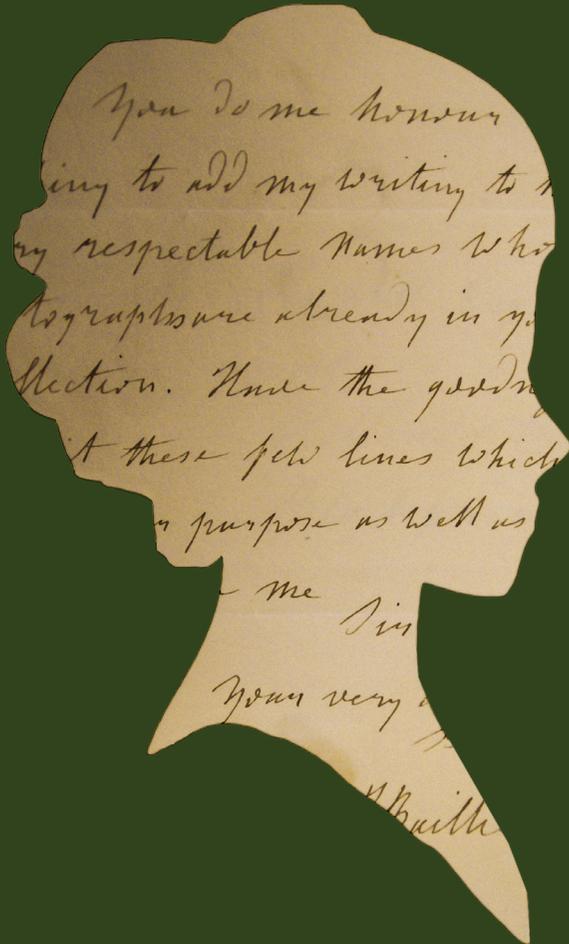


# In Her Hand

Letters of Romantic-Era British Women Writers  
in New Zealand Collections



OTAGO STUDENTS OF LETTERS

**In Her Hand**



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Letters of Romantic-Era British  
Women Writers in New Zealand Collections



Otago Students of Letters  
Department of English, University of Otago

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The majority of the manuscripts published in this book are found in the Alfred and Isabel Reed Collection at the Dunedin Public Libraries, and we would like to acknowledge the support we have received from the Heritage Collections staff there. We are particularly grateful to Anthony Tedeschi, Rare Books Librarian, Dunedin Public Libraries, for sharing his knowledge of the manuscripts and to Diana Kearns for the time and care she has taken in cataloguing the manuscripts.

We would also like to thank the following institutions for providing access to original manuscripts and other resources: the Alexander Turnbull Library, the Sir George Grey Special Collections at Auckland Libraries, the Carl H. Pforzheimer Collection at the New York Public Library, Invercargill City Libraries and Archives, the Department of English at the University of Otago, and the University of Otago Press.

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And finally, our biggest thanks go to Tom McLean and Shef Rogers, without whom this publication would not have been possible. We are enormously grateful for your hard work and guidance, and the specialised knowledge you have shared in the areas of Romantic literature and print publication. Your patience and support throughout the process has been invaluable.

## Introduction

Dear Reader,

Dunedin, 28 May 2013

We hope this book finds you happy and well. We're pleased that you have just picked up *In Her Hand: Letters of Romantic-Era Women Writers in New Zealand Collections*, a book that presents you with letters from eleven women writers of the Romantic era: Anna Barbauld, Hannah More, Joanna Baillie, Jane Porter, Sydney Morgan, Lucy Aikin, Amelia Opie, Annabella Byron, Felicia Hemans, Anna Jameson and Maria Jane Jewsbury. These women were contemporaries of Mary Wollstonecraft, Jane Austen and Mary Shelley, but today their works and names do not enjoy the same level of popularity and recognition.

Our book is focused on personal letters rather than the essays, novels and poems written by these authors. The Otago Students of Letters have read, transcribed, researched, annotated and written essays on an assortment of correspondence we were lucky to have available to us. These letters are fascinating: they provide intimate glimpses into the personal lives of women who dedicated themselves to a life of literary publication. They are also sometimes frustrating: not every nineteenth-century woman had graceful cursive handwriting, and dates of letters and names of correspondents have on occasion eluded both records and research.

Instrumental to, and indeed the very basis of our project was the Heritage Room of the Dunedin Public Libraries, which is home to the Alfred and Isabel Reed Collection, an amazing assortment of letters, autographs, books and medieval manuscripts. A. H. Reed was born in England in 1876. The Reed family immigrated to New Zealand in 1886 after the family business failed. After working for the New Zealand Typewriter Company, Reed was sent to Dunedin to open a new branch of the typewriter business. This branch he subsequently acquired and turned into a publishing house that became one of the most significant in New Zealand. Retiring in 1940, Reed remained in Dunedin for the rest of his life. In 1948, he presented his collection to the Dunedin Public Libraries.

Reed was a dedicated collector of books and letters relating to Samuel Johnson and Charles Dickens. But he also bought large

## Introduction

miscellaneous collections of letters from London dealers, in the hope of finding ones by famous authors. Among the materials he received were many letters from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century women writers. These letters provide unique glimpses into the Romantic era, a time when writing letters was the main form of communication.

These unpublished letters, supplemented with letters from three other libraries and two private collections, were the subject material for an English honours paper at the University of Otago, *ENGL404: Writing for Publication*. The paper introduced fourth-year students to the publication process and followed in the footsteps of two previous 404 classes. The 404 class of 2013 was the first to adopt a literary theme; the previous two classes were run in conjunction with the History Department and focused on aspects of University of Otago culture and controversies. As a result, our path to publication included an extra challenge: a hurried self-education in the scholarly dos and don'ts of publishing on the subject of British Romantic-era women writers.

The course co-ordinators, and this book's editors, Tom McLean and Shef Rogers, guided us through the paper with much advice, many editing suggestions, and the assurance that we would probably manage to produce a book at the end of it all. Tom identified which authors had sufficient letters to write on, and how these authors might fit together to make a meaningful group, while Shef's knowledge and interest in the ins and outs of publishing was instrumental to the project. The basis for our biographical information has come from the ever impressive *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, though there were numerous other invaluable sources specific to each chapter.

Besides their individual articles, students of 404 were delegated production tasks. These tasks included cover design, obtaining permissions, shaping the textual layout, creating an index, and composing the final aspects of the book. The goal of creating a publishable book in one semester meant this project had some serious deadlines, but our course co-ordinators were understanding of our plight. The class met on a Monday afternoon for a marathon three-hour seminar in which we discussed all aspects of research and writing before turning our attention to book production and publishing. As needed, classes were supplemented with some very in-depth library chats and extracurricular meetings at our local bar,

## *Introduction*

Eureka. Students participated in impassioned debates on pertinent subjects such as layout and transcription policy while learning that compromise is an important part of group work. Tom and Shef willingly replied to a multitude of emails and graciously answered our barrage of questions on the Romantics and publishing alike. And so, in a mostly democratic manner, the book was brought to life.

To sum up: the English 404 class of 2013 have completed a crash course in both Romantic women writers and the publishing process. Students in the class have been schooled in the contexts and the key personalities of Romantic-era literature, as well as the vicious culture of drafting, rewriting, and editing involved in the publication process. We have also learned a lot about ourselves.

The result, dear Reader, is in your hand. We hope that it will adorn your library shelf, sitting alongside recognised academic works and works of our authors.

As *In Her Hand* goes to print, we breathe a collective sigh of relief and apply ourselves to repairing sleep patterns, addressing caffeine addictions, and perhaps, those other less fortunate classes which we elected to take this year. Despite the stresses and crises, this book has been a privilege and joy to write. An opportunity such as this does not happen very often and we recognise our luck in being able to take part. We hope you enjoy our collected efforts in their published form.

We remain your humble and obedient servants,  
Otago Students of Letters

**Editorial Conventions**

- [word] Authorial omission supplied by editor.
- [?word] Authorial omission supplied conjecturally.
- <word> Lost or obliterated matter supplied by editor.
- <?word> Lost or obliterated matter supplied conjecturally.
- {word} Illegible matter supplied by editor.
- {?word} Illegible matter supplied conjecturally.
- ^word^ Word inserted by the letter writer.
- ~~word~~ Word deleted by the letter writer.

# I

## Anna Barbauld and the Business of Literature

GEORGINA ARCHIBALD

Anna Letitia Barbauld (née Aikin) (1743–1825) was one of the most influential and well-known British writers of her time. Beginning in the mid-1760s, her literary output was substantial and included poems, essays, literary criticism, children’s literature and political works. She moved in a wide literary circle centred in the London scene, and enjoyed particularly close relationships with Joseph Priestley, William Enfield and Joseph Johnson. She associated with many other women authors of the period including Joanna Baillie, Hannah More, Maria Edgeworth, Amelia Opie and Jane Porter, and was much admired by the young William Wordsworth and Samuel Coleridge. Barbauld’s brother John Aikin was her foremost influence and confidant, and the two collaborated on a number of publications. She became close friends with her niece, Lucy Aikin, who published the collected works and a memoir of Barbauld in 1825.

Although Anna Barbauld was a household name during her lifetime, by the early twentieth century she was remembered only as a writer for children. This decline into literary obscurity can be attributed partly to Barbauld’s radical political views, which saw staunch opposition, as well as to criticism leveled against Barbauld by Wordsworth and Coleridge during their later lives (McCarthy 2008, xiv). It was not until the 1980s that feminism allowed a new space for Barbauld to be reconsidered, and she is now recognised

as a pivotal figure bridging eighteenth-century neoclassicism and nineteenth-century British Romanticism. In the last two decades, William McCarthy, Elizabeth Kraft, Anne Janowitz and Fiona Price have comprehensively detailed Barbauld's life and works, with McCarthy's biography providing a particularly illuminating source of reference. Other scholars including Michelle Levy, Scott Krawczyk and Daniel E. White have recently written about the Barbauld–Aikin literary circle.

Anna Barbauld was born Anna Letitia Aikin on 20 June 1742 at Kibworth Harcourt in Leicestershire to the Rev. Dr. John Aikin (1713–1780) and his wife Jane (née Jennings) (1714–1785). Barbauld's brother John Aikin (1747–1822), the noted physician and author, was born five years later. The siblings grew up in Kibworth in a house of comfortable means that doubled as a boys' school, where their father was a schoolmaster and the minister of a local Presbyterian church.

Lucy Aikin (1781–1864) writes in her memoir that her aunt's "quickness of apprehension by which she was imminently distinguished, manifested itself from her earliest infancy" (1825, v). Remarkably, Barbauld could read by the age of two. Worried by the predominantly male Kibworth environment, Jane Aikin took charge of Barbauld's early education and tried to instill a sense of womanly decorum in her spirited young daughter. However, Barbauld convinced her father to teach her Latin and Greek, resulting in her receiving an education comparable to that of her male peers. Her mother was apprehensive that Barbauld's keen intellect would alienate her from society, and although Jane Aikin later praised her daughter's accomplishments, Barbauld felt that she never lived up to her mother's expectations. Her upbringing at a school for boys resulted in her feeling an "awkwardness" when in female company (Aikin 1825, xxii); her writings reflected this discomfort by interrogating the conventions of femininity (McCarthy 2008, 28).

In 1758, the Aikin family moved to Warrington, Lancashire, where Barbauld's father took up a position as a tutor at the newly formed dissenting academy. Barbauld thrived in the socially stimulating environment at Warrington Academy, forming several lifelong friendships with its members, including the natural philosopher

## Anna Barbauld

Joseph Priestley (1733–1804) and his wife Mary (1742–1796), and the Rev. William Enfield (1741–1797) and his wife Mary (d. 1830). Anne Janowitz claims that “Anna Barbauld was intellectually formed during her years in the provincial Warrington circle” (Janowitz 2002, 62); indeed, it was through the influence of her new friends and the encouragement of her brother that she began her literary career in the mid-1760s, producing a number of poems, many of which were addressed to the Priestleys.

