willie of the 'little wit ... he ever possessed', and people fear that he 'would end in being a 'natural', as they call an idiot in the Dales'. His verbal skills regress,

consisting largely of vocalisations, and 'he had to have the same care taken of him that a little child of four years old requires'. Michael Hurst takes Willie, unbeknown to Susan, to see a Dr Preston, 'the first doctor in the county', in Kendal, who is reported by Michael to think that Willie 'will get badder from year to year' and advises sending him off, specifically to Lancaster Asylum. Michael, who fears that Willie 'may turn into a madman some day', reports that in the asylum 'They've ways there both of keeping such people in order and making them happy', but Susan, aware of 'stories of the brutal treatment offered to the insane; stories that were, in fact, but too well founded', and of 'horrible stories ... about madhouses', will not agree, pledging herself to look after her brother, and so her chance of marriage to Michael Hurst is lost.

The reference to Lancaster Asylum in *Half a life-time ago* may, of course, be incidental. There are, to my knowledge, no references in the extant correspondence to *Martha Preston*, and only one to *Half a life-time ago* (ref. 3, p. 143), so no particular details of the influences on their composition are available, or likely to be recoverable. Any link is therefore at best conjectural. However, it seems unlikely that Elizabeth Gaskell would not have known that her brother-in-law had worked at Lancaster Asylum for almost a decade (1840-9). The story begins 'fifty or fifty-one years ago' which would place it in the first decade of the nineteenth century. This is well before Samuel's medical career and the movement to reform the running of madhouses and the care of the insane. However, as Lancaster Asylum was only opened in 1816, there may be anachronism in the story, albeit that in the period 1816-1840 conditions in that institution were undeniably grim (ref. 12, pp. 170-2), and hence all too possibly a subject of 'stories of the brutal treatment offered to the insane'.

Women taking on the care of fatherless children (*Half a life-time ago*) or those otherwise abandoned (possibly orphaned? - *The Well of Pen-Morfa*) is a feature in some of Elizabeth's stories, a call perhaps to the instinct of maternal love, and hence possibly reminiscent of Samuel Gaskell's innovation in the care of orphans and female asylum patients.

## Conclusion

The possible influences of Elizabeth's Holland maternal medical relatives, her uncle Peter (1766-1855) and, perhaps most notably, his son and Elizabeth Gaskell's cousin Henry (1788-1873), later Sir Henry Holland, 1<sup>st</sup> Baronet, have been previously noted,<sup>18</sup> and there is at least one more clinician in later generations of the Holland family (Charles Thurstan Holland, 1863-1941).<sup>19</sup> It may be the case, based on the account given here, that a clinician from her Gaskell family of in-laws also had a small influence upon Elizabeth Gaskell's work.

## Acknowledgement

Thanks to Richard Renold for prompting me, perhaps inadvertently, to look further into Samuel Gaskell.

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**Editor adds:** The article in footnote 18 above is a companion piece to A J Larner's article on Elizabeth Gaskell's headaches published previously in *The Gaskell Journal* 2011: 25: 97-103.

## Why was Elizabeth Gaskell 'Dangerous to Associate with'?

Jane Carlyle and Mrs Gaskell:

19th-Century Women Writers, Gossip, and Creativity

Part Two

Brenda McKay

Nineteenth-century women writers' gossip often crystallised into high art. Conversely, distinguished writing sometimes provoked the envious into eloquent detraction of these artists. The illustrious novelists themselves, with an innate gift for story-telling, enjoyed relating piquant anecdotes to friends, even in early letters; they honed their craft from early youth, being witty at the expense of their neighbours. Thus Jane Austen on a very ugly local clergyman, whose wife gave birth to a dead child 'before she expected', owing to a fright. Jane adds: 'I suppose she happened unawares to look at her husband.'<sup>1</sup> Or George Eliot: 'Mrs Wood[,] a very ugly but lady-like little woman who is under an infatuation as it regards her caps, always wearing the brightest rose-colour or intensest blue, with a complexion not unlike a dirty primrose glove' (GEL, 1, 309). Or Elizabeth Gaskell on Effie Gray: 'She is very pretty[,] very clever,- and very vain...' Effie's delight was to add to the list of her offers (27 she was at, then); but she never cared for any one of them. It was her boast to add to this list in every town...just like somebody in the *Arabian Nights*, who was making up her list of 1000 lovers' (GL, p287).

Such cutting remarks reveal the alertness of the able novelist engaged with the minutiae of life, capable of capturing people's comic oddities deftly. But these women, echoing their society, seem over-preoccupied with people's possession of physical beauty, or otherwise – not surprisingly in an age when finding a husband, or getting a daughter 'settled', was a priority. Blanche Stanley's mother complained that her young daughter was still '*on her hands*', forcing the girl to marry a man that she didn't 'care a rush for...'<sup>2</sup>. Looks increased a girl's prospects in the marriage market. Spinsterhood could be grim, also. Matrimony itself could be a horrible trap, with no exit.

Not the least razor-tongued of women writers in England was Jane Welsh Carlyle (1801-66), a doctor's daughter from Haddington. She married a fellow Scot, the eccentric, emotionally introverted historian-philosopher, Thomas Carlyle: tragically for herself, though much for the entertainment of posterity. An aspiring, but unfulfilled novelist, Jane Carlyle wrote brilliant letters, crackling with sharp gossip but also wittily cerebral which form a body of literature in their own right. Her ample gifts for story-telling prompted Dickens after her death to say, 'None of the writing women come near her...'; he wished she could have finished a novel.<sup>3</sup> Thomas Carlyle himself said of her letters, 'None of the *Sands* or *Eliots* and babbling...



"celebrated Scribbling Women" approached her for wit and distinguished writing.<sup>4</sup> Such comments, while coming from men who could be brutal to females, nevertheless helped puncture the misogynist myth that women were 'sub-human' and unintelligent. As a child prodigy aged 10, Jane herself could read in Latin, with ease, Vergil's much-loved *Aeneid*. In some respects her letters resemble those of (much kinder) Mrs Gaskell, whose correspondence is also a delight to read. Jane's sharp, sometimes toxic wit (not sparing her husband), was dreaded by those who feared being its object. Her tongue, said J A Froude, was 'like a cat's; it could take the skin off with a touch'.<sup>5</sup> Jane reveals her meaner side in comments after an Oratorio in 1855: 'Such a set of ugly creatures as the chorus women I never did see! I grew so sorry for them, that each had a life of her own, that perhaps 'somebody loved that pig' that if I had any tears *in* me..., I should have cried for *them* all packed like Herrings in a barrel into *one mass of sound!*' (CLC, 30, 252). An unfortunate victim of Jane's poisonous pen, though blissfully unaware of it, was Elizabeth Gaskell. One might think it difficult to dislike Elizabeth - socially responsible, beautiful and hugely gifted - and yet Jane Carlyle did, with increasing venom as time rolled by. Truthfully, it was only a matter of time before someone detested a pretty, accomplished literary celebrity. Described initially as a pleasant, 'unassuming' woman, Elizabeth is later caricatured by Jane: 'Mrs Gaskell... reminds me of a servant girl who has pulled off her gown to *scrub* her neck at the pump' (CLC, 30, 249). The Gaskells moved like a small thread through the Carlyles' lives, however. Elizabeth indeed records Jane's waspish social sparkle from her excellent memory, when Jane's feelings were still amicable toward her:

I sat next to Mrs Carlyle, who amused me very much with her account of their only servant...from...Annandale in Scotland, and had never been accustomed to announce titles: so when Count Pepoli called she announced him as Mr Compilloloy; Lord Jeffrey as Lorcherfield; and simply repeated it louder & louder each time; till at last Mrs Carlyle said 'What is it - man, woman, or beast?' to which the servant answered 'a little wee gentleman, Ma'am (GL, p828).

Jane notes (1851): 'Mrs Gaskell took Geraldine [Jewsbury] and me for a beautiful drive', but pronounced a 'moral dullness about her...' (26,169). Carlyle stayed overnight with the Gaskells while travelling. He considered William 'very dull', but thought a clean bed compensated all (26, 172). More of Jane and Elizabeth presently, since to understand barbed comments, we need to look at Jane's life and marriage.

Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), a man from rural Scotland who pulled himself up socially by his boot-straps, probably the most influential writer of non-fiction in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and his wife, were famous not only as a (childless) couple, but as one single entity. Their wit, their phenomenal success, meant that all the 'civilised' world, British, American, European, made pilgrimages to the Carlyles' home in

what was then shabby-genteel Chelsea. The quantity of their preserved letters is stupendous, making thus far 42 volumes and still counting. Husband and wife also shone incandescently before political leaders, like Jane's close friend the Italian patriot Mazzini, and also literary 'lions', during their own years of sparkling success. As Rosemary Ashton comments, referring to Jane's correspondence, '[C]elebrities provided the raw material, along with a succession of servants, neighbours, shopkeepers, beggars, 'mads', and social flotsam and jetsam, for [Jane's] fluent letters, of which one might say... that they were written as if by special correspondent for posterity'. Adding Jane's letters to Carlyle's brilliant, idiosyncratic writings, including *Sartor Resartus* (1833-4), *The French Revolution* (1837) and *Past and Present* (1843), furnishes 'the most striking body of non-fictional prose of the 19th century'(Asht, 448). Figures like Marx, Engels and Nietzsche owed something to Thomas: Marx disliked Carlyle's ugly racism. Conversely, the 'Sage of Chelsea' showed extraordinary compassion for English working classes. Harriet Martineau said of Carlyle's qualities, 'The sympathetic is by far [his] finest... [His] savageness is... [an] expression of his intolerable sympathy with the suffering'.<sup>6</sup> Carlyle deplored worship of wealth and machinery at the cost of culture. Elizabeth Gaskell, though, noting something like the germ of the Nietzschean Superman, criticised Carlyle's cult of the Hero as 'un-Christian heroism...[and an] injury to others'.<sup>7</sup>

Yet the Carlyles' marriage was often hellish, and they separated intermittently when the heat became scorching. Samuel Butler later remarked: "[I]t was... good of God to let Carlyle and Mrs Carlyle marry one another, and make only two people miserable instead of four' (Asht, 11). Thomas, self-centred, sometimes foul-tempered, and fixated emotionally on his mother, had little sympathy left for his wife: an unhappy, 'wretched' man, as he wrote Goethe (CLC, 4, 248). Millais reputedly said that Carlyle's 'judgement is that no woman has any right to complain of any treatment whatsoever, and should patiently undergo all misery'....<sup>8</sup> A militant suffragette slashed Thomas's picture in the National Portrait Gallery in 1914.

