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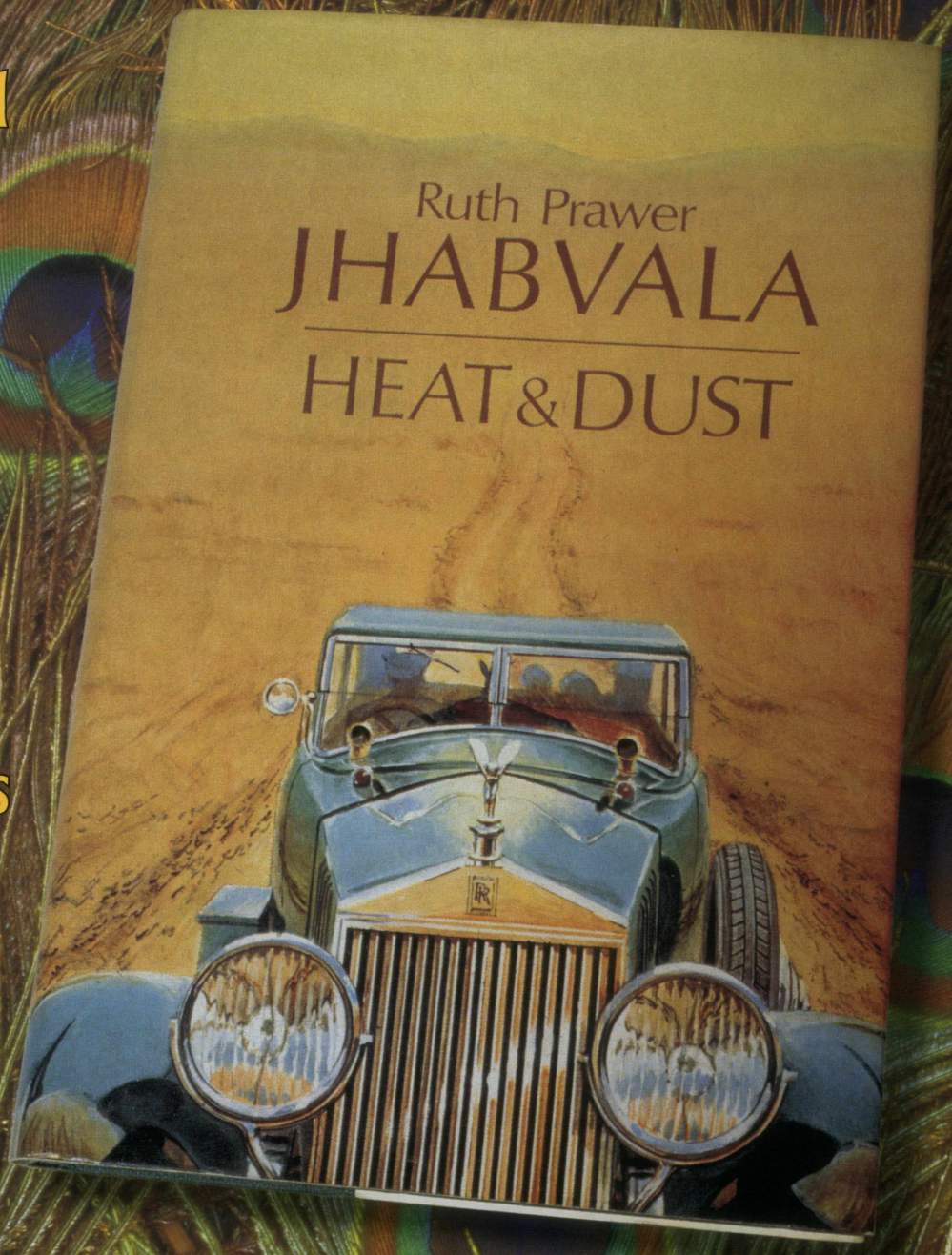
FIRSTS

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Post-Colonial Indian Literature

Victorian Women Novelists

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Five Major VICTORIAN WOMEN NOVELISTS *(and Some Others)*

by

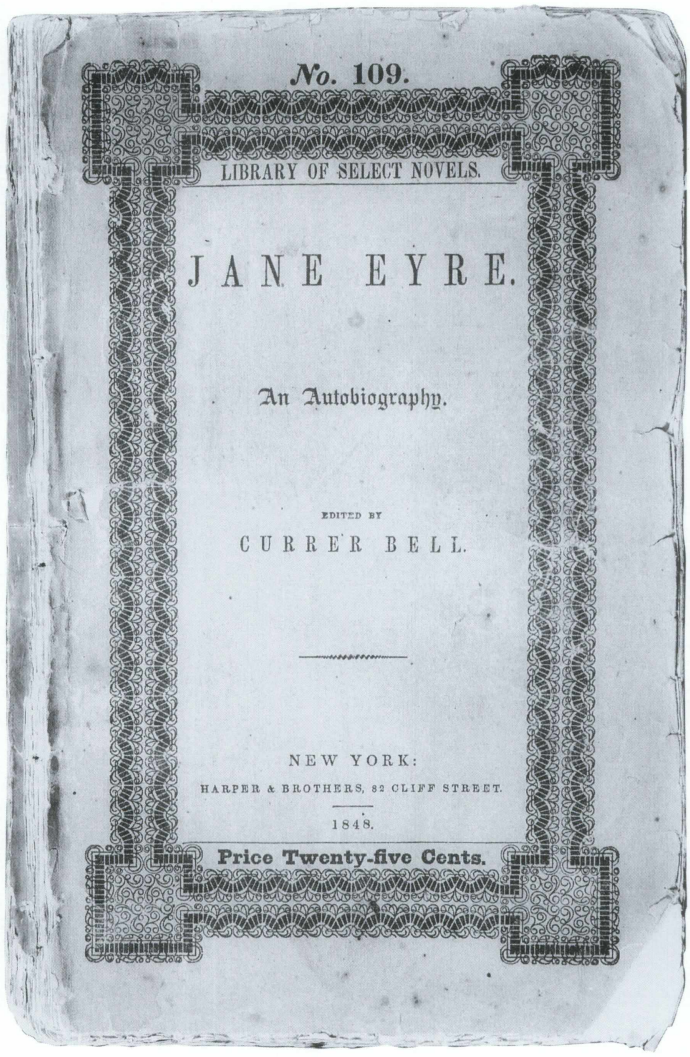
CHRISTINA MICHAUD & LEE BIONDI

"NOVELIST" was possibly the single profession in which Victorian women could participate with anything approaching equality with men. Many of the so-called "masters" of the Victorian novel were, in fact, women. Undoubtedly the most famous, and arguably the best, Victorian novelist was Charles Dickens, a bestseller since *The Pickwick Papers* (1837). But after Dickens, the top ranks of Victorian novelists were by no means all or even mostly male: there were Anthony Trollope, William Thackeray, Thomas Hardy and Wilkie Collins on the male side, and Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell (the three Brontës), George Eliot (Marian Evans), and Mrs. (Elizabeth Cleghorn) Gaskell on the female side. These and other women novelists wrote highly popular, highly literary novels, in numbers and of quality equal to or exceeding those of men. In addition to novels of domestic realism, the favorite type of Victorian novel, they also wrote in most of the major subgenres of the novel. The Brontës' *Jane Eyre* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* anticipated many of the qualities of the sensation novel, made most famous by Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White*. Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley* and Gaskell's *Mary Barton* and *North and South* are true "condition of England" novels, vividly depicting social problems. Eliot's *Romola* and Gaskell's *Sylvia's Lovers* are historical novels like *A Tale of Two Cities*, showing the desire on the part of professional novelists of the period, whether male or female, to tackle important historical questions in at least one of their works.

Still, we have to remember that gender was an important and problematic issue for the woman novelist in the Nineteenth century in a way it simply was not for the man. We can see three different ways women novelists dealt with the "problem" of their gender in the different type of publication names these five women novelists adopted. The Brontës published under deliberately ambiguous pseudonyms, not liking actually to assume men's names, but correctly realizing that women's novels would be judged according to different standards than men's novels. Indeed, when early reviewers speculated that the Bells might be women, one of their primary complaints was the "unwomanly" content of their novels; thought to be unsuitable for a woman to read, how much more scandalous, or even dangerous, would it be for a woman actually to have imagined and *written* such objectionable scenes!

Unlike the Brontës, Marian Evans actually did use a masculine pseudonym (so successfully, in fact, that today she is much better known by her pseudonym, and many people who may have heard of George Eliot don't know that the writer is in fact a woman). Elizabeth Gaskell masked her identity in yet a different way when publishing, using "Mrs." instead of her Christian name, in a way that marked her obviously as a woman, but also as a married woman, shielded by her title and her husband's name, and therefore one for whom it was somewhat more acceptable to venture into the public world (including that of publishing).

We may view the names under which these female novelists chose to publish as a regrettable by-product of their time, in which a male novelist was typically paid more for a leading serial in a magazine than a female novelist of comparable reputation, and in which some themes were judged unacceptable for a female novelist to address, solely because of her gender. On the other hand, however, we have to realize that anonymous or pseudonymous publication was a common phenomenon throughout the Nineteenth century: If Dickens is the most famous Victorian novelist, then "Boz" should be one of the most famous pseudonyms. Interestingly, George Eliot published more consistently under her pseudonym, and as a result is more well known by it, than Dickens, Thackeray, or even Samuel Clemens/Mark Twain. While it's certainly true that no male novelists used female or even ambiguously gendered pseudonyms during the Victorian period, Eliot and the Brontës may simply have accepted the common use of pseudonyms as another of the conventions of Victorian publishing, like the accepted form of the three-volume novel.