It was during her time at Warrington that Joseph Priestley introduced Barbauld to the progressive London bookseller Joseph Johnson (1738–1809). Johnson would go on to publish the majority of Barbauld’s works. Her first pieces were issued anonymously, with six songs included in John Aikin’s *Essays on Songwriting* (1771) and five hymns in William Enfield’s *Hymns for Public Worship* (1772). In 1773 Johnson published Barbauld’s first book, *Poems*, which appeared under her own name and to immense critical acclaim. Invited into literary circles such as the Blue Stockings Society, Barbauld was also embraced by British readers, and *Poems* went through four editions in its first year (Janowitz 2012, 213). Later that year the Aikin siblings jointly released *Miscellaneous Pieces of Prose* (1773); this publication also achieved great success, and encouraged curiosity from its readers as to the siblings’ authorship.

Barbauld, now a young woman, was by no means short of suitors. Her admirers included Warrington students, a schoolmaster and a young farmer from Kibworth from whose proposal of marriage she literally ran (McCarthy 2008, 130–31). In 1774, at thirty-one years of age, she married the Rev. Rochemont Barbauld (1749–1808), a former student of Warrington Academy and six years Barbauld’s junior. Rochemont, a descendant of French Huguenots, was intelligent, well bred, and absolutely devoted to his wife; however, in later life his mental health declined into a dangerous form of bipolar disorder. Prior to their marriage, Barbauld was warned by a friend that Rochemont had experienced an episode of insanity; after being urged to break off the engagement, she replied “if I were now to disappoint him, he would certainly go mad,” and duly undertook the union (Le Breton 1874, 42–43).

**1. Anna Barbauld to Thomas Bellamy,<sup>5</sup> 19 May 1798**

Dorking May 19<sup>th</sup>

M<sup>rs</sup> Barbauld presents her Comp<sup>ts</sup> to the *Proprietors of the Monthly Mirror*, & begs leave to assure them that she has not in her possession any painting which would serve for the purpose they request. She likewise informs them, that notwithstanding the compliment she acknowledges to be included in the intention they announce, she should feel it highly unpleasant to be made, while living, the subject of any such public notice as seems to be intended.—

Address: M<sup>r</sup> Bellamy / Monthly Mirror Office / King Street / Covent Garden  
MS: Dunedin Public Library, Alfred and Isabel Reed Collection, inserted by Alfred Reed in James Boswell's *The Life of Samuel Johnson* (1907, vol. 5 illustrated edition) between 558 and 559

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Bellamy (1745–1800), a minor author and the founding proprietor of the literary periodical *The Monthly Mirror: Reflecting Men and Manners, with Strictures on their Epitome, the Stage* (1795–1811).

# II

## Hannah More: From Versificatrix to Saint

JACQUELINE McMILLAN

Hannah More (1745–1833), by a combination of talent and good timing, had a long and illustrious literary career. As a child she was a prodigy who excelled in languages and literature. While still young she became highly successful as a dramatist, poet and author of moralising prose, and continued to succeed in her literary endeavours—including producing a best-selling novel and a religious biography—well into old age. This chapter publishes five letters and a poem found in New Zealand collections that represent various stages in More’s career, including the first complete publication of a 1778 letter from More to Henry Mackenzie. The remainder of More’s letters here are from later in her life, as is the poem, which does not appear to have been published before.

The fourth of five sisters, More grew up and was educated in Bristol in reasonably modest circumstances. Her first teacher was her schoolmaster father Jacob More (1700–1783). Despite her aptitude for learning, Jacob More initially refused to teach his daughter Latin or mathematics “lest he be rearing a female pedant,” until her mother intervened (Johnson 1925, 3). In her early teens she attended the school established by her two eldest sisters Mary (1738–1813) and Elizabeth (1740–1816). More and her other two sisters eventually taught at the school as well. Through writing and producing for the school a pastoral verse drama *The Search After Happiness*, More

gained local fame and the ongoing support of Bristol's theatre-going public, many of whom—like Ann Lovell Gwatkin (c. 1729–1809), to whom More dedicated the drama—were also patrons of the Mores' school. More was sixteen when she wrote this drama for young ladies; first published more than ten years later in 1773, it went on to be performed at other girls' boarding schools for many years. It is clear in the excerpt from "An Occasional Prologue to *The Search After Happiness*" that More sought to impart moral lessons in her writing. More was modest and did not seek personal fame. These two principles, modesty and morality, resounded throughout More's life and work.

She [the author] does not write, nor do we speak for fame.  
To make Amusement and Instruction friends,  
A lesson in the guise of play she sends;  
She claims no merit for her love of truth.  
No plea to favour, but her sex and youth. (ll. 8–12)

Many of More's local supporters were well connected to the London literary scene. One such supporter was the Mores' neighbour, clergyman Dr. James Stonhouse (1716–1795), who was to play an important role in launching More's literary career. Before he could assist in making More's genius known in London, though, Stonhouse had to perform the delicate task of intervening in her love life. More had continued teaching until the age of twenty-two, when she had become engaged to a local wealthy landowner William Turner (c. 1724–1804). The engagement continued for six years. Turner postponed the wedding three times, but neither he, nor More, wanted to relinquish their commitment to each other. Finally, Stonhouse intervened at the request of More's older sisters. He negotiated the end of the engagement and an annuity for More of £200 from Turner (Stott 2003, 20). This annuity allowed More the freedom to dedicate herself to writing; she also vowed to remain single.

Following the end of the engagement, Stonhouse wrote to his friend, the famous actor and Drury Lane theatre manager, David Garrick (1717–1779), enclosing a manuscript of More's play *The Inflexible Captive* (Stott 2003, 20–22). Garrick turned down the play. More also failed in her first attempt to meet Garrick in London. *The Inflexible Captive*, however, was published in March 1774 by former

Bristolian Thomas Cadell (1742–1802), whose firm continued to publish More’s work for the next forty years. More was determined to meet Garrick; she knew his acceptance of her writing was vital for a career as a dramatist. More and two of her sisters, Sarah (Sally; 1743–1817) and Martha (Patty; 1747–1819), travelled to London and took lodgings near Garrick’s London residence in May 1774. Meanwhile, Stonhouse forwarded to Garrick a letter from More to himself praising Garrick’s acting and covered it with one of his own praising More’s talent. These combined tactics were successful. More also required introduction to like-minded literary society in London. Ann Gwatkin sent a letter of introduction to her artist friend Frances Reynolds (1729–1807), who later painted More’s portrait. Frances’s brother was the famous portrait painter Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792) who established the gentlemen’s literary club along with the pre-eminent British man of letters, Samuel Johnson (1709–1784), who

Image not permitted to be reproduced in digital version.

*Hannah More c. 1780 by Frances Reynolds*  
(© Bristol’s Museums, Galleries & Archives).

was also connected to Garrick. More met several of the club members socially in the ensuing years. Thus it was through More’s connections to Bristol’s literary circle that she was introduced and accepted into an interconnected and fashionable London literary society.

More became one of Samuel Johnson’s favourites; he was as emphatic in his praise of her and her writing as she was notable for her flattery of him (Boswell 1934, 4.341–42). After Garrick read out More’s poem *Sir Eldred of the Bower* (1776) at a party, Johnson proclaimed that she was “the most powerful versificatrix in the English language” (Clarke 2000, 166). More was also befriended by the leaders of the women’s literary circle, the Bluestockings: Elizabeth

1. Hannah More to Henry Mackenzie,<sup>1</sup> 18 July 1778

Sir

You cannot imagine how very much I regretted that your engagements would not allow you to favour me with your company at Bristol.<sup>2</sup> When I lay the blame on your *engagements* I get a saving clause for my vanity you see; and, to this purpose I design, whenever I recollect my disappointment, to remember also that <?you> had *intended* me the pleasure of seeing you, and that I owe the loss of this pleasure only <?to> the ill-natured intervention of busin<ess.>

I shall always however consider you as in debt to me for this visit; and really, in common justice you owe me some compensation for the tears you have made me shed so frequently, and so plentifully: though I don't know whether I can't lighten the burthen from your conscience by intirely transferring the obligation to the other side; for most precious to the heart of sensibility, is the sorrow excited by such causes!<sup>3</sup> and I am savage enough to wish earnestly that I had talents and pathos to be even with you in the same way, a<nd> so take a short method to get out of <you>r debt by breaking your heart.<sup>4</sup>

I will hope however, according to the comfortable French maxim that, *ce qui est differé n'est point perdu*,<sup>5</sup> and that I shall, some future day, have an opportunity of telling you how much I am

Bristol July 18  
1778

Sir  
Your obliged and obedient  
humble Servant Han: More

<sup>1</sup> Henry Mackenzie (1745–1831), Scottish novelist and lawyer; author of *The Man of Feeling* (1771).

<sup>2</sup> More's letter and Henry Mackenzie's 12 October reply imply that he was visiting Bristol for business purposes.

<sup>3</sup> More's poem *Sensibility* (1782) was published after this letter was written. Two lines of this poem mention Mackenzie's writing, arguing that Mackenzie does not overuse pity in his writing: "Not so the tender moralist of Tweed / His 'Man of Feeling,' is a man indeed." More "praises sensibility, but warns about hollow affectation and excess" (Waldron 1999, 174, n. 7).

<sup>4</sup> A portion of this letter (from "really in common justice" to "breaking your heart") has been published before in Thompson's *A Scottish Man of Feeling* (1931, 170).

<sup>5</sup> Translated as "that which is delayed is not lost."

*Hannah More*

Address: To / Henry Mackenzie Esq<sup>r</sup><sup>6</sup>

MS: Dunedin Public Library, Alfred and Isabel Reed Collection

Endorsements: Miss Hannah More / 18 July 1778 / – Dissapointment [*sic*]  
at not seeing me / – Effects of pathetic writings

<sup>6</sup> There is no address or postmark on More's letter. The letter may have been hand-delivered, although in his reply Mackenzie stated that he had not seen More's letter until after his travels in the Scottish Highlands. Mackenzie notes that he considers it a high priority to reply to More as three months have passed (Roberts 1835, 1.143). He also acknowledges their common acquaintances are their publisher Thomas Cadell, Sr. and the Miss Erskines of Bath.

# III

## Joanna Baillie: Model of a Literary Lady

ELICIA MILNE



*Joanna Baillie, engraving by H. Robinson after a portrait by Sir William Newton, sketched by Elicia Milne.*

Scottish author Joanna Baillie (1762–1851) was a well-respected poet and playwright whom Sir Walter Scott called “the best dramatic writer’ Britain had produced ‘since the days of Shakespeare” (Carhart 1923, 3). Her major publications include the series of volumes of *Plays on the Passions*, among which *De Monfort* and *The Election* were professionally produced. Baillie was celebrated by a number of notable writers of the period, moving in literary circles that included Scott, Lord and

Lady Byron, William Wordsworth and Robert Southey. She had a reputation for assisting those who were less fortunate than herself, raising money for families in need and participating in philanthropic activities. Wordsworth considered Baillie to be the “model of an English Gentlewoman” (Carhart 1923, 3), and she was regarded by many other acquaintances as the epitome of a Christian lady.

Baillie was born and cared for during the first years of her life at the manse of Bothwell, Lanarkshire. Her father was the Reverend James Baillie (c. 1722–1778), the minister of Bothwell, and her mother Dorothea (née Hunter) (c. 1721–1806) was the sister of noted physicians William and John Hunter. Baillie had as her close companions two older siblings: Agnes (1760–1861), the eldest, and Matthew (1761–1823), the middle child, both of whom she lived with well into adulthood. After Matthew’s inheritance of William Hunter’s Great Windmill Street home in 1783, the two sisters and their mother moved to London to keep house for him. They moved to Colchester in 1791 upon Matthew’s marriage to Sophia Denman (1771–1845), and it was there that Baillie began writing the first volume of her *Plays on the Passions*. From there Baillie and Agnes (along with their mother) moved to Hampstead, where they resided together for the remainder of their lives. While neither sister married, both maintained friendships with their neighbours, and intimate relationships with other family members, notably their nephew William Hunter Baillie (1797–1894) and his family. Baillie’s later works had some successes in print and on the stage. In addition to her plays, she also wrote poems, songs, and several pamphlets on issues that were important to her. She lived to see her collected works published in a single volume, a “great Monster book” as she called it, a triumph she saw achieved shortly before her death (Baillie 2010, 258).

