

# **Geraldine Who?**

**“Miss Jewsbury, the Well-Known Authoress”,  
her Forgettable Novels and her Memorable Achievement**

by

**Goldie G. Weatherhead**

**A Thesis**

**Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
of the University of Manitoba  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
of the Degree of**

**Master of Arts**

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## **Abstract**

In her own time (1812-1880), Geraldine Jewsbury wrote six novels which were well-received and frequently reprinted; they led to her continuing employment as a contributor to prestigious journals, a fiction reviewer, and a reader for a leading publisher. She was a popular figure in literary circles, friendly with Ruskin, Kingsley, the Brownings, Lewes, Lady Morgan, Emerson, Froude, the Carlyles, and many of the influential editors of the day. Yet her novels are virtually forgotten; they, and her considerable influence on Victorian fiction as an arbiter of other people's writing now interest only Victorian scholars pursuing fragmented and esoteric areas of study not always relevant to the real intent of her work. This thesis offers a close reading of all of Jewsbury's novels in order to determine why they appealed to her own era, but not to ours, and what they contain that might enrich our understanding of the vast body of minor Victorian fiction, and of the mid-Victorian age.



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but mostly I thank my son-in-law, Laurence Grafstein, and my grandsons, Daniel, Edward and Isaac Grafstein for always giving me things to brag about, no matter how paltry my own achievements.

The quotation in the title is taken from Emma Stebbins,  
*Charlotte Cushman: Her Letters and Memories of Her Life.*

In memory of my beloved husband  
Edward Albert (Ted) Weatherhead

1932-1992

who knew a pretentious piece of puke  
when he saw one.

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## Introduction

### Geraldine, Why?

I had not heard of, much less read anything by Geraldine Endor Jewsbury (1812-1880) when I picked up a new Oxford World's Classics paperback of *The Half Sisters*.<sup>1</sup> The attraction was superficial; I liked what the two young women in the cover illustration were wearing,<sup>2</sup> and the novel looked like the kind of convoluted but undemanding Victorian narrative one could read, just for the story, between planes or during bouts of insomnia. I learned from the blurb that from 1845 to 1859 Jewsbury had written six novels covering a range of topics which I recognized to be a cross-section of recurring Victorian themes. But I had not yet read *The Half Sisters* when, urgently needing to change a previously-approved thesis topic gone stale, I wildly suggested Geraldine Jewsbury.

Talk about serendipity! My adviser, Dr. Pamela Perkins, had actually read both *The Half Sisters* and Jewsbury's first novel, *Zoe*, published in 1845 (Dr. Perkins remains the only person of my acquaintance with this experience). She thought it was a good idea, so, Geraldine, why not?

I then began a tedious search for everything nobody wanted to know or would ever have dreamed of asking about this long-turned-off literary light. George Lewes, I found, had mentioned her third in his catalogue of influential lady novelists.<sup>3</sup> Most of her six novels had gone into more than one edition, and had been reviewed in the likes of *The Athenaeum* and *The Westminster Review*. She was well-regarded in her own time, both

as a novelist and as a public person, consorting with other notables such as Ruskin, Emerson, Carlyle, Samuel Bamford, Mrs. Gaskell, Froude and Prof. Huxley. She published two children's books, and several articles on sociological topics for important magazines- - including, by invitation, Dickens's *Household Words*. She was employed for decades as a frequent fiction reviewer for *The Athenaeum* and a publisher's reader for Bentley.<sup>4</sup> Yet most of the Victorian scholars I asked had either never heard of her or knew the name only, not the works.

And no wonder! Her novels had had few reissues in the twentieth century. Local libraries owned no copies. It took months to acquire the *oeuvre*, either in crumbly, ancient volumes or hard-to-access microfilm. The job was done with the indispensable help of the Elizabeth Dafoe Library document delivery staff (who brought home the obscurity of my interests when they left a message saying my Geraldine Jewsberg material had arrived).

When I finally did read the novels, I found that they spanned a panorama of Victorian topical discourse, often raising contentious issues years earlier than better-known writers writing better books.

Yet I was not surprised that Jewsbury's novels had been all but forgotten; they deserve to be. What did surprise me was the paper-trail of criticism exploring this *terra incognita* for the purpose of publish-or-perish exploitation. These scholarly critics seemed to me to be immortalizing Jewsbury partially for spurious reasons- - her perceived "feminism", and her dependence on her friendship with Jane and Thomas Carlyle- - both, I thought, approached with Procrustean wrong-headedness. And when

Jewsbury was recognized for her work as reviewer and reader, the recognition fell short of relating her critical output to its effect on her own life and on Victorian literature.

If any attention is better than no attention, Jewsbury has benefited in exposure from recent attempts to load female authors into the mystical canon of great writing from which they had allegedly been excluded. This in itself explains why Virago (which existed for that very purpose<sup>5</sup>) reprinted *Zoe* in 1989, and why OWC reissued *The Half Sisters*. Both novels deal, at least partly, with the need for women to have some sort of cerebral focus and useful occupation. All of Jewsbury's novels are to some degree concerned with this topic, providing a convenient launching pad for any critic bent on gauging yet another nineteenth century woman writer in terms of her "feminism"- - although this word, as Karen Carney reminds us, was not used in Great Britain until fifteen years after Jewsbury's death.<sup>6</sup>

Jewsbury also wrote about faith and doubt, applied technology, shifting power in a changing class system, church bureaucracy, hereditary madness, desire versus duty, Utopian workplaces, Catholic corruption and Irish insincerity- - a gamut of Victorian oldies but goodies. That most of the commentary about her comes from the view from the womb (of one's own) strikes me as being unfair as well as tedious.<sup>7</sup>

It is also contrived; the degree of discomfort critics express with Jewsbury's feminism makes one question why she is being discussed in that context at all. This applies both to her personal life and to her novels. Karen Carney complains about Jewsbury's political restraint.<sup>8</sup> J.M. Hartley says Jewsbury wants women to develop their inner potential only to improve their performances as wives and mothers.<sup>9</sup> Lisa Surridge accuses Jewsbury of using male spokespersons to deliver the feminist message,<sup>10</sup> and

Gayle Tuchman and Nina E. Fortin say Jewsbury's reviews and reader's reports firm up the prevailing position of men's writing on top and women's on the bottom of the intellectual scale.<sup>11</sup>

Carney does defend Jewsbury's feminism in that while

other novelists portrayed women as 'relative creatures' Jewsbury created women characters who often prove abler and wiser than their male counterparts.<sup>12</sup>

But so what? So did Trollope, Thackeray and that least feminist of novelists, Dickens; just contrast Mrs. Max Goesler and Phineas Finn, Becky Sharp and any of her conquests, or Amy Dorrit and her father.

That Jewsbury was female and a novelist should not automatically burden her with righting all the wrongs visited upon womanhood. The problem with assaying Jewsbury's "feminism" lies in the assumption that it really was daring and unusual to be a Victorian **woman** novelist- - that women writers were crucified for their careers, and thus need to be resurrected and deified. This assumption loses sight of two facts. One is that writing things people would pay to read was then, as it is now, a way to make a living, and furthermore, a natural one for middle-class women, since the relative privacy of the workplace would keep them from the then inappropriate public sphere. The other is that until the twentieth century novels were generally not regarded as high culture. The literature taught in universities was poetry- - and not even English, but Greek or Latin poetry. Novels were merely entertainment- - usually serialized in periodicals or volumes, and often criticized for their moral content. Compare *The Sopranos*, not *The Iliad*. Even the overwhelmingly admired Dickens with his blockbuster public readings was Happening more than High Art.

Women were thought to be the bulk of novel readership, and as is documented by John Sutherland, made up over one third of the novel writers in the Victorian period. Of the 878 published novelists (out of tens of thousands believed to have existed), 566 are men, and 312 are women, but the women wrote an average of 21 titles each, and the men only 15.7. Given the lack of other career opportunities and/or demands, Sutherland suggests that women had more time and more need to focus on career writing:

Among the men, no less than 110 had law as either a concurrent or previous vocation (journalism comes second with 82). Among the women, the vast bulk had no other recorded activity than being wives (167) or spinsters (113). Not surprisingly, the Victorian spinster was the most productive single category of novelist with an average lifetime output of 24 titles.<sup>13</sup>

Sutherland's breakdown<sup>14</sup> of his 312 women novelists does not say whether Jewsbury is counted with the 113 spinsters, the nine female journalists or the four women in the book trade. In any case, it was both normal and commonplace for women to be novelists all through the 1800's, and I would argue that there are certain works by women that have been revered and studied as long as novels have been revered and studied at all.

That some of the best female novelists chose male pseudonyms further feeds the canard; i.e. it was improper or unsafe for women to air their imaginings by bouncing them around in the public sphere. But one could also argue that the Bell boys (Currer, Ellis and Acton) had other good reasons not to expose their already weird and disreputable family to more notoriety.<sup>15</sup> Or that George Eliot, using the first name of the man whose last name she was not entitled to take, may have been afraid that her living arrangements would colour judgment of her moralistic novels. Mrs. Gaskell and Mrs. Oliphant emphasized their femininity by using their titles rather than their initials. Sutherland says novelists of both sexes used pseudonyms "to mask shame at being a



novelist”;<sup>16</sup> at any rate, the Brontes and Eliot dropped their disguises when their books were well-received.

It is merely irrelevant to remember Jewsbury in terms of her “feminism”. It is grossly unfair that many works about Victorian life and literature mention her chiefly or solely in regard to her long connection with the Carlyles, prioritizing that relationship so as to diminish Jewsbury’s considerable achievements: e.g. “an intimate and valued friend of the Carlyles, she wrote articles for various periodicals, six novels . . .”;<sup>17</sup> “[George Eliot] moves on from Kingsley to review *Constance Herbert*, a new novel by Jane Carlyle’s friend Geraldine Jewsbury . . .”;<sup>18</sup> “Though known today mainly for her long correspondence with Jane Welsh Carlyle, Geraldine Endor Jewsbury . . .”;<sup>19</sup> “concerned with a Carlylean discipline of work, Geraldine Jewsbury. . . .”<sup>20</sup>

Jewsbury did enter literary life via Cheyne Row.<sup>21</sup> She remained close enough to the Carlyles to be able, after Jane’s death, to reveal to J.A. Froude, Carlyle’s biographer, that the marriage had been unconsummated, since Carlyle was impotent.<sup>22</sup> But casting Jewsbury as the Carlyles’ social and ideological dependent is somewhat revisionist. Jewsbury was a prolific, published, paid author and literary advisor. Jane Carlyle wrote nothing but letters, many to Jewsbury complaining about Thomas Carlyle, many to other friends and relations revealing her jealousy of Jewsbury’s growing literary reputation and social success.<sup>23</sup> Thomas Carlyle viciously attacked Jewsbury’s novels, Jane appropriated Jewsbury’s friends and attempted to thwart her romances.<sup>24</sup> Yet they consistently accepted Jewsbury’s loyalty, hospitality and assistance. Though she was initially attracted to Carlyle’s ideas, I do not see her works as parroting them. Rather,

this thesis will raise the possibility that (likely, unconsciously) she wrote characters who limn Carlyle's personality defects.

The most legitimate recent critical recognition of Jewsbury is recognition of her as a critic. The 2300-odd reviews that she wrote for *The Athenaeum* between 1849 and 1880 have themselves inspired a 155 page volume of commentary.<sup>25</sup> Her contribution as a publisher's reader for Bentley from 1860 until two weeks before her death is discussed in several articles and books.<sup>26</sup> Neither occupation was considered an unsuitable job for a woman. Bentley employed at least five other women readers,<sup>27</sup> and many other women are known to have reviewed for literary journals.<sup>28</sup>

Most of these women were themselves novelists- - as were many men who did such work.<sup>29</sup> Had Jewsbury not written novels "generally regarded as being better than commonplace"<sup>30</sup> (as Bentley biographer Royal Gettman describes them) she would probably not have been hired to judge other people's fiction.

Her paid-for opinions on what should be read or published gave Geraldine Jewsbury an enormous voice in Victorian fiction while it was being produced. Reading and reviewing provided most of her income for the last twenty years of her life, and secured her place in the literary milieu of which she had become an integral part. Never married (not for want of trying), lacking independent means, too mercurial to be a governess or companion, too opinionated to take a back seat to the sisters-in-law she would have had to depend on for shelter, what kind of a Bronte nightmare existence would Geraldine Jewsbury have had had she not written her six novels?

Admittedly, I see Jewsbury's novels as instrumental to her life style, rather than intrinsic as literature. I do not see this as an injustice to the novels. But I do see it as an

injustice to the woman that modern critics have looked at the novels only one or two at a time, only as makeweight for other agendas of analysis, e.g. female friendship,<sup>31</sup> women's work,<sup>32</sup> suppressed sex,<sup>33</sup> and industrial interests.<sup>34</sup> They have not been looked at all together as a body of work, to see what they contain that made them commercially viable, entertaining, representative and influential in their own time- - though forgotten in ours. That is what I intend to do in this thesis- - because, although I think Jewsbury's novels are terrible, I think her achievement in writing them and turning them to good purpose is admirable.

## About This Thesis

Geraldine Endors Jewsbury contributed to *Household Words*, but her name isn't one. Consequently, I have felt it necessary to provide some background material with this thesis.

Biographical information is used in the text only when necessary to develop arguments, and is otherwise found in a chronology of Jewsbury's life and times (Appendix A), or in the endnotes. I have mined most of it from the only full-length integral biography of Jewsbury extant- - Susanne Howe's *Geraldine Jewsbury, her Life and Errors* (1935). Although the book is not documented, Howe draws from a number of credible primary sources and combines an open mind with a sympathetic outlook. There is no reason to believe her information is not accurate.<sup>35</sup>

It would be fantastical to assume that anyone (else) is familiar with Jewsbury's not-very-good, hard-to-find novels. I have therefore felt obliged to provide summaries of all six of them. These summaries appear as Appendices B, C, D, E, F and G. Constraints of length prohibited including the summaries in the text of the thesis, **but unless each is read before reading my discussion of the relevant novel, my discussion will appear meaningless.** We are not dealing with *Middlemarch* here.

Novels quoted in my text are identified thus:

<i>Zoe: The History of Two Lives</i>	(1845)	Z
<i>The Half Sisters</i>	(1848)	HS
<i>Marian Withers</i>	(1851)	MW
<i>Constance Herbert</i>	(1855)	CH
<i>The Sorrows of Gentility</i>	(1856)	SOG
<i>Right or Wrong</i>	(1859)	ROW

## Chapter 1

### Bizarre Bedfellows

The circumstances of Geraldine Jewsbury's life and how she lived it appear as a collage of Victorian clichés streaked with adolescent rebellion. As in so many Victorian lives and in so many Victorian novels, Jewsbury had a mother who died when she was very young- - a month after, and presumably related to giving birth to a younger brother. She had a father who was both loved and respected, and stern and exacting. Besides keeping house for him, he required that his daughters read him the business news and Parliamentary debates printed in the Manchester papers. Of Jewsbury's four brothers, one, a sailor, was deemed a ne'er do well and was cast off by his father after running into some sort of trouble, probably debt. Her older sister, who had to raise Jewsbury and her brothers, escaped into marriage at age 32 (over the objections of their father; the fiancé was a lowly chaplain), went off to India, and died of cholera a year later. Her sister's marriage left Jewsbury at 19 with the job of housekeeper- - relieving her of having to seek work as a governess, for which career she had been educated (no one seems to have expected her to marry, perhaps because she was scrawny and red-headed, and the family was only comfortable, not magnetically rich).

In spite of her father's *penchant* for moving house frequently, Jewsbury became an impeccable home-maker, keeping a well-appointed, well-provendered domain for her father until his death, then for her youngest brother until he married- - all the while providing hospitality for their Manchester friends and for visiting notables such as Ralph

Waldo Emerson and Alfred, Lord Tennyson. Yet, in spite of her own domestic mastery, Jewsbury spoke with consistent scorn of the "Sarah Stickney Ellis sort of woman".<sup>36</sup>

Like many a Victorian spinster, Jewsbury expended her emotions in (verbally) passionate female friendships of the sort that have become the source of so much literary speculation.<sup>37</sup> Yet, she fell in love with, doggedly pursued, and proposed marriage to at least three men - - alas, to no avail. She was notorious for smoking "cigarillos",<sup>38</sup> for the shock value of her first two novels, and for her fondness for making outrageous pronouncements. Yet, nothing seems to have breached her received image as respectable Mancunian maiden lady - - and far from being shocking, her last four novels, her reader's reports and book reviews are chock-full of passages of conventional and pragmatic moralising.

Geraldine Jewsbury's family background is another Victorian set piece, a paradigm of the technology-driven class flexibility of the recently industrialized north. Her grandfather, Thomas Jewsbury, had been a colliery manager, a road surveyor, and a canal navigation engineer, leaving his large family well-off. Her father, also Thomas Jewsbury, had learned cotton manufacturing from Robert Peel, Sr.,<sup>39</sup> and established - - possibly with Peel's aid - - a small cotton mill and offices adjoining the Jewsbury home in Measham, Derbyshire.

Born there in 1812, Geraldine was the fourth of six children, and the second girl; her sister, Maria Jane, born in 1800, was the oldest. The Jewsbury sons were encouraged to become involved in the activities of the mill,<sup>40</sup> and in later life followed the family bent for business and applied science (the second son, Henry, a druggist, was the creator of famous brands of toothpaste and ginger beer, and the youngest, Frank is said to have

entertained the visiting Tennyson by making whiskey in the summer house.<sup>41</sup>) The girls were not allowed to

satisfy their curiosity about mechanical things by tinkering with odds and ends in the workshop

although Geraldine had

a restless and consuming curiosity to get at the workings of things and to see behind the scenes, symptomatic in her day of one thing- - a 'masculine' mind. In the nature of things she could only apply this mental energy to the dissection of people's emotions and motives which she was sometimes able to objectify in her novels. Had she applied it to power looms and dressing machines . . . which were revolutionizing the whole cotton industry . . . who knows how different her erratic and feverish career might have been?<sup>42</sup>

The implication is that if Jewsbury had been a male, she would not have had to be a writer at all.

Because of the depressed state of the cotton market following the war of 1812, in 1818 Thomas Jewsbury moved his family to Manchester where he had earlier established a cotton fibre dealership and insurance business. The same year, Mrs. Jewsbury died, leaving Maria Jane to run the household, and finish raising Tom, 16, Henry, 15, Geraldine, six, Arthur, three, and new-born Frank. Mrs. Jewsbury was said to have been "clever, bright . . . accomplished . . . of cultivated artistic taste and skill",<sup>43</sup> although, with six children, she would hardly have had time to develop it. Maria Jane apparently inherited these traits. According to her biographer, Eric Gillett, she spent her childhood nursing ambitions to write a book, be praised for it publicly, and get to associate with authors.<sup>44</sup> She had already had published (in the Coventry Herald) some truly awful verse,<sup>45</sup> when at age 19 she was plunged into a life which she later described as "so painfully, laboriously domestic that it was an absolute duty to crush intellectual tastes".<sup>46</sup>

However, she managed to scrounge time from domestic chores<sup>47</sup> to embark on a course of reading to remedy her self-perceived ignorance, and to spend in frenzied writing. For ten years, she churned out “verses of a romantic and sometimes of a pious type, short stories in which blighted affections played a very prominent part, and really amusing light essays”.<sup>48</sup>

Maria Jane was a prolific contributor to the sentimental annuals of the type that Mr. Ned Plymdale produces to claim the attention of Miss Rosalind Vincy,<sup>49</sup> as well as to periodicals of a more elevated class (e.g. *The Athenaeum*). She was the author of four books. She also wrote many letters to people who could advance her writing career, notably William Wordsworth, with whose daughter Dora she subsequently developed a close friendship.<sup>50</sup>

Another friend was Felicia Hemans, the poet (poetess? poetastress?).<sup>51</sup> The frivolity of holidays spent visiting these women, and of literary celebrity parties in London where she was “much admired” showed Maria Jane that life could be much different from her “thirteen years of dutiful drudgery in Manchester”.<sup>52</sup> After much agonizing, in which she admits she is not in love, she accepted a proposal of marriage from the Reverend William Kew Fletcher. “My father”, she wrote to Dora Wordsworth

takes refuge in lamenting how I can possibly think of leaving him and the children, forgetting that the children have already had the best of me, and that Geraldine is nearly nineteen.<sup>53</sup>

Howe speculates that Maria Jane would not have accepted the proposal had Fletcher not been taking her to India, as far as possible from the interminable wet weekend in Manchester to which her younger sister was now sentenced.<sup>54</sup>



Having herself at the same age had to take on the care of three tiny children, Maria Jane may have felt that the duties with which she left Geraldine were not so daunting. But Jewsbury did have to cope with childishness- - not of the teenage Frank, but her own; both her own words and anecdotal evidence tell us that she was immature for her age.<sup>55</sup> And just as the teenage Maria Jane's responsibilities had been aggravated by grief for her mother, Maria Jane's death in 1833 must have been to Jewsbury the death of a second mother.

Nevertheless, anecdotes and letters tell us that she learned to keep house beautifully, inspired loyalty and efficiency in servants, provided elaborate Victorian meals, and maintained a range of friendships within Manchester's oligarchic technocracy and burgeoning cultural life. Like Maria Jane, she read compulsively- - philosophy, history, science and the hyped novels of the day, especially George Sand's- - but she does not seem to have tried to pursue a writing career within her father's lifetime.

Eight years after Jewsbury had taken on the reins- - and shackles- - of the household, in August, 1840, after a trying illness, Thomas Jewsbury died at the age of 79. Jewsbury, then 28, was still to keep house for her younger brother, Frank, but she must have wondered for how long. Frank was gregarious, and likely to marry. She must have speculated, if not agonized, about what her long-term future offered. Neither marital nor career opportunities for 28-year-old middle-class women were abundant in 1840. No wonder that she experienced emotional crises and physical ills following her father's death- - but six years later, rather than having become a subservient spinster overwhelmed by the neuroses of old-maidhood and economic dependence, she was a

sought-after, vibrant personage whose first novel was a *cause célèbre*. How this happened is arguably more interesting than the novel itself.

George Sand and Thomas Carlyle make bizarre bedfellows, but both contributed to the writing of *Zoe*, its subsequent success, and Jewsbury's consequent career as a novelist. In the late 1830's, Jewsbury was troubled by religious doubt. Had she been troubled by religious faith, it would have been the greater wonder. Her teenage years had promised a life beyond her father's domestic authority. She had been sent to a good boarding school, partly to prepare her for the possible necessity of becoming a governess, partly to level the peaks and valleys of her quicksilver personality, so worrisome to Maria Jane (who does not seem to have taken into account that one should worry if an adolescent girl is **not** "a being whose events are emotions, whose principles are impulses, whose feelings are passions"<sup>56</sup>).

Jewsbury came away from school with a background in languages, science and literature. This was followed by time spent in London polishing up her Italian, French and drawing, and being hauled about by Maria Jane to literary parties whose other guests included Wordsworth and Maria Edgeworth. These worldly sorties must have sent mixed messages, for Maria Jane had always been pious. Indeed, she had expressed her piety commercially by exploiting Jewsbury's adolescent volatility; in 1828, Maria Jane had published in book form *Letters to the Young*, advice that had been preached to Jewsbury away at boarding school. The letters were full of cautions for self-suppression, self-restraint, the exercise of self-denying duty, and unquestioning devotion to religion.<sup>57</sup> It seems unlikely that the effervescent and impulsive Geraldine Jewsbury could have emerged into adulthood without great potential for feelings of guilt.

The late 1830's were for any open-minded British intellectual a Petrie dish on which to grow doubt.<sup>58</sup> Jewsbury had also to deal with where Maria Jane's faith had gotten **her**, with the ingrained guilt activated by her own intellectual embarrassment at her Calvinist upbringing,<sup>59</sup> and with the stagnating circumstances of her existence. As well, she was concerned about her ailing, aging father (who was soon to die). Feeling, as Joanne Wilkes says

intellectually and spiritually isolated . . . trying to combat a Materialist view of life [Jewsbury] gain[ed] some consolation from reading the works of Thomas Carlyle.<sup>60</sup>

By 1840, Carlyle was well on his way to becoming **the** Victorian Sage, and according to Susanne Howe Nobbe, was frequently the target of letters full of mental and spiritual distress

from earnest young people to whom Sartor, the French Revolution, . . . Wilhelm Meister and the first volume of his collected letters and reviews had come as a revelation . . . His correspondents were often young provincials of Non-Conformist background inclined to radicalism and sometimes rather spottily self-educated.<sup>61</sup>

In April of 1840, Jewsbury wrote to Carlyle, expressing her admiration for his work, and describing

her struggles with metaphysical and scientific reading, in search of some replacement for lost faith in Calvinist dogma.<sup>62</sup>

Jewsbury may also had in the back of her mind how a similar fan letter to Wordsworth in 1825 had brought Maria Jane an invitation to visit the Wordworth family and lifelong entrée into the Wordsworth household.

Carlyle responded, telling Jewsbury how to deal with her pain and doubt by giving her a stream of good sensible advice. There is nothing startling or unusual about

the advice. It says the same sort of things that have been said before and since by other mentors to other troubled souls riddled with cosmic doubt,<sup>63</sup> depression,<sup>64</sup> and hopelessness at the futility of effort,<sup>65</sup> concerned with accessibility to Divine Wisdom,<sup>66</sup> or lacking incentive to pursue important goals.<sup>67</sup> It is advice which benefited Jewsbury, and which would have benefited Carlyle himself. The back-and-forth correspondence led to Carlyle's being almost as impressed by Jewsbury as she was by him - or perhaps he was impressed by how much she was impressed by him. An invitation resulted, and in March of 1841, Jewsbury went to London to visit Carlyle and his wife at their Chelsea home.