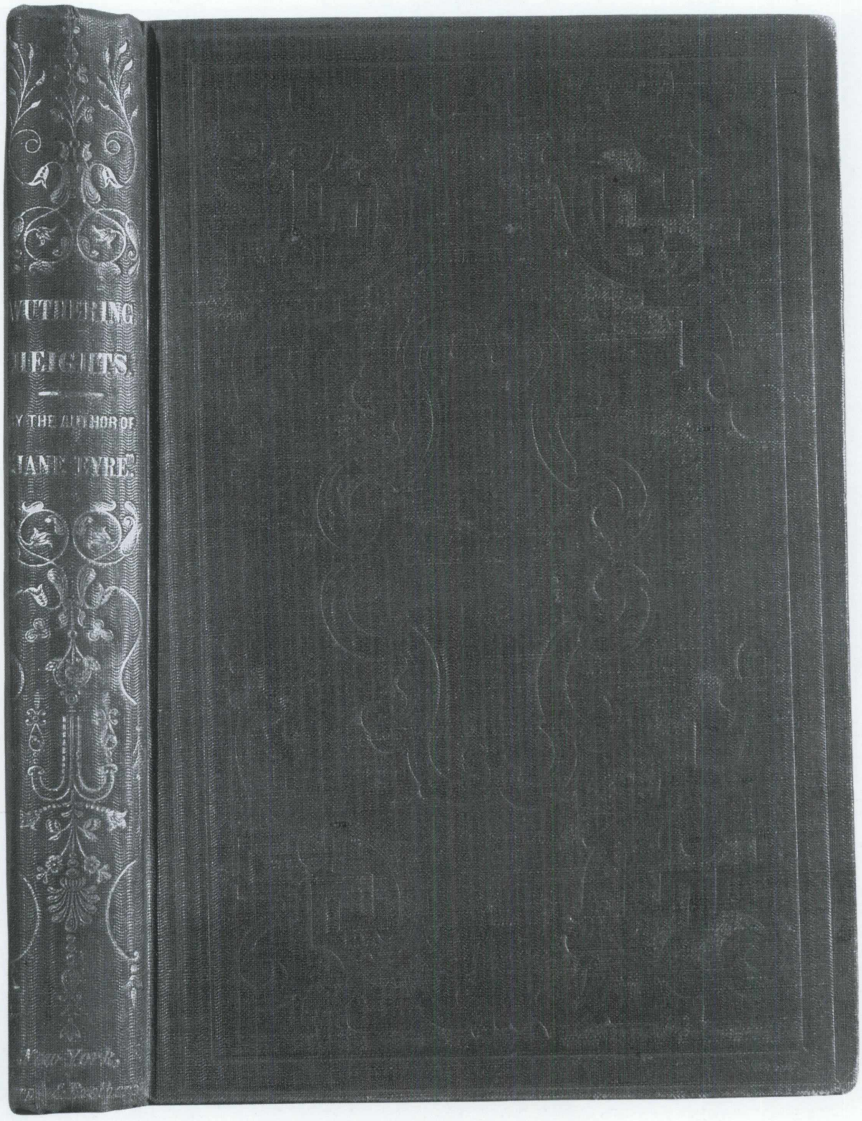
Charlotte (1816-1855), Emily (1818-1848) and Anne (1820-1849) Brontë

THE ISOLATED CHILDHOOD of Charlotte, Emily and Anne Brontë at Haworth parsonage on the Yorkshire moors is legendary, a myth created in large part by Charlotte's friend and first biographer, Elizabeth Gaskell, and repeated throughout the years. In fact, though still quite provincial, Haworth at the time was not quite as wild and antiquated a place as Gaskell made it appear (it was actually a center of working-class meetings during the politically turbulent 1840s). And while not completely isolated from society, as Gaskell suggested, the Brontë family was indeed extremely close-knit, particularly after the early deaths from consumption of two older sisters. Along with brother Branwell, the three sisters were raised by their widowed father (himself something of a writer) and their Aunt Branwell who, while not harsh with the family, was never either loved or appreciated. The four surviving siblings retreated into passionate worlds of imagination, writing scores of sagas and poems for their mythical kingdoms of Angria (Charlotte and Branwell's domain) and Gondal (Emily and Anne's). After Charlotte and Emily's unhappy sojourn at a religious school much like the dismal Lowood School depicted in *Jane Eyre*, they were joined by Anne for a few terms at a more pleasant school. This period was followed by more or less successful stints as governesses for all three, a year of

additional education in Brussels for Emily and Charlotte, and then one more for Charlotte alone.

The lives of all four Brontë siblings are inscribed in the novels of the three women: Anne's confined existence as a governess in that of her title character, *Agnes Grey*; Branwell's sexual scandals, dissipation and ultimate death through alcoholism in those of Arthur Huntington in Anne's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*; Charlotte's unhappy love for her older teacher in Brussels in that of Lucy Snowe in her *Villette*; and the natural wildness of their surrounding moors and the creative, passionate, imaginative inner lives of all four in the unconfined passion and wildness of Heathcliff in Emily's *Wuthering Heights*. This is not to say that the Brontë sisters wrote only out of autobiographical impulses, nor only out of imaginative ones. The novels of Anne, Emily and Charlotte reveal intelligence and humor, as well as passion, and in this combination they managed to be among the most shocking of Nineteenth-century novels, flouting accepted Victorian ideals at almost every turn.

The literary careers of the sisters were compressed into a relatively short period, between 1846 and 1853. By 1849, Anne and Emily were dead of consumption, and by 1853 Charlotte had completed her literary output; her only remaining book to be published (posthumously, in 1857), *The Professor*, was actually her first-written, initially offered for publication 10 years earlier. In 1846, largely at Charlotte's urging, the sisters published at their own expense a joint volume of their poetry, largely taken from their early imaginings in the worlds of Gondal and Angria. Although it received a few favorable reviews (especially for Emily and Anne's contributions), it left no literary mark and sold almost no copies until it was reissued by Charlotte's publisher, Smith, Elder, after the success of *Jane Eyre*. Before that, however, "Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell" proposed a three-decker novel consisting of three separate tales, one by each author. But Emily's novel was too long for one volume, and Charlotte's *(The Professor)* was rejected by several publishers, so Anne and Emily's tales *(Agnes Grey* and *Wuthering Heights)* were published together as a three-decker (referring to the three-volume format, not the number of works included) in 1847 by the famously unscrupulous London publisher Thomas Newby.



Undeterred by rejection, Charlotte set aside *The Professor* and wrote *Jane Eyre*, which was published by Smith, Elder in October 1847. Though composed after *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey*, *Jane Eyre* actually preceded them in terms of publication dates: Smith, Elder accepted Charlotte's novel and published it before Newby got around to publishing those of the two younger sisters. The following year, in 1848, Newby published Anne's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, falsely implying it was Charlotte's (or Currer's) work. Charlotte then published *Shirley* in 1849 and *Villette* in 1853, and these seven novels conclude the publishing careers of three of the most famous Victorian women novelists, and one of the most famous families of writers ever—though also one of the most harshly criticized.

Charlotte, Emily and Anne always guarded their privacy closely, and in their case, in the face of the many negative reactions their books garnered, the use of pseudonyms may actually have been an empowering act. The much-guarded secret of their authorship seems to have united the sisters in adulthood just as their imaginary worlds and private sagas did in childhood, and served to isolate them somewhat from the outside world of hostile readers and reviewers.

Reviewers at the time noticed at once the political force of these novels. The works of all three Brontës are not merely engrossing works with lively characters, written out of the imaginations of their lonely, bookish creators; they are also novels of new and different ideas, which urge most strongly for equality across the lines of class and gender, among many other things. Charlotte's first and last novels are her most autobiographical, drawing heavily on her years in Brussels (though *Villette* is considered by some to be her best work). In between, she created the plain but outspoken governess, Miss Eyre, in her most famous work.

Jane Eyre was a hugely successful first novel; its unknown author became the talk of London literary circles, and it was adapted for the stage within a year of publication. It was successful, and it was shocking. Charlotte's heroine delivered one of the most scandalous speeches a Victorian reader was ever forced to endure: "Do you think I can stay to be nothing to you?" she demands of her employer, Rochester, when she thinks he has been toying with her affections or asking her to become his mistress. "Do you think I am an automaton?—a machine without feelings?...Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain, and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong!...I am not talking to you now through the medium of custom, conventionalities, nor even of mortal flesh: it is my spirit that addresses your spirit; just as if both had passed through the grave, and we stood at God's feet, equal—as we are!"

To the Victorians, setting aside "custom" and "conventionalities" was inconceivable—and Jane's further rejection of the mediation of "mortal flesh" must have contained uncomfortable associations of nakedness for them, as well as heresy—but to have these words spoken by a woman to a man, and by a servant (for governesses, while upper servants, were distinctly not of the same class as their employers) to her master was even more upsetting. Jane's speech is not at all humble or modest; if her voice comes sharply and clearly across the pages to us, in a far more liberal age, think how much more it did so to the Victorians!