Mary Russell Mitford (1787–1855) described Baillie as “the very pattern of what a literary lady should be – quiet, unpretending, generous, kind, admirable in her writings, excellent in her life” (Mitford 1852, 1.242). Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832) corresponded with Baillie for over two decades; he called her “our immortal Joanna” (Lockhart 1837–38, 4.226). Baillie’s acquaintances with women writers were especially significant to her. Indeed, she corresponded with

Mary Berry, Anna Jameson and Felicia Hemans. In an 1828 letter to Hemans, Baillie offers praise and a review of Hemans's *Records of Woman: With Other Poems*.

Indeed I have read your Records of Women [*sic*] with great interest and pleasure. You have seized upon most striking circumstances, characteristic of the best side of our nature, and pourtrayed them with a high-minded tenderness & truth which you only could have given to them and which marks so decidedly your pre-eminence in all the feminin[e] graces of poetry. (Baillie 2010, 125)

Anna Barbauld and Lucy Aikin were also two of Baillie's friends and neighbours.

Baillie was confident in her works' worth, and justifiably so. She delighted in the production of her plays and, according to Thomas McLean, she was willing to "take extra efforts to get them performed" (Baillie 2010, 24). Baillie's stage plays had a few successes, one of the most popular being the 1800 production of *De Monfort* at Drury Lane, where it ran for eleven nights with John Philip Kemble and Sarah Siddons in the lead roles. It appeared at the same theatre again in 1821, this time starring Edmund Kean. Despite Baillie having written and published *Constantine Paleologus* in 1804 with Drury Lane in mind, the play was declined, although it was staged in Dublin, Liverpool and Edinburgh. Baillie's Scottish play *The Family Legend* was also produced in Edinburgh at the Theatre Royale, where it enjoyed "one of the most successful runs of Baillie's works, opening 29 January 1810 and running fourteen consecutive nights" (Baillie 2010, 46 n. 41). Two of her later plays received London performances in 1836: *The Separation* at Covent Garden, and *Henriquez* at Drury Lane.

Baillie faced many challenges in getting her plays produced. Though she was accused by critics of lacking in stagecraft knowledge, she claimed that her plays worked best in "well-lit small theatres where facial expressions could clearly be seen" (Clarke 2006), reasoning that the attention to psychological detail in her works was lost in the extravagantly large theatres that were the order of the day. Baillie was of the opinion that "critics had unfairly labelled her a closet dramatist, partly because she was a woman and partly because they had failed to read her prefaces with care" (Clarke 2006). Baillie also faced challenges when it came to her published works.

1. Joanna Baillie to George Bartley,<sup>1</sup> [8 June 1817]<sup>2</sup>

Hampstead Sunday  
evening

My dear Sir,

A thousand thanks for your kind & cheering note! I had heard not quite such an encouraging account of it in the morning from a Servant of my Brother's<sup>3</sup> who was sent to the Theatre last night to give us some news of it. —

I would go to see the play to morrow most gladly, but when you hear how I am circumstanced, I am sure you will agree that I ought not. We have Friends, who are engaged to dine & spend the day with us to morrow, there is no other day in which we can meet, and one of these is going abroad, so that it is the last opportunity we shall have of seeing her for a long time. On tuesday I am engaged to meet a party at my Brothers whom M<sup>rs</sup> Baillie is particularly anxious I should meet, and who were not invited till I had promised that I would meet them. So you see, my dear Sir, how I am entangled. I must then beg to profit by your kind offer of a private box on Wednesday<sup>4</sup> as I at first proposed, and I hope on that evening to have an opportunity of personally thanking M<sup>r</sup> Arnold<sup>5</sup> & you for all your goodness & attention to me. — Give my love to M<sup>rs</sup> Bartley with many thanks for her kind congratulations. — I rest,

my dear Sir, your obliged Friend

J Baillie

<sup>1</sup> George Bartley (?1782–1858), actor and comedian, and his wife, the actress Sarah Bartley (née Smith) (1783–1850), were good friends of Baillie.

<sup>2</sup> Internal evidence and a comparison with other Baillie letters from June 1817 confirm that this letter dates the day after the 7 June 1817 opening night at the English Opera House of the operatic version of Baillie's comedy *The Election*.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew Baillie (1761–1823), Baillie's older brother, and his wife Sophia Baillie (née Denman) (1771–1845), maintained a close relationship with his sister. He was a great supporter of Baillie's works, and she dedicated the second volume of her *Plays on the Passions* to him, which included *The Election*.

<sup>4</sup> We do not know whether Baillie attended the 11 June performance of *The Election*, but she certainly attended the 26 June performance, the same night that the Duke of Wellington made an appearance.

<sup>5</sup> Samuel James Arnold (1774–1852), manager of the English Opera House, which was converted from the Lyceum on the Strand. Baillie is thanking him here for his reworking of her play into an opera and promoting it as a performance.

*Joanna Baillie*

Address: George Bartley Esq<sup>r</sup> / 27 Manchester Street  
MS: Private collection, Dunedin

# IV

## Everyone's "Dear Friend," Amelia Opie

PIPPA MAESSEN

Amelia Opie (1769–1853) was a highly acclaimed novelist and poet who lived a long and productive life of eighty-four years. Her earliest works were influenced by the company of leading radicals, including William Godwin, and she was among the first writers to portray enslaved Africans in a way that suggested parallels to the plight of disenfranchised women (Eberle 1999, 72). After her marriage to the artist John Opie, she distanced herself from radical politics and wrote some of her most popular novels and moral tales. Works such as *The Father and Daughter* and *Adeline Mowbray* examined the theme of family politics and portrayed female desire in striking ways (Opie 2003, 35). In 1825 Opie joined the Society of Friends, and her later writing was mainly restricted to non-fiction and poetry.

Opie's dedication to her literary productions was an important aspect of her character, but equally noteworthy were her kind nature and charitable spirit. This is evident in the nine letters printed here, which span twenty-eight years of her life, from her late fifties to only months before she died. The letters highlight more personal aspects of Opie's life, including a zeal for family and her encounters with sickness and death. Indeed, death was a prominent feature throughout her life: she lost her mother young and then her husband after only nine years of marriage. Perhaps the most affecting death, however, was that of her father, James Alderson, with whom Amelia had developed

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a very close relationship. One of the following letters, written only days before her father's death, provides insight into Opie's complex feelings about this event.



*Amelia Opie, 29, after a 1798 portrait by her husband John Opie  
(from a portrait cutting in Alfred Reed's album of autograph letters, B3, 63).*

### **Biography**

Amelia Opie was born Amelia Alderson on 12 December 1769 in Norwich, the town where she spent the majority of her life and where she lived out her final days. Her father James Alderson (1743–1825) was a dedicated physician, prescribing to four or five hundred people a week. His devotion and kindness to his patients impressed his daughter and were remembered long after he had died (Brightwell 1854, 3–4). Her mother, Amelia Briggs (1750–1784), was born into an established Norwich family that had roots in the East India Company in Bengal. There are few records of Amelia Briggs's life, but Opie's autobiographical accounts of her early life suggest that her mother was a good-hearted disciplinarian, quick to rid the young Opie of any "girlish fears" (Kelly 2004). In a recollection of her youth, Opie wrote of being afraid of an African man who lived across the street. Her mother reportedly forced her to shake hands with him,

and Opie was then told the “sad tale of negro wrongs and negro slavery” (Brightwell 1854, 13). This experience gave early rise to her feelings about the emancipation of enslaved Africans, which became a prominent concern in her writings.

Amelia Briggs Alderson died at just thirty-four years of age and had little time to impress her moral character on her daughter. Opie’s biographer Cecilia Lucy Brightwell claims that Amelia’s personality would probably have been “more demure and decorous had her mother lived” (Brightwell 1854, 7). At just fifteen, Amelia Opie shouldered her mother’s responsibilities as housekeeper and hostess for her father—the result of which was the development of a strong bond and lifelong, loving friendship with him.

Opie’s first novel, *The Dangers of Coquetry*, was published anonymously in 1790 and received very little attention. One reviewer stated that the work “does not possess sufficient *interest* to move the heart, nor a sufficient *probability* to convince the understanding” (Opie 2003, 263, emphasis in original). She found greater success with her early poetry. Through the encouragement of her father, Opie developed an attraction to radical politics which led her to publish her first poems in 1795 in *The Cabinet*, a Norwich political periodical. These early works earned her the respect of a literary circle that included William Godwin, Thomas Holcroft and Elizabeth Inchbald (Eberle 1994, 121).

On 8 May 1798 Amelia married the portrait artist John Opie (1761–1807). By the time they met he had already been involved in a dissolved marriage, reputedly because he was too absorbed in his work. Nevertheless, Amelia described her husband as being free of any kind of vanity and of possessing great conversational merit. He did not share the same vigor for socialising in fashionable circles as his wife did, and with his encouragement, she broke off most contact with her radical circle of acquaintances. But he was very supportive of her work, and “his professionalism, diligence, and independence inspired her” (Kelly 2004).

It was not long after their marriage that one of her most notable works appeared. Opie described *The Father and Daughter* (1801), the first fiction published under her own name, as “a simple moral tale” (Opie 2003, 63). It followed a young woman who ignores her father’s advice, causing grief and anguish for them both. According to King

1. Amelia Opie to Samuel Barber,<sup>1</sup> 4 October 1825

Norwich—

10/4 1825

2 in the morning

I am *sitting up* dear friend, & will scrawl a few lines to thee in answer to thy *last—mine* passed thine in ye road—

I wrote to dear Tom<sup>2</sup> to say I *hoped* he would not be out of the way &c—He replied that he had put off his journies that he might come down when wanted, & be *near me* but *indeed* my dear friend, I could not be so unreasonable, & selfish as to wish him to come down *yet*—& idle away his time *even* if his being here would cheer me—which *it would not*—

I am wonderfully supported *at times*—but, I am, I *own* so *selfish*, as to rejoice in the *slow*, tho' *sure* progress of the disease—*Sinking he is*—& living on his *own substance* alone—*now*, his stomach rejects liquids, food he has not taken for *weeks*—<sup>3</sup>

*Just* given him some milk & water which keeps *down*—I think the richness *less*—but his *pain* is *constant*, & *great*—*never ceases*—& no relief from the {?bowel} but by medicine—*repeated medicine*—and *he* knows every *inch* of the road he is going—but *such firmness*, such patience, such resignation, & such relying faith! J.J.G.<sup>4</sup> says it is a *benefit* to *him* to sit by his bedside—

H: Gurney<sup>5</sup> comes every day, & J J *nearly* so—but he is full of engagements—however, he comes when he can.—How *long* this suffering Scene will last I *know not*—but this I know—that *beyond* it all is at present *dark to me*—& life seems lying like a *blank* before me—

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Barber (d. 1832), neighbour of William Wordsworth (1770–1850) and an acquaintance of Opie.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas John Alderson (1791–1864), a cousin of Amelia Opie. According to Shelley King and John B. Pierce, “Tom remained dear to her heart, though the relationship was sometimes tempestuous” (Opie 2009, 562).

<sup>3</sup> Opie’s father James Alderson (1743–1825) was at this time terminally ill and died 20 October, sixteen days after this letter was written.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph John Gurney (1788–1847), a member of the Society of Friends and close companion of the Alderson family. A banker and religious writer, Gurney and his sister Elizabeth Fry (1780–1845) campaigned for prison reform.

<sup>5</sup> Hudson Gurney (1775–1864), a cousin of Joseph John Gurney, was a good friend of Amelia Opie and her father.