Jane too could be difficult: she went through 30 maids in as many years, but her hiring skills were inept. Unusually, they were plagued by thefts, drunkenness and pregnancy in servants. One poured boiling water on Jane's foot, scalding her so badly that she had to be carried around for five weeks. A later maid who appeared saintly, named Mary, stole food, napkins and crockery. Jane mistakenly suspected and fired the other girl, Helen. Astonishingly, there was more, later. 'Now', wrote Jane, with her gift for narrative, 'if you had seen the creature Mary you would just as soon have suspected the Virgin Mary of such things!' Mary had fallen pregnant. 'While she was in labour in the small room' (during Jane's absence in Scotland), 'Mr Carlyle was taking tea in the dining room with Miss Jewsbury...!!! Just a thin small door between them! The child was not born till two in the morning when Mr C was still reading in the Drawingroom.' Jane expressed her disquiet and amusement at Carlyle, out of touch, sitting drinking tea unawares, 'while his cook and housekeeper

was taking the liberty' of giving birth in a room behind a partition wall (Asht, 434-5).

As an only child, Jane had been used to admiring attention. She was deeply wounded by her husband's indifference, even when she was (often) ill; her maladies were surely psychosomatic in part, the product of her marriage. Ruskin noticed 'there was never the slightest look of right affection... - he rarely attended to a word she said.'<sup>9</sup> Suspecting she had cancer in 1850 (which had killed two aunts) due to a wrenching pain in the chest, Jane, upset, wrote Helen Welsh: 'Oh God forbid I should die a *lingering* death... beside a Husband who *could* not avoid letting me see how little patience his own ailments have left him for anybody else's'. If she *did* have cancer, 'I should go away from here... and ask one of you [women] to... care for me... [E]ven my low spirits about the thing which in the first days I could not *conceal* from him... brought down on me such a tempest of scornful and wrathful words[:]... 'impatience', 'cowardliness', '*impiety*', 'contemptibility'... [N]othing should ever again wring from me another expression of suffering - to HIM' (CLC, 25, 303). That she was frequently unwell and *wasting* became obvious. Carlyle seemed wilfully blind to his wife's terribly deteriorating appearance. Husband and wife quarrelled loudly. One entry in Jane's Journal in 1856 notes sardonically: 'The chief interest of today expressed in blue marks on my wrists' (Asht, 380). Jane's closest friend, the novelist Geraldine Jewsbury, later told Carlyle's fine, posthumous, 'official' biographer, J A Froude, that Carlyle had grasped her wrists during a quarrel. This violence was rare, perhaps a single occurrence - one hopes.

The major problem with their marriage, apparently, whispered in gentlemen's clubs and London drawing rooms, was that it wasn't consummated, that Carlyle was impotent. We can probably never know the truth about this. Froude believed the rumours, and said Thomas had asserted that no biography of him could be written because 'there was a secret connected with him unknown to his closest friends, that no one knew...', making a veracious biography impossible.<sup>10</sup>

In a private journal entry before his marriage, Carlyle addresses Jane, in German: 'Ah my only one... why am I as a broken reed before you?' (tr. Rosemary Ashton, 37), a metaphor which may suggest dread of drawing a blank sexually. Geraldine Jewsbury told Froude: '[T]he state of things had been most unsatisfactory; ...Carlyle was one of those persons who ought never to have married... Mrs Carlyle never forgave the injury which she believed herself to have received. She had often resolved to leave Carlyle' (Fr, 21-2). The morning after the wedding, Froude tells us, Carlyle tore to pieces the flower garden at Comely Bank in 'a fit of ungovernable fury'. In Froude's view this episode indicated that 'Carlyle did not know...what his [sexual] constitution was' (ibid, 23), that he had been sexually inexperienced. A Carlyle biographer, Simon Heffer, cautiously sees Geraldine as 'the root of rumours about the Carlyles' [lack of] sexual practices': but in fact the whispers started earlier.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, Carlyle suffered from an irritable bowel and constipation, possibly caused by anxiety and a neurotic condition.

Attempting to read between the lines, it seems that in some Journal entries he self-deludedly attributes constipation, liberal doses of laxatives and consequent embarrassment, to his terror of intimacy. Obsessed by matters cloacal, his writings are liberally peppered with metaphors of faeces and diarrhoea, especially to express disgust. Edinburgh in his experience was a 'stinking and reeky mass of stone, lime and dung' (CLC, 300,304). He was an 'inverse sensualist, not drawn into the rank of beasts by [sexual?] pleasure...' (MS, Asht, 37). 'Today the guts are all wrong again, the headache,...the black despondency...' (CLC, 325). In fact, Geraldine tried her wiles on Carlyle during an 1843 visit. Jane 'became weary of her': '[S]he makes a *grande toilette* - comes down in the forenoon with a *bare neck*...[etc] - all wasted I assure you.' Geraldine tried 'all sorts of *seductions* on him...but the poor man was *unseducible* - Even when she took the strong measure of stretching herself on the hearth rug at his feet and sleeping...' (CLC, 16, 79). Perhaps significantly, Carlyle's strong, misogynist's dislike of women's writing became vehement regarding George Sand, who was open in sexual matters, which, with disgust, Carlyle called 'Phallus Worship': 'Madame Sand, the melodious Anti-Virgin' (Asht, 281, 285).

As for poor Jane, unhappy during much of her marriage (despite sunny moments when they exchanged endearments), she was plagued by excruciating sleeplessness, a common symptom of depression; she woke, she said, 'twenty or thirty times every night of my life for years and years', sometimes lying awake all night, and Carlyle inconsiderately leapt out of bed noisily in his room above if he awoke, waking her. She took opium to help her, and as her insomnia worsened, so she imbibed more. In a time when opiates were easily available, she joined the ranks of opium-bibbing Victorians, including Wilkie Collins, Mrs Browning, Florence Nightingale, and Gladstone, and even Mrs Gaskell experimented with it. Probably Jane also drank more than was good for her. At low ebb, Carlyle questioned the 'opiate abominations' used (Fr, 4, 274). More than once Jane went through the horrors of withdrawal, physical and psychological.

Planning separate holidays in 1851, Carlyle kept his cigar in his mouth when she came for a 'goodbye' kiss, enraging Jane. He had 'fallen in love' with a Lady Ashburton, of Bath House, a bossy aristocratic woman who liked to surround herself with obsequious (male) celebrities. Carlyle addressed her with silly gallantry. This was catastrophic emotionally for Jane: Lady A. treated her sometimes with patronising kindness, which was galling: 'Like a queen' this 'Siren' 'must have her court,' wrote Jane. 'She summons...Carlyle - and he never refuses a wish of hers.' Carlyle was besotted. The *probability* was that Lady Ashburton, married and unlikely to be unfaithful to her doting husband, was thus a 'safe' object to worship, without the threat of intimacy. 'How is it', asked Thackeray, 'that I find myself humbling before her?' All men took 'a certain [servile]... air' in her company; in which there was certainly a sexual element, something Thackeray resisted.<sup>12</sup> Carlyle's long 'friendship' made Jane utterly wretched, giving her 'terrible headaches'. Thomas

was often at Bath House, leaving Jane to her own devices. For Jane, her life became one with 'black predominating'. She began to sink slowly into a dark slippery hole of melancholia; and Thomas meanwhile had struggled excruciatingly for 12 years over *Frederick the Great* (1859), which ultimately was only partially successful, and Carlyle threw unnerving tantrums. Jane wrote: 'My constant anxiety is to keep out of Bedlam'. And: 'Dear, dear! What a sick day this has been for me. Oh, my mother! Nobody sees what I am suffering now...' (Journal, cited from Asht, 372-3). She begged Thomas to keep her from a 'mad house'. He gave his word. As things worsened, Jane abjectly begged the doctor to give her poison. At a bad time she had a terrible opium-induced vision of 'turning into marble', her whole body petrifying and adhering to marble slate. Incredibly, Carlyle placed his picture on one side of their mantelpiece and one of Lady Ashburton opposite. A visitor asked if they were man and wife, as Jane wrote, bitterly (Journal, II, 97, 100). Sometimes Jane bit back: 'Indeed, indeed, dear Lady... "There is no chance of our coming to the Grange [for Christmas]?" /Isn't there!!! I don't think Mr C's staying sulking at home turned out so well for him...that he should again "take that I line" (your phrase)' (MS, Asht, 375).

Ultimately Jane recovered from her breakdown. Lady Ashburton died in 1857, ending her 13-year 'friendship' with Carlyle. He, finally, already thoroughly alarmed by Jane's terrifying madness, and the possibility of losing her, began to be kind to his wife. As Simon Heffer notes sardonically, 'It had taken him 38 years of marriage to express... spontaneous affection' (333). Jane's health was damaged by years of sleeplessness and opium addiction. But, though at first distrustful, she became happier. She died in 1866, living to be 10 years older than Gaskell was at her death, despite Jane's poor health and difficulties. Discovering Jane's diaries and Journals, which revealed the extent of her miseries, Carlyle, as an act of penance, arranged for their publication, though at Froude's discretion.

Why had Jane taken a strong dislike to Elizabeth Gaskell? She had from early on wanted to write novels, but it is doubtful Carlyle would have tolerated competition from his gifted wife. 'I never heard him praise a *woman's* book...', said Jane (Asht, 423). Even when she helped Geraldine proof-read her new novel, he had a 'furious objection to my meddling... I do not know bad grammar even when I see it any more than *she* does', for 'if I HAD any faculty I might find better employment for it...' (CLC, 32, 165).

One woman, we know, received an accolade from Carlyle in 1849; he admired *Mary Barton*. He caught 'the treble of that fine melodious voice...', narrating 'new, important,... rich materials,' which it 'required a soul of some opulence to recognise as rich'. The novel was 'a real contribution to developing a huge subject... Your writing is already very beautiful...', and veracious (CLC, 23, 154-5). Gaskell stated that Carlyle's letter gave 'only unmixed pleasure' (GL, pp 64, 65).

Jane's jealousy may have already started to grow. Initially, Jane liked Elizabeth, whom 'they are doing their best to spoil by making a *lioness* of her' (24, 51). A later

dinner, 'to meet Mary Barton - ach Gott!' (25, 314). When the green-eyed monster strikes an insecure personage, a good survival strategy is to trash the one envied, and thus feel less threatened. This process, largely unconscious, is effective if she seizes on attributes envied, then berates the 'offences' satirically. Elizabeth seemingly had everything Jane felt deprived of: literary success, beauty, a happy marriage (apparently), children, and a personal independence unusual for wives of the time. At Samuel Rogers's home, Jane comments: '*Mrs Gaskell* said; "*Mrs Carlyle*! I am astonished to see you here; Miss Jewsbury told me last week she thought you dying!" "She was right"; I said... [adding parenthetically:] "I do not like thee, Doctor Fell [ie, *Mrs Gaskell*]. The reason why [I cannot tell...]"' (30, 249). Jane looked for a flaw in Elizabeth's beauty: 'What is that quality in the skins of some women...which always suggests nakedness - *striptness*? *Mrs G* for instance...' (30, 249).