In *Shirley*, her novel of industrial Yorkshire, Charlotte created another striking heroine, the tomboyish woman of business. *Shirley* is the Brontë novel that explores most strongly the question of gender roles, and the occupations and options available to women. It was written during an emotionally turbulent period in Charlotte's life (Branwell, Emily and Anne all died during its composition, and her elderly father, Patrick Brontë, though he would outlive all his children, was ever growing weaker). Though even close friends of the Brontës did not notice until it was pointed out to them, Charlotte intended *Shirley* to be a portrait of her sister Emily; not Emily, the consumptive, obsessive poet who never thrived far away from Haworth, her family, her beloved dogs and her moors, but rather Emily as she might have been had she been healthy and better able to live in the world. Though it is true that Shirley's love of dogs and the outdoors is reflective of Emily's, by removing from Shirley the qualities that made Emily at once the best poet in the family and the least adapted to "society," it may be that Charlotte removed the very essence of her sister from her fictional double.

Emily's only novel, *Wuthering Heights,* is famous for the eternal, passionate love between its main characters, Heathcliff and Cathy. Today we often think of Emily's novel as a pleasant, romantic one, in which the two lovers are united at the end. Many film dramatizations even entirely omit the novel's darker second part. But Heathcliff, who has been compared to Lord Byron, Milton's Satan, and even to a version of Mary Shelley's murdering monster, is manipulative and abusive throughout the story as well as darkly attractive. This stormy novel set on Emily's own Yorkshire moors is full of hatred, cruelty and a rejection of Christianity which Victorian readers found very disturbing. Emily's Cathy explicitly rejects the idea of Heaven and God's grace, feeling that earth (as embodied in Heathcliff) is far more powerful, more interesting, and more compelling than the traditional Christian Heaven.

If not absolutely revolted by the amoral world of *Wuthering Heights*, with its unrelenting pattern of death and revenge, contemporary readers simply did not know what to make of it. A few reviewers noted the evident literary ability of its author in the energetic, carefully crafted prose, but most condemned the novel for its subject matter and ignored its author's style. Unlike most novels of the time (even unlike Anne's highly objectionable *Tenant of Wildfell Hall*), *Wuthering Heights* thwarted most attempts to extract a moral lesson from it. One of the most favorable reviews, in the *Britannia*, could only say the following of the story: "We do not know whether the author writes with any purpose; but we can speak of one effect of his production. It strongly shows the brutalizing influence of unchecked passion."

Emily didn't live to write another novel—though some critics and biographers speculate now, on the basis of her letters from the time, that she was working on another novel just before she died—but the one she did write has always elicited strong responses from readers. Along with *Jane Eyre* and the

pre-Victorian novels of Jane Austen, hers is among the most adapted, most reprinted and most widely read Nineteenth-century novels written by women.

Although Anne's novels are not as well known today as those of Emily and Charlotte, a case can be made for her novels as the most radical of all the sisters'. Anne's *Agnes Grey* actually preceded *Jane Eyre* as a novel with a plain governess as the heroine, although it is Charlotte who usually receives credit for such an innovation (previously, literary convention dictated that heroines had to be beautiful according to accepted standards). *Agnes Grey* was based in large part on Anne's experiences as a governess, a position which all of the sisters held at various points, but in which Anne was the most successful. Anne became a governess to help support the family financially and, if the feelings of the title character in her first novel are in any way reflective of her creator, Anne may have eagerly looked forward to holding a position, earning money, and seeing a (very) little more of the world. Unlike Emily, Anne actually proved herself able to function while away from home and the family circle, and unlike Charlotte, she was able, if not necessarily willing, to submit herself to the authority of her employers. By the time she became a governess, Anne had a great deal of experience at being submissive, whether she liked it or not; just as Anne's literary fame has always been overshadowed by that of the more prolific Charlotte or the more poetic Emily, in life Anne's personality was so overshadowed by the domineering Charlotte that we have no concept of what Anne was really like as a person. Except for her writing, almost everything we know about Anne has come to us filtered through the condescending, over-protective view Charlotte held toward her youngest sister.

Anne's second novel, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall,* met with horrified reactions that equaled, if not exceeded, those to *Jane Eyre*, causing the book to remain almost entirely unknown until very recently. Even Charlotte denigrated this novel, expressing surprise that her little sister chose such unsuitable subject matter! Among the accepted Victorian ideas *Tenant* flouted were the notions that a married woman and her children should live under the roof and under the control of her husband; that boys and girls should be treated differently and receive different kinds of preparation for the world; that women can't be creative artists or writers who treat the same subjects or work on the same kind of public scale as men; and that the Protestant idea of God's grace is redeeming enough to save even the heroine's husband, the unrepentant Arthur, from Hell. The novel was additionally criticized for being too graphic in its depiction of the ravages of alcoholism. The Brontës were, in fact, all too familiar with the reality of the subject; they watched Branwell drink himself to death much the way Anne's character Helen watches her husband Arthur do. However, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* was also based in part on the situation of a family friend, who took her children and left her dissipated husband, visiting the Brontës not long afterwards. Anne was very impressed by this woman, and she sought to portray in her heroine Helen the combination of female independence and the pure, protective instincts of motherhood she saw in her friend.

While her portrayal of Helen is an utterly successful one, and *The Tenant* is indeed one of the true masterpieces of Nineteenth-century literature, Anne's position as an author is a complicated one. Her work is almost never examined apart from that of her sisters, and is often only reprinted together with theirs. She is under-read compared with her sisters (her two novels, along with Charlotte's *The Professor*, are the least read today in the Brontës' oeuvre), and yet she was one of the more well-read woman novelists of the period. What would have been the fate of her novels if she weren't the sister of Charlotte and Emily is impossible to determine.

Marian Evans/George Eliot (1819-1880)

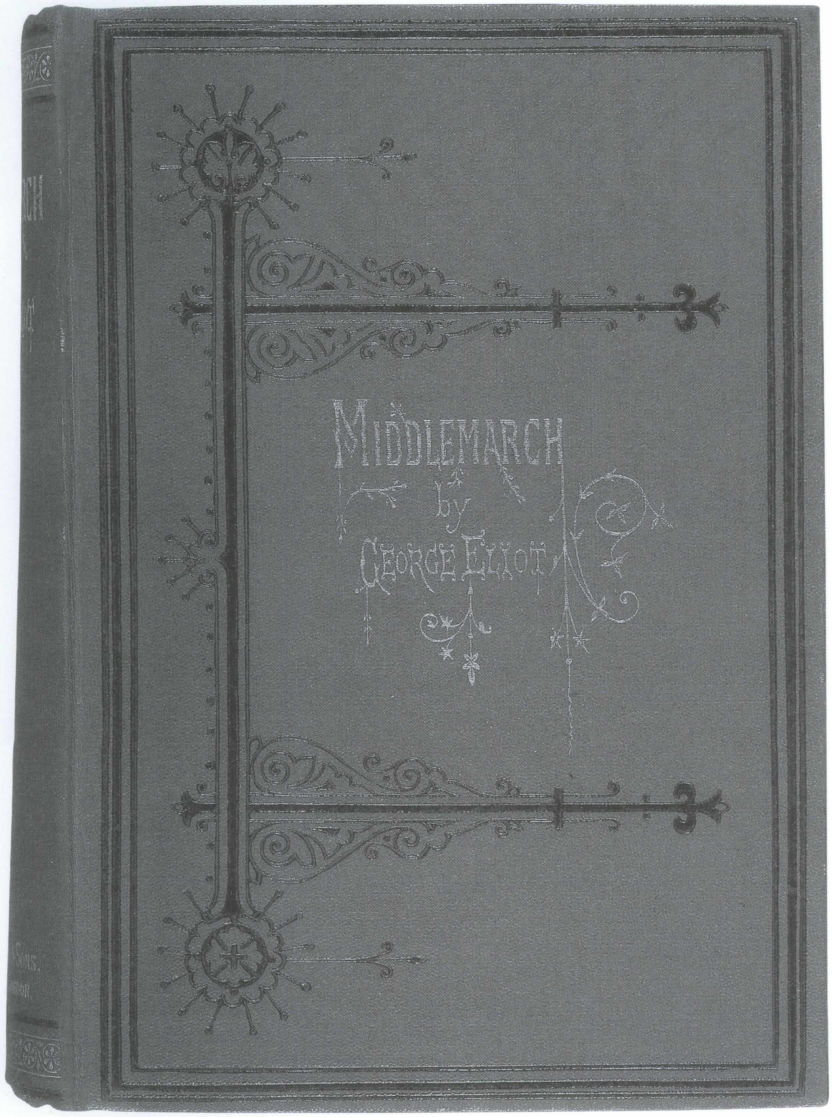
BORN MARY ANNE EVANS, Eliot styled herself Mary Ann Evans from age 18 and then Marian Evans from age 30. She was largely self-educated, reading copiously in many languages while keeping house for her widowed father from the age of 17. As a young woman, she famously revolted and refused to attend church with her father, as her "free-thinker" beliefs were no longer in accord with traditional Christianity. When she was 25 she began work on her first publication, an English translation from the German of D.F. Strauss' *Life of Jesus* which was published in 1846. After her father's death, she worked with publisher John Chapman on his *Westminster Review* as a writer and assistant editor and, through her business connection and romantic involvement with Chapman, became familiar with the literary and critical world of London in which she was to associate for many years.