*Amelia Opie*

My plans for future life are quite unfixed—but I *cannot* live in a *city*—& I think I shall, If I survive, travel before I settle any where—

My head aches so much I cannot write anymore—but thou will excuse me,

Thy affect[iona]te tho' afflicted friend

A. Opie

Not able now to be moved to have his bed made! He sleeps much—but is so clear when he wakes!

Our two {?elder} maids the *best* of nurses & I, take our turn for sitting up, & hope to require no other aid—

It was Mr Bland's *eldest son Tom*, not *George* whom you saw that died<sup>6</sup>—*Robert Alderson*<sup>7</sup> is so *attentive* and affect[iona]te!—

Address: Samuel Barber / Grasmere Cottage / Ambleside / Westmorland  
MS: Dunedin Public Library, Alfred and Isabel Reed Collection

<sup>6</sup> “Michael and Sophia Bland were Norwich residents. Opie wrote ‘Lines to the Memory of Sophia Bland Jun,’ an elegy for their daughter who died in 1818” (Shelley King, personal correspondence).

<sup>7</sup> Perhaps Robert Alderson (1752–1833), an uncle of Opie's, the brother of James Alderson. Shelley King suggests Opie's cousin Robert Jarvis Coke Alderson as another possibility (personal correspondence).

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*From Jane Porter's The Scottish Chiefs, 1856 edition. Appleton, New York  
(Image courtesy of the University of Otago Library).*

# V

## Jane Porter and the Heroic Past

VIRGINIA SUTHERLAND

Jane Porter (bap. 1776–1850) was one of Britain’s first historical novelists. Her most famous works, *Thaddeus of Warsaw* (1803) and *The Scottish Chiefs* (1810), enjoyed huge success and heavily influenced later authors, including the man now remembered as “the originator of Scotland’s romanticised past,” Sir Walter Scott (Gosta 2011, 707). Porter’s portrayal of William Wallace, like that of Polish patriot Thaddeus Sobieski in *Thaddeus*, was unabashedly sentimental: her heroes are models of chivalry, her heroines angelic, and the good for which they fight is absolute.

Porter was born in Durham, the third child of Jane (née Blenkinsop) (1745–1831) and William Porter (1735–1779), an Irish-born soldier who served twenty years as an army surgeon in the 6th Enniskillen Dragoons. Her siblings were Colonel John Porter (1772–1810); William Ogilvie Porter (1774–1850), later a widely travelled and well-respected physician; Sir Robert Ker Porter (1777–1842), renowned painter, soldier, writer and diplomat, friend of Tsar Alexander I and husband of a Russian princess; and Anna Maria Porter (1778–1832), a celebrated novelist who was Jane’s constant companion in writing, as in all else.

The death of William Porter in 1779 placed his young family under financial pressure and spurred his widow’s removal to Edinburgh with her three youngest children, Jane, Robert and

Maria. There they received an education from Mr. George Fulton of Niddry's Wynd, a dedicated schoolmaster said to bring out the best in his charges. The *Edinburgh Journal* champions his passionate retellings of "the glories of the historic heroes of Cambuskenneth and Bannockburn" as a key influence on Porter's later work (1834, vol. 5, 115); Porter herself honours him alongside "the maids in the nursery, the serving-man in the hall," and her mother's many Scottish visitors, some of whom still mourned the defeat of Bonnie Prince Charlie at Culloden a generation earlier (Jerdan 1834b, 1–2). One neighbour in particular, the low-born Luckie Forbes, would be remembered by Porter more than fifty years later. In her "Recollective Preface" to an 1840 edition of *The Scottish Chiefs*, Porter describes how the words of this "superior spirit" united Scotland's past with Christian virtue, and fostered in her a profound sense of admiration:

my aged companion, with her knitting in her hand ... would talk to me of the "awful times of the brave Sir William Wallace," when he fought for Scotland, "against a cruel tyrant, like unto them Abraham overcame" ... Her representation of his heart-rending sacrifices for the good of his country, called forth my tears and sobs ... and bewailing him, as I had but too recently done my own gallant father, I ceased not, during my whole future life, to remember, with something like a kindred sympathy, himself, and the dauntless friends who had followed him to honour or the grave.

(Porter 1854, x)

Tales like this fed the deep curiosity shared by each of the young Porter children, all three of whom showed promise at an early age. Jane is said to have been a voracious reader, sometimes rising before dawn to immerse herself in works of romance, religion, or chivalry (Jerdan 1834b, 2). As Gary Kelly has noted, many of these had a Gothic flavour (2002, ix), and some—Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, as well as modern German romances—can be seen as significant influences on her later writing. Anna Maria, the more light-hearted and much the more prolific of the Porter sisters, published her first work, *Artless Tales, or Romantic Effusions of the Heart*, at thirteen. It began a lifetime of composition, during which Jane's "ever-beloved" younger sister would produce almost twenty major novels (Porter 1833, 276; see also Shattock 1999, 985). Their brother, Robert Ker Porter,

was presented at thirteen to the Royal Academy of Art at Somerset House in London. His rapid progress culminated in 1800 with the painting that would make his name, *The Storming of Seringapatam*, an immense martial panorama depicting a part of the British Empire's conquest of southern India. Its 120-foot long canvas was displayed so that it curved around its audience, creating what Thomas Frognall Dibdin spoke of as "a thing dropt from the clouds—all fire, energy, intelligence, and admiration" (1836, 146). In a later letter to Dibdin, Jane proudly repeated the praise of Robert's mentor, Benjamin West: "A wonder!' [said] he. 'A wonder of the world!'" (145).

Porter's own artistic reception was more uncertain. Her first novel, *The Spirit of the Elbe*, had been published a year earlier to unflattering reviews. A tale of "ghosts, gremlins, and chimaeras dire," it was described by the *Monthly Mirror* as "a romance of the modern school, carelessly written and loosely constructed" (1799, vol. 7, 289). Worse, it was said to present "a representation of human passions not only indulged to dangerous excess, but pushed beyond those bounds which Nature seems to have prescribed to the actions and feelings of mankind" (quoted in Joukovsky 1990, 15).

This last comment was one that Porter would receive throughout her career, though often in decidedly less negative terms. Her sense of grandeur was a match for her brother's: both sought to depict moments of heroism as vividly as possible, as vivid as the heroic emotion itself. In Jane's case, this was born of admiration and a wish to encourage Christian piety, along with all of "those Moral Principles, which Luxury, and Evil Precept, have now so dangerously shaken" (Porter, quoted in Joukovsky 1990, 16). Inspired by mythologised heroes like Sir Philip Sidney, who as an author, soldier, poet and Christian seemed the height of moral excellence, the young Miss Porter sought to redeem the failures of English society:

I, though a poor weak woman, have so much of the patriot's spirit in my breast, as to mourn in my heart, the degeneracy of English Honour, and Chastity: — The Men, have forgotten the real meaning of the word which ought to rule their conduct: — And the Women, have ceased altogether to remember, that the soul of their Purity and Estimation ever had existence. (Porter, quoted in Joukovsky 1990, 16)

1. Jane Porter to Mrs. Sargant,<sup>1</sup> 21 June 1822<sup>2</sup>

12 York Place —

Long Ditton — Friday —

My dear Madam /

I began this from Town — but was obliged to close my paper as soon as begun — yet to shew I was prompt to express the delight your little memoirs of my Brother<sup>3</sup> gave to me, I write on the same piece.<sup>4</sup> — Indeed, dear Madam, nothing can be more happily couched with regard to him — for it seems his express image — I cannot say more; and my mother & my sister feel it the same:<sup>5</sup> — my mother shed tears over the manner in which you mention her<sup>6</sup> — Maria & myself can only repeat, that we are honoured by the commendations of such a pen — and are grateful for the kind wish with which the

<sup>1</sup> Jane Alice Sargant (d. 1869), author of *Ringstead Abbey* (1830) and various religious and political tracts. Sargant kept a school at Hackney and may have corresponded with Hannah More (“Smith, Sir Harry George Wakelyn” in *Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by Sir Leslie Stephen, 1882, 441. See also *Ringstead Abbey*, ii, and *An Englishwoman’s Letter to Mrs. Hannah More on the Present Crisis*, London, 1820).

<sup>2</sup> Porter indicates that the letter was written on a Friday. This was presumably June 21, as it is postmarked for the following Monday, “24·JU / 1822.”

<sup>3</sup> Sir Robert Ker Porter (1777–1842), the topic of an article by Sargant published in *The Ladies’ Monthly Magazine*, vol. 16, July 1822. He had made a brief return from overseas travel in 1820, and his *Travels in Georgia, Persia, Armenia, Ancient Babylonia, 1817–1820* was published in London the following year. At the time of this letter, Robert was living with his wife and daughter in St Petersburg. Jane’s only other surviving brother was William Ogilvie Porter (1774–1850), a physician, which whom she had a more distant relationship. He was seldom mentioned in her correspondence (Looser 2010a, 156).

<sup>4</sup> Porter presumably began the letter at 12 York Place, where she was staying with her friend Mrs. Patterson, and completed it at her home in Long Ditton, a small town near Hampton Court Palace. Porter, her mother and her sister lived there together from 1804 before moving to nearby Esher (“History of the Porter Family” in *Guide to the Porter Family Collection*).

<sup>5</sup> Jane Blenkinsop Porter (d. 1831) and Anna Maria Porter (1778–1832), often called simply Maria, Jane’s sister and a fellow novelist.

<sup>6</sup> Sargant proclaimed her “one of the happiest of her sex,” blessed by her children’s “public fame and private worth” (1822, 4).

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little narrative concludes.<sup>7</sup> — I shall send my Brother the sheet by the first dispatches, and I am sure he will be much gratified by so distinguished a remembrance from you. —

Maria desires me to say how sorry she is not to be able at present (f<or> the fatigue of eye-sight in finishing her work,)<sup>8</sup> to write to you herself — but with her kindest regards, united with mine, believe me,

Dear Madam,  
most truly yours  
*Jane Porter.* —

Address: M<sup>rs</sup> Sargeant / Clapton Square / near Hackney  
MS: Dunedin Public Library, Alfred and Isabel Reed Collection

<sup>7</sup> “We will ... close this very imperfect sketch, by sincerely wishing Sir R. every success in his future undertakings that he deserves, and heartily hoping that this amiable family may long live united in those ties of affection and unbroken harmony which have so long subsisted between them” ([Sargant] 1822, 4).

<sup>8</sup> This appears to be Anna Maria’s romance *Roche-Blanche, or the Hunters of the Pyrenees*, which was published in Britain, the United States and France later that year (Shattock 1999, 985; “Miss A. M. Porter’s Works” in *The Times* [London], Monday, Dec. 16, 1822). The novel’s opening dedication is dated June 1822.

# VI

## Sydney Morgan: Portraits of a Long Life

FIONA GLASGOW

Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan (c. 1778–1859) was a worldly woman. She described herself as “*ambitious*, far, far beyond the line of laudable *emulations*, perhaps beyond the power of being happy. Yet the strongest point of my ambition is to be *every inch a woman*” (Morgan 1862, 1.230, emphasis in original). Morgan’s literary contributions were numerous and varied. She wrote novels, travelogues, essays, plays, biographies and memoirs. Were she to learn that several of her letters had surfaced in New Zealand, it is hard to imagine she would be anything but delighted. She would see this spread of interest in her work as conquering the globe. Exceedingly popular in her own time, Morgan’s works fell out of favour in the years following her death. In recent years there has been a resurgence of interest in her writings. Owenson is being recognised as an important figure in the development of the “national tale,” placing her back into the spotlight among more recognised authors such as Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832) and Maria Edgeworth (1768–1849). Owenson wrote mainly fiction, but she often blurred the line between reality and make-believe by including in her novels as much political commentary as literary narrative.