Jane had an opportunity when the controversial *Life of Charlotte Brontë* appeared (1857), the fine work George Eliot found 'deeply affecting' (GEL, 318-20). Jane said, 'I have got almost to scream at the first word of [it]! I am so sick of *Mrs Gaskell*... [W]ho constituted [her] the avenging Deity of public morals?' With some validity, Jane finds the weakness of the biography: descriptions of Branwell Brontë's decline after his alleged 'seduction' by Lydia Robinson. Gaskell has, according to Jane, emptied 'her mind out, dregs and all.' 'Lady Scott [formerly Robinson] denies the whole accusation and declares Mr Brontë to have been *mad* and a great liar' (32, 141). '...I can't usually be *at the trouble* to hate people *enough* to wish them ill, but upon my *honour*, it was with a sensation wonderfully like pleasure, that I heard...a prosecution is commenced against *Mrs Gaskell* by '*that woman*' whom she has so...cruelly gibbeted'. Jane has a thrust at the freedom granted Elizabeth by *her* husband: '...*Mrs Gaskell*, having thrown her poisoned shaft into '*that woman's*' heart and life (she thought) had gone to Rome to disport herself with her two daughters, leaving her Husband... to nurse the younger children and keep house, as he do[es] one half of the year... I am readier to believe the poor woman...nothing like so bad...; because I have had the evidence of my own senses that *Mrs G*... [has] the novel writer tendency to dramatise everything...' (Old Mr Brontë, while admiring the book, said the same). In Jane's view, 'A deficiency of *precision* makes [*Gaskell*]...a person rather dangerous to associate with' (ibid, 139-42).

Jane Carlyle was a tragic, deeply pitiable figure, who wanted love from a husband incapable of giving it. Ironically, her fame rests on the wonderful, acerbic letters she wrote during her marriage. Her view of Elizabeth as 'dangerous' was largely based on her envy of a woman who, in her jealous eyes, had excessive good fortune showered in her lap, while she had little.

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**NB Also:**

GL - Gaskell letters

GEL - George Eliot letters

## William Gaskell, 'Hints on English Composition'

John Chapple

After Elizabeth Gaskell's death in 1865 William decided to relinquish the Alton house and stay in Manchester, continuing with his manifold duties as minister at Cross Street Chapel and living on in Plymouth Grove with his two unmarried daughters, Meta and Julia. He could have abandoned work altogether, but he beavered away as Principal of the Unitarian College in Manchester, chairman of several committees, examiner and involved in numerous charitable enterprises. Today he would be called a workaholic.

He did a good deal in his study at home – kept 'terribly hot' for hours on end, Elizabeth told his sister Nancy in the May of 1865. There he wrote his letters 'very slowly and very neatly and correctly', composed lectures for Owen's College and prepared literary classes for the Working Man's College. He acted as a private tutor, notably to the Winkworth sisters. With John Relly Beard he founded the Unitarian Home Missionary Board to train working-class ministers, adding History and New Testament Greek to yet another course in literature. In 1861 he had co-founded and edited 'the plaguing *Unitarian Herald*', as his impatient wife put it.

After his death in 1884 Meta and Julia stayed on in Plymouth Grove. They kept up their involvement with the Chapel, extended and developed their parents' many charities until Julia's death in 1908 and Meta's in 1913. Some half a century later Arthur Pollard and I began to gather Elizabeth Gaskell's widely dispersed letters for the edition we brought out in 1966 (Manchester U.P.) I think it must have been in that decade that Geoffrey Sharps and I decided to call at 84 Plymouth Grove. It was no longer bursting with life and activity but slowly decaying in its leafy suburb. Some splendid photographs taken about 1897 show the house as it had been in Meta and Julia's day. We found it very quiet but much the same.

In a busy study, any empty spot is made use of. The tide of waiting books and papers soon reaches the top of fixed bookshelves, and loose papers easily slip down behind. To our pleasure and surprise the kind occupant of the house, Miss Lilian L Harper, was able to show us a sheet of writing paper found when William's study shelves had been taken away from the wall. Illustration 13 in *A Portrait in Letters* shows that *Hints on English Composition* was not too affected. But scores of newspaper cuttings, all filthy with soot from William's fire, turned up too. These I have kept, though they shed innumerable fragments when disturbed.

The cuttings prove that William had a catholic range of concerns. *The Liberal Christian*, ed Russell N Bellows, New York, 7 October 1876, points to his interest in American Unitarianism, stimulated by old friends like Edward Hale and Charles Norton. Another cutting comes from *The Inquirer*, a very British Unitarian Magazine, London, 5 April 1877. Others probably entertained and informed his classes: veneration of relics, ritualism, folk customs, Professor Huxley's lectures on ethnology to working men, the 1870 education act, Chinese immigration, Derbyshire archaeology and so on.

A cutting headed 'Natural Science at Oxford' contains a long, sardonic letter on a proposal to give voting powers to natural scientists in the University. It would entail 'the omission of one of the two classical languages, Latin and Greek, from what has been hitherto understood as the curriculum of an Oxford education.' Dated 17 May, it was sent to the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* of 19 May 1877 and signed 'Charles L Dodgson, Mathematical Lecturer of Christ Church, Oxford'. Nobody could suspect him of being a biased classical tutor, he wrote, 'for mathematics, though good-humouredly scorned by the biologists on account of the abnormal certainty of its conclusions, is still reckoned among the sciences.' Dodgson is, of course, better known to us as Lewis Carroll.

## Hints on English Composition

William Gaskell

(Transcribed by Helen Smith. The MS is reproduced on the centre spread by courtesy of The University Librarian and Director, The John Rylands University Library, The University of Manchester.)

Just as a man learns to speak well, so must he learn to write well, by early and progressive practice. No higher beauty for composition is to write as you would speak. That is your style (of course, assuming that you speak correctly). The natural expression for what you wish to say. You should let your style grow according as your thoughts, understanding, taste and imagination grow.

# Hints on English Composition

Just as a man cannot speak well, he cannot write well - by early & progressive practices.  
No highest beauty & composition can be written at once. That  
2. your style - Of course, assuming & your speech comes before.  
The natural expression of what you do say. Your style grows, according as you copy, read, talk & imagination grows.  
Only a few suggestions that are of subtlety.

- I. The 1<sup>st</sup> quality is clearness, perspicuity. This depends on clearness & style. It may be said, "I can't express" & shows a he does not know it fully, thoroughly. If a man's mind is misty, & style is misty. Clear up & style up & expression is in style.
- II. Another prime quality is aimed at is simplicity & precision. You will find that I have both expressed in 4 simple words, & in short simple words. As a rule, I never use a long word & a short one will do. Young & apt like *descriptio cala verba*. Avoid "news paperese" - "The obvious element conveyed to persons" - "The obvious element conveyed to persons" & "talks well". Use Saxon words, in preference to Greek or Latin words, if it can be expressed in 5 words. They are more intelligible & so. It is the same thing more expressive - The purest English. The Bible is distinguished by its use of Saxon elements.
- Dr. E. Mackintosh 81-2

III. Closely connected & c. 2. purity & idion. Avoid needless novelties & expression - foreign importations & c. & a native article & does just as well. Much affected by & who & a smattering of French or German - not by, thoroughly educated & refined. Why a "réunion" & a meeting or a party? A résumé & a summary? A séance & a sitting or session? (Keep it as 1<sup>st</sup> rate & trickery in language) stand point & position, ground, ground work? Subsidiary & a

must prevent illness!

- iv. Brevity or Precision - To say just & meant in just words  
c mean it. Some new use 2 or 3 words where one do -  
Chambers, and so round & round about in involved sentences,  
instead of going straight to point. (Remember to cut long into brief)
- v. An equality & Unity - All S. & a sentence & a series  
near relation 1. each to, & 2. to related S. kept & another  
sentences. (C. Macaulay's practice.) So a S. unity is: vari-  
ous S. & a composition - a mutual relation S.:: among a -  
among S. sentences c form a paragraph, : paragraphs c form  
a chapter, : chapters c form a whole
- vi. This unity leads, in certain cases, to climax (reaching a top  
or bottom) - : height or argument reached - : Development & :  
completion. The sentences grow as : grows, in force,  
intensity, & in length.  
Long & short sentences S. mixed - This is natural,  
if it is so forcing, or affectation, or mechanical compression.  
(Like Macaulay's "Too it is chopped hay all a length.")
- vii. Harmony or Melody, & style, depends much on ear -  
avoid an accumulation of hard consonants - repetition  
+ of same sound ("If you note delight") - too much sibilant  
(hissing) S. - a needless recurrence of open vowels  
(i.e. vowels ending one word & beginning next).

Of course, a literary taste must be cultivated by a familiarity w. best models & excellence in vlg. There is a close analogy in & respect b. cultivation & taste in painting or fine arts. They learn & admire, & study models & objects.

+ [Bad - "He rightly writes"]

Only a few suggestions that may be relevant to the subject

I. The first quality for good writing is clearness, perspicuity.

This depends on clearness of thought. A man generally says "I understand but I can't express" this shews that he doesn't understand it fully, thoroughly. If a man's mind is misty, his style will be misty.

Clear up thinking and expression will improve in writing.

II. Another prime quality to be aimed at is simplicity of expression.

You will find that best expressed in short simple words. As a rule, never use a long word when a short would do as well. Young writers are apt to like *sesquipedalia verba*. Avoid 'newspaperee'.

The devouring element consumed to hebdomadal ...possesses good conversational powers ... talks well. Use Saxon words in preference to those of Greek or Latin origin as they are more intelligible and at the same time – the purest English. The Bible is distinguished by its use of Saxon elements.

Sir J Mackintosh -81-2

III. Closely connected with this is purity of idiom. Avoid needless novelties of expression- foreign importations when a native article does just as well. Much affected by those who have a smattering of French or German not by the thoroughly educated and refined. Why a 'réunion' not a meeting or a party? A *résumé* not a summary? A 'séance' not a sitting or a session? 'Antecedents' not a man's previous history?

IV. Brevity or Precision. To say what is meant in just the words that mean it. Some men use 2 or 3 words where one would do ...and go round and round about in involved sentences instead of going straight to the point

(Remember 'Ars est longa, vita brevis')

V. An excellent quality is Unity. All the elements of a sentence should bear some relation to each other and anything not related should be kept for another sentence.

(Ld Macaulay's practice) ...the sentences then form a paragraph, the paragraphs then form a chapter, the chapters then form the whole.

VI. This unity leads in certain cases to a climax (reaching the top of the ladder). The height of the argument reached – the development of the composition completed. The sentences growing as the composition, in force, in intensity, and in length. Long and short sentences should be mixed. This should occur naturally if there is no forcing or affectation, or mechanical compression (Like Macaulay's "Too...is chopped hay - all of a length.")

VII. Harmony or Melody of style depends much on the ear – Avoid an accumulation of harsh consonants – repetition + of the same sound (...)

Too much of the sibilant (hissing) ... a needless recurrence of open vowels (ie vowels ending one word and beginning the next)

Of course, a literary taste must be cultivated by a familiarity with the best models of excellence in good writing.

There is a close analogy in respect to the cultivation of taste in painting or appreciation of the fine arts.

They learn what should be admired and become the models for objects of study.....

+ Bad 'He rightly writes' -

**Editor adds:**

I have attempted to transcribe and decipher this document (which measures approx 18cmx10cm).