The friendship that quickly developed between Jewsbury and Jane was intensified by the passion already burning in both women by the time they met - - passion, then widely held, for the writings of George Sand. If Carlyle can be called the Victorian Sage, Sand (1804-1876) might be termed the Victorian monosodium glutamate.<sup>68</sup> The Baroness Dudevant, a.k.a. Sand, famous for her liaisons with De Musset, Chopin, Liszt et al. has ended up as cinematic legend rather than in the literary canon.<sup>69</sup> But in the 1840's her works were venerated and her person idolized by intellectuals and artists throughout Continental Europe and Britain. Her novels dealt frankly with sexual passion ("frankly" for the time meaning the acknowledgment that sex happened). This, says Paul Blount, "did not endear [Sand] to the English Puritan nor to the press that acted as guardian of his morality."<sup>70</sup> Nor, probably, did the sociopolitical messages expressed in and out of Sand's fictive bedrooms; they assigned to women the rights to have opinions and to choose their own lifestyles and companions, and to working-class men the rights to learn, and to improve their worldly situations. Thus, says Blount, Sand became a compelling symbol,

“championing the rights of two of England’s most oppressed groups, women and the working class”.<sup>71</sup>

Epistolary evidence shows that among Sand’s admirers were Matthew Arnold, George Eliot, John Ruskin, Charlotte Bronte, John Stewart Mill, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning.<sup>72</sup> Barrett Browning went so far as to dedicate two poems which extolled Sand’s “pure genius sanctified from blame” and her womanly suffering, while trying to get around Sand’s transvestitism and generally smutty behaviour.<sup>73</sup> According to Patricia Thomson, Jane Carlyle read Sand’s works because they gratified her own “sentimental and romantic view of things”.<sup>74</sup> Jane demonstrated her obsession with the novels frequently in her letters, comparing her friends to Sand characters, and justifying her admiration by naming other Sand readers who ranked among the morally and socially uplifted.<sup>75</sup> The justification was needed because Thomas Carlyle despised Sand, as Thomson says, for her “tolerance of immorality, romantic effusiveness, lack of common sense, high flown sentiments, concentration on love”.<sup>76</sup> Or more probably, as Alethea Hayter suggests, Carlyle detested George Sand “with particular violence because he thought Mrs. Carlyle admired George Sand too much”.<sup>77</sup> But then, Carlyle would despise Sand. Sexist, sexless, elitist, egomaniacal and a laboriously slow writer,<sup>78</sup> he would hardly be likely to regard with favour a free-thinking, free-loving female who, seemingly between orgasms, spewed out novels that attracted adulation from people who should have been expending their energies in admiring **him**.

His first in-person meeting with Jewsbury sparked Carlyle’s admiring comment: “One of the most interesting young women I have seen for years; clear, delicate sense and courage looking out of her small, sylph-like figure”.<sup>79</sup> But according to June’s

biographers Lawrence and Elizabeth Hansen, "The next day he discovered that Geraldine was a devotee of George Sand, and his admiration cooled".<sup>80</sup>

As the friendship between Jane and Jewsbury grew, Jewsbury became the repository of Jane's complaints about her difficult husband, and the advisor encouraging her to work around, if not defy his reductive treatment. Jewsbury enriched Jane's social circle by introducing her own friends, people who were not Carlyle's hand-me-downs or hangers-on. Elizabeth Paulet was another Sandomaniac.<sup>81</sup> A girlhood friend of Jewsbury's, she often had both women to stay at her Liverpool home. Like-mindedness, and possibly the *frisson* derived from questioning Carlyle's opinions led the three to decide to write a novel in the manner of George Sand. Jewsbury and Paulet were to do the writing, with Jane's encouragement and power of veto.

In 1842, *Zoe* was begun in epistolary form. Beyond the sociable collaboration, it was a serious career step for Jewsbury. She had published only translations of articles by the Italian revolutionary Mazzini, and her ambition, according to Susanne Howe, "was to be a journalist rather than a novelist".<sup>82</sup> Paulet soon dropped out of the project, and Jewsbury, with surprising pragmatism, completed the novel, now in narrative form, two years later.

Jane was at first ecstatic. She wrote to her cousin, Jeannie Welsh, in February, 1844:

I have all Geraldine's MS now and by the powers it is a wonderful book!--  
Decidedly the *cleverest* Englishwoman's book I ever remember to have  
read.<sup>83</sup>

Jane, using her contacts and clout as Mrs. Carlyle, undertook finding a publisher. This turned out to be so easy that her patronage soon turned to petulance at Jewsbury's success. She tells Jeannie Welsh in March 1844:

[B]esides putting her in the way of getting her 'superfluous activity' vented in printed books, I consider that I shall have done a real act of Charity-- what is to become of her when she is old-- without ties, without purposes, unless she apply herself to this *trade*? And how is she even to have a *subsistence* otherwise should her Brother take it into his head to marry? All these considerations have made me very anxious to find a publisher for her *first* book, and contrary to Carlyle's prognostications-- beyond almost my own hopes I yesterday found that her MS was accepted . . . . [W]hen I think how John Mill's Logic which he spent *ten* years over-- and Carlyle's *Sartor* a real "*work of Genius*"-- had to hawk themselves about thro' all the *trade* before they could so much as get printed *free of cost*-- I do wonder at my good luck and *hers* in having this philosophical novel accepted by the first man I offered it to-- on the principle of *half profits*.<sup>84</sup>

The sensational aspects that must have signalled heavy sales to the eager publisher (Chapman and Hall) also set off alarm bells of unorthodoxy and impropriety, but Jewsbury proved professionally tractable to requests for change.

**(See summary of *Zoe* in Appendix B)**

In a series of letters, she tells Chapman and Hall:

The whole chapter of the "Religion of Humanity" can be cancelled . . . nothing positive will then be said about Everhard's faith-- people will be left at liberty to suppose anything they like . . . .

She promises to

introduce some quiet wholesome domestic scenes, to correct the somewhat *un-English* tones of other portions of the work

and will add a

solemn, definitive moral . . . that the spirit of purity & sincerity . . . the foundation of everything that is great or noble in humanity . . . is *equally incumbent* on men whether they have a religious faith or . . . not.

She refuses to marry Zoe and Everhard because it would give offence to “the parties themselves” and to her “most intimate friends among the Catholic clergy” who would consider marriage, for even a lapsed priest “a deliberate insult”.<sup>85</sup> Even at this early stage, she is thinking of her market, and tells her editor

My desire is to produce a work which shall take permanent rank at once . . . therefore I do not shrink from any amount of labour.<sup>86</sup>

The “George Sandism” tag given to *Zoe* by contemporary readers brought Jewsbury heavy sales, instant celebrity and social success not dependent on the Carlyles, causing Jane to write to her cousin, Helen Welsh, in 1847:

Geraldine was a much more lively and agreeable person in company when I knew her first-- *before* her book-- than now-- but there was hardly a house in London *then*, to which I could have used the *freedom* of taking her along with me-- and now because she has put her cleverness into a *book* accused of immorality . . . there is no house I visit at where the people would not *thank* me for giving them a sight of her. . . .<sup>87</sup>

Jewsbury must indeed have been a windfall to literary circles. She could be received anywhere as the respectable middle-class spinster she was,<sup>88</sup> at the same time bringing into the drawing room the *cachet* of a writer like Sand.

But it is hard to see now why *Zoe* was considered so scandalous that in order to protect the morals of young men it was banned from the reading room of the Manchester library.<sup>89</sup> Though its florid language emulates Sand, sexual activity is cut off in time for British consumption. *Zoe* is actually a model of middle-class Mancunian morality. The eponymous heroine has lovers, but they accept that “no” means “no” and she says “no” so as to not embarrass her children. The novel’s real scandal lay in Jewsbury’s take on what was to become a chestnut of discourse roasting on the open Victorian fire. Written four years before Froude’s *The Nemesis of Faith*, ten before Gaskell’s *North and South*,



*Zoe* is a novel of faith and doubt- - with the refreshing conclusion that doubt is more ethical. This antagonized doctrinal-retentive Victorian society. But Jewsbury does temper her writing with more acceptable conventions, i.e. Catholic-bashing, Irish-bashing, French-bashing, English chauvinism, and vilification of Established Church bureaucracy.

*Zoe* looks more sympathetically at the position of women too smart or too strong or too hot to fit into their socially sanctioned niches. And three years before *Jane Eyre*, twenty before *The Clever Woman of the Family*, and twenty-two before *Middlemarch*, *Zoe* pleads for rational education and fulfilling occupation for women, and (factoring in the discourse of love versus duty) comes to similar, self-defeating conclusions.

But the big question before this gallimaufry of rebellion and cliché can be addressed is, does the novel at all deserve the epithet that caused it to be gobbled up by readers and condemned by moralists? Can it really be termed George Sandist? George Lewes says “yes”, finding “turbulence and fervor” and an “impetuous, passionate style [which] clearly betrays the influence of George Sand”.<sup>90</sup> Or is that just logorrhea?

Compare this passage, picked randomly from Sand’s *Lélia* with the next one from *Zoe* :

Forgive my sadness, oh my well-beloved. Forgive my sacrilegious anger. Thankless as I am, have I any right to reproach you? Since my kisses have never warmed your marble lips, did I deserve such a miracle? But I beg you on my knees, at least tell me what fears of suspicions estrange you from me. Do you fear obeying me if you surrender to me?<sup>91</sup>

It was madness like hatred- - beads of sweat stood thick on his forehead and his breath came in gasps . . . *Zoe* . . . struggled to disengage herself from his arms, and . . . seeing a large shawl . . . attempted to cover herself with it, exclaiming, ‘Oh Everhard, what will you think of me? I have made you hate me- -despise me. Forgive me for letting you betray yourself . . .’

At length, Everhard said in a hoarse broken voice, 'Zoe, you know now the power you have over me . . . . It is you who have saved both of us this night . . . .' 'Oh, Everhard. . . . tell me that you have not lost the esteem you had for me.'

'Oh, no, no,' cried he passionately, 'you are more than mortal!' (Z 245)

But Victorian intellectuals were drawn to Sand not by her purple prose, according to Dorothy Mermin but because she was a

female, feminist version of Byron . . . Her novels vibrate with sexual passion and passionate protests against the subjection of women . . . Her artist-heroine Consuelo . . . manages to have everything : exciting travels, heroic adventures, triumph as a singer, a grand marriage . . . .<sup>92</sup>

Though Sand's heroines might have reflected the Corsair, all Zoe is is La Corsette. *Zoe* blithers, rather than vibrates with sexual passion, and in nearly all the novel's liaisons, pragmatism and/or propriety prevail over passion. Everhard's father's passion is for the priesthood, and he sacrifices it to marry for money. Zoe's mother's "wild attachment and gratitude" to her rescuer, Zoe's father, "was only equalled by his passionate love for her" (Z68), but these are mentioned just the once; after that, the pair are merely caregivers to each other. Gifford has backed off from his passion to marry rank; he later marries Zoe because she "brought back vividly the image of the only woman he . . . ever loved" (Z97)- - like buying a postcard. She marries him so that she

might walk out and be independent like a rational being, which it seems no woman on the continent is considered until she gets married (Z98).

The Evangelical cleric, Horace O'Brian, gazes at Catholic Clotilde "with a look of passionate tenderness, enough to change a saint of snow or marble into a most yielding woman" (Z222), but marries the bitchy Miss Smith, "favourite niece of the Bishop" to get a deanery, the Church being "a bore of a profession if one has not the hope of rising

in it" (Z225-6). Everhard's brother Louis and Gifford's niece Marian exemplify besotted young love. Louis is besotted with Marian's housekeeping skills:

up by seven o'clock . . . spends all morning regularly in the housekeeper's room . . . making all the jellies and potted meats . . . has begun a large carpet . . . is making all her baby clothes . . . I feel quite jealous of her needle (Z181).

The squire's Fieldingesque son, who "had been in love with Zoe ever since she was twelve years old" (Z84) resolves to marry her only when the housekeeper quits. He is quickly fobbed off with a stuffy cousin when Zoe's illegitimacy is revealed.

Even the fire from which Everhard rescues Zoe is contained, threatens nothing more than "the missis's clothes and jewels and nick-nacks" (Z247) before it is put out by servants with buckets and by Everhard's tearing down burning hangings. "[O]wing to the great thickness of the castle floors, the flames gradually died away when there was nothing more in the rooms to feed them" (Z246). The use of resistant feminine imagery against intrusive masculine imagery approaches overkill; the only thing that saves the fire-as-passion-trope from complete critical contempt is that Zoe predates by two years Jane Eyre's rescue of Rochester from his burning bed. Given *Zoe's* notoriety, and evidence that Charlotte Bronte had read the novel,<sup>93</sup> one suspects that this is where she got the idea.

As for the rest of Mermin's list, Zoe herself is not so troubled by the subjection of women as by systemic boredom. When she slops over society's margins, she does so with far less panache than a Consuelo. Instead of "exciting travels", Zoe makes a conventional Grand Tour highlighted by a long visit to her stepdaughter's convent. She does not make a "grand marriage" but a convenient and stultifying one, achieving nothing like "triumph as a singer", but maternal gratification as a dowager political hostess.

Rather than demonstrating “George Sandism”, what *Zoe* really does is anticipate Georgette Heyerism;<sup>94</sup> i.e. the literary syndrome described by Lillian S. Robinson in the chapter “On Reading Trash” in *Sex, Class and Culture*. Writing about historical fiction by, for and about women, and specifically citing Heyer’s regency romances, Robinson says:

The events these novels chronicle about women’s lives- - love, marriage, adultery, childbirth- - reinforce the idea that female history is essentially sexual . . . . In . . . the female historical novel, these sexual events take place in the larger movements of history, which are motivated and enacted by men, . . . affairs of nations whose details are state quarrels, wars, and pestilences.<sup>95</sup> [Women are] unable except through the exercise of their sexuality to exert any influence on more central historical events.<sup>96</sup>

Though *Zoe*’s sexuality does not really get much of a workout, it is her clearly described sexual magnetism that gives her entrée into those events in the novel which air sound-bites about what might really be happening in the late eighteenth century. The gorgeous *Zoe* is thrust into society when her husband finds it politically expedient to attend the Court. Since she is “eminently beautiful . . . all the most noted men of the day crowded to be presented to . . . the new Venus” (Z126-7); women want to glow in her reflected lustre, so she is asked everywhere and visited by everyone. Heyerlike, *Jewsbury* makes no effort to set her scenes with the real issues or conflicts of eighteenth century social and political machinations. Rather, she creates ambience by name-dropping; e.g. a letter to *Zoe*’s uncle refers to her personal encounters with Topham Beauclerk, the Countess of Coventry, George Selwyn, James Boswell, Fanny Burney, The Duke [sic] of Queensbury and his winning horse. *Jewsbury* highlights (as with a metaphorical fluorescent pink marker) the female intellectual aspect of her novel by having *Zoe* go to a marvellous party at Elizabeth Montagu’s, where who should show up

but Elizabeth Carter, Miss [Anna the] Swan of Lichfield, and Hannah More! There is, however, no attempt to gauge the significance of the Bluestockings in relation to whatever else Jewsbury is saying about female intellectual autonomy.

Jewsbury's use of the questionable French revolutionary figure, Mirabeau, is even more blatant Heyerism. The historical Mirabeau, alternately spokesman for the third estate, and advocate of constitutional monarchy was a wild man in his private as well as his public life. Frequently jailed for debt, he was a womanizer and abuser of women. Circa 1783-85, the real Mirabeau visited England, fleeing a lawsuit by his wife and troubles with his government, and bringing a teenage mistress he had liberated from a convent. He behaved badly at country houses- - but actively and vocally opposed the slave trade and supported Wilberforce. (For period verisimilitude, Jewsbury writes a scene at a dinner party where Wilberforce tells Zoe "some amusing anecdotes about the king and queen" (Z362), then has some nice things to say about Jesus Christ in a discussion about heroes with Mirabeau.)

A convenient wild man passionate about freedom was just what Jewsbury needed for Zoe to be tempted by, enabling her to exercise strong-minded female superiority by resisting. It is likely that Jewsbury borrowed her fictive, Sandishly Byronic Mirabeau from Thomas Carlyle. In *The French Revolution, a History* (1837), Carlyle's Mirabeau

the obstreporous, fierce man . . . glares with flashing sun glare . . .  
[t]hrough whose shaggy beetle brows and rough-hew scarred carbuncled  
face, there look natural ugliness, small-pox incontinence- - bankruptcy- -  
and burning fire of genius comet-fire glaring fuliginous through murkiest  
confusions.<sup>97</sup>

Carlyle seems to have admired Mirabeau's leadership qualities enough to gloss over his questionable ethics and enter him in the Hall of Fame of heroes who define history:

his triumph progresses . . . with mob jubilee, flaming torches . . . and voluntary guard of a hundred men . . . . He has opened his far-sounding voice, the depths of his far-sounding soul, he can quell . . . the pride tumults of the rich, the hunger tumults of the poor; and wild multitudes move under him, as under the moon do billows of the sea; he has become a world compeller and ruler over men.<sup>98</sup>

In *Zoe*, Mirabeau's charisma is refocused to fit the constraints of Georgette Heyerism.

Mirabeau was of a larger and stronger character than even Zoe. His genius mastered hers and she felt it. He held her proud, imperious nature in subjection, he kept her in a constant ferment (Z387).

Ironically, biographies of Thomas and Jane Carlyle chronicle just such a relationship. Did Jewsbury perhaps unconsciously, use her observations of their dysfunctional marriage and her private line to Jane's complaints to base her Mirabeau on Carlyle? Both rant and obfuscate, and take far longer than necessary to come to any given point.<sup>99</sup> Like Carlyle, *Zoe's* Mirabeau is egocentric and aggrieved. He berates the world for seeing him as "an Ishmaelite, an outcast" (Z369). He abuses Zoe for neglecting him to visit her dying uncle and to nurse her critically ill child. The Carlyles' financial difficulties were chronic; no money came in during the three years of writing *The French Revolution*- - and biographer Thea Holme repeats Jane's claim that Carlyle accused her "of pestering his life out about money . . . declaring that his soul was sick with hearing about it".<sup>100</sup>

Mirabeau sees his debt as a persecution, rather than a personal responsibility:

[A]ll my strength must be concerned in battling with the world for my daily bread, in avoiding my creditors- - pursued by debts; dragged down and steeped in poverty (Z369).

In view of his alleged impotence, it would be absurd to call Carlyle a womanizer like Mirabeau, but by the time *Zoe* was written, his fawning attachment to the influential

hostess Lady Harriet Baring (later Lady Ashburton) was already causing Jane pain.<sup>101</sup>

Mirabeau is also a misogynist, like Carlyle, making the pronouncements:

A woman's love is no compliment, she is the prey to whoever will take her . . . you are made of the same stuff as all the other women I have known. . . my wife was a fool, but she spoiled and ruined my existence (Z394).

Even the magnetism as a lecturer/writer that raised Carlyle from being a hick peasant Edinburgh University dropout to being the Sage of Chelsea is echoed in "the strange influence [Mirabeau] obtained over everyone he came near" (Z39-40). Perhaps this anticipates George Du Maurierism.<sup>102</sup>

In fact, the world was fated to experience several Georges more relevant to *Zoe* than were dreamed of in Sand's philosophy. The fire-in-the-castle scene contains farce worthy of George Formby. Everhard's London literary struggles herald George Gissing, and his ostracism by Welsh iron miners call forth George Orwell.<sup>103</sup> Even the area in which *Zoe* is treated most seriously by critics- - as a rare novel of doubt in the Victorian soap opera of Faith and Doubt- - might be termed "George Harrisonism". In matters of faith, what Jewsbury is saying is that all you need is love.<sup>104</sup>

In his umbrella work *Gains and Losses: Novels of Faith and Doubt in Victorian England*, Robert Wolff credits *Zoe* with being

the first novel to sound the notes which novelists were so often to repeat. Scepticism of Christian evidences, sublimation of doubt in sex, social service among the poor as a substitute for faith, the importance of German biblical criticism in undermining belief: all these entirely new in 1845.<sup>105</sup>

Even more unusual is that doubt, in *Zoe*, is seen as a Good Thing. But the doubt turns out not to be lack or denial of faith but simply a transference of its object.

We do see from other mid-nineteenth century literature that “doubt” means almost any deviation from established orthodoxy, ranging from believing in only thirty-eight and a half of the Thirty-Nine Articles,<sup>106</sup> to uncompromising atheism. It is almost always the case that doubt is problematic. In Gaskell’s *North and South* (1855), the Reverend Mr. Hale, still a convinced Christian, deserts his parish and exiles his delicate wife and fastidious daughter to lowly poverty in a dark, satanic mill town; he no longer feels comfortable with some unnamed minor point of Anglican dogma. In J.A. Froude’s *The Nemesis of Faith* (1848), the hero’s doubts stop him from pursuing a career as an Anglican priest. He explores and discards Catholicism, Protestantism, and the doctrines of eternal punishment, the Incarnation, etc. and ends up by default after personal tragedy as an unbelieving inmate of an Italian monastery. In *In Memoriam*, that he is questioning the justice and mercy of a Deity who goes around wiping out promising twenty-one-year-olds causes Tennyson as much pain as did Arthur Hallam’s death.

In *Zoe*, at least, not going along with what one has been carefully taught is a virtue. None of the formal belief systems displayed in the novel get much respect. Catholics bear the brunt of the attack, but the representatives of the Church of England, High and Low, and of holy-rolling fundamental Protestantism do not emerge unscathed. Zoe’s own, “pagan”/theist/Carlylean Deist/pragmatic humanitarianism, being informal and *ad hoc*, is treated best.

Everhard’s odyssey from faith to doubt to love in lieu of faith is more of an exercise in Catholic-bashing than a questioning of the transcendental. The “torrid episode” of Everhard and Zoe groping during the fire at Gifford castle is what ultimately



causes Everhard to leave the Priesthood- -“and so it should!”<sup>107</sup>, as Wolff says. Wolff points out that *Zoe* echoes Gothic tradition, in which priests make passes at damsels in castles. That in *Zoe*, the damsel invites the pass does not nullify the novel’s carping at Catholic hypocrisy. Everhard does not need the Higher Pantheism of sex to undermine his personal faith; it has already metamorphosed. And the reader does not need the spectacle of the horny sworn celibate to tarnish Catholicism. Like any good Low-end C. of E. Victorian, Jewsbury has been doing that all along.

The novel begins by returning the Burrows family to an estate described in what could be a collection of metaphors for English Catholicism, post 1745- - a spooky, derelict mansion which

no one cared to go near . . . even in broad daylight (Z16) [with dark, narrow windows] as if some evil spirit had taken shape in brick and stone (Z17).

The weedy moat is filled with stagnant water, the grass is like moss- - something that grows on dead things away from light- - and the terrace is littered with broken vessels, shards of Italian vases. But the scene casts the allure of the exotic and forbidden, “for every thing, when tending to decay, has a mystery it did not possess in its bloom’ (Z17).

The Burrows family also has Rome’s scarlet, sticky fingerprints all over it. Mr. Burrows has had to give up his aspirations of priesthood to gain material means by which to establish papal power in England. Henpecked, he obeys the hard-hearted Mme. Burrows as though **she** were Mother Church. The maid caring for the children neglects them because she is always praying. Catholicism is safe and benevolent only in the hands of the simple and simple-minded Father Martin, and its attractions lie only in glamorous myths of heroic saints.

The reader is, then, not to be surprised when Everhard abandons his R.C. allegiance. His visit to Paris plunges him into a Catholic hegemony where all he encounters is venal. His aunt, "though *devoté*, . . . was still too young and handsome to remain contented with merely spiritual diversions" (Z42), and seems bent on seducing him. And so she does, not sexually, but by introducing him to salon society brilliant in its manifestations both of style and brains (the parties Everhard attends resound with snippets of eighteenth century rational babbling). When his mother writes that it is time he was off to the seminary in Rome, Everhard appeals in despair to his Aunt's tame Abbé Du Pré (whom he finds foraging off the pastry cart) :

I feel as if I could never perform the duties which the priesthood entails; there is something horrible in the suppressed energy, the still life endurance it requires. Nothing to do- - nothing to hope for- - no danger- - no enterprise- - no variety. I shall die if I am made a priest; can you tell me no way to get out of it? (Z52)

The Abbé sloughs Everhard off with promises of priestly perquisites designed to satisfy greed, lust, envy, gluttony and desire for political power; if Everhard is discreet, he can do what he likes. The intermediary being no help, Everhard turns to direct prayer, "the appeal from the fluctuating incomprehensible aspect of this life, to Him who changes not" (Z53). An answer comes- - an offer from a relative, a "prosperous India merchant" to take Everhard into the business. The priesthood is chosen by default, being not as vulgar as trade.

At the English college in Rome, Everhard, who "was not imaginative" (Z57) is plunged into lonely regimentation, and is served at supper "with trays on which the dishes were ready carved" (Z57). His chief companion is John Paul Marston, who really

wanted a dissolute, secular life as an actor, but has been emotionally blackmailed into the seminary by a dying mother. Marston further disillusiones Everhard by telling him:

After all, I have only left one stage to come on another; for what is saying mass . . . but acting a sort of 'solemn charade'? And in the sermons, which are a sort of programme, is it not asserted that the whole affair will finally be wound up by a magnificent tableau of a Last Judgement . . . ? I would not wish for a more theatrical denouement (Z61-2).

Later in the novel, we find that Marston has risen very high in the church hierarchy.

The seminary's atmosphere is cerebral, but not spiritual- - not nice spirits at any rate:

bats flitted to and fro like unclear spirits . . . the stars came out bright and many, but the moon had not yet risen (Z59).

It is, in effect, a prison, the students referred to as "inmates"- - "comfortable and regular" (Z65), a prefect tells Everhard, if one does not evade the rules. "Obedience," he says, "is our corner stone" (Z65). Perhaps because Everhard has no imagination, he does well at the English college, but it is the pin-head-angel-counting aspect of the educational discipline rather than divine fire that engages him. He longs for the regimen of the Jesuits, now abolished, who turned knowledge to manipulative power. He comes to choose to have faith, not in God but in

the Church. She is not an abstraction, as the profane deem, but a living and glorious creature . . . . It is she who gives a meaning and value to all I attempt . . . . [T]he love of religion for its own sake, which I had as a child, has of late been greatly modified . . . . From being a sacred and mysterious object of belief, it has become a collection of doctrines to be . . . . proved by premises . . . . stripped [of] the bloom of reverence and awe . . . . Religion has no evidences independent of the Church . . . . [T]herefore the Church . . . whereby religion is made available to the wants of men is all in all (Z121-2).

At the point of his ordination, he is wracked with doubt, but vows to

cling to the most holy and visible church . . . I will make an act of obedience . . . I will stay myself upon her, and will she not as a tender mother save me from the horror of great darkness that is coming for me!  
(Z123)

Not being able to claim that there are no atheists in priest-holes, Everhard is in no frame of mind to do parish work. He gets a job as professor in the college- - the devil he knows. However, it is the time of Voltaire

and the school of the philosophers and encyclopediasts [sic]. They attacked and turned into ridicule the outer works and external doctrines of Christianity; they scoffed at scripture history, Church legends, and ecclesiastical authority (Z148).