Owenson blurred these lines in her own life as well, and the multiple stories of her birth would befit any of her heroines. She was most likely born in Dublin, on 25 December c. 1778. The more

interesting story of her birth, and the one that Morgan herself preferred, is also a happy metaphor for her literary presence. According to Morgan, she was born on board a ship voyaging between England and Ireland, on Christmas Day 1785. Notoriously self-conscious, she subtracted almost a decade from her age to maintain her youth for as long as possible. Her death certificate could only record that she was “about 80 years” at the time of her death, on 13 April 1859. Helping her to maintain this girlish image was her height: she reached just over four feet tall.

Her parentage, like her birth, also situates her as belonging neither entirely to Ireland nor to England. Her father was born Robert MacOwen in 1744. An Irish actor of modest popularity, he was informed by David Garrick (1717–1779) that he would be more successful if he anglicised his name, and thus he became Robert Owenson. In 1772 he married Jane Hill, who was from a prosperous evangelical Methodist British family in Shropshire, England.

Sydney and younger sister Olivia had an interesting childhood in “dear dirty Dublin,” where they grew up (Fitzpatrick 1859, 117). It is said she had trouble learning how to read, but was a precocious child who impressed her father’s acting peers with her abilities on the stage. The Owenson children were educated at home by their mother Jane, who kept her English sensibilities despite the move to Ireland. Jane Owenson’s strict religious teachings conflicted with the young Sydney’s love of the arts. Owenson’s most recent biographer, Mary Campbell, slyly remarks, “psalm singing and moral homilies could not compete with the songs and stories on offer from her father” (Campbell 1988, 23). Owenson herself remembered her mother feeling banished “to the land of potatoes and papists, both of which she hated with Christian inveteracy and culinary prejudice” (Morgan 1862, 1.62). When Jane died suddenly in 1789, their father sent them to boarding schools and then to finishing schools. But money was scarce since Robert Owenson’s financial schemes routinely ended in disaster, and by 1798 the family’s affairs were in a bad way.

Sydney, now a young woman, and very fond of her father, aided the family by becoming a governess. It was during her time working for the Featherstones of Bracklin Castle, Westmeath, that she published her first work, a collection of poetry entitled simply *Poems* (1801).

She was a popular addition to the Featherstone family; according to one biographer, “so brilliant were her sallies at dinner that ... the menservants were obliged to stuff their napkins down their throats till they were nearly suffocated” (Paston 1902, 108).

Owenson’s first two novels further introduced her to the literary circles of Dublin, but it was her third work, *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806), that shot her to stardom. An overnight success, the novel is an allegorical “national tale” following the romance between the Irish Princess Glorvina and the English Horatio, and it celebrates Irish traditions through the eyes of an Englishman. Julia M. Wright describes the “national tale” as a sub-genre of the novel which explores “cultural differences and the possibility of reconciliation between a dominant and an oppressed national group” (Wright 2007, 9). As became her custom, the heroine of her novel was based on herself; and after the novel was published, Owenson’s name became interchangeable with that of Glorvina. Like Owenson’s dainty person, the figure of Glorvina was “so impalpably delicate ... it seemed like the incarnation of some pure ethereal spirit” (Morgan 1850, 77). Mary Campbell writes of the success of the novel in terms of its commercial influence: the novel started “a passion for all things ‘native’ ... Ladies in the vice-regal court were now wearing their hair held in place by golden bodkins ... the drapers were advertising the ‘Glorvina’ mantle, a scarlet cloak, as a companion for ornament” (Campbell 1988, 71–72).

Praise and criticism came in equal parts in Owenson’s life. From early on her works were subject to harsh reviews. The most prolific voice among these belonged to Irish statesman and author, John Wilson Croker (1780–1857). He was known for his caustic criticisms, and Owenson often bore the full force of his attacks. She suggests in her memoirs that the source of his derision stemmed from her rejection of his romantic advances. Croker, disguised under the initials “M. T.,” wrote in the *Freeman’s Journal*, “I accuse Miss OWENSON of having written bad novels, and worse poetry—volumes without number, and verses without end” (15 December 1806).

After a few hit-and-miss publications, including a play, Owenson returned to the novel. These novels differ from the earlier ones in that they set aside the obvious theme of Anglo-Irish politics. However,

1. Lady Morgan to John Philip Davis,<sup>1</sup> [?1830]

D<sup>r</sup> Sir,

The original of y<sup>r</sup> pretty drawing<sup>2</sup> is at present passing a few days in Kildare Street<sup>3</sup> and will be most happy to sit for you any morning or evening after *tomorrow morning*.—A thousand thanks for the *beautiful* engraving. It is quite perfect both in idea and execution, very truly &c

Sydney Morgan

Wednesday evening

As I can *write* while you *draw* it would save time if you would have the kindness and come to *us*, as I am now much pressed by that *Seccatore*<sup>4</sup> a *Printer's devil*.<sup>5</sup>

Address: Davis Esq<sup>r</sup> / Castle

MS: Private collection, Dunedin

<sup>1</sup> John Philip “Pope” Davis (1784–1862), English portrait artist.

<sup>2</sup> The original drawing’s location is unknown. An engraving by T. Wright after Davis’s drawing appears in *Lady Morgan’s France in 1829–30* (1830). It seems possible that this is the engraving Morgan mentions later in the letter; hence the proposed year.

<sup>3</sup> The Morgans lived at 35 Kildare Street, Dublin from 1812–1837.

<sup>4</sup> *Seccatore* is the Italian word for “nuisance, bother.”

<sup>5</sup> A printer’s assistant.

# VII

## Where Her Strength Lay: New Letters of Lucy Aikin

PETRA WESTROPP

Lucy Aikin (1781–1864) is said to have first envisioned her future as a writer at the same moment she noticed the unequal treatment of men and women. She was six years old, and her mother was scolding her for not sharing: “You should be willing to give your brother part of your tart” (Aikin 1864, xvii). Aikin responded at length as a means to justify what she had done, to which her father commented that she was exceptionally eloquent (Knapp 1994). It was in response to this moment that Aikin realised “Had I been a boy, it might have made me an orator; as it was, it incited me to exert to the utmost, by tongue and pen, all the power of words I possessed or could ever acquire—I had learned where my strength lay” (Aikin 1864, xvii).

Aikin has been described as the most renowned historian of her day. She was the first female biographer in England to centre her writing on a broad study in original documents and was commended in her lifetime as one who “has done more to illustrate modern English history than almost any of the numerous and able writers, who, within the last fifty years, have turned their head to the subject” (“Review” 1834, 145). Despite her reputation and a rising interest in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century women’s contributions to historiography, Aikin and her writings have been overlooked. The three letters printed below offer some promising leads for future research.

Aikin was born in Warrington, England, on 6 November 1781. She was the fourth child and sole daughter of physician and author John Aikin (1747–1822) and Martha Jennings Aikin (d. 1830). Her parents and her three brothers, Arthur (1773–1854), Charles Rochemont (1775–1847), and Edmund (1780–1820), moved to Yarmouth in 1784 and remained there until 1792. Aikin loved Yarmouth and recollects appreciating the landscape for the first time: “My first view of the ocean from Yarmouth jetty filled my little bosom with sentiments too big for utterance and the sea was my never-failing source of wonder and delight during all the years that I dwelt beside its murmurs” (Aikin 1864, xviii). In 1792, the Aikins moved to London for five years until Dr. Aikin’s health began to fail and he could no longer practice. Dr. Aikin shared in the common belief that nature and the countryside would help invigorate his condition, so he moved his family to Stoke Newington, where they lived until his death in 1822 (Knapp 1994). Aikin then moved with her mother to Hampstead.

Family played an important role in Aikin’s childhood, particularly because she was only ever privately taught. She spent one day at school; it proved to be an unhappy experience. “I soon discovered that I was far beyond my school-fellows of the same age. Lessons which occupied them half the morning I would learn in a few minutes, and my reading was incomparably better” (Aikin 1864, xv). As a result, her father assumed the role of primary tutor, though her aunt Anna Letitia Aikin Barbauld (1743–1825) also served as an important guide in her learning. Anna Barbauld has been praised as one of the most important writers of early Romanticism, producing works that range from poetry to children’s literature. Barbauld’s *Hymns in Prose for Children* was designed to assist children in the devotional aspect of religion and had a particularly profound effect on Aikin: “the hymns gave me the idea of something bright and glorious, hung on high above my present reach, but not above my aspirations. They gave me first the sentiment of sublimity, and of the Author of all that is sublime. They taught me piety” (Aikin 1864, xviii). While Aikin never forgot the nickname “little dunce” her grandmother bestowed upon her because she did not learn to read as fast as her famous aunt or any of her brothers, this did not stop her from swiftly coming into her own as a writer (Turzynski 1996). She was fluent in English, French, Italian

and Latin, and she wrote her first periodical contribution when she was only seventeen. Despite the high expectations within the Aikin household, Aikin grew up within a family who greatly cherished one another. This afforded her a model of family living mirrored in all her later writings for children (Turzynski 1996).

Over her lifetime, Aikin displayed a great literary versatility, writing fiction, poetry, historical biography, letters and adaptations of classic literature. However, she was best known in her lifetime, and for many decades after, for her three two-volume court histories: *Memoirs of the Court of Queen Elizabeth* (1818), *Memoirs of the Court of James I* (1822), and *Memoirs of the Court of Charles I* (1833). Reviewers and readers alike were stunned by Aikin's proficiency in organising a huge amount of material—collected from both “print and manuscript collections, in private hands and public institutions,” dispersed across the country—and converting it into an entertaining and unbiased narrative from Elizabeth's birth in 1533 to Charles I's death in 1649 (Levy 2012, 157). While entertaining, the volumes were still critical, especially of all religious persecution, because of her perspective as a dissenting liberal.

While not as popular, her four-part poem, *Epistles on the Character and Condition of Women in Various Ages and Nations* (1810), was equally original. *Epistles on Women* has been described as “the first text in English to re-write the entire history of Western culture, from the Creation of Genesis through the eighteenth century, from a feminist perspective, explicitly defining the practices and consequences of a patriarchal social system” (Mellor 2010, 430). In contrast to the male authors of histories of this period, women authors such as Aikin showed that the lives and actions of women were significant in history. Aikin was an ardent supporter of higher education and greater civil rights for women, despite never being, or even being regarded as, a radical.

*Epistles on Women* and the court histories were not the only literary achievements Aikin accomplished in her lifetime. Her family's desire to promote education spurred Aikin into translating and adapting informational works for young readers. These included her personal work as well as Anna Barbauld's, but principally presented selections from English Augustan writers (Turzynski 1996). Her books for

1. Lucy Aikin to Charles Wesley,<sup>2</sup> 19 January [1827]<sup>3</sup>

Dear sir,

Miss Wesley's approbation of my little memoir<sup>4</sup> highly gratified me; she could well judge of the resemblance, which was all I aimed at, & if her affection is satisfied, I think it cannot at least be very defective in the leading features.

Often during the last year I have enquired of our poor friend respecting the state of Miss Wesley's health; & I had hoped from her reports that a greater progress had been made towards the recovery of her sight—I trust however that it is in progress, & that time & care will yet restore her.

I must not take to myself the credit of an attention undeservedly; & therefore I must apprise you, that there ~~must have~~ <sup>has</sup> been some mistake as to my calling on Miss Wesley, which in fact I never did. But when the severity of the season has a little abated, which renders me at present much of an invalid, I will make an effort to see her, that we may talk together of our dear friend, & of our common loss; & I hope my mother,<sup>5</sup> who is just beginning to go abroad after a confinement of several weeks, may be able to accompany me, as she is now restored to health, though still requiring caution.

The loss of a mutual friend is a strong tie between survivors; tell Miss Wesley that I feel it so, & sincerely wish for some opportunities of intercourse. My mother begs to write in kind regards to her with,

Yours very tr<uly>

Lucy Aiki<n>

Hampstead Jan. 19

<sup>2</sup> Charles Wesley Jr. (1757–1834) and Sarah Wesley (1759–1828), children of Charles Wesley (1707–1788), hymn-writer and founder of Methodism.