In places Mr Gaskell uses shorthand based on a system 'first invented by Mr. Jeremiah Rich, and improved by Dr. Doddridge.' The manual for this shorthand was published in London in 1799 and priced at five shillings. Fran Baker has discovered an earlier manual, *Maximum in minimo, or, Mr. Jeremiah Rich's Pen's dexterity compleated being the plainest and easiest method of writing shorthand by Samuel Botley*, 1674.

**All the advice given by Mr Gaskell still holds good. Do please consider putting these precepts into practice for the next Newsletter but not in shorthand!**



## Lindeth Tower

Steam opaque  
like the lace Mrs Gaskell drapes  
around her shoulders.

Her boots clack  
on the Lancashire stone platform  
as she changes trains at Carnforth.

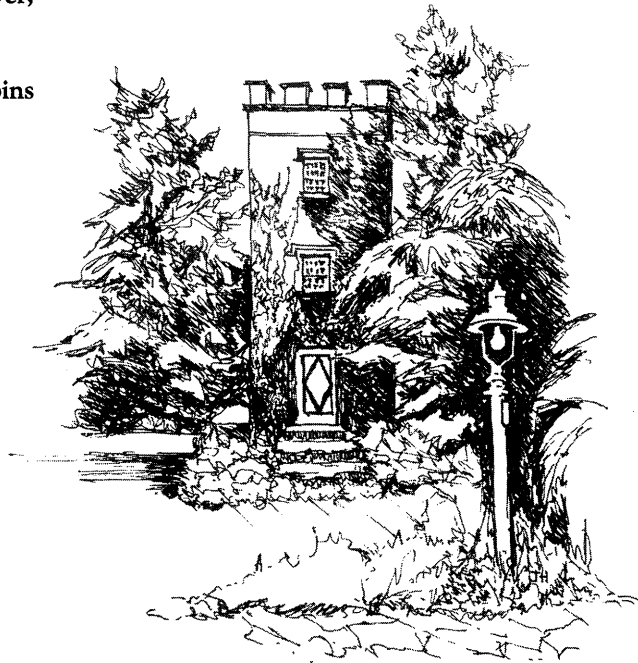
The Furness Railway engine,  
red as iron ore,  
changes tempo to allegretto.

She alights at Silverdale,  
unruffles her taffeta dress,  
settles into the chaise.

Mrs Gaskell arrives, steps down –  
tackles the stairs of Lindeth Tower,  
lays out her writing-desk.

Glances at the sequence of hairpins  
diminishing out to sea,  
begins to form characters.

Edwin Stockdale



Jean Hockenhill

## Mme de Sévigné:

'a well-known friend to me all my life'

John Greenwood

The name *Mme de Sévigné* occurs occasionally in Mrs Gaskell's letters and briefly in *French Life*. In this article I intend to show by examining letters by both, that Mme de Sévigné was more important to Elizabeth Gaskell as a writer than as a person, hence Gaskell's intention to write a biography of Mme de Sévigné was never a top priority.

First, a few details of the life and work of Mme de Sévigné will facilitate a comparison of the two writers. Born in Paris of an aristocratic family in 1626, she was only one when her father died and seven when her mother died. She was brought up by her uncle, the Abbé Christophe de Coulanges, who ensured that she was given a good education by famous tutors. As well as being her guardian, he became her close, trusted friend and adviser. Aged eighteen, she married into another aristocratic family, de Sévigné, so through her parents and her marriage she was well placed in French high society. After seven unhappy years of a disastrous marriage her husband was killed in a duel. Left with a son and a daughter but not lacking money or social standing, she refused to re-marry and spent the rest of her very active life either at the court of Louis XIV in Versailles, or in top Parisian salons or at her country estate in Brittany or at her daughter's estate at Grignan in Provence. Today Mme de Sévigné remains an important literary figure in France solely for the letters she wrote (of which most after 1671 were written to her daughter, Mme de Grignan, whom she adored).

Contemporary accounts of her were highly complimentary: beautiful, intelligent, well-liked and respected by all (from aristocrats to peasants) who came in contact with her. The Portico Library has the complete ten-volume set of her letters in French (1). In Vol 1 a eulogy section of 48 pages from such notables as Mme de La Fayette pays homage to Sévigné's character. For example:

I am in despair of finding any unpleasant things about you... [y]our mind embellishes your person so strongly that there is nothing so bewitching as when you are lively in a conversation where all constraint is banished. All that you say has such charm that your words produce laughter and appreciation around you. (2)

As stated earlier, there are two sources: Mrs Gaskell's letters and her *French Life*, an account of a visit in 1862 to northern France with her daughter, Meta. In the early 1830s Gaskell wrote some letters to Harriet Carr who had become her friend during her stay with the family of the Rev William Taylor in Newcastle. Mrs Gaskell mentions her interest in the letters of Mme de Sévigné, but there is a clear absence of enthusiasm, as she admits she failed to finish reading them (3). In the substantial

collection of Gaskell letters (4) Mme de Sévigné's name appears in only five. In a letter to a W S Williams, Mrs Gaskell asks for information about Mme de Sévigné, preparatory to writing a book about her:

I want to tell you why I asked about Miss Kavanagh's books... I began to write some articles which I intended to send to 'All the Year Round' ... as pictures of French Society in Paris and the province in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. (I think what gave me the start was the meeting with a supposed-to-be well-educated young lady who knew nothing about Mme. de Sévigné, who had been like a well-known friend to me all my life)...But knowing that Miss Kavanagh wrote on those subjects I wanted to know how far she had forestalled me, or how far I should interfere with her...My book is rather Memoirs elucidatory of the Life and Times of Mme de Sévigné. The sort of subjects are, 'Who was Madame de Sévigné?' 'Her friends in Paris and the Hotel Rambouillet', 'Her Two Cousins,...with the history of Mme de Miramion', 'Her widowed life and her children', 'Her old age, - debts, and death' ... Now may I ask you how far this ground has been preoccupied by Miss Kavanagh? (5)

It will be noted it is in this letter that Gaskell wrote about Mme de Sévigné 'who had been like a well-known friend to me all my life.'

In a letter to George Smith (her publisher) Gaskell admits:

I have not a scrap of anything written by me but the beginning / first chapter / of a sort of Memoir of Mme de Sévigné and her Times. (6)

The question arises: what happened to this first chapter? Did Gaskell send even a draft version to Smith or to anybody else for comments? 'her Times' refers to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, so it cannot be part of *French Life*, which is about the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Another letter to George Smith was written a year later in 1862. After a brief reference to

'Life and Times of Madame de Sévigné' more in my head than out of it,

Gaskell claims she has written fifty pages on:

odd bits, scenes, conversations/ with rather famous people in Paris/ small adventures, descriptions (7)

This is obviously a reference to what will be published in 1864 as *French Life*. Mme de Sévigné is still in her head and not down on paper.

The long letter to Catherine Winkworth in 1862 begins in a business-like way,

promising serious work on a Sévigné biography:

I however laid a good foundation for future work at Mme de Sévigné, saw M. Hachette about it, got all manner of introductions to/ the private part of/ public collections of MSS, books, portraits &c; went to every old house in Paris that she lived in, & got a list of books 'pour servir', & a splendid collection of all the portraits of herself, family & contemporaries. (8)

Then follows a delightful piece of writing, describing her arrival through the countryside to the Sévigné country estate in Brittany. A wonderful description, as good as, for example, her nature descriptions of North Wales in *Ruth*. One does not, however, have the impression in reading this letter that Mrs Gaskell has a potential biography of Sévigné in mind.

Significantly, Mme de Sévigné is rarely mentioned in *French Life*. Her first appearance is simply:

We determined to go off to Brittany for our few remaining days, having a sort of happy mixture of the ideas of sea, heath, rocks, ferns and Mme de Sévigné in our heads. (9)

Her second appearance is more concerned with the condition of the hotel in Vitry than in focusing on Sévigné's connection with this small town, close to her estate. A third and final reference is used to provide a witty anecdote about a staunch conservative Catholic being contaminated by the heresy of (Sévigné's) Jansenism. So, serious preparatory work on a Sévigné biography is not apparent in *French Life*.

The many biographies and critical studies of Gaskell all refer to this proposed Sévigné biography and yet dismiss the failure to write it as simply because Gaskell was too busy with other matters in her hectic life as wife, mother and writer. There is no attempt to suggest why this particular project lost out rather than another. Why, for instance, did she work on *French Life* instead, when it is hardly a masterpiece?

Rather than focus on the personality of Mme de Sévigné as the primary attraction for Mrs Gaskell, it may be a more fruitful exercise to focus on Sévigné's writing; that is, exclusively her letters. She has remained famous in France for these letters, mainly to her daughter, who after marriage spent most of her life with her husband in the South of France far away from her mother, who was living either in Paris or Brittany. As a devoted mother, she compensated for this cruel (in her eyes) separation by writing regularly to her daughter. It is the content and the style of these letters which so impressed Mrs Gaskell. Declaring that Sévigné was 'a well-known friend all my life' surely implies Gaskell's frequent **reading** of the Sévigné letters as she progressed as a writer of letters and novels, rather than assuming she turned to the letters only in the early 1830s when in Newcastle and then later in the early

1860s when she wrote the letters to Williams, Smith and Winkworth quoted above.

I came to this conclusion after examining closely two sets of material; about 90 letters by Mme de Sévigné to her daughter and all Gaskell's letters to her daughter Marianne that appear in Chapple & Pollard. I chose the letters to Marianne, rather than to other correspondents, because: a) there are enough of them to balance the large number to Mme de Grignan, and b) both recipients are the daughters of the writers. I began by reading through the Sévigné letters in order to note down two areas:

1. Content eg topics and their frequency of occurrence  
types of persons mentioned
2. Style eg choice of vocabulary  
type of sentence structure  
levels of formality  
narrative skills

I then read through the Gaskell letters to Marianne to check on any similarities with regard to Content and Style.

The table that follows this article gives just a few examples of the comparison.

So for these two writers of letters there seems to be no fixed high-literary style attempted; instead, a fluent, conversational flow of words with no hint of any desire for future publication. All depends on the personality and ability of the writer and the subjects written about. As Jane Austen writes to her sister Cassandra:

I have now attained the true art of letter-writing, which we are always told is to express on paper exactly what one would say to the same person by word of mouth: I have been talking to you almost as fast as I could the whole of this letter. (23)

This echoes comments made by M. Suard of the French Academy in his excellent analysis, entitled *Du Style Epistolaire de Madame de Sévigné*:

A letter is a conversation written down, so the tone of the letter must differ from an ordinary conversation only a little by choice of subject and correction in expressions, due to rapidity of speech.... Naturalness and fluency are the essential characteristics of the epistolary style. (24)

Referring to Mrs Gaskell's intention to write a biography of Mme de Sévigné, Gérin is surely right in claiming

... no one was temperamentally better suited to the subject than Mrs Gaskell... Madame de Sévigné's gift for spontaneous self-expression, for vivacious

description,... always witty but seldom malicious, and never less than entertaining comment could, at times, be equalled by Mrs Gaskell herself. They were two of a kind... (25)

In their respective articles Yarrow and Jumeau stress the close affinity between the two women, veritable 'twin souls'. (26)

By reading the Sévigné letters Mrs Gaskell was, I wish to claim, encouraged to use a similar style in her own writing. This may be pure conjecture and it could be argued that Mrs Gaskell's innate ability would have allowed her to write as she did, even if she had never read Sévigné. However, she did choose to single out Mme de Sévigné's letters rather than, for example, those of Mary Wortley Montagu or Fanny Burney - both admired as letter-writers by Mrs Gaskell's generation. Quite definitely, Mme de Sévigné was Mrs Gaskell's 'well-known friend' - and influence - 'all her life'.