It is in Everhard's job description to respond. He writes a much-admired anti-encyclopedist work, but the exposure to the enemy's reasoning convinces him that "his idol the Church" (Z149) is obsolete and irrelevant to man's spiritual needs. Everhard becomes ill, and is desperate to pray- - but for him, there is Nobody up there. Then, convalescing amid the beauties of nature, he experiences an epiphany of celestial light:

the moon had risen high in the heavens surrounded by stars . . . bathing all beneath in a flood of celestial radiance. The glory of the scene struck upon Everhard as if now, for the first time, his eyes were open to behold it. His heart overflowed within him; by an uncontrollable impulse, he prostrated himself upon the ground in an agony of speechless devotion (Z153).

In describing the suggestible Everhard's distress, Jewsbury actually casts light on Victorian doubt- - not why they doubted, over-explained in Victorian cultural studies, but why they minded doubting. No God, for Everhard, who had never had any emotional or practical ties that were not Church-related, meant that there was no light, no hope, and no motivation. With no Church, there was also no structure and no agenda. Of course, once Everhard debunks the Catholic Church, he gets God back, which restores his equilibrium. But Jewsbury will not have us believe that doubting has trashed Everhard's

character. His integrity is real, though absurd; he approaches his superior confessing loss of belief but confirming that he is still honour-bound to keep vows.

The problem is taken to the Pope- - what to do with this loose cannon, too talented to lose, talented enough to be dangerous if allowed to fall into some other camp.

It is proposed that since English Everhard's works

are in great repute in England, even among the most ultra Protestants [who] look on him less as a Catholic priest than as the champion of Christianity (Z160)

it might be safe to use him as principal of Gifford's new college. The anonymous, perhaps generic, Pope replies:

if we could but feel sure that he would keep his doubts to himself; but he has a strange mania for being sincere, which . . . means saying the most inconvenient truths at the most inconvenient times (Z160).

On Gifford's estate, Everhard sees Zoe in the chapel

high up on a ladder over which the light streamed in from a small painted window, making the figure look scarcely like an inhabitant of earth (Z163).

The "Greek-shaped head" and "flowing Paris negligée" paganize the apparition- - no Mariolatry here! It is to be another transference for Everhard; he soon finds in Zoe an intelligent helpmeet who

looks[s] from the same point of view as himself . . . unveil[s] for him the resources of his own mind . . . [giving a force, and meaning, and use to learning which till now had lain crude and inert . . . . [H]e began to speak and feel more truthfully and naturally than he had done for years; . . . his mind put forth fresh growth . . . like a fertile soil teeming with the seeds of life and vegetation . . . for the first time . . . able to draw them forth and bring them to perfection (Z184-5)

The pagan fertility goddess is not just a pretty face; Zoe cheekily tells the priest that morality depends on individuals exercising their own moral codes, and that formal religion is party politics:

priests . . . fight for the side they have taken vows upon . . . for a cause in which they feel no personal interest (Z186).

Everhard counters that most people need a circumscriptive doctrine because they are incapable of seeing moral truth. And as for love, he says that loving God is better than loving another human being, because human love empowers the loved one to control and hurt the lover. But talk is cheap. After playing happy families in the woods with Zoe and her sons (George IIIism?) Everhard realizes how much he has missed without human love. When the fire in the castle lights the flame in their hearts, Everhard makes his final transference- - his love for Zoe turning all his previous beliefs into "falseness and worthlessness" (Z252). However, a vow of celibacy is not to be broken, even though faith is lost and the loved one's husband dies. So instead of getting together with Zoe, Everhard calls up a somewhat sterile love for humanity to minister to miners in the wilds of Wales.

The miners really need Good Works. Their lifestyle is

uncongenial, distasteful and utterly wearisome (Z275). [N]o man cared for them: there was no place of worship . . . . The people knew nothing . . . of God except to swear by (Z273).

Bringing both a conviction that everyone has potential, and some first-aid skills- - the miners tend to spill molten ore all over themselves- - Everhard tries

to infuse a spirit of love and fellow-feeling among that wild, selfish and deceitful race (Z276), to implant some principle . . . higher than their brutal passions, and to wean them from their degrading vices (Z278).

Given this attitude, he gets nowhere. What the miners want is Eternal Salvation, which Everhard cannot offer. Accepting salvation from fire-and brimstone evangelists, the miners readily link Everhard with the devil. But his ignominious eviction from the village only sends him to London to flog the book he has been writing during the squalid Cymric evenings.

The reputation of his last book and the rumour that he had left the Catholic Church pave the way for publication. The book is a sensation; we are told only that it is “newly detached truth” and “good advice for the public” (Z287) and so outrageous that “preachers of all denominations”, “the Society for the Suppression of Vice” and press and critics all over the continent are condemning its blasphemy and sedition. Everhard is dumfounded; he had only been “uttering common-place truisms” (Z288), and believes the world has gone mad. (Perhaps Jewsbury was being prescient, anticipating similar public reaction to *Zoe*, which she must have known was nothing special in what it said or how it said it.) Everhard’s success makes him prey to more Catholic machinations. His atheistic seminary friend, Marston, now a Bishop of Rome and a spy for the Vatican, extends a Mephistophelean temptation: without sacrificing private doubt, Everhard could publicly return to the church in some high post, thereby being in a position to help mankind more through established channels than by revolutionary methods. Power for Everhard, P.R. for the church! Because Jewsbury clearly wants us to like Marston who is consistently honest with himself, she clarifies the polarity of attraction the Catholic Church had for Mid-Victorian seekers of belief. At one extreme, there was the pure-hearted simple faith of old Father Martin; now, we have Marston’s glamour and urbanity.

But Everhard has been purified by the fire of human love, so he can say “no” to power and glory, both for themselves and as a means to help the poor and stupid.

Off he goes, instead, to Germany, where he finds that the ideas in his book really **are** common-place truisms that everyone teaches as a matter of course (this is the closest *Zoe* gets to Wolff’s inference of biblical criticism). Everhard ekes out a living as a librarian and copyist, starving, but happy.

[H]is passion for Zoe tinged his life with gladness;- - it wrapped him round as with a bright cloud through which none of the sordid evils of life could pierce (Z309-10).

The disembodied love is a sublimated faith that sustains him all the way to the end of the novel.

Never hampered by doctrinal baggage, *Zoe* is quicker to conclude that human love is the ultimate form of faith. A.O.J. Cockshutt says that some Victorians who rejected **all** religions combined their unbelief with “a Romantic pagan longing”<sup>108</sup> *Zoe*’s pragmatic skepticism is enriched by a kind of nature-nurtured paganism, come by honestly; she is half Greek, a natural child (born of parents not yet married), and heroine of a novel set in a period which looked to classical models in art. *Jewsbury* may also have drawn Romantic inspiration from Byron’s *Don Juan*, Canto II, in which Juan, marooned on a Greek island, becomes involved with Haidee, daughter of a pirate. The physical description of *Zoe* is similar to that of Haidee, and Byron’s tongue-in-cheek story of the lovers shows up, garbled, in *Jewsbury*’s straight-faced account of *Zoe*’s parents (and Haidee’s maid is called “*Zoe*”). These associations, familiar to reading Victorians, might have added to the reaction that *Zoe* was more salacious than it actually was (George Gordonism?).



We know that Zoe's paganism is a virtue because the wrong people frown on it - the head of the Catholic seminary who had his eye on Gifford's fortune and is horrified when he marries "a heretic", her pompous, formal Anglican cleric uncle, and her narrow-minded aggressively Protestant Aunt Martha. Zoe's childhood gives her a sense of specialness. She refuses to learn Martha's domestic skills, so her uncle gives her the classical education usually reserved for boys. She dreams that her father will come to take her away, and reveal that she is really a princess. Learning she is illegitimate increases her alienation, and when her aging father does come for her, she turns, not into a princess but a personal care home attendant. Though she enters a household in which the woman who has raised her pious stepdaughter considers her an agent of Satan, Zoe's spiritual identity is liberated by marriage to Gifford. His castle has at last provided a proper setting for the unawakened pagan princess:

Steep cliffs, covered with woods . . . hills . . . fretted with jutting rock . . . trees of all kinds grown to an enormous size . . . the thick boughs twisting together form[ing] a canopy . . . wall-like rocks (Z107).

But her father's death, and the pain of producing her first child set off the alarm clock for Sleeping Beauty, pushing her subliminally-held skepticism into the consciousness that if Any Power is running the universe, It's making a right mess of it.

Finding no comfort in dogma is not the problem for Zoe that it was for Everhard; her sense of separation leads her to conclude that morality is separate from religion, that, indeed, religion is a hindrance to morality, and that individually, man is capable of distinguishing between naughty and nice. Her humanist approach stands in contrast to Everhard's contempt for humanity.

The ramble in the woods, epiphany of the lost joys of family life, as ominous for Everhard as a Teddy Bear's Picnic,<sup>109</sup> also causes anguish for Zoe. Shared happiness in an incorrupted setting makes her ashamed of her "schemes for getting Everhard into her power [which] now seemed like sacrilege" (Z241). Love has dashed very cold Holy Water all over her libido.

Love must also sustain her, after Everhard runs away, and remarkably, it does:

the recollection of Everhard became the life-spring of her soul . . . . The more a love is purified from mere emotion, and does not depend on the intoxicating sensations of presence or absence, it becomes dignified into a religion; nothing poor or trivial can live along with it . . . . A massive simplicity took the place of her former meretricious display;- - a magnanimous transparency of character made her appear surrounded with a halo of moral beauty (Z290-1).

This may be what really offended those Victorian readers who found the book scandalous. Whatever the differences in dogma, the prevailing opinion among the English in 1845 was still that one was to have no other Gods before God himself, and that one was supposed to find salvation in Jesus Christ, not in one's unofficial ex-boyfriend.

Yet Jewsbury shows us that Zoe's spiritual approach to human love is what keeps her honest, devoted to her children, and strong enough to slam-dunk her hormone level when it is elevated by Mirabeau. At the same time, her stepdaughter's commitment to Christianity- - entering a convent- - is the result of petulance, pique and subversive behaviour. The teen-age Clotilde prays for an opportunity to bring an apostate shoemaker back to Catholicism. Finding his child's nursemaid has sprained her ankle, Clotilde takes the baby home to gain entrée into the shoemaker's life. This includes an introduction to his clergyman. The devilishly handsome Horace O'Brian is a widowed, Evangelical, Irish C. of E. cleric whose social-climbing so anticipates the curates in

*Shirley* that one has to believe that Bronte had read *Zoe*. With O'Brian's encouragement, Clotilde (an heiress) becomes infatuated, but he marries a wealthy evangelical woman who gets him a deanship. Clotilde bursts a blood vessel and bleeds profusely from her ears (this has got to have some kind of deconstructed hymeneal significance). She takes

refuge in religion; the same process which makes her mother-in-law a contented strong-minded woman, only increased Clotilde's desire to leave the world, and enter a religious life, in which she might be absorbed into her religious duties (Z291).

Entering an Italian convent, Clotilde is made Mother Superior in a miraculously short time. How her religiosity is treated at first fits into the assumption that Catholicism has virtue for the simple. But what of the whiz-kid, now Reverend Mother Angélique, who, in about three years has

matured to self-possession and gentle dignity; the habit of directing the proceedings of others gave this, for though her sway was gentle, she was too conscientious not to be firm. No unruly passions disturb[ed] her holy serenity- - all earthly thoughts were dead, she lived in her religion (Z402).

The convent is well-supplied with "delicious *confitures*" and "beautiful things" with which to entertain unexpected visitors. These include the newly rewidowed O'Brian and his daughters. Overwhelmed by Clotilde as Mother Superior, O'Brian asks her to take in and educate his daughters (surely an improbable career move for a clergyman bent on rising in the Evangelical C. of E.). Of course, what O'Brian really wants to do is get into Clotilde's hypothetical conventual knickers<sup>110</sup>, but he succeeds only in getting said knickers in a metaphorical twist when he makes an impassioned, epistolary proposal of marriage. Clotilde is so horrified by the letter that she seeks priestly absolution for having read it. The priest tells her that despite her revulsion, she must treat O'Brian diplomatically or else

he will remove the dear children out of our hands, and then who will save their precious souls? . . . [Y]ou must overlook your own feelings, when it is a question of saving souls for the glory of the church (Z412).

Even Clotilde's good-guy Catholicism is merely a decoy for the Catholic power trip.

However, Jewsbury's main uses for O'Brian are to attack Evangelicalism, the Irish, and the Established Church bureaucracy. Jewsbury's Evangelicals are either hypocritical and opportunistic, or sincere but bigoted. O'Brian is the former. He has reluctantly taken orders on the promise of a living, needing the money to pay off debts stemming from the excesses of his student days. He cringes at proposing to rich Miss Smith because she is so "horribly evangelical and dogmatic" (Z226). But as a clergyman he goes through all the evangelical motions--

gives out tracts and Bibles, has a Sunday School . . . goes into all the houses to instruct the people (Z178),

proselytises and preaches against Catholics.

He was a zealous no popery man, not because he had any antipathy to their doctrines, but because 'no popery' happened to be the government watchword just then (Z214).

Pursuing Clotilde, O'Brian privately tells her he wants to return to the faith of his forefathers. Miss Smith, the **sincere** Evangelical, doubts

whether a Christian be justified in holding social intercourse with any who are partakers in the soul destroying doctrines of the Church of Rome

but she will

pray for them, and if they require any sort of assistance, I hope as a Christian, I should give it; but we shall never prosper as a nation till Catholics and Catholicism are rooted out (Z229).

She goes so far as to advocate relighting "the fires of Smithfield".<sup>111</sup>

Miss Smith's wealth having come from industry suggests the association between Evangelicalism and the new money of an ascendant middle-class, cf. the Bulstrodes of *Middlemarch* (1871) and Mrs. Clennan in *Little Dorrit* (1857). Material excess is linked to an excess of zeal; Miss Smith has a marble-paved hall, expensive but ugly furniture, a "large work-basket filled with Dorcas clothing"<sup>112</sup> (Z228) and a tableful of Missionary Registers and tracts. For Evangelicals, money can buy everything, even a husband. Only by rooting out Catholicism, says Miss Smith, will the country prosper - i.e. evil is the root of no money.

Evangelical hard-nosed hate mongering is at least controlled and contained, in contrast to the Welsh *Evangelist* Dissenters. The Welsh revival meetings that caused Everhard's expulsion feature shrieks, groans, writhing and mass hysteria, but offer nothing but afterworld relief to people in desperate need of earthly subsistence. The Evangelicals at least **have** a Dorcas basket.

What Jewsbury questions is that there is basic decency in any organized religious group. Only Zoe's country vicar uncle, whose kindly pomposity is rooted in established English medium-High Church tradition escapes excoriation. He is being English. O'Brian's hypocrisy is a function of his Irishness as much as his Evangelicalism. Jewsbury's Irish-bashing is a Mancunian as well as English tradition. The Irish workers who had inundated Manchester to staff the cotton mills were, as Engels wrote, "the first to be thrown out of work when there is a commercial crisis, and the last to be taken on again when trade improves"<sup>113</sup>. They were often housed in subhuman conditions, and regarded as a subculture. Therefore, the Irish upper-classes who had allowed their

hunger-driven migration and who should have been responsible for setting standards must be considered feckless and corrupt. O'Brian, nephew to an Irish Earl,

is an Irishman and full of blarney . . . [whose] father got a post under government for changing his religion (Z214),

says Everhard's brother Louis, who hates the Irishness more than the apostasy.

Jewsbury also reflects convention in her treatment of the French- - Mean Mommy Mme. Burrows, egotistical Mirabeau, Everhard's trashy aunt and her sophistic salons, La Noix, the spiteful nursemaid, who picks on the children when she has been censured. In Paris, the teenage Zoe is allowed to read *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* and *La Nouvelle Heloise* but not to escape a toxically overheated apartment to go for walks in the fresh air.

As for French food,

the ambitious ragouts and amphibious [froggy?] dishes sent in by the *traiteur* were so different from the wholesome appetising viands she had been used to . . . at Aunt Martha's that she ran some risk of being absolutely starved (Z92).

Zoe's own childhood maid, Nanette, is nevertheless a kind and loving woman who tries to adapt and be helpful in the hostile Aunt Martha household; like the Catholics, the French are all right when kept in their place and given no power.

It is always implicit in *Zoe* that "English" means better. Even the not-very-nice English characters are nicer, or cleaner or more rational than their French counterparts. Martha is a far more nurturing guardian to Zoe than is Mme. Burrows to her own sons, and treats the servants, even Nanette, whom she finds "outlandish", more considerately. At the French salon of Everhard's aunt, intellectuals pontificate in self-aggrandizement, and Everhard must get his hair done and be dressed in a ruffled suit before he is allowed to attend. A guest at the Bluestocking salon Zoe attends is "modest little damsel" Fanny

Burney, who “seems to carry her fame about her from a sense of duty and be almost sinking under the load” (Z133). When Wilberforce and Mirabeau define heroism, Mirabeau cites passion, roughness, cruelty and power, and Wilberforce cites Divine Wisdom and Christlike perfection; i.e. the French are despotic, the English idealistic. And when the cynical Pope redirects Everhard’s career path from Rome to Gifford’s castle, Everhard senses a cleansing atmosphere:

The first thing that strikes an eye . . . on returning to England, is the peculiar freshness and richness of the green foliage. The green fields and trees of England . . . all contributed to make Everhard feel, on returning to the land of his birth, that it indeed merited the epithet of “happy England” . . . . The face of nature . . . was again “a glory and a joy” and he felt that light is indeed good, and a pleasant thing it is for man to behold the sun (Z161).

It is obvious whose side God/Mother Nature is on.

And it is **Mother** Nature. The characters in *Zoe* who wield the most power are women, leading to an interesting dichotomy: while there is implicit criticism against those female characters who make a show of their **outer** strength by controlling the world around them, there is a plea for means by which women may find **inner** strength through real education and useful purpose.

The female control-freaks in *Zoe* exercise their authority in two ways- - equally unpleasant- - overtly (i.e. like men), or by passive-aggressive manipulation (i.e. like women). Everhard’s mother countermands the wishes of a husband who “never contradicts his wife”, reacts with “surprised contempt” to the “small interests and events” (Z23) that occupy her female neighbours, and either neglects or is actively harmful to her children. Widowed suddenly, she sets herself “strenuously to her dearly beloved task of making everything go her own way” (Z24), and develops the “natural aptitude for

business which would never suffer her to delegate her power into the hands of another” assuming, “wrapped in a large riding-coat like a man’s”, a man’s rôle in running her estate.

Miss Smith, as Mrs. O’Brian, controls the ideology of the household, as well as the purse-strings, acting as stern Victorian *paterfamilias* in making life hell for her terminally adorable twin step-daughters, while O’Brian obeys like an idealized Victorian housewife (though he is letting off steam by flirting clandestinely with Zoe’s friend Lady Clara). The second Mrs. O’Brian, says Clara:

had the impertinence to treat her husband with the most solemn disapprobation . . . . She received all of his little amiable and gallant attentions with a sort of suppressed contempt, and really he was kind and attentive to her beyond expression; . . . as to the children . . . the present wife was constantly telling them about their sinfulness and the natural evil of their hearts (Z322-3).

Equally reprehensible is the traditional female who throws her weight around, pitching underhand. An example is Miss Rodney, “faithful housekeeper to Gifford and a kind of mother to Clotilde” (Z104), formerly a “noted beauty and a reputed heiress” who has been martyred by smallpox scars and the loss of her money.

Her ruling idea became, by degrees, to be self-mortification. Her steady self-denial and innumerable good works might have challenged respect, had they not arisen more from the desire to benefit her own soul than from any feeling of benevolence to those around her (Z104).

Miss Rodney tells Clotilde that the world is “a dreadful place, a dreary wilderness” (Z107) and classes Zoe “among the agents of Satan” (Z109). When Gifford wants his daughter to benefit from his new wife’s accomplishments and knowledge Miss Rodney uses emotional blackmail to retain control:

as it was my entreaty that she was kept from a convent, I am bound to see that her precious soul does not suffer by any human weakness; and I am



doubly anxious that she should be kept from all evil that is in the world (Z109).

Jewsbury opens moral questions about the conventionally subservient rôle of women by showing how some women use domestic competence to emasculate their husbands. Zoe's cousin Sarah Anne achieves status by marrying the young squire Zoe rejected. Sarah Anne becomes

famous for her cheese, butter and poultry, and ha[s] obtained celebrity for her method of fattening calves [and for her four children] brought up to be notable (Z374).

Her indolent husband is quite happy to read his paper by the fire, while she constantly reminds him of her wifely virtues. Louis's wife, Marian,

shows[s] her love to her husband . . . by studying his dinners and suppers- - a stronger hold upon men's tender sensibilities than they might be willing to acknowledge (Z202).

She wins Louis's heart completely by finding "that the butcher had made an overcharge of five pounds in his bill" (Z260). But though domestic competence controls men, both women perceive that female intellectuality threatens men; thus they are quick to disparage Zoe's. Marian, who owes her current comfort to meeting Louis through Zoe's hospitality, now "cordially detests her", since Louis considers Zoe "a highly reprehensible female" (Z260). Sarah Anne makes sure she has impressed her husband with the articulacy of a snarky letter she has written to Zoe, then disdains female scholarship, saying:

I could write quite as well as another if I had time to give to such things; but I consider that a woman ought to be a good wife first and foremost; and I shall teach my girls not to be bookworms (Z377).

And Louis tells Zoe:

[I]t is all very well for women to lose their time in reading books and playing music, before they are married, but after that they have things of more importance to attend to, in looking after their home and family, and seeing they are not imposed upon (Z181).

But women, as Zoe tells Louis, “are imposed upon in many ways besides butchers’ bills” (Z182). Pious old Gifford gives up entering the priesthood to marry toothsome young Zoe because

masculine education had given a tone to her mind which showed itself in her . . . conversation, for though so young, and with a judgement unripe, and her intellect unmaturing [sic] there was still the stamp of genius in all she said (Z297-8).

This does not stop Gifford after their marriage from tossing into the fire a “choice French copy of De Grammont’s Memoirs<sup>114</sup> which Zoe had discovered that morning in an old book shop” (Z124).

That Zoe wants to read scandalous memoirs, hangs out with eighteenth century glitterati, tries to traduce Everhard into infatuation, becomes vulnerable to the undeserving Mirabeau, and for that matter, has married the stuffy Gifford, Jewsbury attributes to society’s penalties on bright women, who get neither scope nor guidance to develop potential.

Women gifted like Zoe often present instances of aberration from the standard of female rectitude . . . . [T]hey require . . . a stronger and wiser guidance than they often get . . . .

Women with high powers; . . . do not feel the obligations of those small moralities, the fear of being ‘singular’, of rendering themselves the subject of ‘remark’ (Z128).

Telling us that clever women tend to be cleverer than the men they have to answer to, Jewsbury decries the waste of human potential in women who

have more energy of character than is absorbed by the routine of duties women are generally called on to perform, and who have no channel in which their superfluous activity can be expended. Women seldom have

their powers equalised and balanced by a thorough education, so it is not wonderful that one gifted with more strongly marked strength of character than the generality . . . [displays] strength resembl[ing] the undirected activity of a child, much promised and nothing accomplished with it (Z128-9).

Albeit more memorably expressed, Jane Eyre's circumscriptions regarding pudding production and needlework were not to appear in print for another two years.<sup>115</sup> Though the Patmores<sup>116</sup> and the Ruskins<sup>117</sup> were to see the private sphere of domesticity as a fortification for protecting middle-class women from corruption, Jewsbury sees the private sphere as a corrupting influence in itself.

Women cannot, like men, correct their false and crude notions by intercourse with the actual world; from their natural position they are prevented from taking a broad view of things as they really exist. When a woman steps beyond her own domestic circle into whatever scene she goes she is . . . treated as a visitor, not as an inhabitant: therefore what a woman calls 'a knowledge of the world' is only a fresh source of bewilderment . . . . [W]omen of strong energetic character, who chafe against conventionalities . . . are not wisely treated; if they were judged more kindly . . . eccentricity would be kept from growing into faults of a graver kind, and they might mature into genial and valuable characters, who in times of trouble and distress would be able to support and guide those of a more fragile nature than themselves (Z129).

These observations are made about Zoe when she is salon-hopping and flirting, before she is channeled into virtue by love and paganism. Jewsbury tells us that Zoe is of superior talents and strong character; in her actual behaviour in this tiresome novel, she evinces more talk than action, and more hair than brains.

Jewsbury herself is another matter. She is the gifted woman of strong character whom fate and a sense of duty might have limited to second-class citizenship in her middle-class brothers' households. Naïve in the ways of the world, with bad guidance from Maria Jane and Jane, she breaks loose to write a novel that is consciously, perhaps calculatedly scandalous, however tempered with received convention. It leaves her prey

to condemnation and criticism- - and runaway sales and celebrity. Having narrowly escaped anonymous drudgery, Jewsbury had suddenly become a must-see for famous visitors to Manchester- - friend to Charlotte Cushman and Fanny Lewald, guest of honour when Monckton Milnes entertained- - like Tennyson's Ulysses, "become a name".

In reviews for several years afterward, Zoe was judged to be a good book, a bad book, a good book with bad things in it and a bad book with good things in it<sup>118</sup>.

In *The Athenaeum*, Henry Chorley finds the plot inconsistent and unfocussed, and suggests that the novel

indicates an original mind, though it may not ultimately prove the mind of a novelist. We should imagine Miss Jewsbury better qualified to succeed in essays and specialty papers<sup>119</sup>.

Whether through Chorley's recommendation, or because all the fuss had made her a saleable commodity, Jewsbury became a contributor to *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine* and had six articles dealing with pseudo-sociological subjects printed in 1846 and 1847. She must also have been working through this time on *The Half Sisters*, published in 1848.

## Chapter II

### Use It or Lose It

*The Half Sisters*, which is almost good enough to read (please see Appendix C for summary), expands so doggedly on the “use it or lose it” theme of women’s intellectual autonomy that one is tempted to invoke Samuel Goldwyn to tell Jewsbury that novels are “for entertainment and messages should be delivered by Western Union”.<sup>120</sup> Like *Zoe*, *The Half Sisters* is the story of two lives, mystically connected and bouncing occasionally off one another. As daughters of the same man, but born on different sides of the blanket and raised by dramatically differing but equally unhelpful mothers, both Bianca and Alice begin with depth, sensitivity, diligence and intellectual curiosity. Baseborn Bianca, navigating through dire straits, uses these qualities and becomes a strong and moral person, an acclaimed actress, and eventually (ultimate Heyer reward!) wife of a handsome, righteous peer. Alice, the weak sister, cravenly obeying convention, does not use the above-named qualities, and loses them and everything else in a terminal fit of the vapours.