In 1855 Marian Evans set up a household with editor and essayist George Henry Lewes. Sometimes it seems that Evans is as famous for her long-term "marriage" with this already-married man as for her novels; however, without demeaning her literary accomplishments, it is important to understand her unconventional biography. Lewes was married without the possibility of divorce; though his wife was living with another man, Lewes had seemingly condoned her adultery, and now was unable to divorce her on the grounds of adultery without a special Act of Parliament—a complicated, rare and extremely expensive process. So Lewes and Evans lived as husband and wife for 24 years, and their union became one of the Victorian era's most famous "illicit marriages." Even though they moved in primarily liberal, intel-

lectual circles, the couple was shunned to a certain degree because of their relationship. Evans, however, referred to Lewes as her husband, called herself "Mrs. Lewes" socially, and obviously felt a deep commitment to him throughout her life.

Although she lived a somewhat sensational life, Eliot's fiction is rather conservative for the period, always looking back at an idealized England of the past. Eliot's first published work of fiction was three long stories serialized in *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1857 as *Scenes of Clerical Life*, and then published in two volumes. By having George Lewes negotiate with the publisher, she was able to keep her real identity a secret for the present, and *Scenes* was well reviewed. The stories, based in part on Eliot's memories of her rural childhood, also treat themes that recur throughout her work, including the somewhat radical idea that outward appearances don't necessarily reflect a person's inner morality; in other words, that good characters can be ugly and beautiful characters, evil. The intensely moralizing *Adam Bede* (1859), her next work, was a full-length three-volume novel, also set in an idyllic rural England of the recent past. The book was an enormous success. Like *Scenes*, *Adam Bede* contains the remnants of real characters from Eliot's girlhood (notably Dinah Morris, who is based on Eliot's Aunt Samuel, a female Methodist preacher who once spent a night in a cell with a young woman condemned for killing her child).

So much interest in the pseudonymous author arose as a result of *Adam Bede* that while Eliot was still at work on her next novel, *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), it became impossible to continue hiding her identity. Though always susceptible to feelings of self-doubt and depression, Eliot seems to have thrived on the secret of her authorship, which allowed her to imagine she was someone else even as she wrote about the characters and settings of her childhood, and so provided her with necessary distance from the subject of her own memories. Her literary cross-dressing, so successful for awhile, made her feel she was a "real" writer, and that her work could stand on its own merits, winning good reviews without the aid of any preconceptions about its author's background. Eliot found the revelation of her identity, and the resulting harsh criticism from reviewers who resented being tricked by her masculine disguise, particularly upsetting. Despite this, of course, *Adam Bede*'s success cemented its author's reputation as a serious writer and paved the way for the reception of her third pastoral, partially autobiographical, novel, *The Mill on the Floss.*

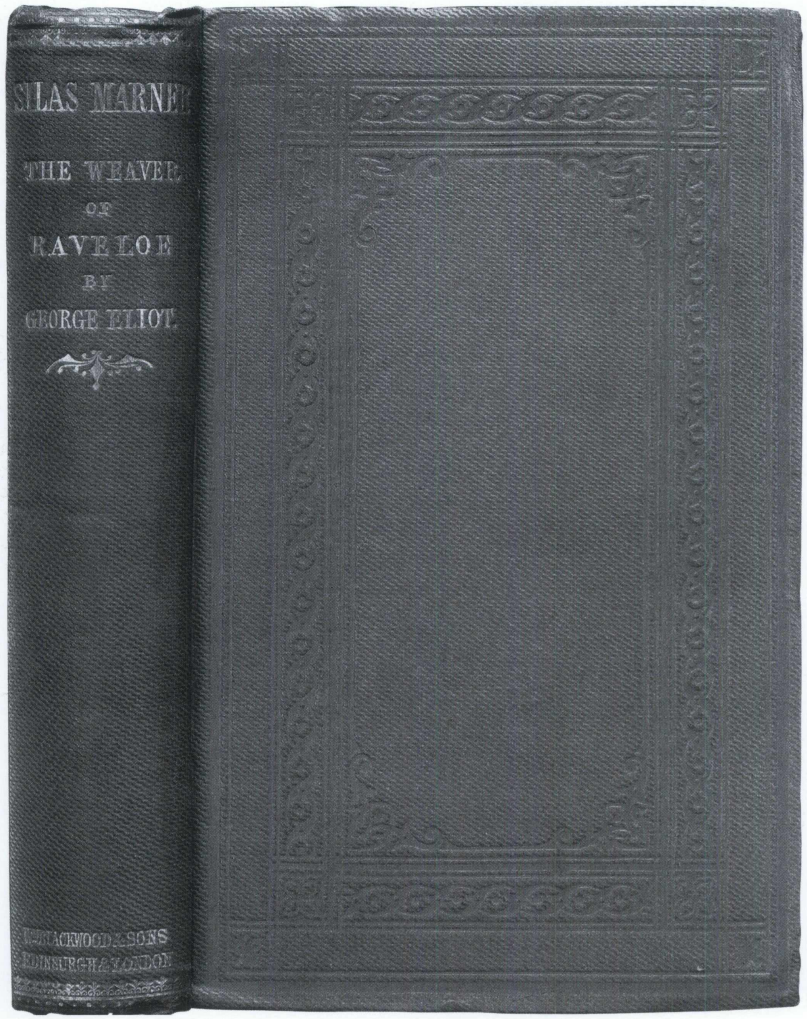


The Mill on the Floss is the most personal of Eliot's three early works, based in part on her own childhood and very close relationship with her brother. Eliot depicts her heroine Maggie's moral growth from childhood to maturity, contrasting her intellectual and sexual awakenings (and her near seduction) to her deep religious feelings and sense of responsibility to her family and the community. While Eliot explores unconventional roles for Maggie to a certain degree, Maggie's ultimate death in a flood while trying to save her brother seems at the same time an example of how traditional gender roles can drown a woman's in-

dividuality, and also a moral victory for Maggie over her selfish, unfilial feelings.

Eliot is so often hailed as a "serious" novelist—so often contrasted with the Dickens who created Mr. Bumble—that it's been forgotten that she, too, succumbed to sentimentality and humor, the twin amusements of Victorian novelists. We see these aspects of her novels in her skillfully interwoven subplots—both wholly virtuous characters, like Mary Garth (who reveals her creator's susceptibility to Victorian sentimentality as Dickens's Little Nell and Tiny Tim do theirs) and comic, Mr. Bumble-like minor characters make appearances even in her masterpiece, *Middlemarch* (1871), that otherwise serious novel of ideas. Still, it is important to recognize that Eliot's financial success was staggering for a novelist of her quality: her novels received enormous payments by the standards of the time—such sums were highly unusual as payment for serious, as opposed to merely popular, works of fiction.

A famous example of her financial success is that of her only major "historical" novel, *Romola* (1863), begun after the publication of *The Mill on the Floss* and *Silas Marner* (1861). Another rural novel, considered by some her best work ever, *Silas Marner* only added to Eliot's high literary reputation and made publishers eager to acquire the rights to her next work in progress, *Romola*. For this, her only novel set farther in the past than the early Nineteenth century, as for all her books, Eliot carefully researched her setting and subject. Her early training in translation and journalism made her an accurate, thorough researcher, and she soon accumulated enough material to begin writing the novel itself. Still, she was never the same kind of easy, fluent writer as Anthony Trollope, who was famed for sitting down every morning and writing the requisite number of pages for his current novel. Instead, Eliot's work always proceeded slowly, interrupted by the recurring headaches and the spells of depression she was troubled with her entire life. When she had barely started writing *Romola*, Smith, the publisher of *Cornhill* magazine, offered to buy the serialization rights and entire copyright to the novel for £10,000. In the words of George Henry Lewes, who was clearly excited and impressed by Eliot's success, it was "the most magnificent offer ever yet made for a novel." However, Eliot was reluctant to commit to a serialization before she had written enough of her novel not to be derailed by the constant demands for new chapters and, after much deliberation, she refused the offer. A year later, when she had most of the novel already written, Eliot did sell the monthly serialization in the *Cornhill* and the entire rights for the next six years to Smith for £7,000, which was still quite a large sum. The story of *Romola* ends rather unfortunately, though, with dismal reviews and the complete commercial failure of this much-hyped novel (Smith himself never recouped the money he paid Eliot for the rights).



Her other novels include a "social problem" or "condition of England" novel (*Felix Holt, the Radical,* 1866), a successful work which significantly revitalized her writing and her career after the failure of *Romola*; *Middlemarch*; and a novel based on her growing fascination with Judaism (*Daniel Deronda*, 1876). Throughout her career, Eliot proved herself a conservative novelist with both a strong sense of morality and duty and a distinctive narrative voice. Particularly in works such as *Mill* and *Middlemarch*, Eliot's third-person narrator, who describes both the countryside and the inner workings of characters' minds,

seems almost to become a character in the novel. Known primarily for her moral vision and her tightly connected plots, Eliot was also an expert at sensitive, utterly convincing characterization. On a level apart from its serious themes of duty and sacrifice, community and connectivity, *Middlemarch* is the story of two women who can't quite manage to like each other—the blonde beauty, Rosamond, and the plain intellectual, Dorothea. Eliot's characterization is so believable, and her depiction of a fictional world so memorable, that it is impossible to forget her novels' achievements as great stories of her characters' triumphs, falls and growths—not just as conveyors of great ideas. Although Eliot may have become a novelist primarily out of a desire to instruct, her absorbing characterizations and elegant prose have always delighted readers.