That Mrs Gaskell failed to write a biography of Mme de Sévigné is no great loss, if it would have been merely an account of her life at court and on her estate in Brittany. There have been enough such biographies written in French and English (27). What was important for Mrs Gaskell and her work was her familiarity with the Sévigné letters and the encouragement they gave her to have faith in her own natural ability and style of writing - in her letters and ultimately in her fiction.

#### Notes

1. Lettres de Madame de Sévigné, de sa famille et de ses amis (Blaise, Paris, 1818), hereafter Blaise
2. Blaise, Vol.1, pp 203-4
3. J.Chapple & A.Shelston (eds): Further Letters of Mrs Gaskell (Manchester U.P.,2000),p.8
4. J.Chapple & A.Pollard (eds): The Letters of Mrs Gaskell (Manchester U.P.,1966)
5. Ibid. L499
6. Chapple & Pollard, L501
7. Ibid. L532
8. Ibid. L509b
9. E.Gaskell: "French Life" in Cousin Phillis & Other Tales (Knutsford Ed., Vol. 7)
10. Blaise, Vol.2 ( 20<sup>th</sup> Feb, 1671) and Vol.3 ( 5<sup>th</sup> Oct,1673)
11. Chapple & Pollard, L92
12. Blaise, Vol.5 (12<sup>th</sup> Jan,1676)
13. Chapple & Pollard, L93
14. Ibid., L500a
15. Blaise, Vol.6 (3<sup>rd</sup> Nov,1677)
16. Chapple & Pollard, L47
17. Blaise, Vol.2 (19<sup>th</sup> Aug,1671)
18. Chapple & Pollard, L131
19. Blaise, Vol.2 (31<sup>st</sup> May,1671)
20. Chapple & Pollard, L116a
21. Blaise, Vol.2 (12<sup>th</sup> Aug,1671)
22. Chapple & Pollard, L156a
23. Letter written 3<sup>rd</sup> Jan,1801, quoted in O.Kenyon: 800 Years of Women's Letters (Sutton,
24. Blaise, Vol.1 p.255 1992)
25. Gérin: Elizabeth Gaskell: a biography (Oxford U.P.,1976)
26. P.Yarrow: "Mrs Gaskell & France" in Gaskell Journal, Vol.7 and A.Jumeau: "Elizabeth
27. One good late 19<sup>th</sup> century biography by Thackeray's elder daughter is in The Portico: Miss Thackeray (Mrs R. Ritchie): Madame de Sévigné (Blackwood, 1881)



Sévigné	Gaskell
<i>Anxiety over absence of daughter &amp; not getting enough letters</i>	
"I must admit I'm very curious to have news from you. Just think, my dear, I've not heard since you were in Lyon."  "I'm always looking for you, and I find that I miss everything because I miss you...I'm dying of curiosity; your letters alone will console me." (10)	"We were all so much disappointed not to hear from you yesterday...If you are in a very great bustle on Saturday, still try and write one line, love, to say you are well & why you don't write." (11)
<i>Controlling parent</i>	
"Gambling has ruined you, and it saddens me... To lose both husband & wife, everything is a freak of luck which offends and annoys me." (12)	"...do not again give a decided opinion on a subject on which you can at present know nothing." (13)  "Don't go to the Storys' Friday afternoons if it is there you meet Dr Manning." (14)
<i>Descriptions of nature</i>	
"I came here to finish the days, and to bid farewell to the leaves; they are still on the trees; all they've done is to change colour; instead of green, they are golden, and of so many kinds that a rich & magnificent golden brocade is created." (15)	"Last night we threw open the windows, and smelt the scent of the sweet-briar and the wallflowers; and heard the nightingales singing away so deliciously." (16)
<i>At ease with all social classes</i>	
Many letters refer to her presence at Versailles & Paris, mixing with leading figures on an equal footing, other letters mention her relaxed relations with, for example, her gardener: "At last, I was with my abbé, my dog, my gardener Pilois, & my builders; I felt so good." (17)	Writing about the servant Hearn: "a dear good valuable friend" and equally at ease with Dickens, Thackeray, Monckton Milnes at a public meeting. (18)
<i>Switching from one subject to another</i>	
"It seems you're not bored in Marseille. Don't forget to let me know how settled you are at Grignan. They've made a sort of entrance gate here for my son. Vaillant has mobilised about 1500 men here." (19)	"I have a good piece of writing to do for the Athenaeum as well. Selina & Emily gone back to Alderley...It is the weekly lecture at the Chapel." (20)
<i>Light-hearted criticism of human behaviour</i>	
"I wish you could have seen the way M. de Locamaria takes off & puts on his hat: what finesse! What precision! He can challenge all the courtiers and astound them." (21)	"At 4 we are to go with the Dean of Hereford, and the Dean of Salisbury (for a good Unitarian Ly Coltman knows a mighty number of Deans) to see Mr Nashs reformatory schools." (22)

## More on Monkshaven

Jean Alston

*In this article, I attempt to show how it is possible to gain considerable insight into Elizabeth Gaskell's activities, thoughts, sympathies and writings during and after her ten day stay in Whitby in 1859.*

Elizabeth Gaskell visited Whitby in November, 1859. She was accompanied by her daughters Meta and Julia, as well as her loyal servant and housekeeper Hearn. She had been interested in Yorkshire and its people since writing *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, which was published in 1857.

The Gaskell party would travel on George Hudson's steam railway, travelling from Manchester to York and on to Whitby. George Hudson, who was a railway financier had purchased Abbey Terrace, on Whitby's West Cliff in 1848 and it was at 1 Abbey Terrace that the party stayed. The landlady was Mrs Rose. Mrs Rose's home was a fine early Victorian house, built to accommodate the rapidly growing number of visitors to the Yorkshire coast.

The Victorians tended to be inveterate letter writers and the postal services were good and frequent, even by today's standards. There is a good collection of letters written by Elizabeth Gaskell, so we know to whom she wrote during her stay and what she told them about how she occupied her time in Whitby.

On November 2, 1859, she wrote to George Smith, her publisher, telling him that they had come to Whitby for the benefit of Julia's health, '... she has outgrown her strength – six inches in the last 12 months...'. However, she really wished him to inform them about 'Madam Adam', i.e. the author of *Adam Bede*. She asked Smith to send a long account of 'what she is like ,,eyes, nose, mouth.....your impression of her...How came she to like Mr Lewes so much...he is so soiled for a woman like her to fancy.' She informed George Smith that they would be in Whitby until 12<sup>th</sup> November, so she clearly believed that a reply within ten days was possible.

A letter on November 7<sup>th</sup> to Charles Bosanquet included part of a letter from Pilkington Jackson, in which he described libraries and reading rooms which he was establishing for soldiers in Gibraltar, to give them an alternative to the establishments which sold wine and other alcoholic drinks. Pilkington described how he had almost 2,000 subscribers who paid 1d (one p = 2.4d) per week and who were also able to buy coffee, ginger beer etc. This letter also described Florence Nightingale's contribution of £10 worth of games and a year's subscription to various periodicals such as *Workman*, *Punch* and the *Illustrated News*. Writing materials were also made available. Florence Nightingale also sent £5 to help to make the reading rooms comfortable and advised that the soldiers should

be allowed to smoke. Although this letter referred principally to soldiers in Gibraltar, Mrs Gaskell received the gifts from Florence Nightingale and showed interest in the movement towards the establishment of reading rooms at home. For example, Meta was described as copying Florence Nightingale's advice so that it could be available for anyone establishing civilian reading rooms.

Gaskell's letter to George Eliot on 10<sup>th</sup> November complimented her on her publications *Scenes from Clerical Life* and *Adam Bede*. She stated 'I have never read anything so complete and beautiful in fiction...'. Before she ended the letter, however, Mrs Gaskell wrote, 'I should not be quite true to my ending, if I did not say before I concluded that I wish you were Mrs Lewes'.

Marianne Gaskell received two letters from 1 Abbey Terrace. These contained some of the more anecdotal information about the Whitby holiday. For example, she was given information about daily activities, such as 'We do nothing but go out, - breakfast at half past 9....Julia and I go to Post Office....home about half past 11 - lunch - go out with Hearn for a long walk ...dine at 5, - go to sleep till half past 7, tea...Julia to bed at 8...Meta and I work till 10.....Sleepiness and hunger are the characteristics of Whitby.'

Although Marianne is given the outline of a typical day, there is considerable evidence that Gaskell also behaved in her usual friendly and inquisitive manner during her Whitby stay.

Elizabeth Gaskell loved to talk to people from all walks of life. She remembered and collected the stories they told her and provided a record of them in her own writing. During her relatively short stay, there is evidence that Mrs Rose's mother, Mrs Huntrods, was one of her informants. Mrs Huntrods was interested in stories that had been passed down the generations and in the history of the whaling industry. She would have informed Gaskell about the 1739 Whitby riot which occurred in response to the Press Gang's methods of capturing men and enforcing them to join the Royal Navy to fight for King George III.

When Thomas Secombe wrote the Introduction to the 1910 edition of *Sylvia's Lovers*, he stated that he had spoken to the daughters of Mrs Rose, who told him that they remembered Mrs Gaskell being closeted day after day with their grandmother Mrs Huntrods, who was a veritable repository of information about Whitby and its people.

The Gaskell family were Unitarians, so Mr Watson the Unitarian Minister was highly likely to have been one of her informants. Mrs Bradley, the bookseller would have probably provided both information and publications. One of Whitby's older inhabitants, John Corney, talked to her and lent her *The History of Whitby*, published in 1817.

Although Gaskell was to set her novel about Whitby in about the year 1800, when the whaling industry was paramount, by 1859, fishing would have provided the livelihood for many inhabitants. Fat old Fish Jane is recorded as a personality on the quayside where gutting and selling of fish would have taken place; Jane is another character with whom Gaskell is recorded as having had long conversations.