Now in OWC paperback, *The Half Sisters* is sufficiently accessible and satisfies enough present-day feminist criteria to catch the attention of those critics in the business of exhuming dead women writers. It actually evokes quite a few of them. It has been pointed out, notably by Henry Chorley, who first reviewed the novel in *The Athenaeum*,<sup>121</sup> by Ellen Moers,<sup>122</sup> and by Lisa Surrige<sup>123</sup> that like *The Mill on the Floss*, *Aurora Leigh*, *Villette*, *The Song of the Lark*, *Consuelo*, *Daniel Deronda*, and Maria Jane

Jewsbury's *Diary of an Enthusiast*, *The Half Sisters* owes rather a lot to Madame de Stael's *Corinne* (1807). As Surridge indicates, *The Half Sisters* is virtually a rewrite.

Both centre on the lives of sisters, one a performer or actress, the other a domestic heroine. In both cases, the performing sister is Italian, the domestic sister British. Both novels focus on the restrictions imposed by domestic middle-class life on the passionate and creative qualities [and both] use the relationship . . . to portray the need for adequate employment in women's lives.<sup>124</sup>

But as Surridge says, *The Half Sisters* reverses the ending of *Corinne* by rewarding the creative (but virtuous) sister with the good husband, and causing the domestic sister to die of illicit love. Surridge also sees in Jewsbury's agenda, undermining the Stickney Ellis creed of domestic incarceration, and, while affirming Carlyle's doctrine of work as spiritual salvation, protesting the "masculinist celebration of work in *Sartor Resartus* and *Past and Present* with its own discussion of women's labour."<sup>125</sup>

The spilled milk of Jewsbury's relationship with the Carlyles puddles further yet over *The Half Sisters*. The idea for writing a novel about an actress almost certainly came from Jewsbury's friendship (from 1846) with the charismatic American actress, Charlotte Cushman. The two women had in common that both were successful professionals- - in fact, *causes célèbres*- -inspiring mutual respect. An equanimitous friendship must have been a relief to Jewsbury; driven frantic because Carlyle had been treating Lady Harriet Baring as his muse, Jane had been bombarding Jewsbury with alternate barrages of dependency and vitriol. Jewsbury's admiration for Cushman made Jane very jealous; she was furious when Jewsbury dedicated the novel to "Jane Welsh Carlyle".<sup>126</sup>

For these reasons, critics have long been trying to read the novel as a *roman à clef*. According to Norma Clarke :

The two heroines live out extreme versions of the lives chosen by Jane and Geraldine. Alice is the dutiful, middle-class wife of a man who cannot respond to her emotional needs, Bianca a professional woman, single, earning . . . a place in society through the hard mastery of dramatic art . . . . Another important influence [was] Charlotte Cushman . . . to Geraldine . . . the embodiment of 'protection and strength' . . . . In Charlotte, Geraldine was able to contemplate the positive possibilities of a professional woman's life, and she set it against the negative example that Jane's life offered.<sup>127</sup>

In *Across an Untried Sea* (2000), Julia Markus says that although

on the surface, the respectable housewife and her husband in *The Half Sisters* were quite unlike the Carlyles . . . [Jewsbury] cleverly stripped away the couple's genius and placed them in the provinces where they could be Mr. and Mrs. Anybody.<sup>128</sup>

An even more superficial assessment is made of Bianca's origins :

Bianca was so obviously based on Charlotte Cushman . . . [T]he name 'Bianca' was instantly recognizable as the character Cushman played in her heralded debut on the London stage [in Henry Hart Milman's *Fazio*].<sup>129</sup>

Markus identifies Conrad Percy as Anthony Sterling, a sometime friend of the Carlyles. Supposed to be one of Jane's admirers, Sterling is thought, by Markus, at least, to be the man for whom Jane almost left Carlyle.

As flawed a novelist as Jewsbury is, it is excessively insulting to give her imagination so little credit. Naturally, she must have been stimulated by the theatrical world exposed to her by her association with Cushman; creating a brilliant actress and calling her after a rôle Cushman played can certainly be considered a tribute (although "Bianca", being Italianate and connoting purity might simply have been a convenient choice; Shakespeare, Cole Porter and the writers of both *Eastenders* and *All My Children* have all used Biancas). But Jewsbury's Bianca is noted for her Juliet- - and the broad-beamed Cushman was famous for playing Romeo and other trouser-rôles. Bianca is

virtuous, beautiful, shapely, dress-conscious, heterosexual and ready to give up the theatre for a good husband. Photographs of Cushman reveal her to look more like the theatre's architecture than its adornment, and according to her biographers, she had a series of female lovers with whom she went through forms of marriage. Both actresses are hard-working, support family and are brilliantly successful, but are not similar beyond that.

The similarities between Jane and Alice also are less important than the differences. Both lose doting fathers early, show precocious, quashed intellectual promise, have supercilious mothers and pre-occupied husbands. But in spite of Jane's occasional viciousness, Jewsbury regarded the feisty, articulate, hard-working woman highly and would not have likened her, as she does Alice, to an unstaked tomato:

She had a soft, flexible nature which shrank from blame rather than aspired to win praise; she had a . . . morbid conscientiousness, which made her fancy herself in the wrong whenever she met with a want of sympathy . . . . She shrank from . . . manifestation of taste or feeling, except when sanctioned by some one to whom she looked up. Gentle, timid, unenterprising . . . a choice and graceful plant, which, for want of support, trails along the ground, putting forth its delicate tendrils in all directions to find something higher and stronger than itself round which to cling (HS41).

Alice's passivity and insecurity have resulted in her lack of moral fibre:

She had it not in her to stand *alone* . . . . [S]he had been all her life educated and thrown amongst highly moral and respectable people . . . but she had not a single strong abiding principle of right or wrong to govern her as a moral necessity, from which there could be no appeal (HS187).

As Alice is not Jane, though she has some of Jane's problems, Bryant is not Carlyle, though like Carlyle, he shuts his wife out of his main pursuits. Bryant is a "captain of industry", consumed by workaholism and the work ethic. But he does not class as work any effort that does not produce useful goods or services- - hence, his



contempt for the theatre. It would follow that he would also consider the commentary of writers like Carlyle to be parasitical on the truly productive.

Unlike Carlyle, Bryant is a good provider; unlike Jane, Alice is not burdened with overwork- - or any work or money worries. It is kindness that prompts Bryant to shield Alice from the problems of his work, which he feels would be unfathomable to her. He cannot make her understand that his lack of time to spend with her is a function of his being a good provider. Carlyle expected Jane to ward off the world so he could nurse his chronic writer's block in isolation, and he had lots of time to fawn on Lady Harriet.

If there is a closet Carlyle at all in *The Half Sisters*, it is the villain, Conrad Percy. Conrad's courtship of Bianca includes blanketing her with translations from Schiller and Goethe. As Joanne Wilkes explains, "Knowledge about both in England was much attributed to . . . Carlyle" (HS405) who first came to public notice for his life of Schiller and translations of Goethe. The ideas Conrad develops about actresses and professional women causing him to turn to the pallid Alice echo Carlyle's anti-Sand sentiments;

Conrad

had seen the 'French novel style of women' . . . in every phase and variety, till he was thoroughly wearied, and took up extremely strict ideas of the simplicity, timid innocence, and shrinking delicacy, that ought to be found in women (HS178).

I have a horror of all professional women. There ought to be a law to keep women from getting their own living: there are men enough in the world to work. Women ought to be kept in retirement. They have no qualities which fit them to struggle in the world (HS208).

Jewsbury has Conrad utter phrases which are Carlyle's own, and echo Carlyle's documented ideas about marriage:

The sort of woman I dream of for my wife is . . . [a] rational, though inferior intelligence, to understand me and help me in my pursuits . . .

looking to me for guidance . . . keeping down all display of her talents. [A wife] is the softened reflex of her husband's opinions (HS217). Let [women] find out some man [sic] wiser and better than themselves and make themselves into a beautiful reflex of his best qualities (HS221).

The phrase "beautiful reflex" is Carlyle's own ("acid reflux" might better have described his own wife). Thus, as with Mirabeau in *Zoe*, Jewsbury creates a selfish and destructive evocation of Carlyle.

Perhaps because *Zoe* worked well for her career, Jewsbury recycles several of its elements in *The Half Sisters*. Like *Zoe*, Bianca is born out of wedlock to an English father and a young, innocent Mediterranean mother. Like *Zoe*, Alice marries a wealthy older man for not very good reasons. Alice's mother is rigid and manipulative, like Everhard's. Like Everhard, Bryant, shattered by his personal life, goes off to minister to the needy miners. Conrad flees a romantic disaster to help the poor/lame/halt, like Everhard. Bianca and *Zoe* both have single-minded friends called "Clara". Strong, sensible, narrow, benevolent older women watch over *Zoe* (the Duchess of N., Aunt Martha) and Bianca (Lady Vernon), and both heroines are mentors to younger women (*Zoe*-Clotilde, Bianca-Clara). And in both novels, the heroines direct passionate intensity toward unreliable love-objects (Mirabeau, Conrad).

But as well as inspiring herself, in *The Half Sisters*, Jewsbury puts forth some ideas later used (perhaps coincidentally) by other (better) writers. The marriage between Alice and Bryant bears some similarity to that to Dorothea and Casaubon in *Middlemarch* - - older man of repute; young woman with intellectual pretensions; she wants to share mental life; he excludes her; no children; much frustration; implied non-consummation. Conrad's literary and philosophical assault on both Bianca and Alice, which attempts to make their minds in his image, anticipates Svengali in *Trilby* (1894). Lady Vernon's

vocational school for girls admits only the genteel classes, who “need educating a great deal more than the children of the actual poor” (HS237). In Gissing’s *The Odd Women* (1893), Miss Barfoot similarly teaches secretarial skills only to girls of her “own class”, having “no interest whatever” in the “uneducated classes”.<sup>130</sup>

Because of its message, *The Half Sisters* sometimes gets critical credit for heralding New Woman/Woman Question writing.<sup>131</sup> Yet there is a paradox in said message; work will set women free, and it will keep them from going off the rails. The novel, as Norma Clarke says:

expands the common-sense view that idleness breeds mischief- -meaning, of course, sexual mischief, and it does so by exposing the moral deficiencies of women entirely dependent on men for guidance. To a readership brought up on the conventional view that the home was safe and the world dangerous [Jewsbury] offered a provocative reversal; it was the world, even the notoriously immoral world of the theatre, which led to moral safety, while the home, for all its goodness led a well-intentioned woman to moral disaster.<sup>132</sup>

Clarke is right about idleness, the home and the world, but wrong about men. Alice suffers from the lack of male guidance and Bianca has the benefit of male guidance only. It is Bryant, too busy himself to do anything about it, who tells Alice, “I wish you would take an interest in something. I think [your discontent] must be because you do not employ yourself enough” (HS181), and the narrator carps:

If Alice had fallen into the hands of a man who could have attended to her . . . she might have become an exquisite character . . . . She would have become all that a superior man could have desired for a companion . . . [d]epending on him, taking her whole being from him (HS186-7).

Bianca’s virtue remains stable because her work gives her purpose. She is motivated, at first by the need to keep her mother and herself, then by the desire to impress the dastardly Conrad, but ultimately, and most significantly by the guidance of two men - -

the old actor, and the young Lord Melton. The character described as “the leading actor of his day, the head of the profession” (HS99) inspires Bianca by showing her the potential for greatness in her craft. For several years, he is her mentor as she perfects her skills, then he uses his influence to get her jobs in prestigious theatres.

When Bianca tells him that her love for Conrad overshadows her theatrical ambitions, the old actor straightens her out with moral maxims:

Your work is with you, and the reward before you; but the work is infinitely more important than the reward . . . . You must not only take the head of your profession but you must make that profession what it has never been made yet, . . . raise it from its meretricious degraded state . . . purified from the sensualism that has defaced it . . . . [I]t is worth dedicating a life for (HS160-1).

Lord Melton is of the opinion that

wise guidance and government is what [all women] yearn after [since a] woman is a rational being . . . and yet she is never educated for her own sake, to help her lead her own life better (HS225).

When Bianca is shattered at losing Conrad, Melton tells her:

You must not be faithless to yourself; you are too richly freighted with precious gifts, recklessly to make shipwreck . . . . You have a task to do in this world, and if you neglect it you will not be guiltless . . . . [A] merely personal grief is no excuse for neglecting the work to which you are sent (HS225).

Though Bianca protests that Melton speaks to her “as if I were a man” (HS221), she comes to accept his guidance, and eventually is able to conclude:

I have had work to do and I have done it. I have had a purpose, and have endeavoured to work it out; and I say that if you could furnish women with a definite object, or address motives in them fit to animate rational beings, you would have a race of wives and daughters far different from those which now flourish in your drawing rooms; the quality of their nature would be elevated; they would be able to aid men in any noble object by any thoughts, by self denial, by real sympathy and fellowship of heart (HS250).

That it must be men educating women to be good enough to be helpful to men is a somewhat questionable answer to the Woman Question, but as the omniscient narrator of *The Half Sisters* clearly states, “women never elevate each other, but fall into a fraternity [sic] of petty interests and trivial rivalries” (HS42).

The popularity of *The Half Sisters* inspired the *Manchester Examiner and Times* to commission Jewsbury’s third novel, to be serialized during the year of the Great Exhibition (1851).<sup>133</sup> According to J.M. Hartley, the paper “asked for an industrial novel and [Jewsbury] gave them a domestic novel”.<sup>134</sup> This is a simplistic evaluation; *Marian Withers* (please see Appendix D for summary) most certainly is an industrial novel - - dealing with the high end of the factory food chain. But it is also a domestic novel, and a silver fork novel, and a novel of sensation, and a *bildungsroman*, and a didactic novel, and even to some degree a *roman à clef*, rolled into one.<sup>135</sup> Understandably, the resulting *mélange* is scatty, but the elements are there.

If the *Examiner and Times* had been expecting a social problem/Condition of England work like the 1848 output of that other Mancunian lady, Elizabeth Gaskell, they were not thinking. *Mary Barton* pictures the working class as basically decent but driven to mayhem by greedy factory owner-managers. It was written by the wife of a Unitarian clergyman with a philanthropic-humanitarian attitude, and from an upper-middle-class vantage point. Although *Mary Barton* is a better novel, Gaskell is an outsider to the factory world. Jewsbury came from a class which had fashioned itself into a new power. Familiarity and affection inform Jewsbury’s portraits of her self-made mill-owners, themselves former factory workers who have had the moral fibre to advance beyond spinning cotton fibre.

As Gaskell had originally planned to call her novel *John Barton*, *Jewsbury* might have called hers *John Withers*. Had the father of the eponymous Marian, raised from squalor, dripped from the pen of a more important author, Withers might be seen as an allegory of the growth of nineteenth century British industry. He sacrifices profit to see his innovations put into manufacturing advancement; his mill is state-of-the-art. To his colleagues, Withers is a “main clever chap” (MWII41), “always making improvements” (MWII40). John Withers’s work ethic leads him to condemn joint stock companies as

schemes for making everybody rich without working . . . trying to cheat nature into working miracles, and getting things without paying the price for them (MWII15-6)

When he suffers reverses, it is a result of dealing with money men, not because of his own work.

Why Hartley, who has overindulged on Marxist criticism, does not want to see *Marian Withers* as an industrial novel may be that in it, factory workers *per se* do not appear as individual characters. They are seen as extensions of their machines, not smart or industrious enough to have improved themselves. Thus, the lowest level job, unpacking raw cotton and putting it through a carding comb, is undertaken by a “meagre-looking boy, whose hair was all covered with cotton flue, as also was his ragged shirt and fustian trousers” (MSII39). Higher up in the spinning stage

[a]s the work becomes finer, the people engaged upon it look healthier, cleaner and more intelligent . . . Clean work needs clean folk to do it (MSII48).

John Withers’s proposal for cleaning up the workplace is techonocratic-Utopian, but also answers the Luddites.

I hope to see the day when machinery will be brought to such perfection that it will do all the drudgery of work that is not fit for human beings, and

thus the workman will only need to give the intellect. The more a machine can be made to do, the more the character and position of the workman is raised; and every invention that goes to perfect machinery improves the condition of the working-classes at the same time. Though at first it may seem to deprive them of some branches of employment, yet eventually it brings more hands into work, for the more we produce, the cheaper the goods will be, and the cheaper the goods are, the greater the demand for them, and of course more plentiful the supply. Improvement in machinery will not only lighten labour, but shorten the hours of work, and the people will have time to improve themselves and become something better than drudges (MSII45-6)

This is not as dehumanizing as it sounds. Withers and two fellow mill-owners, Wilcox and Sykes, employ benevolent paternalism to raise their workers above their brutish state.

Withers says that until

workpeople . . . are educated they will have no more sense than so many children (MWII56), [and if in parliament, I would] get a law made to make [their] children go to school before [they] could send them to work (MWII58)

With the backing of the social activist Cunningham, Withers ultimately does establish school and library facilities for his workers, with the result that “the improvement in their condition [is] very striking” (MWIII240).

Mr. Wilcox believes that

a man will hold up his head when he is clean washed and shaved, and scorn to do many a thing he might give into when he is in his dirt (MWII49-50).

Admiring the fountains beautifying a manor house garden, Wilcox researches the plumbing design and has it adapted for a laundry and bathhouse he builds for his workers. He also invents the lunch break, and installs the earliest ladies’ loo in English literature. Mr. Sykes has dragged himself up from penury, decries the workers’ fecklessness, and asks from them only what he has forced himself to do:

I would like to see them lay by a penny against a rainy day. It is no good for trade to be brisk and for the people to get good wages if they spend their money as fast as they get it . . . . There are men who earn their . . . two-and-twenty shillings a week who, instead of putting anything by, or even clothing their children decently, let them run about barefoot, and sit down to Sunday dinner fit for a Lord (MSII51).

It is put forth by Wilcox and Sykes that millworkers come home too tired to clean and manage their homes, that small children left by working mothers are in danger, and that it would be better if

masters would make it a rule never to employ married women, it would put a stop to many an improvident marriage . . . . [A] lad of nineteen or twenty will keep company with a girl . . . [and their wages add up to twenty-five shillings] and they will go and get married though neither know more of housekeeping than a cat- - and then children come; they will either live or die; if they live, they will earn money for their parents; and if they die, there are the burial-clubs. And as to breeding them and teaching them, they don't think of it and it is a shame things should be this way (MWII53-4).

There is some feeling these concerned arguments are economically self-defeating. The traditional "peevish master", Mr. Higginbottom, thinks that mill workers must be kept unbathed, overworked, drunk, and above all, illiterate to keep them from turning into "radicals, politicians and trades' union demagogues" (MWII37)- - but then, "his mill had been set on fire more than once . . . and [he] had been shot at by some of his own men during a strike for a dispute about wages" (MWII37). Where is it written that an industrial novel cannot be about industrialists?

*Marian Withers* is also a novel about class-crossing- - people moving, or trying to move from one class to another. Thus its features as a "domestic novel" appear in contrast to its "silver fork" aspect. *Marian Withers* moves back and forth between Burn Brook, the cosy kingdom of the industrialists, and Carrisford, where the social-climbing Mrs. Arl holds court in hastily assembled luxury; through her actions and reactions,



Marian illuminates class contrasts. As Rosemarie Bodenheimer suggests, the main theme of the novel, i.e. bringing the newly prosperous industrialists into relationship with “gentility”, is put into action through Marian’s “second generation struggle between the provincial values of her father and aunt and her ambivalent attraction to ‘good society’”.<sup>136</sup>

Eighteen-year-old Marian is first introduced packing for a visit to posh Carrisford. John Withers and unassuming Aunt Alice still live in their modest stone house near the mill. Withers has used his prosperity only to educate and equip his daughter, the “high-water mark which showed how much he had risen” (MWI81). Withers’s struggles have all been

of the material kind . . . [H]e did not dream of the more refined sufferings to which he was opening the door, by awakening Marian’s tastes and aspirations which she was not likely to have the means of gratifying (MWI83).

Marian is already having trouble choosing among her many articles of clothing, and getting them all into her trunk.

Meeting Nancy Arl, Marian sees

a young and elegant woman dressed rather conspicuously for good taste, but presenting to Marian’s eyes an *ensemble* of magnificence which was quite dazzling (MWI98).

Mrs. Arl sees that

Marian’s bonnet, and mantle, and dress although of good materials were of very provincial fashion, and she wondered, what kind of society her young guest frequented (MWI99).

Though in Mrs. Arl’s opinion “tradespeople and farmers did not come within the pale of civilization” (MSI102), Marian’s visit is allowed because she had been invited to stay

with her Vicar's titled family (Withers had not let her go, since "it did girls no good to visit out of their station in life" (MWI102).

Mrs. Arl tells Marian, "in these days, every one can get rich, so that 'family' is the only distinction left" (MWI104). To this end, Mrs. Arl is trying to marry her sister Hilda off to Mr. Glyndon, "a most disagreeable creature, but very rich [who] lives in a beautiful place which has belonged to his family for generations" (MWI112). The aging Glyndon has ruined his health through dissipation and is seeking redemption through the possession of innocence. Hilda must pretend to admire Hannah More, and must always wear a "white muslin dress with a single moss rose" (MWI114) in order to hold his interest.

Nancy and Hilda Blair had grown up in an austere Calvinist home in which all pursuit of beauty, art or pleasure was squelched. Marrying Arl gives Nancy license to over-compensate, and Carrisford, (which is only rented) is over-furnished, over decorated and over-filled with those members of county society who deign to visit an *arriviste* and her foreign merchant husband. Rejected and ridiculed by the neighbourhood upper echelons, the society Nancy has gathered is "without being the very best, . . . still very respectable" (MWI156). Aided by her love of music, she cashes in on her husband's continental urbanity by maintaining a salon of distinguished visitors. Though pretentious, Nancy admires Marian for her frankness about her own background, and has used her prosperity to send Hilda to a good school. Nancy also takes responsibility for her excessively charming cousin Albert; though more decorative than useful, he has been given a job in Arl's business. Gifted with a fine voice, he is a fixture at the Arl social gatherings.

Marian is made uneasy by the worldliness and self-absorption at Carrisford. Used to Aunt Alice's social conscience, Marian asks Nancy- - who never thought about it- - if there is much unemployment in the district. This plunges Marian into constant worry about doing or saying or wearing the wrong thing. She also worries about Hilda's engineered pursuit of a man she despises. But Marian is overwhelmed by the ambient glamour, the fine music, and most particularly the attentions of Albert. She returns home discontented and moody, scorning the practical domesticity of her own family setting.

With dry humour, Jewsbury describes an episode of reverse class-snobbery which contrasts directly with the over-reaching at Carrisford. The Wilcoxes are to give a dinner (i.e. mid-day meal). Alice decides Mrs. Wilcox will need some help, and so drags Marian, "a cream cheese, a pot of damson preserves, and a couple of Guinea fowls" (MWII1) over to the Wilcox home just after breakfast. They find Mrs. Wilcox quite unprepared and perversely proud of being so. She is still plucking the goose she plans to serve, the giblets are boiling for a pie but she can't make pastry, she is sure the beef she was going to cook has been improperly salted, she "would have got some fish, but there was none" (MWII4), and the rooms are not prepared. Although

Samuel Wilcox was now a rich man and the owner of two large mills, their style of living continued to be what it had been twenty years previously (MWII7).

"I am not accustomed to give dinners," Mrs. Wilcox almost brags, "our cooking is just for hungry folks and not for fancy things" (MWII3). Moving up is hard to do.

Through the superwoman efforts of Alice and Marian, dinner is only half an hour late. It is served in the kitchen, for "no earthly consideration would have induced Mrs. Wilcox to allow her parlour to be dined in" (MWII6), even though the guests include two

Methodist ministers, three wealthy industrialists, and the aristocratic Mr. Cunningham.

In contrast to silver-fork Carrisford:

the appliances were wonderfully meagre; black-hafted knives and two-pronged steel forks, and the supply of those eked out with odd green ones, with curiously curved blades; everything else was in the same primitive fashion (MWII8-9).

The domestic environment of the industrialists, whether simple and well-run, like Alice Withers's, or rural-retro, like Mrs. Wilcox's, is at least wholesome. Silver forks tend to tarnish. Carrisford- -well in advance of the sensation novels of the 1860's- - spawns a sex scandal. But when Lady Wollaston, bored rigid by a lack of personal purpose, narrowly escapes eloping with the amorous Albert, and is roped into looking after her recently dead husband's silly mistress, Jewsbury turns a potentially shocking sequence into a very funny piece of writing.

The adventures of the predatory Clarissa Wendover, authoress of "a volume of poems in which nothing but officers of various denominations figured" (MWIII215), evoke illicit sex far more matter of factly than anything in *Zoe* or *The Half Sisters*. Yet this does not seem to have bothered contemporary readers, even though Clarissa is young and from a respectable middle-class background. Clarissa affects deep mourning- - and uncontrollable weeping, which she soon controls:

[A]ppearing to think that reserve was now superfluous . . . she gave Lady Wollaston an account of the rise and progress of her acquaintance with Sir Frederick in a tone of confidential equality which Lady Wollaston found astonishing (MWIII214).

Clarissa proudly gives Lady Wollaston a copy of her book of poems, some aimed at Sir Frederick:

a stunted-looking volume bound in flaming scarlet, all over straggling gold lines . . . poems. . . all about officers;- - ballads about love affairs in

which an officer was always the hero, sonnets to a young cuirassier, - - stanzas to a lancer, . . .

'But how did you get your book published?' asked Lady Wollaston in bewilderment.

'Oh a stationer and printer in town owed father some money, and he offered to print it for me very cheaply, and I persuaded my father to let me have it done . . . '

'Did you sell many copies?'

'Oh yes, father sent them round by his travellers, and all our friends took a copy. I made enough money to buy a beautiful locket for *his* hair; but perhaps I ought not to tell you that.'

'Why not? - It seems to me you have told me things of more consequence.'

'Ah! yes, but it might look like triumphing over you.'

(MWIII218-9).

First providing a respectable cover- - that Clarissa is a distant relative- - Lady Wollaston has to enlist help from Marian, visiting her in Ireland, to provide comfort and company for Clarissa until she can be shipped back to her unsuspecting father. It is an ironic juxtaposition; Clarissa is Marian gone wrong. Clarissa is

the daughter of a respectable grazier; who having made money, had given her an education of as much music and French, drawing and dancing, as could be conveyed in two years' schooling, at an establishment for young ladies. . . and then expected that she would come home and be a comfort to him, as his wife had died . . . . The result of an imperfect education, without any maternal surveillance at home, idleness- - *ennui*- - and unlimited pocket money, may easily be conceived (MWIII2150).