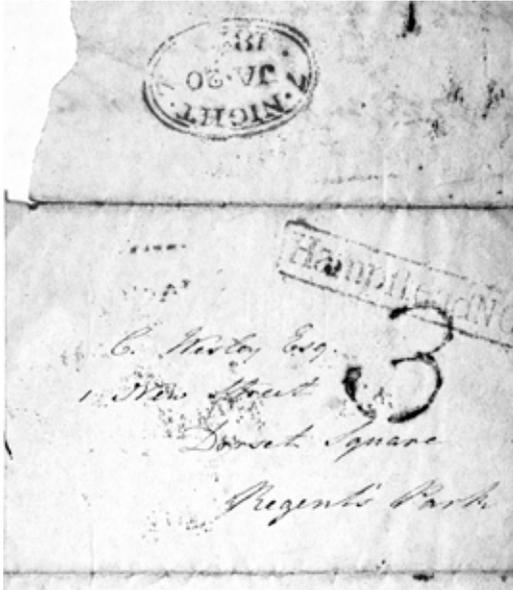
<sup>3</sup> Though the letter's postmark is unclear, an accompanying slip of paper reads "Lucy Aikin (a precious relic) on Miss Benger to Ch. Wesley Esq." Historian and novelist Elizabeth Benger (bap. 1775) died 9 January 1827.

<sup>4</sup> Aikin's memoir of Benger first appeared in the 27 January 1827 *Mirror of Literature*. Perhaps she had sent Sarah Wesley a draft copy.

<sup>5</sup> Martha Jennings Aikin (d. 1830).

*In Her Hand*

Address: C. Wesley Esq. / 1 New Street / Dorset Square / Regent's Park  
MS: Dunedin Public Library, Alfred and Isabel Reed Collection, inserted  
by Alfred Reed in James Boswell's *The Life of Samuel Johnson* (1907, vol. 5  
illustrated edition) between 558 and 559.



*Letter of 20 January [1827] to C. Wesley Esq. from Hampstead  
(Alfred and Isabel Reed Collection).*

# VIII

## Lady Annabella Byron: A “Most Excellent Woman”

VEENA PATEL



*Lady Byron, age twenty-four*  
(National Portrait Gallery).<sup>1</sup>

The inclusion of Lady Anne Isabella “Annabella” Noel Byron [née Milbanke] (1792–1860) in this book may appear slightly anomalous. She shares these pages with leading female literary figures of the

<sup>1</sup> Page, R. *Lady Byron*, stipple engraving, 1 June 1816 (Martin Collection, published with permission of the © National Portrait Gallery, London).

Romantic period, though she published nothing herself.<sup>2</sup> However, while Lady Byron is technically not an ‘authoress,’ she was a well-known figure in her time. In fact, it is likely that she was a frequent topic of conversation among the very same readers of the authors discussed in this book.<sup>3</sup> The public interest in Lady Byron was almost wholly attributable to her marriage to one of the most influential Romantic poets, George Gordon Noel Byron, sixth Baron Byron (1788–1824), despite the fact their marriage lasted only 456 days.<sup>4</sup> Though she did not share the trials and tribulations of publication with the other writers included here, her letters reveal she shared the same concerns about health, friendship and good servants. Further, though history has firmly cast Lady Byron in her husband’s shadow, it should not be forgotten that she was an influential and important woman. She was an avid philanthropist concerned with education of the underprivileged and the anti-slavery movement. She was also academically gifted and notoriously widely read. Lady Byron was an important and oft-talked about figure, and an understanding of her as a woman in her own right enriches our understanding of the period.

The five letters presented in this chapter fall between 1815 and 1829. They are all sourced from New Zealand, one from the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington (11 April 1815), one from Special Collections, Auckland Libraries (27 March 1821), and the rest from the Reed Collection of the Dunedin Public Library. For those reading solely for an interest in Lord Byron (shame on you), the letters contain only one reference to Lady Byron’s husband, in the 11 April 1815 letter. The letters were not all written by Lady Byron, with the two letters from 1829 written by others. The 22 April 1829 letter was written by her cousin-in-law’s wife, Elizabeth Mary Chandos-Pole Byron, and her long-term lawyer and friend Dr. Stephen Lushington (1745–1815) wrote the 4 October 1829 letter. Lady Byron’s letter

<sup>2</sup> Other than her defence of her parents in “Remarks Occasioned by Mr Moore’s *Life of Lord Byron*,” published in the *London Literary Gazette* (1830): 185–86 and included in the second edition of *Life of Lord Byron* (Moore 1844).

<sup>3</sup> A further difference exists between Lady Byron and the authors with whom she shares this book: Lady Byron is the only individual who is referred to by her title in order to avoid potential confusion with her (in)famous husband.

<sup>4</sup> Calculation based on the date Byron left her husband to return to her parents, 21 April 1816.

writing style has been described as humorless, pedantic, intellectually superior and sermonising (Elwin 1962, 173). The following letters do not exhibit all these features but do demonstrate her serious nature and strict morality.

### **All Four Seasons: A Biography of Lady Byron**

It is said of Lady Byron that her life was only “Spring and Winter” (Mayne 1929, 314), yet all lives must have a summer and autumn. Perhaps it is only in considering her life outside her husband’s shadow that all four seasons become visible. Lady Byron was the much-awaited child of Sir Ralph Milbanke [afterwards Noel], the sixth Baronet (1747–1825) and his wife Judith (1751–1822). She was born Miss ‘Annabella’ Milbanke and as the only child born to a mother of forty, the Milbanke’s precious “little angel” was the centre and autocrat of their lives. Judith admitted in a letter to her aunt, Lady Gosford, that Annabella Milbanke was “*Governess in Chief* of Papa, Mama & the whole Family” (Elwin 1962, 62). Her unchallenged and absolute reign of the Milbanke’s domestic sphere fostered an uncompromising attitude in Miss Milbanke, which would come up against an equally formidable obstinacy in Lord Byron.

Though neither parent was known for intellect, Annabella Milbanke was an academically gifted child. She had a natural affinity for mathematics and astronomy, leading Lord Byron to famously dub her his “Princess of Parallelograms.” This barbed title reflected not only ‘Princess’ Byron’s intellectual prowess but also her stubborn inflexibility; she was a straight line that would not bend to compromise with anyone (Stark 1982, 135). Her passions were not exclusively limited to the scientific realm. In fact, as a child Miss Milbanke had a sincere desire to be a writer. Her admiration and formidable consumption of literature was constant throughout her life (Elwin 1962, 82–83). Perhaps this admiration led her to surround herself with many of the literary greats of her time: she was not only married to one of the most famous writers of the era, but also close friends with Joanna Baillie and (until their estrangement in 1852) with Anna Jameson.

Despite being “humble slave[s]” of their daughter, Sir Ralph and his wife sowed the seed of philanthropic zeal that dramatically

**1. Lady Annabella Byron to Lady Judith Milbanke,<sup>12</sup>  
11 April 1815**

5 o'clock

I have seen Sir H. Halford who gives as the result of his conference with Baillie<sup>13</sup> that the case is hopeless—and that there is the most urgent necessity for your coming immediately—There is a general decay of his Constitution<sup>14</sup>—symptoms of water on the Chest, as well as general paralysis—You can come here<sup>15</sup>—or to his house,<sup>16</sup> as Lady Jane leaves him tomorrow<sup>17</sup>—so don't think about lodging, but pray come as soon as possible—He would receive the greatest satisfaction from it I am sure—

In these circumstances I cannot go to [?Court]. I shall take every care therefore be as little anxious as the melancholy circumstances will allow—

Your most affect<sup>te</sup>,

AIB

B's love<sup>18</sup>—and he wishes you very much to come here

Address: To ^The^ Lady Milbanke / Seaham / Stockton Upon Tees  
MS: MS-Papers-0083-469, Alexander Turnbull Library

<sup>12</sup> Lady Judith Milbanke [later Noel] (1751–1822), mother of Lady Byron. She resided with her husband Sir Ralph Milbanke [later Noel], the sixth Baronet (1747–1825) at Seaham Hall, Seaham, Stockton-Upon-Tees, County Durham.

<sup>13</sup> Sir Henry Halford, Baronet (1766–1844), physician to Lord Wentworth and Sir Ralph and Judith Milbanke, conference with Matthew Baillie (1761–1823), London doctor consulted regarding Lord Wentworth's health and Lord Byron's sanity (1816), brother of Joanna Baillie (1762–1851), playwright, poet and friend of Lady Byron.

<sup>14</sup> Health of Thomas Noel, second Viscount Wentworth of Wellesborough (1745–1815), brother of Lady Judith Milbanke and uncle of Lady Annabella Byron (Elwin 1962, 11).

<sup>15</sup> The Byron's London house, 13 Piccadilly Street (Elwin 1962, 301).

<sup>16</sup> Edward Street, Marylebone, Middlesex, England.

<sup>17</sup> Possibly Lady Jane Aston [née Henley](d. 1823), Lord Wentworth's sister-in-law.

<sup>18</sup> Lord George Gordon Byron, sixth Baron Byron (1788–1824), poet and Lady Byron's husband.

*In Her Hand*



*Eighteenth-century caricature of fashion for “high heads” (George Paston [pseud.], Social Caricature in the Eighteenth Century, London: Methuen, 1905, 22). See Felicia Hemans’s letter to Miss Chorley, p. 189.*

# IX

## Felicia Hemans: “Foi de poète”

HOPE WILSON

*Were there to be a feminine literary house of commons,  
Felicia Hemans might very worthily be called to fill the  
chair as the speaker—a representative of the whole body.  
(Maria Jane Jewsbury, 1831, quoted in Wolfson 2000, 562)*

History—subject to the insistence of recent feminist scholarship—is in the process of redelivering Felicia Hemans to the world. Although she was one of the most widely read poets of the nineteenth century, her reputation suffered after her death and has only enjoyed a gradual rehabilitation over the last forty years. Literary scholars, including Paula Feldman, Nanora Sweet and Susan Wolfson, have given Hemans the chance to reclaim her place as a prominent voice not only of the feminine ‘counter-canon’ but also of the Romantic era.

During the course of her life Hemans’s work received overwhelmingly positive reviews and reached the height of popularity in much of the English-speaking world by the mid-1820s. This wave of celebrity and admiration did not abate until decades after her early passing in 1835. Though Hemans’s life was briefer than some—she lived only forty-one years, from 1793 to 1835—she was highly regarded and admired during her career and her work was widely reproduced in Europe and North America. As the twenty-first century dawns, the great poet and author of works such as the collection *Records of Woman*, and individual poems—including the once popular favourites

“The Homes of England” and “The Graves of a Household”—has been firmly reinstated in the Romantic canon.

In this chapter appear four previously unpublished letters: three in Hemans’s hand and one authored by the poet Margaret Holford (1778–1852). These letters, three from the Reed Collection in Dunedin and one from the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington, are discussed in the hope that they may contribute to the significant body of scholarship which already surrounds Felicia Hemans and her poetry.

Felicia Browne was born to parents George and Felicity Browne in Liverpool on 25 September 1793. Her childhood was characterised by her love for reading and her access to an extensive family library. Her mother, Felicity Browne (1766–1827), was a valuable formative influence for the budding poet and encouraged her daughter’s use of the library. Felicia was an avid reader from a young age and completed a thorough self-education in poetry as well as music, art, and multiple languages.

In 1800, due to financial difficulties, the Brownes resettled in Gwrych, near Abergele, in North Wales. This relocation proved inspiring for the young Felicia and the Welsh landscape had a powerful influence on her imagination; her later poetry frequently reflects the isolated beauty of the environment.



*Felicia Hemans*  
(Alfred and Isabel Reed Collection).

Though young, Felicia published her first volume of poetry in 1808 with the support and financial backing of a family friend. Entitled *Poems* and published by Cadell and Davies, the work of the fourteen-year old received a lukewarm critical reception. That said, the teenage Percy Shelley did write to offer his condolences about the disappointing reviews, and the pair corresponded briefly before her mother intervened. This recognition constituted Felicia’s poetical debut and hinted at the

potential of the young poet. *Poems* was Felicia's first exposure to the industry that would provide her with occupation, livelihood, and unbidden celebrity status until her death.