Elizabeth Gaskell (1810-1865)

Gaskell (née Stevenson) was born in London, but was raised by an aunt in the small country town of Knutsford, Cheshire. She was brought up in the Unitarian beliefs and was well educated in local schools. At the age of 22 she married a Unitarian minister with an interest in public service and social issues, and moved with him to Manchester, an industrialized northern city. Gaskell was happy as a minister's wife and homemaker and, although she had always dabbled in poetry, did not think seriously about herself as a writer. After a stillborn first child, she had three daughters, then a son, and later another daughter; she was a devoted, concerned mother. Her only son, William, died of scarlet fever at the age of 10 months and Gaskell—supposedly to take her mind off her inconsolable grief—began writing her first novel, *Mary Barton.*

Mary Barton is set in Manchester during the "hungry Forties," a period of particular economic hardship. It was the first of Gaskell's social problem novels, about the economic and social conditions of England during the period of industrialization. Gaskell's firsthand insight into the lives of the urban poor (gained from her work helping her husband in his Manchester parish) contributed many authentic details to this moving story of murder and love and the poverty and despair of the working classes. *Mary Barton* elicited some negative reactions because of its sympathies with the working classes during a period of worker uprisings, but overall it was well received. Charles Dickens admired the novel so much that he initiated a professional relationship with Gaskell which lasted for many years and which led to the serialization of many of her novels and the appearance of many of her stories in his magazines, *Household Words* and *All the Year Round.*

North and South (1855), Gaskell's thematic follow-up novel to *Mary Barton*, begins as a domestic novel set in the rural south, but then shifts its focus to that of a condition of England novel, as the main character, Margaret, moves with her family to a Manchester-like city in the north. It is a novel written less out of Gaskell's reformer instincts and with more sympathy for the mill owners than *Mary Barton*, and it dramatizes the conflicts between factory owners and workers, or "masters" and "men." Gaskell inscribes upon the typical class concerns of the social problem novel the gender concerns of the "woman question" novel: *North and South* deals with the dramas of private lives as well as public ones, and mixes its account of social and romantic problems, dealing with marriage and sexual attraction as well as with a workers' strike.

In addition to her novels of industrialization, Gaskell wrote the first biography of Charlotte Brontë (1857) which, although criticized for its depiction of the Brontës, remains one of the best Victorian biographies. Gaskell also ventured outside the condition of England novel with *Ruth* (1853), a sympathetic although slightly melodramatic account of unwed motherhood; *Wives and Daughters* (1866) and *Cranford* (1853), two domestic novels set in the rural south of England where the author grew up; many short stories, some of which are almost sensational in their plots; and *Sylvia's Lovers* (1863), a love story set during the Napoleonic wars. Written more from imagination than from observations of life, *Sylvia's Lovers* is interesting for its relation to the genre of the maritime novel, popularized by the many works of Captain Marryat, and continued later in the century by W. Clark Russell and others. No woman writer in the Victorian period wrote a true maritime novel for the simple reason that their gender prevented them from experiencing a seafaring life and then writing a novel about their adventures. *Sylvia's Lovers,* however, is as much of a maritime novel as Gaskell, who obviously had never been a ship's captain like Marryat, was able to write; it is a woman's version of a such a novel, and tells the story of what happens to a woman at home while her man is off at sea.

"Lost" sailors who ultimately return to their loved ones turn up in three of Gaskell's novels (*Mary Barton*, *North and South* and *Sylvia's Lovers*), reflecting the devastating loss of her older sailor brother when she was a young woman. Indeed, many of Gaskell's novels echo comparably emotional situations from her life, including a mother's experience of the death of a young child—in *Mary Barton*—and a daughter's experience of the traumatic remarriage of her long-widowed father—in *Wives and Daughters*, left unfinished at her death, but felt by many to be her greatest novel.

THESE FIVE MAJOR NOVELISTS lived widely varying lives, typical in many ways of the options available to women at the time: the Brontës repre-

sent the Victorian "odd women," who were usually governesses (other acceptable forms of work for genteel women were scarce) and remained unmarried for all or most of their lives; Eliot the conservative radical, on one hand disregarding the formal institution of marriage, and on the other hand privately styling her own relationship as a marriage; and Gaskell the traditional helpmate, wife, homemaker and mother. Still, all were writers working out of the same literary and similar philosophical traditions; all came of age in about the same period; and, despite the specific differences among their novels and opinions, all explored, in ways that were both of and ahead of their time, the question of what it meant to be a talented, intellectual woman in the Victorian era.

Forgotten Bestsellers, or... Four Important Victorian Novels by Women You've Never Heard Of

WE TEND TO FORGET that there were successful women novelists in the Victorian period other than the "Big Five" profiled above. But some of the bestselling novels of the century were actually by female novelists well known and enormously well read in their own day, but forgotten now except by specialized groups of collectors and scholars. No one with a true interest in the literature of the Victorian period, or in women's literature as a whole, however, should ignore the following forgotten bestsellers.

Geraldine Jewsbury (1812-1880), *The Half Sisters* (1848)

Jewsbury was an accomplished journalist, a literary critic for publisher Richard Bentley, a social critic in the style of Thomas Carlyle, and one of the most passionate explorers in her novels of the "woman question"—women's need to find meaningful, challenging employment; accessible, quality education; and, in general, socially acceptable options in life other than marriage. The title characters are the heroine Bianca, an illegitimate, half-foreign, strong-willed actress, and her half-sister Alice, a traditional, submissive English wife. The novel is one of the best of its kind, and its account of the sisters' love affairs was thought to be shockingly immoral when it was published.

Charlotte Yonge (1823-1901), *The Heir of Redclyffe* (1853)

A runaway success, this story of two cousins, the noble Sir Guy and the annoyingly self-righteous Philip, was written by the best novelist of the "Oxford movement," the high-church Christian revival popularized by John Keble in the 1830s. Sir Guy is full of passion, both in his temperamental rages against his cousin Philip and in his rapturous enjoyment of high medieval literature and the sacraments and ceremonies of the Church. Female readers wanted to marry Sir Guy, and male readers wanted to become him (most notably the Pre-Raphaelites Sir Edward Burne-Jones and William Morris, who claimed they used Sir Guy as a pattern for their actual lives). At first rejected by publisher John Murray, and then only reluctantly accepted by Parker, *The Heir of Redclyffe* is an engrossing story and essential background for understanding the mid- to late-Victorian era cult of chivalry.

Mary Elizabeth Braddon (1835-1915), *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862)

This is an early and important example of many "sensational novels" written in the 1860s by Braddon, Wilkie Collins, Mrs. Henry (Ellen) Wood and others. Characteristically, these novels have complicated plots with intrigues, illegitimacies, secret marriages, murders and disguises, and this one is no exception, with the heroine and title character herself at the center of it all. Braddon was one of the best-selling novelists of the 1860s, largely on the basis of this novel. The author herself lived a sensational life for a woman of her day—a former actress, she lived with her publisher, John Maxwell, as his wife for many years and had a child with him, despite the fact that he had five children and a legal wife who was still living, albeit in an Irish insane asylum. *Lady Audley's Secret* is sensational even to a Twentieth-century reader, but in its sensationalism it voices the unspoken concerns of the mid-Victorian about gender, class and what was seen as a breakdown of the home.

Mary Augusta Arnold (Mrs. Humphrey) Ward (1851-1920), *Robert Elsmere* (1888)

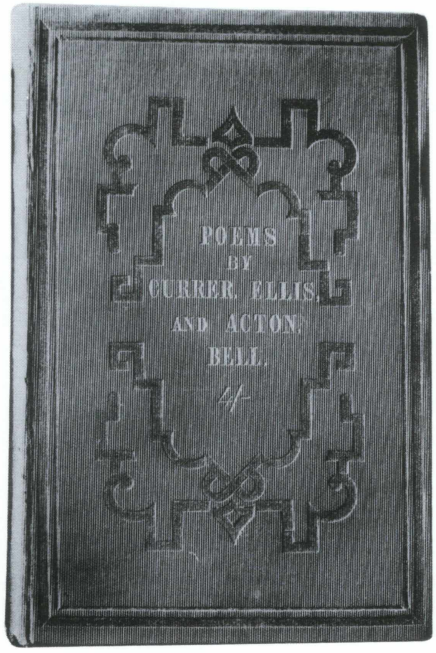
Absolutely one of the most popular novels of the Nineteenth century, this is the story of Elsmere, a young Oxford-educated clergyman who finds he can no longer believe in traditional Christianity. Elsmere abandons his parish and, despite the earnest Christianity of his wife, moves to London to set up a "New Brotherhood" among the working-class men of the East End.

The daughter of a Catholic convert and the niece of Matthew Arnold, Ward came from a family with strong feelings about both intellectualism and religion. This, her most successful novel, was seen as a truly modern novel, exploring the problem of traditional Christian faith in modern times.