Here again is Jewsbury's lament for women's need for proper teaching, proper guidance, and something meaningful to do. Thus, the "sensational" aspect of the novel is interlinked with the novel as double *bildungsroman*- - the coming to emotional and intellectual maturity of both Lady Wollaston and Marian.

Lady Wollaston first appears proud, cold, bookish, solitary and uncompromising, with "a prejudice against people in trade which had never been corrected by experience"(MWI251). But her rigidity is only external; when she tries to confine her

feelings for Albert to friendship only, she is not morally equipped to put her passions into perspective.

She had nothing to which in the way of temptation she could turn for strength. She had never heard one word of real strong principle of right and wrong. She had received . . . an education of accomplishments. . . the main facts taught in history and geography; a smattering of science, diluted down to the female level. She could speak French and Italian, and knew something of Latin; had read many books of travels and biography . . . And what was she to find here to strengthen her in the evil day that she might stand . . . ? The regulation of her mind had been left to chance and the regulation of her conduct to the example of society (MWII268-70).

Compare Alice in *The Half Sisters*- - but Lady Wollaston is made of the right stuff, and her compelling new emotions lead her to look at what is wrong with her life. She tells her cousin Cunningham:

If women *knew* what they were doing when they 'sell themselves into bondage' . . . for the sake of a position in life,- - they would NOT do it . . . . They are taught that . . . love . . . is an idle fancy, if not a grave impropriety; and they are taught the necessity of making a good match- - it is about the only thing they hear treated as a reality. . . [N]o man . . . can know or imagine what is endured by a woman shut up within herself, with no outlet for her feelings . . . . To feel powers and faculties awaking within her, which might have made her life so rich in blessedness, and to have it all thrown back to die within her heart (MSIII33-5).

Sir Frederick has not given Lady Wollaston "the strength and guidance she had the right to expect from a husband" (MWIII141) and does not seem to care what she does. Her decision to run off with Albert actually comes from hard-won moral honesty, her passion being "a much higher and nobler sentiment than she had ever known before" (MWIII142), making "the moralities in which she had hitherto dwelt seem false". But when Albert sloughs her off, the damage control undertaken by Sir Frederick to minimize the metaphorical egg on her face moves her to gratitude, duty, and physically debilitating

guilt. It is only when she must nurse the wounded Sir Frederick that she is “suddenly endowed with energy” (MWIII190) at the sense of purpose.

She now blames herself, not him, for their earlier bleak relationship. When Sir Frederick dies, she marvels at Clarissa’s lack of guilt feelings, for Clarissa had actually done what Lady Wollaston only planned to do. But the tissue of lies she must tell in order to return Clarissa to her father quasi-intact makes Lady Wollaston “very much ashamed of herself” (MSIII222) but grateful for her own escape from perdition. She tells Cunningham, “I seem to owe such heavy arrears of duty, that I desire life only until I have in some measure redeemed the time that is past” (MWIII226-7). And like Everhard and Conrad, she turns to social work in a convenient sub-culture- - in this case, Ireland; “the people . . . are scarcely human beings”.

Marian’s journey into responsible maturity starts from a stronger position, and she has access to Jewsbury’s *sine qua non* for success, good guidance. Typical of caring parents coming from disadvantaged childhoods, John and Alice have raised Marian with unlimited love, material generosity, and the best possible education. This has instilled a sense of her own ascendancy over their newly rich neighbours, but she is not just a self-indulgent snob. She has absorbed John’s intelligence, decency and modesty, and Alice’s housewifely skills. Marian is competent both to make Mrs. Wilcox’s custard and balance John’s mill’s books. But when we first meet her:

The flower had not yet burst the calyx; all the hopes, fears and capabilities  
or her nature were yet folded around her like the wings within a chrysalis  
(MWI80).

The butterfly is pushed out of the cocoon by the sensory awakening Marian experiences at Carrisford followed by the moral coaching she receives from Cunningham.

The acquisitiveness and social jockeying at Carrisford distress Marian; she prefers to spend her time there listening to Mr. Arl's serious discourse. But having known only her own home, where no décor concession is made to Withers's increased wealth, and having seen only art like Mrs. Wilcox's "sampler . . . with all the glories of a red cow and a lilac donkey grazing over . . . it" (MWII9), Marian is awakened to visual beauty by Carrisford's furnishings, art objects and gardens. Returning home with "the indefinite yearning . . . to be surrounded by things refined and tasteful" (MWII63-4), she makes over her own bedroom using found objects and inexpensive fabrics. Her romantic obsession with Albert dominates and determines her moods, but it, too, is more of a sensory than sensual awakening. She is moved by his fine speeches, good looks, and singing voice- - engaged more by his performance in *Don Giovanni* than by his being a Don Juan.

Cunningham guides Marian's intellectual growth as though she were his do-it-yourself wife kit. Every time they have a conversation, he installs a new virtue in her. He tells her to eschew false values and admire achievement, i.e. not to be so snotty about her rough-diamond industrialist neighbours. He tells her to acquire self-discipline and self-engendered virtue; she is wrong to long for "some one wiser . . . who would guide [her] and teach [her] to do . . . right" (MWII 123), but he tells her she is right to be dissatisfied with her aimlessness. He tells her that she is moody because she is not using her energy in a useful manner, and although she is longing for love, she does not merit it:

do not always be thinking about 'being happy' . . . what right have you to expect providence to shower down its blessings upon you? You are not yet competent to be the life-long companion of such a man as you desire to belong to: think rather of deserving than of enjoying; begin to live worthily now, . . . recollect that you are unhappy and dissatisfied because you are living selfishly, and because you are not seeking to do the



duties . . . around you (MWIII131-2).

When he has finally licked Marian into shape, and she has rejected Albert (market-driven to propose to her), and she has “left off building castles in the air” (MWIII177), and is running classes for female mill-workers, Cunningham marries her. More surprisingly, she marries him.

Cunningham’s endless advice and pontifications about the progress of industry edge *Marian Withers* into the category of didactic novel. Modern critics have cited Carlyle as Jewsbury’s source for the novel’s ideas about work,<sup>137</sup> but it is far more likely to have been Lambert Bey- - né Charles Lambert- - with whom Jewsbury was in love for several years. Lambert was a French engineer turned Moslem, employed by the Pasha of Egypt, and believed to have been a consultant in the building of the Suez Canal. More significantly, he was a Saint-Simonian, a follower of Count Claude Saint-Simon who, according to E.J. Hobsbawm “is by tradition reckoned the pioneer ‘utopian socialist’ [and] was first and foremost the apostle of ‘industrialism’ and ‘industrialists’ (two words of Saint-Simonian coinage)”.<sup>138</sup> The Saint-Simonians favoured “a social organization directed by science and industry for the benefit of the whole society”<sup>139</sup>, believed in “industrial development by investment bankers and engineers”,<sup>140</sup> and considered industrial workers to be ignorant clods who needed education to know what was good for them.

Cunningham (who twice in the novel shows fascination with Aunt Alice’s beehives) speaks and acts in accord with Saint-Simonianism, and also works in some ideas that that other Mancunian, Friedrich Engels and his collaborator, Karl Marx had adapted from Hegel in their 1848 communist Manifesto.<sup>141</sup> Says Cunningham:

Masters and men, capital and labor are beginning to stand in antagonism to each other . . . . There will be a struggle;- - labour will be organized and its forces disciplined, so that their peaceful exploits will be more extended and brilliant than those achieved by war and destruction. Side by side with this growing ANTAGONISM of interests, there is arising the idea of ASSOCIATION, which will mature and develop . . . till . . . it will have strength to gather together the conflicting interests into one (MSII24).

When Marian is persnickety about how crass and boring her father's friends are,

Cunningham tells her:

You say these men want education and refinement- - granted: so much the more imperative is it upon those who possess both to endeavour to civilize and enlighten them that their immense force and activity may not become the mere ferocity of beasts of prey . . . The splendor of military glory has begun to fade; the exploits of peaceful industry are every day becoming more honourable, and they will shine brighter . . . as men are able to . . . look to something higher than their own individual gain and loss. . . . Some spark of generous chivalry must be kindled in the bosom of the peaceful soldiers of commerce, if their . . . Titan-like endowments are to achieve works worthy of them, and are not to be desecrated to mere purposes of industrial gain (MWII28-30).

Cunningham's money is sent to join his mouth when he buys into John Withers's mill- - rescuing Withers from financial ruin. Both men want to use the mill to put their Saint-Simon/Robert Owen/Lord Brougham ideas into practice.<sup>142</sup> The working classes, Cunningham tells Withers, need to be guided by men of character, and the education "to which they are entitled as rational and accountable beings" (MWIII107). Cunningham and Withers revamp the mill to include a library, reading room, night school, bowling green, etc., thus inspiring "a great impulse to the desire for knowledge in hearts of these rude and half-savage men" to the point where

they seemed to belong to a different race of beings; . . .they no longer spent their wages in sensual dissipation; their notions of enjoyment ceased to be idleness and drunkenness (MWIII241-2).

That Jewsbury should have used her hero as mouthpiece for Lambert Bey is touching and generous. According to Howe, Jewsbury proposed marriage to Lambert in 1847, and was abruptly rejected. However, when the novel- - as novels are- - is accused of being a *roman à clef*, Cunningham is said to be Stauros Dilberoglue, Mancunian-Greek merchant, and Frank Jewsbury's best friend. Howe says this is unlikely, since Jewsbury's letters present Dilberoglue as too despotic for the high-minded Cunningham. However, *Marian Withers* does seem to draw some sources from Jewsbury's own milieu. Elizabeth Paulet, in true life married to a low-country born merchant, may have inspired Nancy Arl. Mrs. Sykes echoes some of Thomas Jewsbury's experiences as a millowner. John Withers is a composite of Samuel Bamford, the weaver-poet, who changed his allegiance from labour to management during his career, and Sir Joseph Whitworth, the Manchester inventor and machine maker.

If Albert represents any real person, he is lost in the mists of time- - but his well-deserved end is a negative inversion of that of *Mary Barton*. In that novel, Mary and Jem emigrate to Toronto, and end happily in a Canadian wilderness setting that has been stripped of its "old primeval trees" but somehow possesses an orchard.<sup>143</sup> (They are about to send Job Legh a collection of Canadian insects.) In *Marian Withers*, Albert, exiled to New Orleans, makes a pass at one wife too many, gets shot at, and ends up, not eyeless in Gaza, but noseless in (possibly) Wawa.

## Chapter III

### Love and Duty

That she dabbled in established themes for popular fiction, writing a commissioned work, is an indication that Jewsbury was now consciously producing for the market. The person most likely to crave, read, and above all, buy novels was the middle-class woman, floating about like Glinda in her private sphere in intellectually understimulated isolation.<sup>144</sup> Not surprisingly Jewsbury's next three works can be classified as "women's novels"- - still involved in trendy discourse, but concerned more heavily with issues that arise and must be addressed close to home, and employing devices and conventions that have been shown to work in fiction popular with women. *Constance Herbert* (1855) (please see Appendix E for summary), for example, falls back on Gothicism, and employs the stretchy girdle of coincidence to suck in the ungainly bulges of its plot. Yet though Jewsbury plays with several tried and true fictive tropes with a result that is artistically appalling, *Constance Herbert* manages to be seminal, as well as derivative. Elements of it are destined to turn up in later Victorian fiction by better writers.

*Constance Herbert* is a *bildungsroman* tracing the struggles of the eponymous heroine upward from the bottom of her murky gene pool, through birth, education (or lack thereof<sup>145</sup>), problematic parentage, blighted love life, devotion to duty, and ultimate strength through sacrifice. We can tell Constance is going to be in for a hard slog; Chantry, her family home, is a defiled monastery built in the shape of a cross, with "moss and grass grow[ing] out of the . . . weather-stained stones" under an "air of gloom

and desolateness” (CHI1-2). Similarly we knew moving into Wildfell Hall wasn’t going to be a day at Brighton Pavilion when we saw it described as

a superannuated mansion of the Elizabethan era . . . shielded from the war of wind and weather by . . . firs . . . blighted with storms and looking stern and gloomy as the hall itself.<sup>146</sup>

But we also know everything is somehow going to fall into place because of the excessive use of coincidence – a device found often on critics’ lists of Victorian conventions.<sup>147</sup> Virtually every plot-influencing character introduced turns out to have some connection with some earlier plot-influencing event.

It is sheer gimmickry on Jewsbury’s part: e.g. Sarah Wilmot’s story to Constance and her Aunt Margaret about a childhood dancing-school partner- - whom Sarah always thought of as “Sir Charles Grandison”- - is followed immediately by the three women being rescued from a carriage accident in the middle of nowhere by Grandison, a.k.a. Mr. Harrop. Jewsbury seems to be playing a game of Virtual Novel Reading. She also makes a stab at the growing new *genre* of fiction dealing with crime and detection,<sup>148</sup> but not effectively; i.e. the details of Charles’s acquisition and concealment of stolen money and jewels are hopelessly garbled, the blackmail attempt on Charles seems to be made by the robbers who gave him the money to launder, and when Bow Street Runners show up, they let the perpetrator have a couple of days off to clear up his affairs before they arrest him.

*Constance Herbert* does work better when Jewsbury is dealing with issues than when she is employing literary gizmos- - but not that much. Class-crossing- - adjusting to circumstances and opportunities presented by economic and political changes- - elicits sympathy and sensitivity when she is dealing with the mill milieu of *Marian Withers*. It

is looked at askance in *Constance Herbert*, both in the decline of the Herberts and in the rise of the Marchmonts. The description of the ruined manor with which the novel begins not only tells us, “look out, here comes Gothic”, but announces the lowering of the Herbert position. The house once had a moat, “filled up, except one portion of it which serves as a horse pond” (CHI2), the Herberts “once a powerful family” (CHI3) now differ “but little from . . . the better class of farmers”. Badness, subsequent madness, estate mismanagement and neglect of *noblesse oblige* have diminished the family’s status; the first Herbert, having been given the property of a monastic order by Henry VIII, promptly (Jewsbury delicately implies) ravished the evicted nuns. The subsequent early deaths and recurring insanity which are a feature of Herbert family life through succeeding generations are considered to be the resultant curse. The Herberts get no respect from the neighbours. Certainly, Constance’s father, Charles, deserves none. His fecklessness and compulsive gambling bring an already derelict estate under the control of Marchmont, an interesting character who could have been written by Dickens and Trollope - - and later was.

The son of a jockey, Marchmont becomes through his own efforts a solicitor and a successful investor and financial adviser. He is a single-minded non-drinker who amasses wealth and power through patient planning and careful control. But rather than admire his upward mobility, we are meant to revile his class-crossing as unnatural and malevolent. He is referred to in terms that include “sell my soul”, (CHI178), “devil” (CHI179), “devil’s bargain” (CHI189), “sinister” (CHI168), “man of evil omen” (CHI165), “eyes . . . hard, shallow and stony” (CHI166), “side teeth . . . long and sharp” and “rattlesnake” (CHI204). Thus we are directed to judge Marchmont’s (not unnatural)

aims to acquire a country place and a place in county society for his son as evil. There is no leeway for deconstruction; Jewsbury punishes him at the end of the novel with public humiliation, loss of all his gains, desertion by his son and an alcoholic death in France.

Since approval is given to Marian Withers's and Bianca's upward marriages, and to John Withers's climb from the gutter to ennobled capitalism, it is hard to see why Marchmont's strivings are now condemned, unless it has something to do with popular sentiment and selling books. And did Dickens, who had been publishing tales by Jewsbury in *Household Words* since 1850, pay any attention to *Constance Herbert*? Marchmont's focussed agenda does seem to anticipate Jaggers (*Great Expectations*, 1860-1) who builds a narrow empire of power and prosperity through concentrated manipulation of the law. And Marchmont's financial strategies are not unlike those of Merdle (*Our Mutual Friend*, 1864-5), although Jewsbury actually seems to understand and explain the money market better than Dickens, who generally obfuscates the nature of financial dealings.

Marchmont is evoked as late as 1873 by Augustus Melmotte (in Trollope's *The Way We Live Now*) who also rises from nothing, desires a place in society, acquires his fortune through less than pristine practices, and comes to a disastrous end. As well, the father of Everard Barfoot (Gissing's *The Odd Women*, 1893) is an *arriviste* who fails at achieving more than material prosperity for himself, but sends his son to Eton. It is highly unlikely that Trollope or Gissing would have read, let alone copied Jewsbury. But it is interesting to note that in spite of her middle-class Manchester outlook, she, too, could pick up on the downside of social rise.

Insanity and methods of treating it are not really the focus of serious discourse in *Constance Herbert*, although Jewsbury is compassionate in her attitude toward Constance's mad mother (whose violent bouts are countered by feeding her peppermint candy). According to Helen Small, when *Constance Herbert* was being written,

Hereditary insanity was a subject of mounting concern . . . . In 1852, Charles Dickens rejected a short story on the theme, submitted to him by Wilkie Collins . . . on the grounds that it might easily offend or distress 'those numerous families in which there is such a taint'.<sup>149</sup>

And in *Constance Herbert*, Jewsbury does provide an early example of what will become a fruitcake of maniac-laden Mid-Victorian plots. Yet the purpose of the madness of Kate Herbert is not to present madness as a topic, but to provide opportunities to exercise that most virulent Victorian virtue, duty.

Charles Herbert's Aunt Margaret is chastened by social banishment resulting from having made an undutiful quasi-marriage, but after being deserted, she builds a life and re-establishes her position. She then gives up autonomy, security, and in time, a few prestigious proposals of marriage in order to do her duty, caring for Constance made motherless by madness, and raising **her** to a pattern of duty. The whining Charles hopes the infant Constance will not live to grow up, either to marry and pass on the family madness, or to go mad when prevented from marrying. Margaret tells him that **all** women suffer, and that since he jilted her, Sarah Wilmot, through

no fault of her own is suffering under a fatality that has brought down upon her the bitterest trial that can fall to a woman's lot. . . . [y]et she is bearing it nobly, and why should not Constance be like her? (CHI111).

When Phillip Marchmont, the object of her youthful passion, finally decides Constance is a desirable collectible and wants to marry her, she determines to put an end to the madness and refuses him in spite of repeated entreaties. Her dutiful act has the



unfortunate effect of eliminating the Herberts' last safeguard against Marchmont's takeover of all their assets. Charles consequently becomes ill, obsessive and out of control. Constance again invokes duty in her determination to take care of him. She is so undermined by Charles's irrational demands on her time and privacy that she experiences that other Victorian wasting disease, a crisis of faith- - but unbelief is both madness, and the ultimate dereliction of duty, so she conquers it. The battle leaves her

lovelier than ever . . . like one who, after being shattered by pain and sickness, rises refreshed and made whole out of a deep sleep (CHIII292-5).

In her "L'envoy", Jewsbury entreats

our readers to act up to the sternest requirement that duty claims as right. Although it may at the time seem to slay them, it will in the end prove a life. Nothing they renounce for the sake of a higher principle will prove to have been worth keeping (CHIII303).

The novel includes Jewsbury's usual parade of strong women. They are the ones gritting their teeth, and doing their duty, and they are mostly having to do extra duty because of the behaviour of weak and/or wicked men. Indeed, each having had to clean up after the useless Charles turns Margaret, Sarah and Constance into a quasi-family. Yet, with all that she and Sarah Wilmot have overcome, Margaret does not feel confident enough to die without first making sure of Sarah's marriage to Harrop, just so Constance will have a man around to provide his superior guidance.

Contemporary reviewers found *Constance Herbert* a little too didactic. *The Athenaeum*, for which Jewsbury herself had been reviewing fiction since 1849, bent over backwards to be generous. It finds the novel to be "deeply interesting, full of quiet pathos and a calm and deep morality" but "not a picture of life"- - and asks, "why, to so

much sugar may there not be a little honest sack?"<sup>150</sup> In her critique in *The Westminster Review*, George Eliot, is

sorry that a writer of Miss Jewsbury's insight and sincerity should have produced three volumes for the sake of teaching such copy-book morality<sup>151</sup>

Eliot questions that a novel can illustrate moral heroism

by the story of three ladies, who, after renouncing their lovers or being renounced by them, have the satisfaction of feeling in the end that these lovers were extremely 'good-for-nothing' and that they (the ladies) have had an excellent riddance.<sup>152</sup>

However, both reviews cited are lengthy, both make reference to praiseworthy aspects of Jewsbury's earlier novels, and both these journals were august organs of literary criticism- - too august, perhaps for the readership Jewsbury may have aimed at. At any rate, it is apparent that Jewsbury had joined the "must-read" list, and the negativity did not prevent her from publishing *The Sorrows of Gentility* in 1856.

*The Sorrows of Gentility* (please see **Appendix F for summary**) is actually enjoyable. It develops characters and events with understated wit, and does not lapse into mawkish melodrama until page 289 of the 1864 one-volume edition. What is more important: though *The Half Sisters* strikes the loudest gong with current girls-on-top critical explorations, *The Sorrows of Gentility* strikes a more realistic blow for female autonomy. The heroine survives demeaning schooling, a dictatorial father and a degrading marriage by drawing strength from conventional feminine resources and (literally) embroidering her way to fiscal and social independence.

*The Sorrows of Gentility* begins around 1800. The main action runs for about twelve years. This was a period in which the prosperity and power of the commercial classes grew considerably. Ostensibly, the novel's discourse is about the dangers of

having social pretensions above the class one is born into, but the plot really deals more with the power struggle for moral authority between the clapped-out lower levels of the aristocracy, still over-endowed with self-importance, and the vigorous, newly rich commercial class, still not quite able to leave off tugging its forelock.

It is important to note that *The Sorrows of Gentility* does not deal with Melmottes and Pallisers or Durbeyfields and D'Urbervilles.<sup>153</sup> The class war in which Gertrude Morley, by marrying Augustus Donnelly, becomes cannon fodder is manageably presented as domestic dispute between two families coming from two rungs not-so-far-apart on the social ladder - - at least, to modern eyes. Though the Morleys keep a country inn, the Mettingham Arms, it is large and profitable, bears the name and patronage of the local nobleman, and hosts important events and visitors. Mr. and Mrs. Morley have risen through hard work from humbler beginnings, and have become the pre-eminent commercial family in the neighbourhood. The Donnellys, though gentry, are at the bottom of their division; they are an impoverished but pretentious cadet branch of a landowning Irish Protestant family (giving Jewsbury scope to exercise her demonstrated penchant for Irish-bashing). The Donnellys live largely off handouts and patronage from their not particularly illustrious relations, and from whomever else is willing to contribute. Augustus, an early Hooray Henry, is subsidized by his rich school friend, Lord Southend, in whose casual generosity "[m]any people lived . . . like mites in a cheese" (SOG73). But when Augustus's mother and sister Sophia expect similarly to be taken up by Southend's mother, the fastidious Lady Southend cringes at their vulgar pretension (she does like and cultivate the lowborn but straightforward Gertrude).

Gertrude is reviled by her in-laws for being “a most disastrous connection” and “the ruin of all [Augustus’s] chances in life (SOG61). She is also reviled by her own father who has already had cause to resent her gentrifying education; he opines that “being brought up along with fine folk has made her good-for-nothing” (SOG23). Mr. Morley considers that his son-in-law- - who communicates only to ask for money and brag about his connections- - is “a wastrel- - an idle good-for-nothing whiffing fellow . . . [who] will never do a pennyworth of good anywhere” (SOG189). Yet, when Gertrude is first exposed to social conversation within the Donnellys’ genteel milieu, she is “struck with the similarity of all she heard with the daily occurrences of Dunnington” (SOG57), i.e. her parents’ commercial neighbours.

Indeed, Jewsbury introduces us to both classes by bringing home similarities- - all-encompassing materialism, and a sense of their own superiority. The Morleys believe

the business of money-making . . . to be the ‘chief end of man’ . . . . They loved money, they desired to make money, they respected money more than any other earthly thing. It was their only standard of value (SOG3-4).

But the Morleys, at least, feel some obligation to be generous to the less gifted.

The only thing that Simon Morley and his wife despised was- - poverty. Poverty, no matter how gilded by genius, education or connections- - poverty was the deadly sin of their decalogue. Mrs. Morley revered the Vicar, but she looked down upon the curate in spite of his cloth, though she frequently sent him presents of game and poultry, and tithes of the good things that might be left over after a county dinner or rent day (SOG5).

The Donnellys affect to scorn material worth as opposed to birth, but over and over they present their heritage as though it were tangible, negotiable trade-goods.

“Money”, says Sophia,

may be picked up by the road-side, but an old family, like ours, is getting rarer every day, and any young woman in the land might think herself honoured by an alliance with us (SOG40).

Nevertheless, all strategies are aimed towards giving the appearance of having money, of spending other people's money, and of getting something for nothing. When there is no company, the Donnelly women wear

very dingy old silk dresses- - for they economised greatly upon their washing bills . . . dresses that had become too old and shabby to meet the eyes of men and angels (SOG50).

The servants wear

faded livery and clumsy shoes, . . . the settee is thriftily covered with a duster (SOG38).

But when company appears, so do "gowns of handsome flowered-silk" and "peagreen lustre", sofa cushions covered with "old brocade" and respectable livery on the servants. There is no sense whatever of decent treatment owed to the servants; they are there only to enhance the image of prosperous dignity, and receive little, not even adequate food in reward.

[T]he sides of the kitchen floor were curiously speckled with pipe clay to imitate marble. "Ah" said Mrs. Donnelly complacently, "that is an idea of my own. I tell the girl when she has done her work that she may amuse herself by marbling the floor; it has a pretty effect and is a nice little employment for her."

'Does she like to do it?' asked Gertrude.

'Persons in our class never ask servants what they like,' replied her mother-in-law loftily (SOG54).

Augustus Donnelly assumes that his "rich father-in-law . . . would be only too glad to pay handsomely for the honour his family had received in his name and self" (SOG33). Denied a settlement by Mr. Morley, Augustus is "extremely sarcastic to Gertrude", who knows nothing about his begging letter to her father, "in his reflections

upon 'low money-getting people'". The work ethic has completely eluded Augustus. He leaves his new wife with his mother and sister (who cadge all Gertrude's pocket money) to job-hunt in London, i.e. to party with wealthy friends and badger them to use their influence on his behalf. After two month, he writes to say that he has

received a place adequate to his merits- - a delightful 'situation under government' with a salary of six hundred pounds a year, and many perquisites, whilst the duties were nothing to speak of (SOG70).

Often, he forgets to go to work at all, and borrows in excess of his salary before he even receives it:

[B]orrowing money seemed quite as natural as having it belong to him (SOG72).