The world that received young Felicia Browne's *Poems* in 1808 was one that afforded literature a growing societal importance. The Romantic period—with its increased literacy, prevalence of leisure reading, and flourishing publishing industry—allowed women to succeed as writers. This success owed much to the liminal space occupied by writing; a space somewhere between the public and the private realm. Throughout her life Felicia was actively engaged in the business of writing; this idea is explored in Feldman's "The Poet and the Profits: Felicia Hemans and the Literary Marketplace" of 1997. Felicia succeeded by obscuring the effort and discipline required to write for profit and, instead, emphasising her poetry's womanliness. This conflict between her public image and the reality of the ideas and events addressed in her writing is of much interest to those who study her today. Wolfson remarks, "She wrote in an intensely personal way of socially specific conflicts: between being an artist and being a woman; between affection and ambition, between family and fame" (2000, xvii).

In 1812, Felicia married Captain Alfred Hemans (1781–1827) a wounded war veteran. Alfred had declared his love in 1809, but Felicia's parents had resisted the pairing, and Captain Hemans departed to fight in the Peninsular and Low Country campaigns on the Spanish front. Though these beginnings—of forbidden love, Felicia's youth, and war—suggest much romantic potential in the matching, theirs was a rather anticlimactic love story that ended with an ellipsis rather than a full stop. The couple initially settled in Daventry in 1812 but soon returned to the Browne household in Bronwylfa, Wales with their young son, Arthur, in early 1814, after Captain Hemans was released without pay from the Northamptonshire local militia.

The Hemanses procreated with great proclivity during the brief and unhappy period of their marriage together: five sons were born to the couple in the course of six years. These six years of marriage saw Felicia's career expand as rapidly as her family. Her work began to receive critical commendation, and demand for her poetry took off. Her most significant publications during the period include *The*

1. Felicia Hemans to Fanny Luxmoore, [1817–1830]<sup>2</sup>

My dear Miss Fanny,

I really feel better, though I did not receive my blister<sup>3</sup> last night, owing to some mistake or other—not my fault, I assure you, *foi de poète*<sup>4</sup>—I suppose I must have it to-night, and shall resign<sup>5</sup> myself to my fate with much resignation, in as much as the < ><sup>6</sup> are to dine here to-morrow, and I think the blister by far the more Agreeable Society.—Would you send me a few cough-pills for little Henry,<sup>7</sup> who has a very severe cold?—I should also be glad of a little Arrow-root, and a frank for Blackwood.<sup>8</sup>—Am I not still the true [?Horse]-luck's daughter?<sup>9</sup>—Ever y<sup>r</sup> affect<sup>e</sup>. F.H.

Address: none

MS: Dunedin Public Library, Alfred and Isabel Reed Collection

<sup>2</sup> Fanny Luxmoore (b. 1796), daughter of John Luxmoore (1756–1830), bishop of St. Asaph. Another hand has added that this is a letter “to Miss Luxmoore.” Letter dates from between 1817 (birth of Henry William Hemans) and 1830 (death of John Luxmoore).

<sup>3</sup> Blisters were used to counter irritants. The term describes anything applied to raise a blister: a vesicatory.

<sup>4</sup> “By the faith of a poet.”

<sup>5</sup> Part of the page edge is torn. Though it seems odd that Hemans used “resign” and “resignation” in the same sentence, “resign” is the most logical fit considering the letters that can be seen.

<sup>6</sup> Name has been erased from letter.

<sup>7</sup> Henry William Hemans (1817–1871), Hemans's fourth son.

<sup>8</sup> Arrowroot was commonly used in cookery and medicine. John Luxmoore, as a bishop, had the “frank” which allowed free postage. Hemans requests a frank for postage to the publishing firm, Blackwood's. On Blackwood's and Hemans, see Sweet 2013.

<sup>9</sup> “Worse-luck's daughter” seems the appropriate reading but Hemans has clearly used the letter “H.”

# X

## The Roles and Responsibilities of Anna Jameson

SAMANTHA MCKEGG

A celebrated writer in her lifetime, author and art historian Anna Brownell Jameson (1794–1860) produced a wealth of non-fiction writing. Between 1826 and 1864, Jameson published twenty books and a large number of articles and reviews on a wide range of non-fiction topics, including Shakespeare criticism, history, biography and travel writing. These works are deserving of credit as well-researched and elegantly written pieces of prose and have received favourable academic attention in recent years. Jameson is unique amongst the writers gathered in this collection: she was not only an author but also an art historian who carried out her thorough research in libraries, galleries and collections in Britain and overseas. She is considered to be one of the first professional female art historians (Booth 1999, 259), but she did not belong to any school of thought, and was mostly self-taught in her writing and criticism (Erskine 1915, 10). During an era that valued knowledge, Jameson provided works that remained informative and relevant well into the twentieth century. Modern feminists have also championed Anna Jameson for her literary contributions (Booth 1999, 259). Writing by women of the time was predominantly based around domestic life. Jameson, however, went beyond domesticity and explored countries and cultural aspects far from home.

Anna Jameson was a celebrated writer and historian who received much praise from her literary friends, among them,

Maria Jane Jewsbury, Joanna Baillie, Lady Byron, Lady Morgan, and Elizabeth Gaskell. In response to her published work, Jameson was provided with great opportunities and received much appreciation from readers and friends. However, money always remained an issue. In this dichotomy of the experience of women writers of the Romantic era we can see the many roles Jameson had to fulfill as a writer and as a woman. The multitude of responsibilities that Jameson took on in her life is apparent through the commitment to her published writing, and also the character that is shown in her private writing. She was a friend, confidant and advisor to those she was close to, but also an admired writer, a deal maker and the hardworking provider for her many familial dependents. A handful of the roles Jameson fulfilled in her life are revealed in the letters printed in this volume. The letters vary in subject, place and time, but are unified by the voice of a passionate and intelligent woman, who is at times caring and helpful, and at others persuasive and firm.

§

Anna Brownell Jameson (née Murphy) was born in Dublin on 19 May 1794 and died in London at the age of sixty-five. Jameson, the daughter of an Irish father and English mother, was introduced to art at a young age through her father Denis Brownell Murphy (d. 1842), a painter of miniatures. The family immigrated to England in 1802 and settled in London in 1806. Jameson was always close to her family and from the age of eleven she took over the education of her four younger sisters, two of whom never married and would require her financial assistance throughout their lives. She also came to support both of her parents and her niece (and future biographer), Gerardine Bate Macpherson (d.1878). Between 1810 and 1825, she worked as a governess for various families. This was a role she retained her whole life as she had no children of her own but was a mentor and provider for many.

As a governess for the Rowles family in 1821, Jameson travelled abroad for the first time and began her self-education in travel writing and art criticism. In correspondence with her family she wrote fondly of the trip and shared charming details of her perspectives on the places, people and art she saw (see Erskine 1915, 39–66). She described the great pleasure she had in “beholding these objects of which I have

*Anna Jameson*

*dreamed* from my very childhood,” but she was dependent on her employers and found the “parade and fuss” of travelling with them vexing (Thomas 1967, 15, emphasis in original). The trip inspired Jameson’s first published book, *The Diary of an Ennuyée* (1826). It was initially printed anonymously under the title *Diary of a Lady*, and combined non-fiction passages on travel and art with a fictional romance. Jameson wrote to her mother, “I keep two journals—one contains merely notes of the places we see and—the other . . . contains an exact and faithful account of my own impressions with all the little anecdotes, sketches of character etc.” (Erskine 1915, 43). However, Jameson never returned to the hybrid style she used in *Diary*.



*“Anna Murphy”—age sixteen, after a miniature  
by her father, Denis Brownell Murphy.*

Jameson’s marriage would prove to be significant for the publication of *Diary*, and for her literary career as a whole. Anna Jameson met barrister Robert Sympson Jameson (1798–1854) in the winter of 1820–1821 (Thomas 1967, 23). It is likely that the couple were initially attracted through a mutual interest in art and literature. Robert was a talented painter and had connections to many literary figures of the time, including essayist Charles Lamb, and barrister and writer Basil Montagu (Thomas 1967, 21). Robert and Anna were

1. Anna Jameson to Martin Colnaghi,<sup>3</sup> 10 April 1828

Dear Sir—I enclose you the account of the Items marked in your list of queries—it may not be very business like—but I flatter myself it is intelligible & faithful—I have a few observations to add—

I wish you to understand perfectly that I have acted towards you in the most direct manner—I do not wish to have any bargaining—I have not mentioned one sum, with the intention of accepting another & a lower sum[.] *I will not do so—first*, because I know the value of the work is greater than the sum I ask for it—*secondly*, because I have a present opportunity of purchasing an annuity for my mother for 1200 guineas—a less sum would not answer the purpose & would be no temptation.<sup>4</sup>

The work<sup>5</sup> at present enjoys a certain degree of celebrity—but it has never been properly managed—& the difficulties I have had to contend with & the needless expenses I have incurred astonish me when I look back—& when I think what I have done in spite of all difficulties, it is clear that a person in trade ought to make it a *very* successful speculation—it has never been advertised properly several booksellers & printsellers in London I find never *heard* of it—& this

<sup>3</sup> Martin Colnaghi (1792–1851), an art dealer and print seller who traded under Colnaghi & Co. from 1825, and from 1845 traded under Colnaghi and Puckle.

<sup>4</sup> Jameson's father, Denis Brownell Murphy (d.1842), was said not to have made any regular living from 1828 (Johnston 1997, 2). Jameson was a provider from this time on for her father and mother.

<sup>5</sup> The work referred to is a set of twenty-one miniatures painted by her father, Denis Brownell Murphy. This is confirmed by two contemporary letters between Jameson and Colnaghi held by the Special Collections Library at Pennsylvania State University and one held at the Morgan Library and Museum. The miniatures were a copy of Sir Peter Lely's "Beauties," and painted at the request of Princess Charlotte. The series was not completed before Princess Charlotte's death in 1817, and when sent to her husband for collection of payment, were returned to Murphy. Sir Gerard Noel, a friend of Murphy, eventually purchased the series and decided that the series should be published with accompanying text by Anna Jameson. When Jameson stated the series "enjoys a certain degree of celebrity," she was referring to the 1826 publications of "The Windsor Beauties" and "The Hampton Court Beauties" in the *New Monthly Magazine*. The pictures were eventually published with commentary by Jameson in 1833 by H. Colburn with the title *Beauties of the Court of King Charles the Second: a Series of Portraits*.

is partly the fault or negligence of my publishers—but *chacun pour soi et Dieu pour tous*<sup>6</sup> all the world over.

On reflection & advice from my best friends, I have thus decided—If you cannot conveniently undertake the work, it is my intention to offer it on the same terms to your brother Mr Dominic Colnaghi<sup>7</sup>—if he refuses it—& my own bookseller demurs at giving up to me the management of the engravings—then I shall drop the work in its present state—& sell the engravings—it is painful to disappoint my subscribers—but it would be worse far to injure artists and tradesmen by incurring debts on the work I could not be certain of paying—& this would be the more dishonourable as Mr Jameson will be abroad<sup>8</sup> & I should not be liable—the Power of attorney in my possession enables me to sell & assign over the work legally<sup>9</sup>—

I should regret to drop the work—but I could not *repent* as long as I have incurred no actual loss—& injured no one willingly—

Let me have your answer before Wednesday—because Mr Jameson has not yet sailed—& his signature may be expedient to any arrangement between me & others—

I am d<sup>r</sup> Sir yours

Anna Jameson

Bond St

April 10<sup>th</sup> 1828

Address: 23 Cockspur Street, London<sup>10</sup>

MS: Dunedin Public Library, Alfred and Isabel Reed Collection

<sup>6</sup> A French proverb that translates: “every man for himself and God for all.”