By 1859, Gaskell had become both a novelist and a biographer. As was frequently the case, she was eventually to use information gleaned from Whitby's inhabitants to create her own writings. *Sylvia's Lovers* is a novel about life on two farms near to Whitby; it is likely that the farms she describes are High Straggleton (formerly Straggleton Cottage) and another of the farms which are within walking distance of Abbey Terrace, and it was towards them that Gaskell and Hearn took at least one of their long walks. A retail and banking business run by two Quaker brothers was in existence in Whitby in 1859. The original business was owned by two Quaker brothers, Jonathan and Joseph Sanders; Gaskell was to name two Quaker brothers as John and Jeremiah Foster in her later writing. The Quaker Sanders Brothers' premises are still identifiable as engraved in a glass doorway in Church Street, Whitby. The Whaling industry which had finished thirty years before the Gaskell visit also features in the novel and Secombe identifies the Rendez Vous House (Randyvowse), headquarters of the press gang, as being formerly situated where Baxtergate and Flowergate converge. Central to the novel, is the story of Sylvia, the daughter of a farming family, and Philip, her cousin, who was also a young Quaker employee of the Quaker brothers; the two young people are the main characters of the plot.

Although, the Gaskells visited Whitby ostensibly for the good of Julia's health, Elizabeth had not missed an opportunity to record all that she had learnt; she had absorbed much of the atmosphere of the town and its people and had begun to weave her own novel around it. On 23 December, 1859, she wrote to George Smith with the proposal for a novel, entitled the *Specksioneer*, which was the title given to harpooners, who were active in the actual killing of whales.

Different titles were proposed as the novel progressed; these titles were *Specksioneer*, *Monkshaven* and *Philip's Idol*. However, the ultimate choice for title was *Sylvia's Lovers*.

Gaskell's life was a busy one and it was more than three years before eventual publication. *Sylvia's Lovers* was published by Smith, Elder and Co. in three volumes, in February, 1863.

An addendum to the novel *Sylvia's Lovers* states the following:

Not long since a lady went to the Public Baths....and finding all the rooms engaged she sat down and had some talk with the bathing woman; and as it chanced, the conversation fell on Philip Hepburn and the legend of his fate.

John Geoffrey Sharps asks whether Gaskell was the lady attending the Public Baths and whether she was the person with whom the 'bathing woman' had conversations about Whitby, its inhabitants and its legends?

#### References

Chapple, J.A.V. and Pollard, A. *The Letters of Mrs Gaskell*. Manchester U P (1966)  
Secombe, T. Introduction to *Sylvia's Lovers*, Elizabeth Gaskell. G. Bell & Sons Ltd. (1910)  
Sharps, John Geoffrey. *Mrs Gaskell's Observation and Invention*. Linden Press (1970)

The surname **Huntrods** seems to be very unusual. Could it be a corruption of Uhtred? There was an Anglo-Saxon by the name of Uhtred, who held the manor of Seaton before 1066AD. It is possible that he was the son of Thorketill of Cleveland, who gave lands to Whitby Priory (before it became Whitby Abbey).

Kroebel, Christiane *Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian Mulgrave*. Mulgrave Community Research project (2011)

## Murder near Cranford Over Peover, Cheshire 1840 J P Lethbridge

Over Peover is a Cheshire village about three miles from Knutsford. In August 1840 Joseph Cook, seventy, a retired farmer, and his wife Mary, seventy-one, lived at Over Peover about half a mile from the main village. Rebecca Morgan, aged fifteen, had been their live-in servant since Christmas 1839. The Cooks' house had a large front garden and was ten yards from the road. On the ground floor was a parlour and a 'house place', into which the front door opened, at the front; and a kitchen and another parlour at the back. Upstairs there were two bedrooms at the front and one at the back. The Cooks slept in one front bedroom the other being unused. Rebecca slept in the rear bedroom. There was a landing at the house's rear, a staircase leading up to it from the kitchen.

On the night of Monday 24 August 1840 Joseph Cook went to bed at half eight as did Rebecca. Mary Cook stayed up briefly to wash her feet and then came to bed. Rebecca was later woken by a clock striking ten. About half an hour later she heard a 'blundering downstairs like a breaking of basins'. She heard Mary call from the top of the stairs "Joseph can't you strike a light?". There was no answer and Rebecca heard Mary go downstairs. There was a noise and Mary cried out "Oh! Lord". Rebecca heard more noise 'like someone knocking'. Mary shouted "Oh!" and "Whoh!" and "Murder!". Groaning followed. A 'tall thin fellow in dark clothes' entered

Rebecca's room and searched it as if he was looking for something. He then entered the matrimonial bedroom where she heard him 'burst open a cupboard door'. She took a long time getting back to sleep and heard the clock strike eleven, twelve, one and two. She finally fell asleep and did not hear it strike three.

Rebecca rose at five in the morning on Tuesday 25 August and got dressed. She thought she had had a nightmare but when she went downstairs she found Joseph and Mary Cook's corpses lying on the house place floor. She put on her shoes and bonnet and went to get the victims' brother-in-law William Leah. She roused him at just after five. He sent for John Kinder the Over Peover Parish Constable. William and Rebecca then set out back to the Cooks' house. On the way they met James Harding, a wheelwright from Goostrey, three miles south of Knutsford. They asked if he had heard or seen anything and he denied knowing anything. He had hayseeds on his clothes and admitted having slept overnight in the victims' hayshed having been walking from Manchester to Goostrey.

Rebecca Morgan, William Leah and James Harding went together to the Cooks' house. A desk had been broken open, its lock having been forced off. An axe was lying on the table under the window about a yard from Mary Cook's body. This axe was normally kept in the victims' cattle shed. The police, the parson the Reverend Christopher Bush, and a Knutsford surgeon Richard Dean arrived. Surgeon Dean found that the victims had died from massive head injuries probably caused by an axe. Joseph Cook was wearing a waistcoat, underwear and a shirt, and his wife her night clothes. At the victims' relatives' request the Reverend Bush searched the house to see if anything had been stolen. The papers in the desk had been rummaged through and were 'in confusion'. A secret drawer was untouched and in it were some papers and five sovereigns i.e. £5. Some valuable silverware was still in the cupboard. A purse was missing but was found later that morning in Knutsford churchyard.

There was no obvious suspect but William Leah and the police found two character references for an Irish labourer Bartholomew Murray, aged nineteen. They were bloodstained and an attempt had been made to burn them. One read:

The bearer, B. Murray lived with me as servant boy for six months during which time he conducted himself soberly, honestly and attentively to business. Michael Plunkett, Swelling Lodge, Cavan. The other read Bartley Murray has lived with me \*\*\* years past during which time he \*\*\* himself with the strictest honesty having a good deal to transact for me and \*\*\* fully \*\*\* he is now discharged having been paid all his wages. John Mc Nally.

The Coroner, John Hollins, opened an inquest at the *Mainwaring Arms*, Over Peover, on the afternoon of Tuesday 25 August 1840. Rebecca Morgan, William Leah, James Harding, and the Reverend Bush testified. Harding admitted to having



heard some noise but had not investigated. The Coroner and his jury inspected the murder scene and saw the bodies still lying where they had fallen. On returning to the pub Surgeon Dean testified. The inquest returned a verdict of murder by person or persons unknown.

The victims were buried at Over Peover Church after a well-attended funeral, on Friday 28 August 1840. The police followed many leads. Although Murray was the main suspect they maintained an open mind and also suspected that he had an accomplice. The same day this notice was issued:

**MURDER** Whereas betwixt ten and eleven o'clock on the night of Monday the 24th August inst, the house of Mr Joseph Cook, of Over Peover, in the county of Chester, was entered by one or more men, and Mr Cook and his wife, were both murdered, their skulls being fractured with an axe. Notice is hereby given that a reward of £50 will be paid to any person giving such information as may lead to the detection of the offender or offenders on application to Mr Roscoe, solicitor, Knutsford - August 28th 1840. £50 was worth about £10,000 in modern money.

One suspect Thomas Palin, a nephew of Joseph Cook, was questioned on Wednesday 26 August. A former butcher he lived in 'reduced circumstances' at Hanley, Staffordshire. He had visited his uncle and aunt on Sunday 23 August a day before the murder and had had a 'kind reception' and a meal with them. On the murder day he had been gardening for William Turner of Hanley until four in the afternoon. He had spent from six to twelve that evening in a Hanley pub. Its landlord and several other witnesses supported this alibi and he was cleared.

The same day two men dressed as sailors were arrested near Altrincham, Cheshire. They had gone to a farmhouse and found only a fifteen-year-old girl servant in. They had demanded and been given bread, cheese and beer, by threatening to cut her throat. When the farmer returned the men were chased and captured. Two knives and sixpence in cash were found on them. They were charged with extortion but inquiries cleared them of any involvement in the earlier murder.

An Irishman was arrested at Holmes Chapel five miles south of Over Peover. His shirt front was bloody and his face scratched. He was examined by a magistrate, Trafford Trafford (sic) of Oughtrington Hall, about five miles north of Knutsford, and proved himself innocent of the murder.

A Mr Pigot was arrested at Bucklow Hill, three miles north of Knutsford, having been heard saying "It's done, it's done, I know it will be found out". He was bloodstained and drunk. Once sober he was questioned and said he was merely thinking of the murder after having heard about it and that the bloodstains were from a fight.

Two more suspects were James Crossley, a Manchester file cutter turned tramp, aged twenty-five, and his wife Ann. On the morning of Tuesday 25 August Mr Dumbell an Ollerton, two miles north of Over Peover, farmer's son, had gone with his brother to fetch horses from a field. They saw the Crossleys and Ann was in tears. Dumbell said they were trespassing and asked where they were going. They replied *Mobberley*, a village two miles north, but on being told the best route went the opposite way. The Dumbell brothers left them and went to fetch the horses. Soon after they heard Ann Crossley screaming. Her husband had climbed a hedge and Ann said "Oh, dear me it is a shocking thing". She refused to say where she had spent the previous night. James Crossley returned and was asked why he had not helped his wife over the hedge. He replied "she was stupid and saucy" and said that they had spent the previous night in a Knutsford lodging house.

The Dumbells reported this incident to the police and the Crossleys were traced to an Altrincham lodging house and arrested on Thursday 27 August 1840. James Crossley seemed confused as to whether they were married or merely *cohabiting*. Only a few halfpence were found on them and they said that they had spent the murder night and the night before at a Knutsford lodging house. After four days in prison their evidence was supported by the lodging house keeper and on Monday 31 August 1840 they were released.

Meanwhile the police searched at Cavan, Ireland for Bartholomew Murray, the son of a small farmer by his second wife. Mr Murray senior had been reasonably well off owning three cows and a horse. However he had taken to drink after his second wife died when Bartholomew was two; lost his farm; and became a farm labourer. Bartholomew Murray had been a Cavan baker's errand boy, a horse car driver, a groom and a surgeon's servant; but had lost his job with the surgeon after his master's desk was broken open one night. Two women servants were also suspects so criminal charges could not be brought, but Murray had moved to England. He failed to get work at Birmingham, bought some hardware in Knutsford and hawked it and oranges for three months, returned to Ireland, hawked hardware in Cavan, returned to England, worked near Knutsford on the harvest, was unemployed and became a suspect for the murder of the Cooks.

Murray had fled to Ireland on a Liverpool to Dublin cattle steamer but was traced, arrested in Cavan on a murder warrant on Saturday 29 August and taken to Dublin. On Sunday 6 September 1840 he was brought back to England. On Monday afternoon 7 September 1840 he was examined at Knutsford by four magistrates. They included Sir Harry Mainwaring, of Peover Hall, near Over Peover, whose family had been the local squires since the fourteenth century and after whom the *Mainwaring Arms* was named.