Augustus has no sense of debt to Gertrude's brother when he seeks refuge from his financial misadventures by moving in with Gertrude and their child, Clarissa, to Simon's inn.

As to the obligation, he considered that he was a gentleman and as such, they might feel honoured by entertaining him. He had no conception of gratitude to people in their class (SOG202).

Because both points of view are based on the self-perceived moral superiorities of their own positions, Augustus's attitude can be compared with that of Gertrude's innkeeper parents. The Morleys come off a little better. They treat their help well- - Mrs. Morley even feeds the Donnelly's starving servants- - and they have welcomed their daughter-in-law- - once their hard-working employee- - into their family. But Mr. Morley

had a moral antipathy to poor people, he felt uncomfortable when they were near him, possibly from an ill-defined idea that he ought to assist them, which he never did. He paid his poor rates with an emphatic protest against their injustice, and never gave away a farthing in charity . . . . His rooted aversion to poverty, as something contrary to nature, had rise in a

better feeling; his own shrewd industry and horror of becoming dependent on others had by the lapse of years, all devoted to money-getting, become hardened and withered into his present sordid and unamiable spirit (SOG184-5).

And who can blame him? After a lifetime of following the work ethic, he is saddled not only with an expensively educated daughter who has betrayed him by defecting to the contemptible chattering classes, but with her female child and her worthless husband who has managed to blow a salary more than fifteen times what Bob Cratchit was making and get into serious debt besides.<sup>154</sup>

Though she has clearly pointed out the bad in both factions, it is obvious whose side Jewsbury is on in the class war. The sorrows of Gertrude's acquired gentility are not caused by her ambitions to climb upward, but rather because she has married *down*; gentility, Jewsbury is telling us, tongue in cheek, is inferior. Even when the confidently aristocratic Dowager Lady Southend tells Gertrude:

Take my advice, and teach Clarissa to use her fingers, and bring her up to work for her living. Do not let her have the notion of trying to climb above her present station. If promotion is in store for her, it will come without seeking (SOG265),

it is because the commercial half of Clarissa's heritage offers far more of value than the "gentle" half.

Lady Southend, widow of an earl, is also a veteran of the other war in *The Sorrows of Gentility* - the war between men and women. That aspect of the novel elicited this plaintive whine from *The Athenaeum's* reviewer when the book was published:

the ladies possess all the virtues . . . while . . . there is scarcely one man introduced who has the merit of a single virtue.<sup>155</sup>

This is not quite the case; there is a range of benevolent male characters: a kindly coachman, a helpful Irish priest, an uxorious shopkeeper and his equally uxorious squire-son-in-law, and finally the sensitive, intellectual, successful tradesman who Gertrude marries after she buries the awful Augustus. Conversely, there are henpecking wives, and greedy and manipulative women. But in the inter-gender battle, the honours of moral advantage generally go to women for the way in which they deal with the political disadvantages imposed upon them by men - - who can do and take what they like.

Left destitute by Augustus, and feeling betrayed when her father spans Clarissa in a gouty snit, Gertrude goes to London and applies to Lady Southend for help. While decrying the inadequacy of Gertrude's female education, the two women conclude that Gertrude was given a saleable skill. She begins to take orders for dressmaking and embroidery- - at which she is very good. Working to maintain herself and Clarissa, Gertrude grows in moral strength and self-confidence- - only to be dragged down, and bilked of her earnings when Augustus returns, more degenerate than ever. When she complains to Lady Southend, Gertrude is told that Augustus "is a long way from being a 'bad husband'" (SOG275). The late Lord Southend had been a gambler, womanizer, and one of the few aristocratic chronic wife-beaters in Victorian fiction. Lady Southend recommends her own strategies to Gertrude:

Lay hold of the fact of things, even though it would be sharper than a sword. Accept your lot as it actually is- - do not weakly try to make a compromise if it is miserable; say to yourself it *is* miserable and bear it! You will have strength enough whatever trials may come, and to do whatever is laid upon you- - but your strength will fail if you waste it in struggling to be *happy* into the bargain (SOG279).

Thus, endurance also is added to the job description of wifely duty. Gertrude has already been under fire for undutifulness- - criticism by her parents' neighbours for not



accompanying Augustus when he escapes from creditors by taking the job of secretary to the governor of a certain-death, fever ridden African colony. It is his desertion of *his* duty that brings him back from this venue to exploit and mistreat Gertrude. It is *her* duty, and according to Lady Southend, her strength to put up with it.

*His* strength is spurious, and vested in his political rights. When Augustus, to spite Gertrude, decides to keep Clarissa with him and flits all over England and Ireland, taking the child into worse and worse company, Gertrude learns that she is legally powerless to take her from her father. It is made clear, without actually saying so, that Augustus is headed toward selling his small daughter for sexual purposes to his slimy friends. Even when telling Gertrude Clarissa is safe with her father, Lord Elvington describes her as a “charming child . . . [who] will be a dangerous beauty one of these days” (SOG298; after Gertrude has left, Lady Elvington tells her husband:

I wish, my lord, you would be more careful whom you invite; if anything unfortunate should occur, it will be very unpleasant to have it dated from our house (SOG299),

the implication being that nothing can stop Augustus from disposing of Clarissa as he wishes.

When Gertrude finds Clarissa intact, and Augustus felled by fever, she spends the next several years exercising her moral superiority by dutifully caring for him. It is not too hard; his Rochesterlike affliction has partially paralyzed him, and turned him into a nicer person. She is rewarded by feeling sorry when he dies. Less than two years later, Gertrude further redeems herself by remarrying happily into her own class and financial bracket. Oh, to be torn ‘twixt love and duty!

The relief at the readability of *The Sorrows of Gentility* felt by anyone following Jewsbury's career as a novelist<sup>156</sup> is dashed to smithereens by her sixth and final novel. *Right or Wrong* (1859) is the worst of the lot (please see Appendix G for summary). It is hard to fathom why Jewsbury bothered with it, unless she was asking herself, "What would have happened if Everhard (of *Zoe*) had decided to work within the system?"

Remember Everhard, the renegade priest whose integrity after loss of faith causes him to abscond from the Church, but does not permit him to break his vows of celibacy? *Right or Wrong* features Paul, the meandering monk whose monastic commitments keep him bound to his order, fighting the chaos and corruption he finds there, for six months of each year. For the other six, he is the doting husband to a much younger wife, father of a large brood, and kindly family doctor in a working-class district of Paris. (His wife is not aware he is a monk; she thinks he is off managing estates somewhere.) Otherwise *Right or Wrong* is "déjà vu all over again".<sup>157</sup> Six months on/six months off might easily evoke for a Victorian public steeped in Greek classical lore the story of Persephone, who spends half the year with her nurturing mother, Demeter, but must go back for the other half to her rapacious husband Pluto in Hades; i.e. the Catholic Church is akin to Hell. Catholicism as an institution once again is eminently bashable. The eighteenth century French setting fosters the Catholic-Gothic creepiness as seen in *Zoe* and *Constance Herbert*. All that Michael, the kindly, but airheaded head of Paul's order, wants to do is listen to the scandalous scuttlebutt Paul picks up in the outside world on his rounds as almoner/doctor to the neighbourhood needy. Michael cannot be bothered to lick into shape the venal majority of monks in his convent.

The novel provides enough pork-barrelling French aristocrats to fill a second Bastille- - cf. the French-bashing of *Zoe* and the aristo-bashing of *The Sorrows of Gentility*. Before she marries Paul, the heroine, called "Marguerite", goes through a phoney marriage ceremony with a Vicomte, just as the character "Margaret" does with her nobleman in *Constance Herbert*. The long-suffering Marguerite earns her living and supports dependents by doing beautiful needlework unrealistically quickly and profitably, just as Gertrude does in *The Sorrows of Gentility*.

Like most of Jewsbury's female protagonists, Marguerite looks to her husband (Paul, not the deceiving Vicomte) for wisdom, guidance and protection, but is much stronger and more resourceful than he is. She has looked after her invalid father as a teenager, earned a living without having to go out of the house, and raised a fine family of children as a half-time single parent for twenty years- - without knowing where her husband was. There is a suggestion that Paul is filling the conventional female rôle. After all, he is Persephone, and as well, he first entered the convent after being devastated by the death of the woman he was engaged to. (This is not a literary first; Bois-Guilbert in Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1819) joins the Templars because he was crossed in love.)

Jewsbury's other novels all tried to make some artistic or didactic point- - but by *Right or Wrong* she seems to have run out of this sort of steam. John Sutherland suggests that the novel, published by Hurst and Blackett, "conforms to that house's preference for romantic melodrama".<sup>158</sup> Jewsbury may merely have thought that women were likely to buy books about stalwart but feminine heroines who were rescued from poverty and stood by their men. She will not have been the last to think so.

In 1859, Jewsbury was living independently in London, her brother Frank having married in 1853; she had probably accepted that she would continue to be responsible for herself. She had fallen in love with Walter Mantell in 1856, had pursued him, and been rejected. In 1859, he returned to New Zealand, quashing any hopes of matrimony, though the two corresponded for the rest of her life (and through both his marriages). On the other hand she had, since 1855, published three novels and a children's story. She had been a fiction reviewer for *The Athenaeum* since 1849, and had begun working as a publisher's reader for Bentley in 1858. Perhaps the development of a critical eye arising from these two positions caused her to look askance at her own work. Perhaps she was busy enough, earning enough, and sufficiently content with her position in the literary world - it really doesn't matter. But after *Right of Wrong*, Geraldine Jewsbury wrote no more novels.<sup>159</sup>

## Conclusion

### The Sort of Thing They Liked

According to research done by Monica Fryckstedt, “at one time booksellers would not stock a book until they had read a review of it in *The Athenaeum*”.<sup>160</sup> The review would quite likely have been written by Geraldine Jewsbury; she began contributing in 1849, and in 1854 became a permanent member of the staff, thereafter often assigned the entire new novels section, and/or the opening review of the journal. This continued until 1870, when failing eyesight did not stop her from working but shifted her duties to the easier-to-read children’s and Christmas books. The 2300-odd works on which she passed judgment include nine of Trollope’s novels, five of Eliot’s, Kingsley’s *Yeast*, Craik’s *John Halifax, Gentleman*, Reade’s *The Cloister and the Hearth*, and Gaskell’s *Sylvia’s Lovers*.

In modern terms, Jewsbury’s function as a reviewer might be seen as a cross between a fashion store’s personal shopper, and a member of a film censorship board; she was concerned, as she had been in writing her own novels, with morality, and marketability. Fryckstedt says she “saw herself as a[n] . . . experienced pilot guiding the public through the maze of new novels available in the circulating libraries”, facilitating selection by categorizing each novel’s appeal.<sup>161</sup>

‘[G]ood railway reading’ or ‘sea-side reading’ denote exciting novels making few claims on the reader’s attention or intellect . . . . [A] novel so intellectually demanding that it would hardly be a popular circulating library book [would be recommended for] ‘those readers who care for a higher class of reading’

Fryckstedt's overview of Jewsbury's reviews indicate concern about a novel's moral, didactic qualities- - its ability to "leave an influence for good"<sup>162</sup> - - first, its entertainment value second, but she would excuse lapses of strong principle in novels of superlative readability as long as they were not "unwholesome and insipid". Collins's *The Moonstone*'s lack of moral teaching was overcome by its craftsmanship and fine, adventurous story. Though Eliot's novels contain questionable elements, Jewsbury greatly admired the realism of the characters, and "sensed the great moral seriousness that was the foundation of Eliot's art".<sup>163</sup> Although she questioned the morality of making light of a public charity in *The Warden*, Jewsbury praised *Can You Forgive Her?* because the characters' getting what they deserve would gratify the readers. She generally praised Trollope's realism; it was not gritty realism. Several novels which never got put on the lists of Mudie's Circulating Library had been reviewed by Jewsbury as having graphic horror scenes, or being consistently depressing, or dwelling on sex. Fryckstedt points out that less than ten years after she published the eyebrow-raising *Zoe*, Jewsbury was protesting "the lack of delicacy in the heroine of *The Young Husband*, who not only falls desperately in love, but what is worse, displays it 'without the maidenly reserve which is an instinct even more than a principle'".<sup>164</sup>

More than prudery, she seems to have developed a concept that fiction should be rated on its marketing potential; as Fryckstedt points out, "What was permissible in the novels of the 1840's might be a breach of the moral code of the 1850's when Victorian prudery reached its peak".<sup>165</sup> Perhaps, in her judgments, Jewsbury was gauging the hegemony of public taste, and facilitating the exercise of public taste- - the same principle that may have guided the writing of her last three novels.

Not that she didn't step on any toes - although the no-byline policy of *The Athenaeum* protected her from immediate consequences. In 1861, Jewsbury sharply panned Thackeray's *Lovel the Widower* and in 1863 did the same to his daughter Anne's *The Story of Elizabeth*. Gossip attributed the negative comments to another reviewer, John Cordy Jeaffreson, who was blamed thereafter by Thackeray's friends as "the man who caused Thackeray pain in his last years".<sup>166</sup> It speaks volumes for Jewsbury's personal popularity that Jeaffreson had editorial permission to break anonymity to clear himself, but would not do so because it would injure Jewsbury.

However, the scathing review of Rhoda Broughton's sensational *Cometh Up as a Flower* (1867) was widely known to be Jewsbury's, and rankled so much with the author that in spite of the novel's commercial success, Broughton held a permanent grudge against Jewsbury, and painted a cruel portrait of her in the novel, *The Beginner* (1894), fourteen years after Jewsbury's death.

*Cometh Up as a Flower* was actually published by Bentley, Jewsbury's employer as a publisher's reader. She had talked him out of publishing Broughton's first novel, *Not Wisely but Too Well*, which she described as "highly coloured & hot blooded passion . . . quenched by a few drops of scented lukewarm rose water sentimentality"<sup>167</sup> Published by Tinsley, it became a best-seller. Jewsbury had also persuaded Bentley to reject Ouida's *Under Two Flags* (which would become enduringly popular), telling him that this "idle and immoral book" would sell, but disgrace his company. Still, Bentley must have had enormous respect for her judgment, as he employed her for thirty years and put great value on her colourful, sarcastic, impassioned evaluations. No doubt scholars should also be grateful for the reams and reams of Victorian literature Jewsbury

must have prevented with remarks like, "Reading it is like walking thro' a field of stiff clay on a rainy day!" or "Impertinent of the author to expect anyone to read it".<sup>168</sup>

Unusually for readers- - who generally only reported whether they liked a book- - Jewsbury often suggested what should be the top price Bentley should pay for something she recommended, or that he should make sure a market existed for the book's subject. Though it was previously turned down by Chapman and by Smith, she recommended *East Lynne*, which was to go into 36 editions in 20 years. Jeanne Rosenmayer Fahnestock suggests, of Jewsbury's finding *East Lynne*, that "this coup hallowed her subsequent advice . . . [which] with few exceptions . . . kept Bentley on the safe side of public opinion as the publisher of established types of fiction, retain[ing] the image of his house for respectability".<sup>169</sup> But Rosenmayer points out that tastes changed during the 1860's, and Jewsbury's scruples lost Bentley the works of Mary Elizabeth Braddon and other novels of sensation which were taken up by other publishers and turned into high profits. However, Bentley still made a practice of sending Jewsbury's evaluations to other readers as examples of how to proceed, and kept her filing reader's reports for him until two weeks before she died of cancer. In his diary, he eulogized her abilities as "the genius of common sense to render decisions . . . generally correct".<sup>170</sup>

And what of the present obscurity of her own novels? Since, in her reviews and reader's reports, Jewsbury specifically condemned depictions of graphic violence, child abuse, adultery or the serious, guiltless contemplation thereof, and lack of firm moral teachings in fiction, she would have been horrified if her works were still in public demand. They were written within the parameters of her own time, spoke to her own time, sold well in her own time, and judging from the number of reprints and the bulk of



the reviews, were enjoyed. What matters is that they brought her employment, income and recognition while she was still around to need them. Literature, schmitterature!

Yet, knowing this, and knowing what was in the novels (and how bad they were), the obsessive-compulsive Victorian scholar can still exploit them for their cultural lode: that certain ideas- - that female minds need developing- - that factory working conditions need improving- - that blind faith may not be a good thing- - that in the contest between love and duty, there is no contest- - were floating about for decades in the cultural *soupe du jour*, and did not necessarily spring full-grown from the heads of the likes of Charlotte Bronte and Charles Dickens and Charlotte M. Yonge.

Jewsbury was notable as a human being for her sustained effort, the wholeness of her career, and the affection and respect she received from her contemporary literary world. As a novelist, she was one of legions, now forgotten, who churned out volumes and volumes of the same sort of stuff, gobbled up by their contemporaries; reading them today, we cannot, between yawns and giggles, figure out why. But this is now, and that was then- - and to paraphrase Miss Jean Brodie, for those who liked that sort of thing, that was the sort of thing they liked.<sup>171</sup>

## Notes

1. *The Half Sisters*, Jewsbury's second novel, was first published in two volumes by Chapman and Hall in 1848, with subsequent one-volume reissues by Chapman and Hall in 1854, and the Parlour Library (as vol. 230) in 1861.

2. In the detail from William Gale's *The Confidante* (1857), a dark young woman wearing a glowing, copper taffeta skirt with a black, fringed pelisse, a black Cavalier's hat with a coral feather, and a white silk shirt is comforting a fair young woman with a pale rose in her hair, and wearing a matte fabric merlot print skirt, a lacy white blouse, and a huge black and white plaid shawl. It is a nice juxtaposition of dashing and domestic, within the same confines of quality and period.

3. George Lewes (as "Vivian"), *The Leader* (Spring 1850): "How many of us can write novels like Currer Bell, Mrs. Gaskell, [or] Geraldine Jewsbury. . . with their shrewd and delicate observation of life?"  
Quoted in Susanne Howe, *Geraldine Jewsbury*, 129. Lewes adds, "Groups cluster around Geraldine Jewsbury, who plays with paradoxes, paints character in a phrase, and spoils all my good stories by absorbing the listener".

4. The House of Bentley. Richard Bentley became an independent publisher in 1832, and the firm flourished until 1898. See Royal A. Gettman, *A Victorian Publisher*.

5. Virago Press began in 1978 (according to the blurb in the back of some of their books) "to demonstrate the existence of a female tradition in fiction which is both enriching and enjoyable. The Leavisite notion of the 'Great Tradition', and the narrow academic definition of a classic has meant the neglect of a large number of secondary works of fiction".  
[unnumbered page in M.J Farrell, *The Rising Tide*. London: Virago Press, 1988

6. Karen M. Carney, "The Publisher's Reader as Feminist: The Career of Geraldine Endors Jewsbury". Carney is citing Karen Offen in *Signs*, 14, 1988, 119-157, when she says "feminism" was not used in Great Britain until 1894-5, the word always defied definition, and she (Carney) is using the term about Jewsbury in regard to needs, rights and worth of women as defined by women rather than by masculine ideals.

7. The vast bulk of modern Jewsbury criticism seems tied to estrogen. Viz.:  
Meredith Cary, "Geraldine Jewsbury and the Woman Question";  
J.M. Hartley, "Geraldine Jewsbury and the Problems of the Woman Novelist";  
Jane Rendall, *The Origins of Modern Feminism*;  
Shirley Foster, *Victorian Women's Fiction*;  
Gayle Tuchman and Nina E. Fortin, *Edging Women Out*; and  
B.L. Harman and Susan Meyer, eds., *The New Nineteenth Century, Feminist Readings of Underread Victorian Fiction*, all of which are about or contain significant commentary on Jewsbury.

8. Carney says, "Jewsbury's feminist beliefs did not extend to political action . [S]he did not align herself with those women who were agitating for political reform", 148. i.e. Jewsbury signed the Married Woman's Property Act petition, but did not support woman suffrage.

9. Hartley says, "the reasoning behind Jewsbury's plea for female employment [is] not that women will become better in themselves or closer to equality with men, but that they will make better 'wives and daughters', i.e. they will serve their men better", 148.

10. Lisa Surrige, "Madame de Stael Meets Mrs. Ellis": "Jewsbury supports male guidance for women and relies on a man to make [*The Half Sisters*'] most feminist points", 82 "and finds dependence on male spokesmanship . . . [and] strong endorsement of male authority in a novel which otherwise argues for female realization", 92.

11. Tuchman and Fortin say Jewsbury's Bentley and *Athenaeum* critiques perpetuate the "critical double standard" which classified male writing as high culture and female writing as entertainment. Her opinions conformed "to the expectations of the men who paid . . . for reviews . . . [and] helped to ensure what men deemed 'culture' could be deemed as universal culture", 184.

See also, Mary Werner and Kenneth Womack, "Forbidden Love and Victorian Restraint in Geraldine Jewsbury's *Zoe*": "Jewsbury . . . located the responsibility for maintaining the gender-prescribed order solely in the masculine sphere. When domestic harmony failed, however, she claimed, 'It is not women who fail in docility, but the men who are not high enough to rule", 17.

And Shirley Foster (re *Marian Withers*) says that Jewsbury's solution to her heroine's "unfocused aspirations" is to "provide [her] with a good husband who gives her a purpose in life and a healthier moral outlook, which in this case means recognizing that true womanly fulfillment is attained through duty and service. Female individuality here is not asserted through traditional roles (a professional career or ennobling passion) but through the orthodoxies of wifhood and Christian self discipline", 33-4.

12. Carney, 146.

13. John Sutherland, *The Stanford Companion to Victorian Fiction 2*.

14. John Sutherland, Preface to Harman and Meyer, *The New Nineteenth Century*, xxii.

15. The Bronte sisters' alcoholic brother Bramwell, among other things, was fired from a job as a railway clerk for alleged irregularities in the accounts, and from his job as a tutor for alleged irregularities with his young male charge's mother and/or his young male charge.

16. Harman and Meyer, xvi.

17. Gettman, 194.

18. Rosemary Ashton, *George Eliot*, 147-8.

19. Judith Rosen, "At Home Upon a Stage", in Harman and Meyer (eds.), *The New Nineteenth Century*, 17.

20. Alan Horsman, *The Victorian Novel*, 45.

21. Jane and Thomas Carlyle lived and held court in a constantly-being-renovated house at 5 Cheyne Row, Chelsea.

22. James Anthony Froude, *My Relations with Carlyle*, 21-2.

23. As she had promised, Jewsbury destroyed Jane's letters to her while she herself was dying. Jane had died suddenly 14 years earlier, and Carlyle did not honour Jane's promise to Jewsbury. Jewsbury's letters appear, barbarically butchered and bowdlerized in Mrs. Alexander Ireland (ed.), *Selections from the Letters of Geraldine Endors Jewsbury to Jane Welsh Carlyle*. Jewsbury's responses indicate that Jane has been complaining about her husband, e.g. Letter 121, 426-7, "Do not go to Mr. Carlyle for sympathy- - do not let him dash you with cold water. You must respect your own work and your own motives"; and Letter 102, 371, "I felt a grim satisfaction in thinking that Mr. Carlyle would have to be an uncomplaining victim, and go back alone and face his household destiny as best he might. He would feel the want of you without having the satisfaction of feeling himself ill-used". Letters revealing Jane's resentment of Geraldine are cited in Chapter I of this thesis.

24. See Chronology for examples of Jane's behaviour.

25. Monica Correa Fryckstedt, *Geraldine Jewsbury's Athenaeum Reviews: A Mirror of Mid-Victorian Attitudes to Fiction*.

26. Including Gettman, Carney, John Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists and Publishers*, and Jeanne R. Fahnestock, "Geraldine Jewsbury: The Power of the Publisher's Reader".

27. Including Maria Featherstonhaugh, Mrs. G.W. Godfrey, Lady Dorchester, Mrs. Gertrude T. Mayer, and Adeline Sargent.

28. e.g. George Eliot, Mrs. Oliphant.

29. e.g. Featherstonhaugh, Sargent, Eliot, Oliphant, George Meredith, George Lewes.

30. Gettman, 193.

31. e.g. Norma Clarke, *Ambitious Heights: Writing, Friendship, Love- - The Jewsbury Sisters, Felicia Hemans and Jane Carlyle*.

32. e.g. Hartley, re *Zoe*.

33. e.g. Werner and Womack, re *Zoe*.

34. e.g. Ivana Kovacevic, *Fact into Fiction*, and Rosemarie Bodenheimer, *The Politics of Story in Victorian Social Fiction*.

35. Almost all commentary on Jewsbury since 1935 draws from Howe. A good source closer to Jewsbury's own time is *The Dictionary of National Biography*, 1901 edition, vol. X, 821-2. A bad source is Virginia Woolf's 1929 essay, "Geraldine and Jane", which turns the friendship into a combination of *Strange Fruit*, *All My Children* and *Cranford*, and to which I can

only respond, "Yes, Virginia, there was a Geraldine Jewsbury, but the one you are talking about is a product of your hormonal imbalance".

36. Ireland (ed.). letter 96, 349, "A Mrs. Ellis woman is developed to the extreme of her little possibility; but I can see there is a precious mine of a species of womanhood yet undreamed of by the professors and essayists on female education, and I believe also that we belong to it"- - Jewsbury to Jane, circa 1849. Immediately following this, the letter digresses into the subject of new décor for Jewsbury's bedroom.

Ellis, author of *Wives of England* (1843) and many conduct books and novels opposed academic education for women, and said, "The first thing of importance is to be content to be inferior to men, inferior in mental power in the same proportion that you are inferior in bodily strength" (Quoted in Joan Perkins, *Victorian Women*, 3). It is interesting to note that Ellis was a big fan of Maria Jane Jewsbury, and wanted to write a memorial of her on her death.

37. In works like Lilian Fayderman's *Surpassing the Love of Men*. The lesbian literary lobby, who seem to want to annex Jewsbury make much of her extravagant addresses to Jane in her early letters: e.g. "Remember that I love you always" (34). "I have found you, and now I wonder how I ever lived without you" (43), and do not take into account that 1. this is how Victorian women friends addressed each other, and 2. the letters are full of references to the men Jewsbury was obsessed with. Howe wisely points out that Jane, about the same amount older than Jewsbury as Maria Jane had been, was a surrogate mother figure.

Lisa Merrill, a recent biographer of Charlotte Cushman (*When Romeo was a Woman*) admits that "Geraldine Jewsbury's struggle to recognize the fact that the love Charlotte shared with Eliza [Stebbins] differed both in degree and kind from her own friendship . . . demonstrates some of the ways women . . . differentiated between their relationships with one another".

38. On which she hooked Jane Carlye who was already taking a pharmacopeia of opiates, painkillers and stomach medications.

39. Peel, the father of the police-force founding Prime Minister was noted both for being a gifted inventor of mill machinery, and a pioneer in using child labour in cotton mills.