VICTORIAN WOMEN NOVELISTS

a Selective Checklist

THE FOLLOWING bibliographical checklists are selective. Please refer to the bibliographical works cited for full listing of titles and full descriptions. Some of the prices mentioned are for specific copies at specific auctions; dollar prices are the hammer price plus the buyer's premium applicable at the time. When other, speculative price ranges are mentioned, they are for copies that would be accurately rated very good to near fine. Copies that could be accurately rated as truly in fine condition can set record prices when they show up, which is next to never. The value of lesser copies can plummet quickly. Satisfactory copies of almost any of these books are so few and far between that "price guide" attempts seem futile, but we hope the prices provided can give the reader some point of reference. American editions are not covered, except a few titles by Elizabeth Gaskell where the American edition precedes.



Selected Bibliography of the Brontë Sisters

[BRONTË, Charlotte, Emily and Anne]. *Poems* by Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell. London: Aylott and Jones, 1846.

One volume. Octavo. Published on May 26, 1846. Originally issued in green cloth (see Parrish, Smith and Carter for discussions of the variants.)

The first issue of this little book, with the Aylott and Jones title-page, is exceptionally rare. It is estimated that Aylott and Jones (not a major publisher) printed a thousand copies and sold two. The sisters gave a few copies to key literary figures they admired. After Smith, Elder published *Jane Eyre,* the firm bought the remaining sets of sheets (still over 900) and issued these in late 1848 in a different case binding and with cancelled title-pages bearing the imprint of Smith, Elder, but repeating the 1846 date so as to make it clear that the work preceded *Jane Eyre.*

The Bradley Martin copy of the first issue brought $9,900 (Sotheby's New York, 1990) and would be worth several times that today. The Manney sale (Sotheby's New York, 1991) could only boast a copy with the Smith, Elder title-page. The only other first issue through the auction rooms this decade was the rebound Rosenbloom copy (Sotheby's New York, 1993) but that copy is (or was) accompanied by a high-content letter. In 1986 a first issue in the Carter "A" binding was knocked down to Quaritch at £7,200 (about $12,000 all in) at Sotheby's London.

[BRONTË, Charlotte]. *Jane Eyre*. An Autobiography. Edited by Currer Bell. In Three Volumes. Vol. I. [II. III.]. London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1847.

Three volumes. Octavo. Published on October 19, 1847. Originally issued in a dark grayish reddish-brown cloth.

One of the greatest novels of the Nineteenth century and one of the most highly sought-after. In original publisher's cloth in very good to near fine condition this book is worth $50,000. In a binding, it is worth substantially less, but is still a big-ticket item. Unlike *Wuthering Heights/Agnes Grey* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall,* copies do show up fairly regularly in original cloth in collectable condition. In 1997 a rather rough copy brought $38,525 at Waverley. The Parsons-Engelhard copy went for $21,850 at Christie's New York in 1995. A notably better copy through Christie's brought $46,000 in 1993. The Manney copy (Kern-Benz) fetched $14,300 in 1991. The Bradley Martin copy brought $18,700 in 1990.

Subsequent editions of the title are not of much interest to collectors, but they are to scholars, as it is in the Preface to the "Second Edition" that Charlotte first mentions Thackeray, and in the "Third Edition" that she denies authorship of *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey* (which the unscrupulous publisher Newby [see below] had deliberately associated with her).

[BRONTË, Emily]. *Wuthering Heights*. A Novel, By Ellis Bell, In Three Volumes. Vol. I. [II.]. London: Thomas Cautley Newby, 1847.

[with:]

[BRONTË, Anne]. *Agnes Grey*. A Novel, By Acton Bell, Vol. III. London: Thomas Cautley Newby, 1847.
Three volumes. Twelvemo. Published on December 4, 1847. Originally issued in cloth-backed boards and full cloth, but unobtainable as such.

To cobble together a standard Victorian three-decker presentation (a three-volume novel), the less-than-renowned publisher Newby threw in *Agnes Grey* by Anne Brontë as Volume III of *Wuthering Heights*, in one of the most bizarre moves of Victorian publishing. Like *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights* is now recognized as one of the greatest Nineteenth-century novels, and—with Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*—also can share the "most expensive" crown. Copies don't come on the market in any of the publisher's original bindings, but if a respectable copy *were* to show up, I am confident it would bring upwards of $200,000 in the rooms. Even rebound, a true first of *Wuthering Heights and Agnes Grey* is now worth $85,000-plus. The Bradley Martin copy, rebound, brought $40,700 back in 1990; and the Manney sale had only an American first, also rebound. The Doheny copy in polished calf brought $33,000 back in 1988 (Christie's New York). This book is a true Grail of Nineteenth-century literature.

[BRONTË, Anne]. *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. By Acton Bell. In Three Volumes. Vol. I. [II. III.]. London: T.C. Newby, 1848.
Three volumes. Twelvemo. Published on June 27, 1848.

Originally issued in cloth-backed boards and in full cloth, but, again, the point is moot. Cloth copies are phenomenally rare. Only one copy has appeared at auction in decades in publisher's binding: the Bradley-Martin sale (Sotheby's New York, 1990), where his copy brought $35,200, in the publisher's half cloth over boards with paper labels. The Manney sale didn't have a copy. Today in original publisher's cloth in nice enough condition this title would easily be worth over $85,000. Even rebound, this title can be worth $25,000 to $30,000. The price will continue to rise as this book begins to get its due as a significant, and remarkably modernist, work that does not have to ride on the coattails of *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*.

[BRONTË, Charlotte]. *Shirley*. A Tale. By Currer Bell, Author of "Jane Eyre." In Three Volumes. Vol. I. [II. III.] London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1849.
Three volumes. Octavo. Published on October 26, 1849. Originally issued in a dark grayish-red cloth.

The Jones-Newton-Doheny-Manney copy has been a regular in the auction rooms: bringing £3,450 (about $5,300) at Sotheby's London in 1995; $3,575 at the Manney sale at Sotheby's New York in 1991; and $2,750 at the Doheny sale, Christie's New York in 1988. The Bradley Martin copy went for $2,200 in 1990.

[BRONTË, Charlotte]. *Villette*. By Currer Bell, Author of "Jane Eyre," "Shirley," Etc. In Three Volumes. Vol. I. [II. III.] London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1853.
Three volumes. Octavo. Published on January 28, 1853. Originally issued in grayish yellowish-brown cloth.

Charlotte Brontë's other indisputably great novel. The Doheny-Manney copy brought $3,850 at the Manney sale (1991) and $3,520 at Doheny (1988). The Bradley Martin copy brought $5,500 in 1990. Way back in 1978, the lovely Stockhausen copy brought $2,420.

[BRONTË, Charlotte]. *The Professor*. By Currer Bell, Author of "Jane Eyre," "Shirley," "Villette," Etc. In Two Volumes. Vol. I. [II.] London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1857.
Two volumes. Octavo. Published on June 6, 1857. Originally issued in dark grayish-purple cloth.

Charlotte Brontë's last published novel was her first written. It was originally rejected by Smith, Elder and that rejection prompted the writing of the far superior *Jane Eyre*.

The only relevant copies at auction of late were the Bradley Martin copy at $2,475 in 1990 and the Doheny copy at $1,540 in 1988.

Sadleir comparative scarcity (Sadleir, Michael, *XIX Century Fiction*):
For copies in original bindings or rebound—

The Tenant of Wildfell Hall
Wuthering Heights/Agnes Grey
Jane Eyre
Shirley
Villette
The Professor

The main bibliographical references for the Brontë sisters are:

Smith, Walter. *The Brontë Sisters. A Bibliographical Catalogue of First and Early Editions 1846 – 1860.* With Photographic Reproductions of Bindings and Titlepages. Los Angeles: Heritage Book Shop, 1991.

Parrish, M[orris] L[ongstreet]. *Victorian Lady Novelists. George Eliot. Mrs. Gaskell. The Brontë Sisters.* First Editions in the Library at Dormy House, Pine Valley, New Jersey, Described with Notes by M.L. Parrish. L: Constable and Company, 1933.

Sadleir, Michael. *XIX Century Fiction.* A Bibliographical Record Based on His Own Collection. ...In Two Volumes. Volume I. [II.]. Cambridge: Printed at the University Press, 1951.

Wolff, Robert Lee. *Nineteenth-Century Fiction.* A Bibliographical Catalogue Based on the Collection Formed by Robert Lee Wolff. In Five Volumes. Volume I. [-V.] NY: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1981.

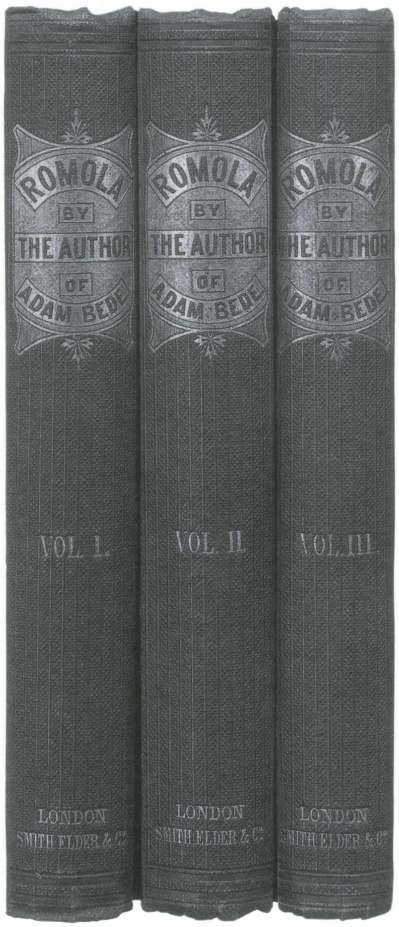
Carter, John. *Binding Variants in English Publishing, 1820-1900.* L: Constable & Co., 1932.