Nine witnesses testified. The prisoner had been in the area of the murder arriving the day before and leaving for Ireland in a hurry the day after it; and had inquired

about whether the victims were wealthy. The character references for Murray found at the murder scene were produced. The prisoner had a case to answer but there was not enough evidence for a murder charge so the magistrates adjourned for more evidence to be obtained including from Ireland. Steamships already existed but railways were in their infancy and the electric telegraph had yet to be invented. On Thursday 17 September 1840 the magistrates' hearing resumed. Fourteen more witnesses testified. Their evidence showed that eleven guineas, about £2,000 by our standards, were missing from Joseph Cook's desk; that the prisoner had been nearly broke before the murder; that he had been flush with cash after it buying a watch, a suit, shoes, hardware to start hawking again, and spending six shillings plus a shilling tip for the driver on getting a horse cab from Dublin to Cavan a hundred miles trip; and that the prisoner and another man, whose identity was unknown, had been heard planning the murder a few hours before it. It was confirmed that the two character references for Murray were his.

Edward Haggarty, a shop assistant for Thomas Trotter, a Liverpool tailor and draper, testified that Murray had bought a mole skin vest (waistcoat), a jacket and a pair of trousers on Tuesday 25 August 1840 for seventeen shillings, about a £170 by our standards. The prisoner had said that his old clothes were marked and insisted on buying a new suit despite being told that the marks would easily wash out. The prisoner was wearing this new suit when he was arrested. This Thomas Trotter may have been the Mr Trotter who was briefly arrested on suspicion of murdering Thomas Ashton (see my previous article); or they may have been related.

The prisoner was asked if he wanted to say anything in his defence. He declined to and was committed to Chester Gaol for trial at the next assizes. He was tried at the Chester Lent Assizes on Monday 5 April 1841. The judge was Sir Thomas Coltman. The lead prosecution counsel was the Attorney General Sir John Campbell QC a Whig MP for Edinburgh. He was assisted by Mr Cottingham and Mr Trafford. Sir John Campbell's presence showed that the government saw this case as important. The defence counsel was Mr Temple.

Sir John Campbell opened the prosecution by presenting the facts of the case. He admitted that all the evidence was circumstantial but said that this was often the strongest evidence. He produced thirty-four witnesses. They showed that the prisoner had been near the murder scene at the time it was done having arrived a day before and left a day after in a hurry; that he had been broke before it and flush with cash after it; that two partially burnt character references for him were found at the murder scene; that he had asked about the victims' wealth; and that he had been heard talking suspiciously with an unknown accomplice outside the *Mainwaring Arms* Over Peover shortly before the murder.

The defence counsel, whose fees were paid by an uncle of Murray, criticised

Rebecca Morgan and James Harding for not investigating the sounds they heard; and said that it was strange that Harding had not applied for lodgings and had slept in the haystack of two murder victims on the night they were murdered. The two character references might have been accidentally lost and then somehow come into the victims' hands, for a murderer would surely not leave two character references at a murder scene. There were discrepancies in the prosecution evidence, and the money that the accused had spent after the murder might have been honestly earned.

The judge summed up. He did his best to be fair and there were discrepancies in the evidence which was all circumstantial; but the jury took just five minutes to convict Murray of murder. The judge sentenced him to death. Murray continued to maintain his innocence to Chester Gaol's Anglican chaplain the Reverend W. G. Eaton, and a Catholic priest Father Carberry who was called in because the prisoner was a Catholic; but Murray did not explain how two character references for him were found in the victims' house.

Bartholomew Murray was ordered to be publicly hanged in front of Chester City Gaol on Saturday 24 April 1841. That day he woke up at four in the morning and had a breakfast of bread and butter and coffee. He was given cups of tea at seven and nine in the morning and a glass of wine at half ten. He was hanged about half twelve in the afternoon, in front of a large crowd in which pickpockets were very active.

A few minutes before the execution the Anglican prison chaplain asked Murray: "Bartholomew Murray I have obtained the consent of Mr Carberry to ask you a solemn and important question. Your mind must have been deeply impressed by the religious exercise in which you have been engaged and as you will very shortly appear in the presence of your Creator and Judge I do not require you to answer the question which I am about to put to you, unless you choose to do so in sincerity and truth. The question is - Is the sentence which you are now about to suffer just or unjust?" The condemned man replied "I have no declaration to make sir".

Knutsford was the childhood home of the novelist Mrs Gaskell née Stevenson, although she was born in London in 1810. The parents of her mother, Elizabeth Stevenson née Holland, farmed Sandlebridge Farm. It was less than three miles north east of Over Peover and about three miles from Knutsford. Elizabeth Stevenson died in 1811, aged forty, when her daughter was thirteen months old. The motherless girl was bought up in Knutsford by her maternal aunt Hannah Lumb.

Mrs Gaskell's first novel *Mary Barton: a tale of Manchester Life* was published anonymously in October 1848. Its plot is well-known to most readers of this newsletter and was summarised in my article *Murder in Mrs Gaskell Country* (Newsletter August 2015). As I explained the plot was partly based on the 1831 murder of Thomas Ashton at Hyde.

Mrs Gaskell must also have known about the Bartholomew Murray case. The several innocent suspects and the circumstantial evidence probably helped inspire similar events in *Mary Barton*. The melodramatic chase after a ship leaving Liverpool may well have been inspired by Murray's flight to Ireland. Her third novel *Cranford* was published serially between 1851 and 1853 and as a volume in 1853. It looked at life in Knutsford on which its imaginary Cranford was based. To quote the opening words of its second chapter 'it was impossible to live a month at Cranford and not know the daily habits of each resident'.

Many buildings still remain in Knutsford that Mrs Gaskell and Bartholomew Murray would have known. They include the Anglican parish church built between 1741 and 1744 where the Gaskells married and in whose churchyard the victims' purse was found; and the seventeenth century Unitarian chapel. Over Peover Church is the same building where the Cooks' funeral service was held. Peover Hall survives. The Mainwaring Arms is today the Whipping Stocks Inn.

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 Elizabeth Gaskell, A Literary Life, Shirley Foster, Palgrave, 2002  
 Elizabeth Gaskell, A Habit of Stories, Jenny Uglow, Faber and Faber, 1993  
 The Letters of Mrs Gaskell, edited by J.A.V. Chapple and Arthur Pollard, Manchester University Press, 1966  
 Methuen's Notes on Elizabeth Gaskell's Mary Barton, Methuen, 1981  
 The Pevsner Guide to Cheshire

## Book Notes

Christine Lingard

George du Maurier: illustrator, author, critic, edited by Simon Cooke and Paul Goldman: *Beyond Svengali*. Ashgate, 2016. ISBN: 978147243159.

Alan Shelston, former president of the Society has contributed to this study of the Victorian writer famous for his novel *Trilby*, due next year. He was also an illustrator and did the illustrations for *Sylvia's Lovers* and *Wives and Daughters*.

Elizabeth Gaskell's *Cranford*: a publishing history, by Thomas Recchio, University of Connecticut. Ashgate studies in publishing history. Taylor and Francis. ISBN 201 9780754696414

This book traces the publishing history of *Cranford* from its initial 1851-53 serialization in Dickens's *Household Words* through its numerous editions and

adaptations. Thomas Recchio is a member of the Society and has contributed several articles to the *Gaskell Journal*. He focuses especially on how the text has been used to support ideas relating to nation and national identity. He maps its nineteenth-century reception in Britain and the United States through illustrated editions in England dating from 1864 and their subsequent re-publication in the United States, US school editions in the first two decades of the twentieth century, dramatic adaptations from 1899 to 2007, and Anglo-American literary criticism in the latter half of the twentieth century.

*Dirt in Victorian literature and culture: writing materiality* by Sabine Schülting, Freie Universität, Berlin. Routledge studies in nineteenth-century literature: ISBN 2016 9781138932906

This book shows how dirt litters Victorian writing - industrial novels, literature about the city, slum fiction, blue books, and the reports of sanitary reformers. There are chapters on Victorian commodity culture as a backdrop to the narratives. The variety of texts discussed include Dickens, E M Forster, Gaskell, Gissing, James Greenwood, Henry James, Kingsley, Henry Mayhew, George Moore, Arthur Morrison, and others. Dr Schülting's recent books include *Shylock nach dem Holocaust* and *Early Modern Encounters with the Islamic East*.

## THE AGM AND LITERARY WEEKEND OF THE ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES

21-22 May 2016

Janet Kennerley

There were 71 delegates from 31 different literary groups which belong to the ALS attending the annual event this year, and The Gaskell Society was as usual well represented. It was held in Haworth, Yorkshire, and hosted by the Brontë society in celebration of the bicentenary of Charlotte's birth.

ALS members were invited to visit the Brontë Parsonage prior to the public arrivals, which proved a popular start to Saturday. Several interesting items were shown to us from the Brontë Archives and we saw the recently acquired original table in the dining room.

We then walked over to the nearby Baptist Centre for registration and coffee: a pleasant opportunity to meet up with acquaintances from previous years and speak with new representatives from several different societies.



John Thirlwell, Chair of the Brontë Trustees, gave us a warm welcome and spoke of the importance of literary geography – the role of the location and the mind of the writer and reader. He mentioned that now it is much easier to improve reaching out to members and he used the strong Brontë links with Brussels as an example.

He then introduced Juliet Barker, biographer of Charlotte Brontë. She thought that Mrs Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte Brontë* of 1857 was a gracious and truthful tribute, but now new information is available and there is no longer need for restraint due to the feeling of those still living after Charlotte's death. Also, Mrs Gaskell was a novelist and Juliet Barker is writing from the perspective of an historian. She felt that Mrs Gaskell had a flaw in her approach and had not been impartial – this later was the subject of lively discussion, especially from some members of The Gaskell Society!

We had a break for a delicious buffet lunch before the AGM began. It was announced that Jenny Uglow has now stepped down after several years as President of the ALS, and Claire Harman (the latest biographer of Charlotte) has accepted this post. Anita Fernandez-Young has resigned after many years of excellent work as Secretary. Marty Smith has taken on this role having been a committee member for several years.

There was a discussion about the ALS making use of Facebook and Twitter; both can be used by member societies. There is to be an updated ALS publicity leaflet showing details of the new officers and current member groups. The Secretary stated that the ALS is working with publishers to publicise the ALS when possible.

Future AGMs – it is planned that the next ALS AGM/Literary Weekend will take place on 3/4th June 2017 at Craiglockhart, Edinburgh Napier University to celebrate Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen. Possible future dates are 2018 Beatrix Potter and 2019 George Eliot.

The AGM closed with the drawing of the raffle with many interesting prizes – a good opportunity to promote the different societies.

The final item of the day was an amusing account by local character, Ian Dewhirst, entitled 'The Druggist and the Relieving Officer' and included other Victorian writers in the Haworth area. Ian, a man of many Yorkshire dialect words, entertained us with examples of the learned locals of Haworth and Keighley, and showed that the Brontës were not so very isolated on the 'bleak moors' as some writers would have us believe!