40. Howe says that because the mill was small and close to the Jewsbury home, there was probably a folksy close connection between labour and management, cf. *Marian Withers*, 4.

41. Howe, 2. Too bad it wasn't Prozac.

42. Howe, 4-5.

43. Howe, 3. Howe is quoting an unnamed source.

44. Eric Gillett, *Maria Jane Jewsbury. Occasional Papers Selected with a Memoir*.

45. Gillett, xvi

. . . These folks remind me of the Bee,  
(But not of useful industry)  
Who range untir'd throughout the fields,  
And suck the meanest flower it yields;

For they to gain their worthy end,  
To every means will condescend,  
With simple children e'en to try  
To make them a domestic spy;  
They, if they could would wish to gather  
The history of their great grandmother,  
But be folks good or full of flaws,  
None can escape from Scandal's claws . . .

46. Gillett, xviii, letter written to Mrs. Hemans.

47. These cannot have been overwhelming. The Jewsburys seem to have been well enough off to have servants to do the cooking, cleaning and scut-work of child care. Geraldine spent several years in boarding school, and both she and Maria Jane went on frequent holidays.

48. Gillett, xiii.

49. *Middlemarch*, chapter 27.

50. Wordsworth tactfully tells her he prefers her prose to her verse (Gillett xxii), and later writes his friend Alaric Watts that her "natural bent" is "more decidedly towards life and manners than poetic work". She kept writing poetry anyway.

51. Hemans, 1793-1835, is probably best known nowadays for "Casabianca"- - i.e. the much parodied "The boy stood on the burning deck". This is most disconcerting, since the poem praises teenage suicide martyrdom, and Hemans was the (deserted) single parent of five sons.

52. Howe, 16.

53. From a letter to Dora Wordsworth, dated March 12, 1831, quoted in Gillett, lvii.

54. I am not condemning Maria Jane, who had every right to life, love and happiness. At any rate, getting rid of her sanctimonious presence was probably beneficial to Jewsbury.

55. Jewsbury tells Carlyle in a letter (quoted in Howe, 19) that though she had turned twenty, she was "childish in both manner and appearance". Even after the publication of *The Half Sisters*, in a letter to John Forster (quoted in Janet Mullane and Robert Wilson, eds., *Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism*, vol. 22, 209) Jane calls the 36-year-old Jewsbury a "young Englishwoman"- - and it is a vicious letter not designed to flatter. Carlyle, Henry Chorley and others call her 'young' in an era when over 30 was not young, not for unmarried women.

56. The words are Maria Jane's, quoted in Howe, 12.

57. A fuller discussion appears in Clarke, 70-2.

58. The literal truth of the Bible had been put into question by early nineteenth century German "Higher Criticism" which looked at the Bible in terms of a collection of human historical writings and folk myth, and also by Sir Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology* (1830-1833), which gave evidence that the earth had taken years to get the way it was, and geological change was still happening. See Richard Altick, *Victorian People and Ideas*, 219-26.

59. Quoted in Clarke, 161, Jewsbury tells Carlyle she had been brought up “a strict *Calvinist* & amongst a set of people who conscientiously discouraged doubt and enquiry”.

60. Joanne Wilkes, ed., Jewsbury, *The Half Sisters* (Chronology) xxx-xxxi.

61. Susanne Howe Nobbe, “Four Unpublished Letters of Thomas Carlyle”, 876-7.

62. Nobbe, “Four Unpublished Letters”, 877.

63. Shakespeare put it:  
There are more things in heaven and earth...  
than are dreamed of in your philosophy.  
*Hamlet*, Act III, Scene IV, line 66.

64. P.G. Wodehouse advised:  
Look for the silver lining  
Whene'er a cloud appears in the blue.  
Remember somewhere the sun is shining  
And so the right thing to do  
Is make it shine for you.  
*Sally*, 1920.

65. Which the sign on the concentration camp at Dachau countered with  
“Work will set you free”.

66. Dorothy Frame Blomfeld's answer was:  
One is nearer God's heart in a garden  
Than anywhere else on earth.  
“The Lord Planted a Garden”.

67. The solution, attributed to Don Cherry:  
“No blood, no shower”.

68. Sage is commonly used in stuffing for turkey. Monosodium glutamate enhances flavour but also causes terrible heartburn.

69. *Impromptu* is probably the most recent of the string of films about Sand (1804 – 1876) and her lovers.

70. Paul Blount, *George Sand and the Victorian World*, 5.

71. Blount, 11

72. See Blount, 5.

73. The poems are “To George Sand: A Desire” and “To George Sand: A Recognition”, 73. The poems are “To George Sand: A Desire” and “To George Sand: A Recognition”, both published 1844. The former poem is most notable for Barrett Browning's ingenious rhyme of “lions”, “appliance”, and “science”.

74. Patricia Thomson, *George Sand and the Victorians*, 28.

75. Thomson, 28.

76. Thomson, 28-9.

77. Alethea Hayter, *A Sultry Month*, 122.

78. Sexist? He wrote to Jane, "It is the nature of woman again (for she is essentially *passive* and not *active*) to cling to the man for support and direction . . . to cope with his humours and feel pleasure in doing so". C.R. Sanders and K.J. Fielding, *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle*, vol. 4 p.70.

Sexless? Carlyle's purported impotence has already been mentioned.

Elitist? "[T]he only real government were a Hierarchy"; (letter to Gustave d'Eichthal, August 9, 1830).

"the evil of democracy [is] an impertinent temporal interference with God's natural order" (in *Heroes and Hero Worship*, in which he saw history as influenced by individual *Übermenschen*).

Egomaniacal? The many biographies and collections of letters I have examined show

- - that Carlyle chose to keep on and on living in Chelsea, yet felt justified in making a scene whenever the natural and expected neighbourhood noises kept him from concentrating on his writing.

- - that he blasted with vitriolic comments almost anyone else who was getting any attention- especially upcoming thinkers and writers.

- - that there is a body of anecdotes about Carlyle sitting comfortably, while Jane scrubbed the floor around him, or the maid sat huddled in the cold scullery, because she had to sleep in the kitchen which he wouldn't vacate.

- - that after Jane's death, he asked Jewsbury to write down any memories Jane may have told her, then was quick to deny any that did not make him look good.

- - a slow writer? "*Frederick the Great*, a six volume epic . . . took Carlyle twelve years to write . . . [and] helped undermine the health of and ultimately kill his wife". (from Simon Heffer, *Moral Desperado. A Life of Thomas Carlyle*, 2-3.

79. Quoted in Lawrence and Elisabeth Hanson, *Necessary Evil. The Life of Jane Welsh Carlyle*, 260.

80. Hanson and Hanson, 260.

81. Paulet, née Elizabeth Newton, a girlhood friend of Jewsbury's, reportedly an artistic, vivacious woman, was the wife of a wealthy merchant. Her home, Seaforth, near Liverpool, was the site of rest and rehabilitation visits for Jewsbury and Jane- - many pleasant, many explosive. Both Carlyles perceived that Paulet was, in Carlyle's words, "very reverent of us" (Howe, 52); Jane seems to have used her to incite temper tantrums and jealousy in Jewsbury, and very often Paulet found herself acting as a buffer between the other two women.

82. Howe, 66.

83. Leonard Huxley, *Jane Welsh Carlyle, Letters to Her Family*, 189.

84. Huxley, 193-4.



85. Unpublished letters of Geraldine Jewsbury, dated August 9, and August 12, 1844, in the collection of the Pierpont Morgan Library.

86. Jewsbury, unpublished letter dated August 12, 1844.

87. Huxley, 304.

88. Other than Jane's chronic accusations in letters to family and friends about Jewsbury's hysteria, chasing men, vamping men and chasing married men, I have found no hint that Jewsbury did other than behave respectably, according to the code of her time. Indeed, almost everyone seems to have loved and respected her, taking her home to stay with their mothers, hiring her to write their memoirs, etc. After her death, her employer, Bentley, wrote in his diary, "Her kindness, goodness & worth are beyond talking about & I feel that I love her too much to talk coolly on such points" (Carney, 155).

89. Zoe was "put in a *dark cupboard* in the Manchester library, since it was said to be harmful for the morals of young men". Fryckstedt, 40, quoting Kathleen Tillotson, *Novels of the 1840's*, 60-1.

90. George Lewes, "The Lady Novelists", *Westminster Review*, Vol. LVIII, No. CXIII, July 1, 1852.

91. George Sand, *Lélia*, 147.

92. Dorothy Mermin, *Godiva's Ride*, 20.

93. In a letter to John Stores Smith, dated July 25, 1850, Charlotte Bronte wrote: "You mention Mrs. Gaskell and Miss Jewsbury; I regard as an honour any expression of interest from these ladies; the latter I had the pleasure of meeting once in London . . .".

This is not, of course, **hard** evidence that Bronte had read *Zoe* and *The Half Sisters*, but given the meeting, the hype surrounding both novels, and what we know of her own career ambitions, it seems very likely.

Unpublished letter in the collection of the Pierpont Morgan Library.

94. Georgette Heyer, 1902-1974, was the originator of the Regency romance *genre* in which, almost invariably, spunky but virtuous young girls get blasé but incorruptible fabulously wealthy noblemen- - against the social backdrop of Regency England- - and nothing much else happens.

95. Lillian Robinson, *Sex, Class and Culture*, 200.

96. Robinson, 207.

97. Thomas Carlyle, *The French Revolution*, 130.

98. Carlyle, 131.

99. The length constraints of this thesis prevent me from quoting either Carlyle or Jewsbury's Mirabeau to illustrate these claims. Anyone who has read any Carlyle, or any Jewsbury novels will know what I mean.

100. Thea Holme, *The Carlyles at Home*, 146.

101. Alan and Mary McQueen Simpson, *I Too Am Here*. "Lady Harriet was a Jane Carlyle in high society, with every advantage of health, wealth and position, as well as wits. She and her husband surrounded themselves with all that was most brilliant in intellectual England. Visits to Bath House . . . or the Scottish hunting lodges were like royal commands. Carlyle idolized her, as an Elizabethan poet-courtier idolized his Gloriana. She was 'his glorious Queen', his 'beneficent goddess', his 'daughter of the Sun', 'the lamp of my dark path' ", 8.  
It is interesting to note that when Lady Harriet, then Lady Ashburton died, Carlyle became very attached to the second Lady Ashburton.

102. In DuMaurier's *Tilby*, the villain Svengali uses mesmeric powers to train his singing protégée.

103. Particularly as in Gissing's *New Grub Street* (1891) and Orwell's *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933).

104. George Harrison, of course, did not write "All You Need is Love", (1967), but neither Lennon nor McCartney, who did, was called "George". Since Harrison was associated by performance, I have taken this liberty.

105. Robert Wolff, *Gains and Losses*, 404.

106. The doctrinal basis of the Church of England to which its clergymen are required to swear.

107. Wolff, 404.

108. A.O.J. Cockshutt, "Faith and Doubt in the Victorian Age" in Arthur Pollard (ed.), *The Victorians, The Penguin History of Literature*, vol. 6, 43.

109. "Teddy Bear's Picnic" (1932), song by Jimmy Kennedy, music by John W. Bratton:  
"It's lovely down in the woods today  
But safer to stay at home".  
and "Beneath the trees where nobody sees  
They'll hide and seek as long as they please".  
It is obvious, but seldom observed, that "Teddy Bear's Picnic" is a deconstruction of Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown".

110. I do not presume to know what eighteenth century nuns wore under their habits. Let it remain a mystery, with Scotsmen's kilts.

111. Forty-three Protestants were burned as heretics at Smithfield during the reign of Queen Mary, 1553-58. Is Miss Smith suggesting a revenge killing? Did Protestants already do so, in a giant Catholic barbecue? Or is Jewsbury just mixing up history, as usual?

112. The Dorcas Society, named after the woman in Acts 9, whose tailoring skills were so impressive that Peter resurrected her after her death, was an association of ladies who supplied clothing to the poor.

113. Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, 157.

114. It is really *Mémoires de la Vie du Comte de Gramont*, written by the Comte's brother-in-law, Anthony Hamilton, and published in Cologne in 1713. It is a source of factually questionable scuzz in both the French and English courts of the period.

115. "[I]t is narrow minded in their more privileged fellow creatures to say that [women] ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings . . . and embroidering bags".

116. Coventry Patmore's *The Angel in the House* is dated 1854 - 1863.

117. John Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies* is dated 1865 - 1871.

118. See Janet Mullane and R.T. Wilson, (eds.), *Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism*, vol. 22. I have already cited many of the reviews represented. The fact is the book sold very well, elicited much comment, and made Jewsbury famous - because it was considered a good read, or a shocker, or a good read because it was a shocker.

119. Mullane and Wilson, 208; source, *The Athenaeum*, 901, February 1, 1845, 114.

120. In Arthur Marx, *Goldwyn*, chapter 15. Quoted in the *Oxford Dictionary of Modern Quotations*.

121. Mullane and Wilson, 208.

122. Ellen Moers, *Literary Women*.

123. Lisa SurrIDGE, "Madame de Stael Meets Mrs. Ellis"

124. SurrIDGE, 82.

125. SurrIDGE, 82.

126. The novel is dedicated both to Jane, and to Elizabeth Paulet. In February of 1848, Jane wrote asking John Forster (the publisher), that he "erase [her] name from the dedication" or her husband would "send me to Gehenna", disliking to be associated with "George Sandism and all that accursed sort of thing". In James A. Froude (ed.), Thomas Carlyle, *Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle*.

127. Clarke, 188.

128. Julia Markus, *Across on Untried Sea*, 142.

129. Markus, 143.

130. George Gissing, *The Odd Women*, 53.

131 e.g. articles cited by Hartley and Cary.

132. Clarke, 192-3.

133. The novel was actually serialized in 1850, and printed in book form in 1851.
134. Hartley, 150.
135. Silver forks were going out, and sensations hadn't quite come in as *genres* in 1851, but most novels do have some home life, some high life, some shocks, some growth, some message and some thinly disguised neighbours in them so perhaps I am making too much of this.
136. Rosemarie Bodenheimer, *The Politics of Story in Victorian Social Fiction*, 88-9.
137. e.g. Bodenheimer, 34, Horsman, 44.
138. E.J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution*, 285.
139. *Funk & Wagnall's Encyclopedia*, vol. 21, 58.
140. Hobsbawm, 177.
141. *Funk & Wagnall's*, vol. 12, 284.
142. Robert Owen, who set up a model community/factory in Scotland in 1799 was largely responsible for the Factory Act of 1819, although he was disappointed with the subsequent slow rate of reform. Lord Brougham was partially responsible for the founding of Mechanics' Institutes, and the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, which was also intended to keep workers' minds occupied, defusing any rebellions.
143. Elizabeth Gaskell, *Mary Barton*, 463.
144. Dealing mainly with Munchkins and Kansan tourists, Glinda was bound to be understimulated.
145. *Constance Herbert* is the first Jewsbury novel not to push education for women. Constance is given only basic reading skills, to keep her mind from boiling over. The women in this novel have enough family problems to keep them busy.
146. Anne Bronte, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, 18.
147. e.g. John Reed, *Victorian Conventions*, Ohio University Press, 1975.
148. According to John Sutherland, *The Stanford Companion to Victorian Fiction*, 181, after French beginnings, this *genre* began to emerge in English with Poe's *The Murder in the Rue Morgue*, with the first English police detective being Inspector Bucket in *Bleak House*, 1852-1853.  
Collins's *The Moonstone*, the first detective story, did not appear until 1868.
149. Helen Small, *Love's Madness*, 183 n.
150. *The Athenaeum*, No. 1430, March 24, 1855, 343-5. Also in Mullane and Wilson, 213-4.
151. *Westminster Review*, Vol. LXIV, No. CXXV, July 1, 1855, 208-307, and Mullane and Wilson, 213.

152. Mullane and Wilson, 213.

153. Respectively, Trollope's newly rich, quickly ruined financier in *The Way We Live Now*, the very aristocratic and fabulously wealthy family in Trollope's political novels, and the peasant family and the aristocratic family they consider themselves related to in Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*.

154. Bob Cratchit was making fifteen shillings a week, which, with no unpaid leave, would work out to 39 pounds a year. Augustus's civil service salary was 600 pounds.

155. *The Athenaeum*, No. 1492, May 31, 1856, 675.

156. There are possibly three of us on Planet Earth.

157. Attributed to Yogi Berra.

158. Sutherland, *Stanford Companion*, 335.

159. The general commentary in *Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism*, vol. 22, p. 20 says that Jewsbury stopped writing fiction because of a strain on her health, but this seems unlikely; the other aspects of her writing workload grew considerably.

160. Fryckstedt, 28.

161. Fryckstedt, 34.

162. Fryckstedt, 35.

163. Fryckstedt, 58.

164. Fryckstedt, 40.

165. Fryckstedt, 40.

166. Fryckstedt, 32.

167. Gettman, 195.

168. Gettman, 197.

169. Fahnestock, 271.

170. Carney, 155.

171. Muriel Spark, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, 37.

## Appendix A

### Chronology

- 1812 Geraldine Endors Jewsbury born August 22 in Measham, Derbyshire, to Thomas Jewsbury, cotton manufacturer, and his wife Maria (née Smith). Geraldine is second daughter, fourth child of six.
- 1818 Jewsburys move to Manchester following collapse of cotton market caused by War of 1812.
- 1819 Mrs. Jewsbury dies after giving birth to Frank. Maria Jane (b. 1800), called "Jane", takes over care of household and five siblings. Peterloo Massacre in Manchester, followed by Parliament passing Six Acts to suppress disorder.
- 1820 ff. Geraldine attends Misses Darby's boarding school at Alden Mills in Tamworth.
- 1825 Maria Jane makes first visit to Wordsworths at Rydal, and publishes her first book.
- 1826 Maria Jane takes Geraldine, Arthur and Frank for a long summer holiday in Wales, near Felicia Hemans and her children. Henry Jewsbury establishes a pharmaceutical business. Dorothy Wordsworth stays with Jewsburys in Manchester.
- 1828 Maria Jane publishes *Letters to the Young*, first written to keep Geraldine in line at boarding school.
- 1830 Maria Jane takes Geraldine to London to polish up languages and drawing. Geraldine is taken to literary parties, meets Wordsworth, Edgeworth.
- 1831 Maria Jane looks for governess job for Geraldine who does not want to teach in a school.
- 1832 Geraldine takes over housekeeping in Manchester when Maria Jane marries the Rev. W.K. Fletcher and departs with him for India. Henry also marries and moves out.
- 1833 Maria Jane dies of cholera in India. Fletcher does not bother to communicate with the Jewsburys. Geraldine reads compulsively- - Shelley, Sand, philosophy, scientific theories.
- 1834 Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* completed.
- 1835 Stauros Dilberoglue, 14, comes to Manchester from Greece, and establishes himself with the aid of Frank Jewsbury, 16.
- 1839 Geraldine (circa Christmas) first reads Carlyle and becomes obsessed, particularly with his philosophy that activity makes one worthwhile. Thomas Jewsbury III marries.

- 1840 Geraldine begins correspondence with Carlyle in April. Father dies in August. Geraldine is plagued with illness, probably depression. She continues to live with brother Frank.
- 1841 Geraldine visits Carlyles in March, first meeting with Jane. Geraldine, 28, becomes intensely attached to Jane, 41, as in an adolescent crush.
- 1842 Geraldine begins *Zoe* collaboration with Elizabeth Paulet and Jane.
- 1843 Geraldine and Frank move to a nicer part of Greenheys- - their suburb of Manchester- - very near the Gaskells, a cleaner, pleasanter, more rural area (see *Mary Barton*). At Thomas Carlyle's invitation, Geraldine goes to stay at Cheyne Row, but overstays her welcome. Jane takes a dislike to her, and begins to complain that Geraldine behaves gauchely and antagonizes all their friends (no external evidence of this). The friendship blows hot and cold, as though both were teenagers; then, Jane begins to use Geraldine as an outlet to complain about Carlyle, and gets Geraldine work translating the writings of Mazzini for John Forster.
- 1844 *British and Foreign Review* publishes Geraldine's translations of Mazzini's articles on Dante and Carlyle. Jane picks a fight with Geraldine at Seaforth, Paulets' Liverpool home, because of Geraldine's "tiger jealousy".
- 1845 Publication of *Zoe*- - causing public outcry re dearth of faith and excess of sex. Book attracts an admirer, the mysterious "Q", to whom Geraldine almost becomes engaged, with the violent opposition of Jane and Frank. Geraldine goes for brief visit to continent with Frank to recover from Q. Geraldine and Jane have a pleasant stay at Seaforth, visit with James Martineau, and are catty about Unitarians (including Harriet Martineau and Mrs. Gaskell). Jane meets Lambert Bey, with whom Geraldine is in love, and though she seems to despise him, makes a point of charming him so that he writes longer letters to her than to Geraldine.
- 1846 Jane stays with Geraldine in Manchester to get over a nervous illness- - is surprised and impressed with Geraldine's excellent housekeeping. Geraldine begins to contribute to *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine*. Geraldine meets and swears eternal friendship with American actress Charlotte Cushman; Jane makes malicious and envious comments to others.
- 1847 Thomas Carlyle stays with Jewsbury's in Manchester. Geraldine proposes by letter to Lambert Bey. He writes weasel-like refusal. Geraldine meets and socializes with Ralph Waldo Emerson. Monckton Milnes hosts breakfast in Geraldine's honour.
- 1848 Publication of *The Half Sisters*. Jane calls it worse than *Zoe*- - "perfectly disgusting for a young English woman to write". Geraldine visits France and Belgium with Frank, Mr. and Mrs. Paulet, W.E. Forster, R.W. Emerson; the tourist attraction is the Revolution of 1848. In Paris, Geraldine buys hats, sees Rachel in *Phaedre*, and renews her friendship with Lambert Bey.
- 1849 Geraldine writes first of *Athenaeum* reviews, of Sylvester Judd's *Margaret, A Tale of the Real and Ideal*; she will write 2300 in 30 years. She also reviews G.H. Lewes as Shylock, and his own play, *The Noble Heart* and loves them.

- 1850 Geraldine's article "Religious Faith and Modern Scepticism" published in *Westminster Review*. Lewes as "Vivian" writes essay about women novelists taking over the field, naming Geraldine third in list of prominent women writers. *Marian Withers* serialized. Geraldine and Frank move to Ardwick. Geraldine reviews *Alton Locke*, has first of 17 tales published in Dickens's *Household Words*, becomes friendly with Robert and E.B. Browning.
- 1851 A letter to her eldest brother reveals Geraldine is getting a quarterly allowance, probably from inheritance. *Marian Withers* published. Geraldine meets novelist Fanny Lewald in London, swears eternal friendship with her. Lewald visits Manchester and becomes ill, stays with Jewsbury to recuperate. Stauros Dilberglue gives small dog, Nero, to Jane.
- 1852 Lewes praises Geraldine in "The Lady Novelists" in *The Westminster Review*. Jewsbury's first children's book, *History of an Adopted Child*, published.
- 1853 Second edition of *Adopted Child*. Frank marries Emily Vandeburgh, relieving Geraldine of housekeeping duties. She continues to live with them until child, Stauros Vandeburgh Jewsbury born, and Emily's mother moves in.
- 1854 Second edition of *Half Sisters*. Geraldine moves to Chelsea, around the corner from the Carlyles.
- 1855 Children's book, *Angelo, or the Pine forest in the Alps*, dedicated to baby Stauros, published. *Constance Herbert* published. Later in the year, Geraldine reviews *Gilbert Messenger* by Holme Lee - a novel on the same theme of duty versus hereditary insanity. She also reviews Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* and takes the author to task for anti-Catholicism.
- 1856 Second editions of *Angelo*, and of *The Sorrows of Gentility* published. Geraldine meets Walter Mantell from New Zealand, eight years her junior, a geologist who had been the first to investigate the remains of the moa, a prehistoric ratite, and a former civil servant who fell out with the N.Z. government because they broke his land promises to Maori. Entry in Jane's journal implies physical abuse, bruising by Carlyle.
- 1857 Geraldine falls in love with Mantell; he does not reciprocate, but they become very close friends. Jane is very jealous. Geraldine begins helping Lady Morgan (novelist Sydney Owenson) to organize her papers and write her memoirs. In a letter to Mrs. Russell, Jane describes Geraldine as "the most intimate friend I have in the world".
- 1858 Geraldine begins as publisher's reader for Bentley - will write 609 reports on 808 books in 22 years. Jane is embittered about Geraldine's friendship with Mantell and writes to people libelling Geraldine and providing incorrect facts about Mantell. Geraldine's friendship with Jane lapses; Mantell is indignant about Jane's treatment of Geraldine, but she cites Jane's ill health and begs Mantell not to think harshly of her.
- 1859 Walter Mantell returns to New Zealand; Geraldine offers to marry anyone who will take her there, so she can be near Mantell. Before he leaves, Jane comes to like, and sucks up to Mantell. Lady Morgan dies and leaves Geraldine 200 pounds. Early volumes of Morgan autobiography are published. Geraldine stays with former teacher, Miss Margareta Darby, while Darby's brother is dying.



- 1860 Geraldine's landlady goes bankrupt. Geraldine is moved out manually by Charles Kingsley; she stays with his mother till she finds new lodgings in Markham Square.
- 1861 Third edition of *Half Sisters* published. Miss Darby dies, leaving Geraldine 500 pounds. Jane and Geraldine have a pleasant holiday in Ramsgate for a week. Nero, beloved dog given to Jane by Dilberoglu, dies - - after eleven years of running away and trying to jump out of the second storey window.
- 1862 Publication of *Lady Morgan's Memoirs*, partly written by Geraldine and co-edited by her and William Hepworth Dixon. The reviews are bad. Bad break in friendship occurs when Jane, irritated by Carlyle's being stuck in the middle of *Frederick The Great*, behaves horribly to Geraldine.
- 1863 Geraldine is godmother to T.H. Huxley's youngest daughter (go figure!).
- 1864 Jane has a bad fall and is very ill, while Carlyle struggles with *Frederick*. Geraldine is compassionate and caring.
- 1865 Carlyle finishes *Frederick* but is still crabby, and so is Jane. Geraldine, writing Mantell, is understanding and tolerant about it.
- 1866 Jane Carlyle dies while on a carriage drive. Carlyle is in Scotland, and Geraldine goes with Froude to see the body in the hospital, and goes to the Carlyle home to await his return.
- 1867 Geraldine meets and makes friends with John Ruskin.
- 1868 Geraldine reviews *The Moonstone*.
- 1869 Geraldine sends a copy of Huxley's lecture on protoplasm, printed in the *Fortnightly Review*, to Mantell in New Zealand.
- 1871 Geraldine is refused a Civil List pension, in spite of many big-name endorsements.
- 1872 Because of personal difficulties, Geraldine's landlady has to move from London to Sevenoaks, Kent, and Geraldine moves with her.
- 1873 Henry Jewsbury dies.
- 1874 Jewsbury is granted a Civil List pension of 40 pounds yearly for services to literature.
- 1876 Geraldine writes introduction to memoirs of Caroline Herschel. She also reviews the book for *The Athenaeum*, the nineteenth century not having heard of conflict of interest.
- 1878 Frank Jewsbury dies.
- 1880 Geraldine dies of cancer on September 23, aged 68. She has filed her last Bentley report two weeks earlier. Visitors in her last days are Bentley, Ruskin and Thomas Carlyle. She is buried in Lady Morgan's mausoleum.