Selected Bibliography of George Eliot

ELIOT, George. *Scenes of Clerical Life.* ...In Two Volumes. Vol. I. [II.]. Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1858.
Two volumes. Octavo. Published in January 1858. Originally issued in a rich maroon cloth.

George Eliot's first book of fiction (after *The Life of Jesus* and *The Essence of Christianity*, translated from German). Contains the short stories "The Sad Fortunes of the Rev. Amos Barton," "Mr. Gilfil's Love Story" and "Janet's Repentance," which had been serialized in Blackwood's *Edinburgh Magazine*, January to November 1857.

The Manney copy brought $15,400 (1991) and the Bradley Martin copy $18,700. Copies that fine now top $25,000. Very good only, around $15,000.



ELIOT, George. *Adam Bede.* By George Eliot. Author of "Scenes of Clerical Life." ...In Three Volumes. Vol. I. [II. III.]. Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1859.
Three volumes. Octavo. Published in February 1859. Originally issued in orange cloth.

Her first novel, and a great success. Reviews were rhapsodic. Blackwood printed 2,100 copies of the first edition (February) and distributed the type, assuming that would be a sufficient supply. The book needed to be reprinted only a month later. By the end of 1859, over 10,000 copies of the title had been sold.

Very good to near fine: $4,000 to $7,500. As far back as the late Seventies, this title was appreciated enough to approach $1,000 (Parsons copy, 1976 and Ewing copy, 1978). Ewing-Slater in 1982 brought $1,870. The Benz copy in 1984 brought $1,210; Bradley Martin copy, $2,475; Ewing–Manney brought $3,750 at Manney's sale in 1991; same copy dropped to $1,725 when it went through the Schlosser sale (Sotheby's New York, June 1992. The description mentioned a little recoloring to the cloth).

ELIOT, George. *The Mill on the Floss.* By George Eliot. Author of "Scenes of Clerical Life" and "Adam Bede" ...In Three Volumes. Vol. I. [II. III.]. Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1860.
Three volumes. Octavo. Published on April 4, 1860. Originally issued in an orange cloth.

About 6,000 copies sold in the first two months. $1,320 at Bradley Martin. Manney's copy had an Autograph Letter Signed (as "M E Lewes") with it and brought $2,750. In 1992, the Quayle copy went for £800 hammer at Sotheby's London (about $1,400 all in). We estimate very good to near fine ranging today from $2,500 to $3,500.

ELIOT, George. *Silas Marner: The Weaver of Raveloe.* By George Eliot. Author of "Adam Bede," etc.... Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1861.
Single octavo volume. Published April (?) 1861. Originally issued in an orange cloth.

As far back as the Slater sale (1982), a nice copy brought over a grand. Bradley Martin's copy was lotted up with his *Romola* and the two brought $2,200. The lovely Manney copy brought $3,025 in 1991, and is worth more today. Very good to near fine these days would be $2,000 to $3,000.

ELIOT, George. *Romola.* By George Eliot, Author of "Adam Bede," "The Mill on the Floss," "Silas Marner," and "Scenes of Clerical Life." In Three Volumes. Vol. I. [II. III.]. London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1863.
Three volumes. Octavo. Published in book form in July 1863; serialization in *Cornhill* ran July 1862 to August 1863. There were authorial revisions for book form publication. Book originally issued in green cloth.

George Eliot received a princely sum of £7,000 for the *Cornhill* serialization and first six years of book publication.

The Slater copy brought $2,090 in 1982. Bradley Martin's was lotted up with his *Silas Marner* and the two brought $2,200. Manney's copy brought $1,650. These days the range is $2,500 to $3,500; the Manney copy would be worth more.

ELIOT, George. *Felix Holt the Radical.* By George Eliot, Author of "Adam Bede," etc. In Three Volumes. Vol. I. [II. III.]. Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1866.
Three octavo volumes. Published in July (?) 1866 (British Museum copy deposited July 21). Originally issued in a reddish-brown cloth (one must consult Carter *Variants* and Lake [see below] for a clearer picture on the many variant bindings on this title).

$1,540 at Slater (1982); $1,100 at Bradley Martin (1990); $1,430 at Manney (1991). Today, maybe $2,500 to $3,000.

ELIOT, George. *Middlemarch.* A Study of Provincial Life. By George Eliot. Vol. I. [II. III. IV.]. Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1871 [1872].
Originally in eight parts between December 1871 and December 1872. Four octavo volumes in book form. Originally issued in a rich blue cloth blocked in blind, black and gilt—one of the most nicely designed Victorian trade bindings. A gorgeous book in nice condition.

Her masterpiece, and simply one of the best novels ever written. About 20,000 copies of this title had been sold by the end of 1874.

Stockhausen-Ewing-Slater copy in parts in original wrappers brought $1,210 in 1982. Bradley Martin copy (cloth): $7,700 in 1990. Manney copy (also Sadleir-Borowitz): $6,050 in 1991. Given the very high demand for this title, copies very good to near fine (cloth or parts) would now be $15,000 to $20,000 and the Sadleir-Borowitz-Manney copy could command $30,000, should it reappear on the market.

ELIOT, George. *Daniel Deronda.* By George Eliot. Vol. I. [II. III. IV.]. Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1876.
Originally published in eight parts, then four octavo volumes, 1876. Book form originally issued in a red-brown cloth.

Eliot's last novel. Bradley Martin copy in parts brought $1,650. Manney in cloth, $8,250. A very nice set in parts went through Sotheby's London in 1992 at £2,600 hammer to the trade (about $4,600 all in). We estimate respectable copies to go these days for around $6,000 or so, parts or cloth.

Sadleir comparative scarcity:
In Original Cloth, but regardless of condition—

Scenes of Clerical Life
Romola
Daniel Deronda
Middlemarch
Adam Bede
The Mill on the Floss
Silas Marner
Felix Holt, The Radical

In Original Cloth, fine—

Romola
Adam Bede
Middlemarch
Daniel Deronda
Scenes of Clerical Life
The Mill on the Floss
Silas Marner
Felix Holt, The Radical

The main bibliographical references for George Eliot are:

Parrish, M[orris] L[ongstreet]. *Victorian Lady Novelists. George Eliot. Mrs. Gaskell. The Brontë Sisters.* First Editions in the Library at Dormy House, Pine Valley, New Jersey, Described with Notes by M.L. Parrish. L: Constable and Company, 1933.

[Lake, Brian and Janet Nassau]. *George Eliot in Original Cloth. A Bibliographical Catalogue.* [L:] Jarndyce, 1988. Absolutely essential for dealers.

Muir, Percy. H. *A Bibliography of the First Editions of George Eliot.* L: The Bookman's Journal Supplement, 1927-1928.

Sadleir, Michael. *XIX Century Fiction.* A Bibliographical Record Based on His Own Collection. ...In Two Volumes. Volume I. [II.]. Cambridge: Printed at the University Press, 1951.

Wolff, Robert Lee. *Nineteenth-Century Fiction.* A Bibliographical Catalogue Based on the Collection Formed by Robert Lee Wolff. In Five Volumes. Volume I. [-V.] NY: Garland Publishing, Inc. 1981.

Carter, John. *Binding Variants in English Publishing, 1820-1900.* L: Constable & Co., 1932.

NOTE: Professor William Baker, of Northern Illinois University, has been working on his descriptive bibliography of George Eliot for over a decade now, with Dr. John Ross of Massey University, New Zealand. Professor Baker relays that the project is in the "finishing stages."

Selected Bibliography of Elizabeth Gaskell

SO FEW COPIES OF GASKELL in original cloth or wrappers come on the market, through dealers or at auction, that we have not attempted a title-by-title price guide. A near fine of *Mary Barton* or fine copies of the later important novels could command $10,000, whereas the prices for lesser titles in lesser condition could dip into the hundreds.

[GASKELL, Elizabeth]. *Mary Barton: A Tale of Manchester Life.* In Two Volumes. Vol. I. [II.]. London: Chapman and Hall, 1848.
Two volumes. Octavo. Published on October 18, 1848. Originally issued in dark red cloth.

The only significant copy through the rooms in 25 years has been the Slater copy ($3,250) in 1982. That copy, a beauty, would be worth well over 10 grand today.

[GASKELL, Elizabeth]. [wrapper title:] *Lizzie Leigh*, A Domestic Tale, from "Household Words," by Charles Dickens [sic]. New York: Dewitt & Davenport, 1850.
Piracy, 36 pp. In twelvemo format, wrappered. Published May 4, 1850.