The Evening Dinner at The Old White Lion Hotel in Haworth was well attended and very enjoyable. As usual, there were various readings after the meal by the diners, some relating to correspondence of Mrs Gaskell about Charlotte Brontë, and others

being favourite passages by writers who were represented.

For those who stayed overnight, the Brontë Society offered a choice of activities for Sunday – a visit to the birthplace of Charlotte, Branwell, Emily and Anne Brontë at Market Street, Thornton (now a delightful coffee house where we were warmly welcomed by the owner and Angela Crow-Woods of the Brontë Society and ALS Committee) – and/or a guided walk to the Brontë Waterfall – or a tour of Ponden Mill, a site associated with Wuthering Heights.

As usual, this year's ALS weekend was most enjoyable and I do recommend that you consider coming along another year – check for details on the ALS website for future events – any members are entitled to attend as long as The Gaskell Society remains in The Alliance of Literary Societies.

## Gaskell Society Tour to Worcester, Malvern and Alfrick

Jean Alston

On Tuesday, 31 May, thirty-nine members and friends began a tour designed to follow the Gaskell association with the area around Worcester and Malvern. Our first port of call was Worcester Cathedral, where we enjoyed Prince Arthur's Chantry, King John's tomb and reference to the Magna Carta. Our major concern was Sir Edward Elgar's association with the cathedral which, along with the River Severn, inspired much of his music. From the cathedral, we travelled to Elgar's birthplace (Broadheath), a small cottage, fine garden and repository for much of his music, letters, and Alice Elgar's letters and diaries. The curator was able to read letters between Meta and Julia Gaskell and Alice and Edward Elgar. He was able to give some information during our visit but has consequently provided more precise details.

The Malvern Concert Club was founded by Elgar and Arthur Troyte Griffith in 1903, with the aim of bringing the very best chamber performances to Malvern. Mrs Holland was present at the inaugural concert, performed by the Brodsky Quartet in 1903. The three times that Mrs Thurstan Holland is mentioned in Alice Elgar's diaries are for Malvern Concert Club performances by the Brodsky Quartet in 1903, 1905 and 1907; these concerts were held in the Imperial Hotel. Lady Elgar's diary for 8th December, 1905 concert reads: 'Had tea with Mrs T. Holland & the 4tet'. Adolph Brodsky was Principal of the Royal Manchester College of Music, and a friend of Hallé. They were both likely to be friends of Meta and Julia Gaskell at that time.

On Wednesday, 1 June, we enjoyed a two-hour tour of the splendid Madresfield Court, which has its origins in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century, was rebuilt in 1593 and is said to be the inspiration for Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead* in the 1945 novel *Brideshead Revisited*. The house was part of a plan to, if necessary, move the UK Government to Worcester in 1942 and for the Royal Family to reside at Madresfield Court. The Court is rich in furniture and pictures, with a chapel decorated in the Arts and Crafts style by the Birmingham Group of artists.

After lunch at the Malvern Hills Hotel, we travelled to the village of Alfrick. Marianne Holland's grave, after being obscured by valerian and other plants, is now identified beside the porch of the Church of St Mary Magdalene. We were welcomed by the Vicar, Anne Potter, and were given afternoon tea by members of the congregation. Several members of our group read items from the Parish Magazines of the period when Marianne was in residence at Alfrick Court. We were able to trace letters written by Elizabeth Gaskell when she was staying at Boughton House, Worcester, in 1850 and 1856, to show that Marianne had lived in the area from 1893 until her death in 1920 and that Marianne's daughter Florence was the last to reside in West Malvern in 1942. So the association with the area lasted 92 years.

On Thursday, 2 June, the group visited Leigh Court Barn, which dates from probably 1325, and provided food and income for the monks of Pershore Abbey. Our final visit was to Wightwick Manor, built in 1887, and now owned by the National Trust. The Manor has a fine collection of Pre-Raphaelite art, fabrics and ceramics. As always there is a Gaskell connection. Several of Elizabeth's letters refer to Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Holman Hunt, John Everett Millais and John Ruskin whom she had met and conversed with on several occasions.

This was another successful study tour for Gaskell Society members, assisted by the stay at the comfortable Bank House Hotel and the good nature, conversation and knowledge of the members themselves.

#### **Addendum:**

Alice Elgar's diary 08/10/03 reads:

Drove to see Miss Gaskells, pouring rain. Left Midland Hotel Manchester about 4. Mr Etling saw us off – a journey through lovely part of Derbysh. E. Kept warm in his coat. Arr. Grand Hotel & Mr Spier (sic Speyer) came and dined with us.... Full of delightful anticipation.

**Editor adds:** The Society thanks Jean for her enormous help and skill in organising these wonderful study tours.

## Day Study Tour to Yorkshire

**Pam Griffiths**

On Wednesday 8 June 25 members plus 5 enthusiastic guests visited Yorkshire, in commemoration of Charlotte Brontë's bicentenary.

Our first stop was at Bankfield Museum in Halifax, a grade II listed historic house museum, formerly the home of Colonel Edward Akroyd, MP (1810-1887), a leading worsted mill owner. The building was sold to Halifax Corporation in 1887 and was immediately turned into a museum and library.

The purpose of our visit was to view the 'Splendid shreds of silk and satin' exhibition, a celebration of Charlotte Brontë in quilts, inspired by the novelist Tracey Chevalier, herself a quilter. The title of the exhibition was taken from a passage in *Jane Eyre*.

The main exhibit was the quilt that the Brontë sisters and their aunt Branwell had worked on: a faded fragile specimen, carefully preserved and on loan from the Brontë Society. On the wall nearby, hung a vibrant modern interpretation of the quilt, a selection of the Museum's historic quilt collection and 30 delightful entries to the Brontë Quilt Challenge. These were small, Brontë-themed quilts and we were invited to vote for our favourite.

A welcome cup of coffee was provided by the helpful Museum staff and then it was back to the coach for a sandwich lunch and transfer to Haworth, where more drinks were awaiting us at one of the pubs.

At 2.30pm, we assembled at the Brontë Parsonage Museum, where we were treated to an excellent talk and slide show, before a self-guided tour of the Museum. The talk generated many questions and greatly added to our enjoyment of the day. We felt that our visit had been a useful precursor to our study, of Mrs Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte Brontë*, in the autumn.

Before we boarded the coach, we were able to manage more liquid refreshment at the pub, forced on us rather than tea and cake, as the tea shops were closed because the BBC were filming a 2-hour drama about the Brontë family (to be screened at Christmas)!

**Editor adds:** Warm thanks to Pam for organising this event.

## ~Forthcoming Events~

### Autumn General Meeting

**Saturday 24 September 2016, Knutsford Methodist Church.**  
Please see enclosed leaflet for further details and application slip.

### Annual General Meeting 2017

**Saturday 8 April 2017, Cross Street Chapel, Manchester**  
Further details TBA in Spring Newsletter

### North-West Group

#### Manchester Meetings

These meetings are held at Cross Street Chapel in Manchester on the first Tuesday of the month (October to March, excluding January). All are welcome from noon onwards when coffee will be available. If members wish, they may bring a packed lunch. The lecture begins at about 1pm and all is over by 2.30pm or earlier.

#### 4 October

Member Philip Morey will speak on German visitors to Manchester in the 19<sup>th</sup>C

#### 1 November

Elizabeth Williams will lead a discussion on Libby Marsh's three eras (1847)

#### 6 December

Lynne Allan, Chairman of The Portico, will speak on The Portico and the Gaskells.  
NB This meeting (with seasonal refreshments) will be held at The Portico, 57 Mosley Street, Manchester M2 3HY (Entrance in Charlotte Street)

#### 7 February 2017

Dr Diane Duffy will discuss Mrs Ellis H Chadwick's biography of Mrs Gaskell.

#### 7 March 2017

Professor Alan Kidd will speak on Manchester suburbs in the 19<sup>th</sup> C.

#### Knutsford Meetings

These meetings are held on the last Wednesday of the month at Brook Street Chapel Hall a few yards from the Gaskell graves. The first meeting of the season will be on 26 October and we shall be studying *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* under the expert guidance of Elizabeth Williams. NB No meeting in December and the last meeting of the season will be on 26 April 2017.

### The Gaskell Society South-West

**Sunday, 4 September, Gaskell Lunch, 14 Vellore Lane, Bath, BA2 6JQ, 12.30pm**

Our usual summer bring-and-share lunch will be held at the home of Boyd and Elizabeth Schlenther. Members wishing to come should let Veronica Trenchard know (01225 723706); she will be organising the food. We hope many will be able to come and bring a partner or friend.

**Saturday, 29 October, 2.30, at BRLSI, Queens's Square, Bath**

Our autumn lecture will be given by Dr Helen MacEwan under the title: 'Winifred Gérin: Biographer of the Brontës and Gaskell, with a Remarkable Life in Her Own Right'. Ms MacEwan, who is a translator for the European Union, is also the Chair of the Brussels Brontë Society. Her book on the subject of her talk has been very well reviewed, and we look forward to an excellent afternoon.

In February and March 2017 we plan discussion groups on *Cousin Phillis* and possibly one of the other longer stories. There will also be a post-Christmas meal for members and their partners at one of the local restaurants. More information about both of these events will be sent in due course.

For further information about these or any other of our activities, please contact Elizabeth Schlenther, 14 Vellore Lane, Bath, BA2 6JQ, Tel: 01225 331763, or via email: [eschlenther@googlemail.com](mailto:eschlenther@googlemail.com).

### London and South-East Group

#### 10 September

Helen MacEwan will speak on her latest book – a biography of Winifred Gérin, biographer of Mrs Gaskell et al.



**12 November**

Member Amanda Ford will speak about her doctoral research on Mrs Gaskell.

The meetings are held at Francis Holland School, 39 Graham Terrace, London SW1W 8JF. The venue is a three-minute walk from Sloane Street tube station, which is on the District and Circle line.

Meetings begin at 2pm and usually last about an hour. Each talk is followed by questions, and then tea is served. Before the meetings, a sandwich lunch is available. All are welcome at any time after 12.45pm.

At each meeting there is a bring-and-buy bookstall in aid of Elizabeth Gaskell's House. Please bring books for sale as the bookstall always needs replenishment.

The afternoon (including lunch and tea) costs £5.

Please contact Fran Twinn for further details.

Dr Frances Twinn, 85 Calton Avenue, Dulwich, London SE21 7DF 020 8693 3238  
frantwinn@aflex.net

## **A Day School on Charlotte Brontë**

**will be held at Elizabeth Gaskell's House  
on Saturday 1 October 2016.**

**Speakers:**

Fran Baker, Angus Easson, Karen Laird, Patsy Stoneman

**Cost:**

£25 (includes lunch)

**Further Details and Booking:**

Libby Tempest

libbytempest@aol.com

Mrs E Tempest, 28 Old Lees Road, Hebden Bridge HX7 8HW