<sup>7</sup> Dominic Charles Colnaghi (1790–1879), the older brother of Martin Colnaghi. Dominic, Martin and their father, Paul Colnaghi (1751–1833) had previously run Colnaghi & Co. together. In 1824 Martin sued his older brother and father due to a disagreement over his father’s possible retirement and settlement offer to his sons. Dominic and Paul settled the suit by buying out Martin, and began trading as P. and D. Colnaghi & Co. at a new address. Martin remained at the original Cockspur Street address.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Sympson Jameson (1798–1854), barrister and husband of Anna Jameson. He took up the position of puisne judge to Dominica in 1829.

<sup>9</sup> Jameson makes the point that when her husband is overseas, she can legally bargain and not be at risk of being sued for debt.

<sup>10</sup> Colnaghi & Co. operated at 23 Cockspur Street from 1799.

# XI

## Maria Jane Jewsbury: “A Genius Who Died Young”

DOMINIC TAY

The city of Dunedin, New Zealand is perhaps an unexpected home for a collection of letters from women writers of the Romantic period, but this is what can be found in the Alfred and Isabel Reed Collection in the Dunedin Public Library. Among the authors whose correspondence has wound up half a world away from its intended reader is the poet and essayist Maria Jane Jewsbury (1800–1833). Jewsbury’s short life was marked by not only her literary contributions—four books, as well as countless reviews, essays, and poems published in the annuals—but also her association with William Wordsworth (1770–1850), who positioned himself as Jewsbury’s mentor after receiving a personal copy of her first collection of writing. What followed was a friendship that lasted until Jewsbury’s early death at the age of 32. Sadly, much of her work was lost after her passing, and Jewsbury—who had been such an acclaimed and well-known writer in her day—faded into obscurity. Academic study of Jewsbury has experienced a small revival in recent years, though she still remains relatively unknown. No complete collection of her writing has yet been compiled, nor have her letters been extensively published. The Reed Collection has contributions to offer to each.

The Reed Collection holds four of Jewsbury’s letters, acquired in a package of miscellaneous documents from London bookseller Edward George Friehold in June 1928. But one of the letters is not



*Maria Jane Jewsbury (1800–1833). Engraved by John Cochran, 1832  
(Alfred and Isabel Reed Collection).*

like the others: the letter dated 7 July 1829 includes a manuscript for an article that appears never to have been published. This article, entitled “The Morning after a Journey,” was composed after Jewsbury visited Wordsworth and his family for three weeks in mid-1829 and makes tactful reference to this specific visit. Although it was sent to a publisher, the essay was ultimately returned to Jewsbury and she passed it on to a friend. In a remarkable coincidence, two of the other letters in the collection were written in the same week as this manuscript, providing future scholars with new insight into Jewsbury’s life, career, and relationships in July 1829.

\* \* \*

Maria Jane Jewsbury was born on 25 October 1800 in Measham, Derbyshire. Her family valued education, and her parents Thomas, a cotton manufacturer, and Maria, who had herself been educated,

sent their eldest daughter to Miss Adams's school in Shenstone, Staffordshire. Jane, as she was known to family and friends, remained in formal education until the age of fourteen, when she was forced to withdraw on the grounds of ill health. She continued her studies from home, though this became difficult when she was forced to take on the responsibility of running the household after her mother's death in 1819. By this time, the Jewsburies were living in Manchester, where they had moved after Thomas's Measham business had folded. While he pursued a career in insurance, his eldest daughter was left to care for her five younger siblings, the youngest of whom was only an infant. She would continue in this role for the majority of her life.

Initially, Jewsbury found her household responsibilities a great burden. She had always had an active imagination and from the age of nine held ambitions to write and publish a book, to make her name as an author and move in literary circles (Clarke 1990, 51). Child rearing, though, was now the priority. Jewsbury soon found her new lifestyle overwhelmingly busy; ten years later she would confess to her fellow author and friend Felicia Hemans that

My life after eighteen became so painfully, laboriously domestic, that it was an absolute duty to crush intellectual tastes. I not only did not know a single author, but I did not know a single person of superior mind,—I did not even know how wretchedly deficient my own cultivation was. (quoted in Chorley 1836, 165)

Through a process of systematic reading in the evenings, Jewsbury overcame the limits placed upon her. She read widely, wrote frequently, and eventually contributed articles to the *Manchester Gazette*. Her writing caught the eye of Alaric Watts (1797–1864), who encouraged her to seek further publication. Throughout the rest of her life, Jewsbury's writing was published in many of the literary annuals including *Forget-Me-Not*, *Friendship's Offering*, and *Literary Souvenir*. Her early works were initially published under the initials "M. J. J.," a pseudonym which allowed Jewsbury to avoid public perceptions of women writers and employ a masculine tone (Wilkes 2010, 24). By 1825, Jewsbury had penned enough material to publish a book of short essays and poetry which she called *Phantasmagoria; or Sketches of Life and Literature*. The publication of this book was to define the early stages of her career: Jewsbury would later be identified in

1. Maria Jane Jewsbury to [?Frederic Shoberl], [1825–1827]<sup>1</sup>

Sir

My friend Mr Watts<sup>2</sup> has I believe mentioned my name to you when he transmitted to you my two papers “Youth” and “the Grave of the Suicide,” for the “Forget Me Not”<sup>3</sup>—In a recent communication he informs me that you write him, that a friend of yours is willing to take the “Sybylline Cards” and give me some compensation for them. I shall be very glad to let him have them on those terms, and shall feel obliged if you will write me a few lines ^by post^ at your early convenience. I understand too from Mr Watts’ something respecting an acknowledgment for “the Grave of the Suicide;” and as I am prevented making any use of that paper in my own work, in consequence of its prior appearance in your “Forget Me Not,” I shall be happy to find that I have not misunderstood him.

I have the honour to remain

Sir

Your obliged & obedient serv<sup>t</sup>

Maria Jane Jewsbury

13 Brooke Street. Chorlton Row  
Manchester.—

Address: none

MS: Dunedin Public Library, Alfred and Isabel Reed Collection

<sup>1</sup> Frederic Shoberl (1775–1853), writer, printer, and publisher. Shoberl edited the *Forget-Me-Not* literary annual from 1822–1834. Jewsbury’s letter to Shoberl can be dated within this range because of her reference to previously published work and the address from which she sent the letter—by July 1827 she resided at Grosvenor Street.

<sup>2</sup> Alaric Alexander Watts (1797–1864), journalist, poet, and editor of the annual *Literary Souvenir*. Watts encouraged Jewsbury into publication early in her career and kept in touch with her after she found success.

<sup>3</sup> Jewsbury’s essays “Youth” and “The Grave of the Suicide” appeared in the *Forget-Me-Not* annual for 1825. (See a list of *Forget-Me-Not* contributions by Katherine D. Harris at [http://www.orgs.muohio.edu/anthologies/FMN/Authors\\_GenB.htm](http://www.orgs.muohio.edu/anthologies/FMN/Authors_GenB.htm).)

## List of Contributors

**Georgie Archibald** completed her Bachelor of Laws at the University of Otago in 2012, and is currently a member of the English honours programme. Her papers vary in subject from storyworlds and cognition to the work of Janet Frame, and her dissertation examines the new forms of reflexivity that have emerged in digital literature. She had a brilliant time in the English 404 class, and made it through the continuous demands of the publication process by adhering to Mad-Eye Moody's mantra of "constant vigilance!"

**Fiona Glasgow** is a fourth-year student at the University of Otago with a BA in English. She is writing a dissertation on Lady Morgan's earlier works and the ways they show Morgan's attention to colonialism. Her favourite literary genres are Victorian and Science Fiction, but her favourite book is probably *Jane Eyre*. She has lived in Dunedin for ten years, but was born in Birmingham, Alabama.

**Pippa Maessen** is an English and Theatre Studies honours student at the University of Otago. Originally from New Plymouth, she is in her fourth year of study in Dunedin. Since high school she has been interested in Shakespeare study and performance and is writing her dissertation on this topic. Other areas of interest include music, gender studies and performing arts, and she has been involved in brass bands for almost ten years. Pippa enjoys almost every genre of literature and has a soft spot for Roald Dahl.

**Samantha McKegg** is an English and Art History honours student at the University of Otago. She is especially interested in art writing and was happy to research Anna Jameson, the only art historian in this collection. When reading about Jameson's support and interest in women's education, Samantha appreciated her commonplace as a woman at university in the twenty-first century. Samantha hopes to pursue a career relating to art, but is open to the possibility of further postgraduate studies.

**Jacqueline McMillan** has a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in English Literature from the University of Otago and a Postgraduate Diploma in Library and Information Studies from Victoria University of Wellington. She has worked in libraries in Auckland and Dunedin and is currently employed as a Collection Specialist for Dunedin Public Libraries. She also works in the Heritage Collections, where many of these letters are housed, and is pleased to be involved in a project to bring these letters to a wider audience. She enjoys writing and has recently completed three writing papers at the University of Otago. Currently, she is pursuing postgraduate studies in English part-time.

**Elicia Milne** is an English honours student who has studied at both the University of Otago and Michigan State University. She has been involved in the sport of rowing throughout her five years of study, and has enjoyed her time as a student, athlete and coach. Elicia found working with the letters of Scottish author Joanna Baillie especially interesting because her own ancestors would have been in Britain during Baillie's era. She looks forward to completing her honours year, and hopes that by the time she graduates she will have figured out what she wants to do when she grows up.

**Veena Patel** is in her final year of a degree in Law, with combined honours in English and Politics. Her research of Lady Byron has been a privilege and a challenge, not to mention an excellent use of second-year property law. She spends an exorbitant amount of time watching test cricket and reading biographies. Though hopefully not as preachy as Lady Byron, she enjoys philosophy and her dissertation engages in the philosophical importance of language.

**Virginia Sutherland** is an English honours student and semi-qualified archaeologist. She grew up in southern New Zealand surrounded by books and sheep, and ultimately decided to pursue the first of the two (her sheep-catching skills being rather inadequate). Virginia was grateful for the opportunity to research and write as part of the Otago Students of Letters, and hopes to continue such work in the future. She is currently completing a dissertation on American poet Jack Gilbert.

**Dominic Tay** graduated from the University of Otago in 2012 with a Bachelor of Arts in mathematics and English. Although he is a Dunedin local and long-time patron of the Dunedin Public Library, he was unaware of the unpublished gems lurking on the third floor until this book project began. Working on original manuscripts was an exciting opportunity that he would like to follow up in future. For now, though, he's busy researching digital literature for his honours dissertation and looking forward to his next publishing opportunity.

**Petra Westropp** was born in Indonesia and lived throughout Asia before moving to New Zealand to finish her tertiary education. She plans to complete her combined honours in English and Politics by the end of 2013. Westropp is currently working on her dissertation, which looks at the effects of globalisation on the construction of a national identity in Singapore. In her free time, she enjoys travelling, golfing and scuba diving.

**Hope Wilson** is an English and Art History honours student at the University of Otago. Like Felicia Hemans, she was an avid reader as a child. However, she clearly does not share Hemans's proclivity for

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publishing, as this is her first contribution to a published work. Hope is a soon-to-be-retired academic and it is highly possible that this chapter on Felicia Hemans will be her first and last publication. She intends to abandon academic pursuits upon graduation and aspires to become a trophy wife and philanthropist.



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Men have had every advantage of us in telling their own story. Education has been theirs in so much higher a degree; the pen has been in their hands.

Jane Austen, *Persuasion*

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, many female authors challenged societal expectations. Jane Austen's contemporaries included leading women novelists, poets, playwrights, essayists, historians and philanthropists. *In Her Hand* presents previously unpublished letters of eleven of these women: Anna Barbauld, Hannah More, Joanna Baillie, Jane Porter, Sydney Morgan, Lucy Aikin, Amelia Opie, Annabella Byron, Felicia Hemans, Anna Jameson and Maria Jane Jewsbury. These letters, found in collections across New Zealand, range in theme from publishing and literary endeavours to spiritual and family concerns. Each chapter offers a short biography, transcriptions of the new letters and a discussion of their contexts.