The above is the true first. The Americans not only thought that the author of *Jane Eyre* also wrote *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey*, but here they put forth the assumption that Dickens wrote *Lizzie Leigh*. This happened quite a few times to Mrs. Gaskell in the early stages of her career Stateside. The story first appeared anonymously in Dickens' weekly *Household Words* (March 30 to April 13, 1850). The title was published in book form in England in 1855 as:

[GASKELL, Elizabeth]. *Lizzie Leigh; And Other Tales.* By the Author of "Mary Barton," "Ruth," &c. Cheap Edition. London: Chapman and Hall, 1855.
One octavo volume. Published in September 1855 as a so-called Cheap Edition, in glazed yellowish paper over boards.

Contains: "Lizzie Leigh," "The Well of Pen-Morfa," "The Heart of John Middleton," "Disappearances," "The Old Nurse's Story," "Traits and Stories of the Huguenots," "Morton Hall," "My French Master," "The Squire's Story," "Company Manners," "Mr. Harrison's Confessions," "Libbie Marsh's Three Eras," "The Sexton's Hero," "Christmas Storms and Sunshine," "Hand and Heart" and "Bessy's Troubles at Home."

[GASKELL, Elizabeth]. *The Moorland Cottage.* By the Author of "Mary Barton." With Illustrations by Birkett [sic] Foster. London: Chapman & Hall, 1850.
Single small octavo volume. Published December 14, 1850. Originally issued in a moderate reddish-brown cloth quite elaborately blocked in blind and gilt; also seen in a green variant cloth with same blocking.

Generally well under $2,000, but a fine copy should be $2,500 to $3,000.

[GASKELL, Elizabeth]. *Ruth.* A Novel. By the Author of "Mary Barton." ...In Three Volumes. Vol. I. [II. III.]. London: Chapman and Hall, 1853.
Standard octavo three-decker. Published January 10, 1853. Issued in a dark grayish-purple cloth. The endpapers on this title pose a bit of a complication, well sorted out in Smith.

No sales at auction between 1978 and 1997, when a so-so copy brought £700 at Christie's South Kensington (about $1,400 all in).

[GASKELL, Elizabeth]. *Cranford.* By the Author of "Mary Barton," "Ruth," &c. London: Chapman & Hall, 1853.
Single small octavo volume. Published on June 18, 1853. Originally issued in moderate olive green cloth.

For publication in book form as *Cranford*, nine sketches that had appeared on and off in *Household Words* from December 1851 to May 1853 were slightly revised into 16 titled chapters.

No significant auction records after 1983, when the A. Edward Newton copy (repaired) brought $440. The Parsons-Slater copy brought $330 in 1982 after making $410 in 1976 at the Parsons sale.

[GASKELL, Elizabeth]. *North and South.* By the Author of "Mary Barton," "The Moorland Cottage," "Cranford," &c. ... New York: Harper & Brothers, 1855.
Number 196 of the Harper's "Library of Select Novels." Octavo. Issued in wrappers. Published on February 14, 1855.

North and South was first serialized in *Household Words* from September 2, 1854 to January 27, 1885. On March 26, 1855, about six weeks after the American edition, the book was published in England as:

[GASKELL, Elizabeth]. *North and South.* By the Author of "Mary Barton," "Ruth," "Cranford," &c. In Two Volumes. Vol. I. [II.]. London: Chapman and Hall, 1855.
Two octavo volumes, in a dark grayish-brown cloth.

Only two significant auction records in 25 years: £1200 hammer at Christie's South Kensington in 1997 (about $2,275 all in), and the Slater copy at $350 in 1982. Nowadays a respectable copy should be about $4,000 to $5,000.

GASKELL, E[lizabeth] C[leghorn]. *The Life of Charlotte Brontë,* Author of "Jane Eyre," "Shirley," "Villette," &c. By E. C. Gaskell, Author of "Mary Barton," "Ruth," &c....In Two Volumes. Vol. I. [II.]. London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1857.
Two twelvemo volumes in dark reddish-brown cloth. Published on March 25, 1857.

A second edition was required within a month. The first American edition appears via D. Appleton and Company between May 9 and 16, 1857 and includes some controversial passages which by that time had already been removed from the British editions. An important book on several levels, but neither particularly rare nor expensive.

GASKELL, Mrs. [Elizabeth]. *My Lady Ludlow.* A Novel. By Mrs. Gaskell, Author of "Mary Barton," "North and South," "Cranford," "The Moorland Cottage," &c., &c., &c. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1858.
Number 209 in the Harper "Library of Select Novels." Octavo. Issued in wrappers. Published October 14, 1858.

My Lady Ludlow was first serialized in *Household Words* from June 19 to September 25, 1858. The first British book form edition with this title was not until 1861 as:

GASKELL, Mrs. [Elizabeth]. *My Lady Ludlow, and Other Tales.* Included in "Round the Sofa." By Mrs. Gaskell, Author of "Mary Barton," "Life of Charlotte Bronte [sic]," &c. &c. London: Sampson Low, Son and Co., 1861.
Single octavo volume, published June 6, 1861 in a nicely blocked yellowish-green cloth.

[GASKELL, Elizabeth]. *Round the Sofa.* By the Author of "Mary Barton," "Life of Charlotte Bronte [sic]," &c. &c. Two Volumes. Vol. I. [II.]. London: Sampson Low, Son & Co., 1859.
Two twelvemo volumes. Published on March 19, 1859 in a strong red cloth.

The book contains the frame story, "Round the Sofa," and "My Lady Ludlow," "An Accursed Race," "The Doom of the Griffiths," "Half a Life-Time Ago," "The Poor Clare" and "The Half Brothers." All but "Round the Sofa" and "The Half Brothers" had already appeared in periodicals. There was no American edition using this title.

[GASKELL, Elizabeth]. *Right at Last, and Other Tales.* By the Author of "Mary Barton," "Life of Charlotte Bronte [sic]," "Round the Sofa," &c. &c. London: Sampson Low, Son & Co., 1860.
One twelvemo volume. Published on May 5, 1860 in a binding almost uniform with its immediate predecessor, *Round the Sofa.*

Contains four stories that had appeared earlier in periodicals: "Right at Last" (originally titled "The Sin of a Father"), "The Manchester Marriage," "Lois the Witch" and "The Crooked Branch" (originally "The Ghost in the Garden Room").

GASKELL, Mrs. [Elizabeth]. *Sylvia's Lovers.* By Mrs. Gaskell. Author of "The Life of Charlotte Brontë," "Mary Barton," "Ruth," "North and South," etc. ...In Three Volumes. Vol. I. [II. III.]. London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1863.
Three octavo volumes. Published on February 20, 1863. Originally issued in a very deep red cloth.

GASKELL, Mrs. [Elizabeth]. *A Dark Night's Work.* A Novel. By Mrs. Gaskell, Author of "Sylvia's Lover's [sic]," "Mary Barton," "North and South," "Right at Last," "My Lady Ludlow," "Cranford," &c. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1863.
Small octavo issued in wrappers. Published on April 14, 1863. First British edition was published 10 days

later by Smith, Elder and Co. in a dark grayish reddish-brown cloth.

[GASKELL, Elizabeth]. *Cousin Phillis.* A Tale. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1864.
Small octavo, issued in wrappers. Number 242 in the Harper's "Library of Select Novels."

This story originally appeared in *Cornhill Magazine* from November 1863 to February 1864. In book form in England, it first appeared as *Cousin Phillis and Other Tales*, issued in a deep red cloth and published on December 2, 1865 by Smith, Elder and Co., comprising "Cousin Phillis," "Company Manners," "Mr. Harrison's Confessions" and "The Sexton's Hero."

GASKELL, Mrs. [Elizabeth]. *The Grey Woman. And Other Tales.* By Mrs. Gaskell, Author of "Mary Barton," North and South," "Sylvia's Lovers," "Cousin Phillis," "Cranford," etc. Illustrated Edition. London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1865.
One octavo volume. Published on October 21, 1865 in deep red cloth.

Contains eight stories that had previously appeared in various periodicals: "The Grey Woman," "Curious, if True," "Six Weeks at Heppenheim," "Libbie Marsh's Three Eras," "Christmas Storms and Sunshine," "Hand and Heart," "Bessie's Troubles at Home" and "Disappearances."

GASKELL, Mrs. [Elizabeth]. *Wives and Daughters.* A Novel. By Mrs. Gaskell. Author of "Mary Barton," "Cranford," "Sylvia's Lovers," "Cousin Phillis," &c., &c. With Illustrations. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1866.
Single octavo volume. Issued in wrappers and lots of variant cloths. Published on February 2, 1866.

The story had originally appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine* from August 1864 to January 1866. It was published in book form in England 10 days after the American edition as:

GASKELL, Mrs. [Elizabeth]. *Wives and Daughters.* An Every-Day Story. By Mrs. Gaskell. With Eighteen Illustrations by George Du Maurier. In Two Volumes. Vol. I. [II.]. London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1866.
Two octavo volumes in dark purplish-red cloth.

Sadleir comparative scarcity:

Mary Barton
Cranford [and] *Sylvia's Lovers*
A Dark Night's Work [and] *The Grey Woman*
Wives and Daughters
Lizzie Leigh
Cousin Phillis
Right at Last
Round the Sofa
The Moorland Cottage
Ruth [and] *North and South*

The main bibliographical references for Elizabeth Gaskell are:

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