## Appendix B

### Plot Summary of *Zoe*

Set in the last third of the eighteenth century, *Zoe, The History of Two Lives* is just that.

Although the entire adult life of the heroine, *Zoe*, is emotionally kitchener-stitched to that of Everhard Burrows, the lapsed-priest hero, the two occupy the same neighbourhood at the same time for only a matter of months, and meet only a few times.

In storyline A, *Zoe Cleveland* is the post-natally legitimized daughter of an English naval officer and the adolescent Greek (but middle-class and virtuous) beauty he has rescued from pirate kidnappers. After her mother dies, *Zoe* is raised in England by an uncle and aunt. Uncle Oliver is a Church of England clergyman who comes to cherish her free spirit, and gives her the classical education usually reserved for boys. The Aunt (his sister or sister-in-law; *Jewsbury* is not consistent) is a Sarah Stickney Ellis-esque figure who thinks such treatment is the ruination of *Zoe*. Demurring at the social restrictions of her youthful, female, single status, *Zoe* marries Gifford, a rich, elderly Catholic-Establishment widower who had once been secretly in love with *Zoe's* mother (and must also have been too old for *her*). *Zoe* goes to live in Gifford's manor house, aptly termed a "castle", becomes devoted to his devout young daughter, *Clotilde*, and presents him with two male children in rapid succession. At this point, *Zoe* has reached the perimeter of her parameters; this leaves her free to get into all kinds of intellectual trouble.

Storyline B concerns Everhard, the younger son of a returned Catholic landowner whose family had fled England for France during what *Jewsbury* calls the "Jacobin" (and

means “Jacobite”) troubles. Burrows *père* had studied to be a priest, but was coerced into marrying a wealthy and aristocratic Frenchwoman, in order to repair the family fortunes. Mme. Burrows is inclined to be a Mean Mommy, at least to Everhard, and she gets away with it after his father dies suddenly and young. Everhard has been dedicated to the priesthood, evidently to make good his father’s default. At first, Everhard doesn’t mind; the only benevolent influence in his bleak childhood is Father Martin, a kindly, simple chaplain-tutor who entralls him with a heroic hagiography of Power Ranger-like saints. Then, on a visit to Parisian relatives prior to entering the seminary in Rome, Everhard is stripped of his illusions by the venal attitudes of an Epicurean *abbé* attached to his rapacious French aunt. Nevertheless, terror at the temptations of the flesh and intellect dangled at him at his aunt’s salon sends Everhard scuttling to his seminary.

Being gifted on a heroic scale, Everhard rises rapidly in the seminary hierarchy. But the seminary’s casuistic hegemony literally knocks the be-Jesus out of him; i.e., while his commitment to the institution of the Church prevails, his faith begins to ebb. To keep Everhard in the fold, his superiors offer him a promotion- - to return to England as the principal of the new Catholic college Gifford is building on the grounds of his castle.

Thrown together, Everhard and Zoe develop strong feelings for each other. Only their consciences and a few layers of clothing keep these feelings from being consummated during a scene in which he rescues her and her children from a fire. Everhard escapes from both his priestly apostasy and his dangerous liaison by running away to do untrained social work among Welsh iron miners. When the miners boot him out (for his lack of commitment to their own Hell-fearing Protestant fundamentalism) he

goes off to win international acclaim, and eke out a minimal living, writing philosophical works in London and Germany.

Meanwhile, Zoe, tranquillized and purified by her long-distance love for Everhard, devotes herself to her husband, children, and holy stepdaughter Clotilde, who has just been dumped by the local Evangelical, Irish Church of England vicar, Horace O'Brian. Clotilde becomes a nun. Gifford drops dead, and Zoe wears widowhood in exemplary fashion- - though wondering why Everhard doesn't get in touch with her (She accepts that he won't break his vow of celibacy, though he is no longer a believer, but at least he could write!).

Rejoining polite society, Zoe meets the impolite, Byronic French literary figure, Mirabeau. Another intense but not quite consummated relationship develops, then flounders : Mirabeau won't marry Zoe, and she won't disgrace her children by unsanctified cohabitation. Mirabeau stomps off in a huff, and Zoe swoons. The novel ends with Zoe facilitating a marriage between Horace, the cleric who dumped Clotilde, and her loyal friend Clara, and then becoming a gracious dutiful *doyenne* for her politician son, and with Everhard returning to die at Gifford castle. Since Zoe doesn't live there any more, though she rushes to say goodbye, she arrives too late.

## Appendix C

### Plot Summary of *The Half Sisters*

Bianca, a gorgeous Italian teenager, and her increasingly feeble/feeble-minded mother, Theresa, come to England in search of Philip Helmsby, the love of Theresa's youth, who had abandoned her without knowing she was pregnant. When they check into a modest inn in a provincial town, Bianca discovers Helmsby has died. The women's plight, and Bianca's magnetism, inspire compassion from two fellow guests. One, Conrad Percy, a Cambridge student, offers financial support (no strings) and becomes Bianca's idol and appointed guardian angel. The other, Simpson, the stingy but kindly owner of an equestrian circus, gives her an entry-level job as a performer. Bianca's innate talent and solid work-ethic soon make her the star, and her unassailable virtue and niceness eventually topple the spiteful jealousy of her fellow artistes. Meanwhile, her mother keeps getting sicker and madder. Through Conrad's patronage, Bianca leaves the circus to join a provincial theatre company, and develops superior acting skills.

In contrast: six months after dumping Theresa, Helmsby marries the practical but prissy daughter of his partner, and produces Alice, as soon as it is proper. Helmsby idolizes the little girl, fills their home with paintings and books, and fills her head with dreamy sensibilities. Helmsby dies when Alice is twelve, Mrs. Helmsby moves house, sells the paintings, and won't let Alice read until she has performed essential tasks, e.g. making a collar for the dog.

Alice does not have the spirit to fight her mother's attempts to stultify her intellectual development, nor the originality to deny that respectable wifedom is her only

acceptable fate. Too colourless and persnickety to attract young men, Alice meets and marries Bryant, a forty-ish mine owner. It is a satisfactory outcome for Mrs. Helmsby - Bryant is rich - and for Alice - Bryant engages in serious discussions on world affairs, and has sufficient stature to inspire hero-worship. Bryant is a kind, fond and indulgent husband, but being a successful businessman, he is busy; he works late, has no time to listen to Alice's ramblings, and takes frequent trips to places where there are problematic iron mines, but no accommodation for genteel wives. Alice takes the neglect personally. Her self-esteem is completely trashed when Bryant recommends that she emulate his greatly admired sister, Mrs. Lauriston, who proves to be selfish, empty, materialistic, and an advocate of never sharing feelings or thoughts with husbands, since they inevitably take them the wrong way.

Alice and Bianca meet when both feel overwhelmingly alone. Alice's mother has died, and she has come to realize that the then-absent Bryant will never see her as a soul-mate, only as set-decoration. Bianca, through fending off the passes of the manager, has lost her theatre job. Her mother is on her deathbed, and Bianca has almost no money left with which to provide for her. Alice sees Bianca in an apothecary's, buying medicine, and becomes Bianca's and Theresa's benefactor. Alice and Bianca become friends, Theresa dies, and Alice takes Bianca home to stay with her (Bryant is still away). Bianca spots Helmsby's portrait, and figures out the relationship, but out of sensitivity to Alice's social position does not enlighten her.

Both sisters draw intellectual and emotional strength from their association, but Bianca leaves when the theatre deems her indispensable and gives her her job back.

Bryant returns, and because of his prejudice against the theatre, Alice is fearful of pursuing the association.

However, Conrad Percy, coincidentally the son of Bryant's lawyer, has accompanied Bryant home for a visit, and does pursue Bianca; Bianca has become glamorous and Alice is boring. The pursuit is honourable- - which horrifies Bryant, who writes Conrad's father a warning letter. Percy senior visits Bianca and emotionally blackmails her into sacrificing her feelings so as not to endanger Conrad's respectability. Conrad goes off to travel on the Continent for three years with the proviso that when he returns, Bianca will have become a fully-trained and famous actress in a big-city theatre, therefore acceptable enough for Conrad to marry.

Bianca's career does advance as specified, but when he returns, Conrad has had too many hands-on experiences with trashy continental actresses; he now hates theatrical ambience, and respects, but does not love Bianca. He does introduce her to his friend, Lord Melton, who falls in love with Bianca, but despairs; she still loves Conrad.

Meanwhile, Conrad revisits Bryant's estate, finding Alice, who is now reduced to petulant despondency by Bryant's inattention, to be his ideal of womanhood, i.e. a shrinking, angelic, housebound violet. Conrad goes back to London, and at a crowded party Bianca overhears him announce that he despises her profession and no longer loves her. She suffers. Melton gets his sister, Lady Vernon, to invite Bianca to her country house to recuperate. Bianca does so for three months, takes an interest in Lady Vernon's charity- - a school which prepares genteel young women in reduced circumstances to earn ladylike livings- - then goes back to work, determined to raise the tone of the acting

profession. Melton, chagrined at her non-reciprocation of his love, goes off on a tour of foreign lands.

Conrad invests in Bryant's business to give himself an excuse to spend more time with Alice. She cheers up. They read Wordsworth. Conrad declares his love for her. She suffers- -begging him to be strong enough for both of them and go away. He goes. She broods. Bryant goes away on business over Alice's protests. Conrad comes back. He persuades the sitting-duck Alice to fly off with him. While she is writing a farewell note to Bryant he returns earlier than expected. Alice shrieks, swoons and within a day, dies.

Bianca, meanwhile, triumphs on the London stage, and realizes she loves Melton, who is not even writing to her. As a platonic pal, she comforts Conrad in his grief. Conrad gets religion, and goes off abroad to be an ascetic do-gooder. Melton, on his travels rescues and restores the long-lost child of a disgusting diva (it is implied that she is the one who has turned Conrad off theatrical women, and we may infer that the child could be Conrad's). Then Melton also saves Bryant (who is on a mission to his Bohemian iron mines) from a coach accident in which Bryant loses a hand.

Melton goes home. He and Bianca get married. She quits work. They set up a happy home, in which Bryant is an affectionate, occasional visitor. He has forgiven Alice, blamed himself for her death and become fond of Bianca, having been told that she is Alice's half-sister, though Alice never knew. Conrad, missionarying in some foreign land, dies. Everybody else who is anybody lives happily and long.



## Appendix D

### Plot Summary of *Marian Withers*

Two ragged and starving Manchester pauper children, John and Alice Withers, acting as brother and sister though not related, have been trained by exploitive low-lives to go out begging with a made-up tale of working-class family tragedy. They are rescued by a philanthropic lady who feeds and clothes them and finds them a home in a nice, comfortable workhouse.

Alice is sent to school to train as a domestic servant, and eventually goes to Scotland to become companion and caregiver to her benefactor, and ultimately is her partial heir. John is apprenticed in a cotton mill, develops mechanical aptitudes, learns to read as his chosen reward for working extra hard when fever decimates the work force, with great effort rises in his trade, and quits his day job to spend all his time, starving, inventing improved machinery. He is partially cheated out of the proceeds of his invention, but puts what he gets into a mill that prospers. He marries his old master's bereaved and destitute daughter out of kindness (leaving Alice, whom he regards as a sister, carrying a silent torch). They produce a daughter, Marian Withers, and Alice rejoins the household as maiden aunt, taking over the housekeeping, and mothering Marian when Mrs. Withers dies. Marian is sent away to school to gain all the advantages her father missed, and comes home at age eighteen, longing for things finer than the comfortable but unpretentious household provides.

She encounters luxurious living on a visit to a school friend, Hilda, who lives with her sister, Mrs. Arl, and her brother-in-law, a wealthy Flemish merchant, in their country

house, Carrisford. Arl is much older than his wife, a social climbing beauty who has acquired wealth through marriage and is now attempting entrée into the aristocracy through wealth. Marian is impressed with the glamour of the Arl household, but disconcerted by Mrs. Arl's shallow materialism. Another concern is that there is a campaign to marry off Hilda (young and lovely) to the rich but raddled elderly roué emeritus, Glynton.

Marian falls in love with Mrs. Arl's cousin, Albert Gordon, a handsome young roué-in-training, who works, but not very hard, as a clerk in Arl's establishment. He encourages her interest, and she pines for him when she returns home. John and Alice try to interest Marian in promoting the well-being of their mill-workers and poor neighbours, but she would rather brood. In Carrisford, Albert begins to pursue Lady Wollaston, an unhappily married superior being who is so contrite about his having heard her snobbish evaluation of him that she becomes interested in him.

In Burn Brook, at the home of the Wilcoxes (well-off but plain-living mill-owners), Marian meets "a middle-aged gentleman" (he's thirty-fivish), Mr. Cunningham, a wealthy intellectual with a theoretical interest in cotton manufacturing and its labour relations. Cunningham listens with interest to the history and theories of several self-made mill-owners with a variety of opinions on who owes what in labour-management. Cunningham predicts (using other words) the thesis, antithesis and synthesis of labour and capital. When Marian apologizes for the vulgarity of her father's friends, Cunningham gives her a little lecture, promoting the benefits of education.

Cunningham's interest in technology and the amelioration of workers' lives forges a relationship between him and John Withers and the more benevolent of the other

mill-owners. Withers develops business troubles- - greedy and dishonest associates abscond- - and must struggle and juggle to meet his payroll. Marian, depressed by her limited existence, is cheered up when Withers takes her into his office to keep his books, and when Cunningham brings her books to read. Cunningham also gives Marian lectures about being self-sufficient, and tells her Mrs. Arl would have been a better person if she had had to earn her living and if she had developed an ideal beyond social climbing.

Meanwhile, in Carrisford, Mrs. Arl is organizing an amateur opera performance in which Albert is to play Don Giovanni, followed by a ball. Mrs. Arl has the aid of an effete, flirtatious friend, Mrs. St. George. Mr. Arl insists Marian should be invited, having been impressed by her modesty and intelligence. Marian returns to Carrisford; Cunningham is also there. He is the son of Arl's oldest friend, and also a cousin of Lady Wollaston. Marian looks gorgeous at the ball in a dress lent by Mrs. St. George, but Albert stands her up (as opposed to "stands up with her") for the first waltz as he is busy chasing after Lady Wollaston. Hilda is now engaged to Mr. Glynton who makes her cringe. Albert declares his feelings for Lady Wollaston, and Marian accidentally overhears.

Marian broods, but thinks naively that it is safer for Albert to admire a woman who is married; she revises her ambition to having Albert think she is like Lady Wollaston. Hilda sets the date of her wedding, and Marian is persuaded to stay to be a bridesmaid. Cunningham asks Lady Wollaston to be nice to Marian- - which she is, admiring Marian's modesty. A nasty Miss Vivian who is jealous of Marian tells Marian Albert has been badmouthing her. Mr. Cunningham gives Marian a lecture against worldliness, and takes her under his wing while others are distressing her.

Albert visits Lady Wollaston at her home, Mayfield, and their mutual attraction increases, though his is partly vanity at making so august a conquest. He has to leave before anything much happens. Cunningham leaves Carrisford, and Marian is bored and disgusted by all the pre-wedding conspicuous consumption. Albert and everybody else regather at Carrisford.

Lady Wollaston expounds to Cunningham about the follies of young women marrying for social advantage when they are too jejune to know better. It is revealed that Cunningham had once been in love with Lady Wollaston. Lady Wollaston still thinks she and Albert can just be friends. Albert asks her to run away with him and she says no. He is then uneasy about his proposal. Albert really wants her to be in love with him without the bother of his having to do anything about it.

After Hilda's wedding, Marian is summoned home by Alice's illness, Marian takes care of her but occasionally lapses into petulance. The doctor sends both of them off for a holiday in Blackpool; they have a nice time, and it's an engaging picture of Blackpool. Alice and Marian return home where John Withers is still struggling with business difficulties. Cunningham wants to test his views about guiding the working classes into a more edified existence, and to synthesize the thesis of the rights of property with the developing antithesis of the rights of labour. So he decides to invest with Withers as a partner and help him to expand his business which will run according to Cunningham's Utopian schemes. Cunningham is also developing love for Marian- - she needs guidance, too, and complains about the lack of it. But he tells her that first she must take charge of herself before she is worthy of the kind of love she wants.

Albert is confidently waiting for Lady Wollaston to fall prey to his advances. Trying to resist, she is piqued that her husband Sir Frederick does nothing to stand in her way (he doesn't want her to stand in the way of his own bad behaviour). When her husband announces his regiment is going to be sent to Ireland, Lady Wollaston offers to run away with Albert. Knowing this act will bring him social ruin rather than advancement, Albert brushes her off in a hypocritical letter. She is disillusioned with Albert, and tells her husband what she has been up to. Sir Frederick criticizes her more for the solecism of bad taste than for her almost-infidelity, forgives her too easily, and gets her letters to Albert back for her. They go off to Ireland, where she goes into a decline, and Cunningham gets Marian to come and stay with her; each woman benefits from the other's good qualities.

Sir Frederick is shot by an Irish dissident/patriot/hooligan. Lady Wollaston nurses him; dying, he gets her to promise to look after a young woman, daughter of a respectable tradesman, who has camp-followed him to Ireland. The girl, Clarissa Wendover, is a poetess *manqué* who specializes in dedicating verse to military officers. She is shallow and affected, but she gives Lady Wollaston something to do, and Lady Wollaston, under a respectable cover story (protecting Marian from the scandalous truth) eventually sends Clarissa back to her father, where she soon marries a Methodist minister. The whole caregiving experience, plus her beneficial friendship with Marian, strengthens Lady Wollaston's character, and she resolves to stay in Ireland to nurse, feed and educate the benighted Irish peasantry.

Cunningham, in active partnership with Withers, succeeds in improving living conditions for the workers, and spreads culture to fellow mill-owners by inspiring them to

buy art objects like the ones he owns. Marian interests herself in a school and singing classes for female workers. Albert pursues Mrs. St. George, who dumps him. She causes him to lose his job and spoils his chances of marrying an heiress. With no better options, he goes to Burn Brook to propose to Marian (Withers is now rich). He is refused, but this shakes up Cunningham enough to propose to her himself. He and Marian marry. On their ecstatic European honeymoon, they meet Hilda and the horrible Glynton; she is now his nurse and veritable prisoner.

Albert is given a job in New Orleans, and makes the mistake of making a play for the wife of a hot-blooded Creole. The husband shoots Albert in the face, and the resulting shattered nose disfigures him for life, causing Albert to go to live "in the backwoods of Canada where appearances were not of much consequence".

## Appendix E

### Summary of *Constance Herbert*

Charles Herbert, youngest son of a family whose traditions include early and violent death, madness and mental retardation inherits an impoverished Gothic estate, Chantry, and jilts a wealthy and admirable woman, Sarah Wilmot, to marry his first love, Kate, at this point the new widow of an elderly lawyer. Kate is the daughter of a neighbouring farmer. Her family also carries a strain of insanity. Kate becomes pregnant, which triggers depression, violence, religious mania, and guilt at wrecking Sarah's life. After the birth of their daughter, Constance, Charles puts Kate into a lunatic asylum. His Aunt Margaret, a strong, silent senior with a mysterious past shows up to look after the baby alone at Chantry. Charles is economically strapped so they can't live somewhere less spooky. Jarred out of his lugubrious lethargy by Margaret's strong-mindedness, Charles gets a sinecure in India. Margaret raises Constance in bucolic bliss, and is instantly popular among the local Tory, anti-Jacobin (Jewsbury has found out what the word means) gentry, in spite of her wanting to institute social improvements for the poor.

It is decided to let Constance believe her mother is dead and never allow her to marry and perpetuate two strains of madness. Also, she is considered potentially unstable if overtaxed. Thus, Margaret educates her with Rousseau-style minimalism to be a sort of unaffiliated nun, loving nature, admiring martyrs, and exercising self-discipline. Constance grows up imaginative, beautiful and naïve.

Meanwhile, Charles has gambled and speculated away his Indian earnings, and gets into serious debt. Leaving India under a cloud, he returns to Chantry, having made over the estate as a future consideration in exchange for debt repayment, estate-improvement, and a home for life. His dubious benefactor is the sinister Marchmont, a jockey's son who has re-invented himself as a financial planner, and who aspires to become country gentry, which is why he wants a mouldering estate. Marchmont is clearly meant to be close to the sources of evil. Not very subtly, Jewsbury consistently bedecks him with rattlesnake/demon/Mephistopheles metaphor.

When Marchmont brings his dashing but suggestible son Phillip, an Eton scholar, to Chantry, Phillip ignores the young Constance- - to her chagrin. Constance is also pained by Charles, whose indolence, self-indulgence and gambling inspire her contempt. This changes to sympathy after Margaret cautiously tells the story of Charles's love for and loss of Constance's mother.

Marchmont, seeing the respect Margaret inspires among the county set, wants to use her as hostess to enhance his and his son's changes in society. He plays on Charles's gambling habit to share a house with the Marchmonts in London. This household is staffed and equipped with a view to the position Marchmont intends for his son to occupy- - i.e. with the restrained luxury of establishment, not the flashy fashion of new money. Men who owe Marchmont money make their wives call on Margaret and are favourably impressed by her. Because his friends admire the beautiful Constance, Phillip becomes interested in her. Margaret dislikes Phillip because he is controlled and controlling like his father.



When Constance turns seventeen, the Herberts and Marchmonts celebrate by taking a trip to the Rhine. A decent and hard-working young gentleman, Sydney Beacham, sees Constance and falls instantly in love with her. Sydney just happens to be the nephew and surrogate son of Charles's jiltee, Sarah Wilcox; Sydney's own father was a profligate like Charles. In pursuit of Constance, Sydney cultivates Charles- - who introduces him to gambling, but not to Constance. Sydney has beginner's luck at the casino, but no luck otherwise; he develops brain fever (whatever that is), perceives that Constance has a passion for Phillip, makes a will leaving his estate to her, and commits suicide by some unnamed method.

On Marchmont's advice, Charles rushes Constance home before she becomes the object of scandal. Phillip, swayed because someone else has wanted Constance that much, decides he loves her himself, and with Marchmont's encouragement, proposes by letter. The anguished Margaret takes Constance to observe Kate- - who is by now several clerestories short of a Gothic monastery- - and when the full horror has sunk in, tells her that that was her mother. Constance is thus convinced she shouldn't marry, and she and Margaret return to Chantry.

Marchmont thinks that Constance's refusal is caused by snobbery, and that all old families are chock full of nuts- - it's the price you pay- - and what they need is new, vigorous blood. So Phillip continues his suit, until the smitten but dutiful Constance refuses adamantly, in person. Phillip leaves in a snit, Constance fall into a swoon, and ails and grieves for weeks, during which Margaret tells *her* story. She had made a forbidden, youthful runaway marriage, not legal, but performed by a Catholic priest, to a young aristocrat, Maurice. When Maurice comes into his inheritance, he abandons

Margaret and marries someone else. (Was Jewsbury thinking of Maria Fitzherbert and George IV?) Margaret is subsequently wooed unsuccessfully by a suitor she had before she eloped, and by her quasi-husband after his legal wife dies. The story of Margaret's courage through adversity makes Constance rally. Then Sarah Wilmot, having heard of Sydney's love and Constance's illness, comes to visit. The three dumped/bereft/dutiful women hit it off, comparing their circumstances to a Gothic novel. They decide to go to live at Swale, the Yorkshire estate Sydney left Constance. En route, their coach breaks down, and they are given respite by Harrop, a gentleman who turns out to be the boy Sarah Wilmot had had a crush on when they were children at dancing school; she has just been comparing him to Sir Charles Grandison. Recently widowed, he forms a relationship with Sarah, based on her having known and being able to talk about his late wife. The three then proceed to Swale, where Constance is re-energized and made useful by having to take charge of the estate.

Harrop comes to visit, and (Jewsbury artificially constructing a family of the three women) advises Constance on running the estate, and consults Margaret about his new love for Sarah. He proposes to Sarah, using his loneliness as emotional blackmail. Margaret becomes ill, and she emotionally blackmails Sarah to accept, so that Constance would have some male person to watch over her when Margaret dies. They marry, having gone to London first. Margaret dies. Constance is shattered. But Charles returns and Constance has to rally to look after him. He is too sick for her to go to join the Harrops. Charles has been in New Orleans (cf. Albert in *Marian Withers*; Jewsbury seems to see it as a spa for lowlifes). He has won a goodly sum of money, and has bought a lot of good jewelry for a very good price from a couple of really bad guys who

turn out to have stolen it in high profile robberies. Having developed an obsessive fear of poverty, and a tendency to miserliness, Charles does not want to turn the money in, and flees to England to consult Marchmont about what to do. But when he gets to Chantry, he secretly undertakes a lot of Gothic burrowing and bricking up to hide the loot.

Charles becomes so possessive of Constance's attention, and so obsessively stingy about her housekeeping that only her overwhelming sense of duty keeps her going. Still in love with Phillip, she fantasizes about being friends with the wife he will eventually acquire. (cf. Aunt Alice in *Marian Withers*.) When Phillip does marry a woman of good family, and brings her to visit, his wife is vindictive and lets Constance know that Chantry will eventually belong to her and Phillip. She even invades the late Margaret's sanctuary. Constance is plunged into a fit of atheism, which she rejects because the absence of God is worse than all her other troubles.

Marchmont explains to Constance that Charles has made the house over to him, and gives the Herberts a month's notice to leave. Charles stages a scene in which he behaves even crazier than he is, for Marchmont's benefit, to stall him, but dutiful Constance refuses to put Charles into an asylum. She plans to take him to Swale - but Marchmont thinks that Charles is too mad for Constance to remove him on her own, so hires a keeper. This turns out to be a nice young man who is the son of the bank manager whose life was ruined when he was wrongly blamed for the robbery from which Charles has secreted the loot. Knowledge of this makes Charles feel guiltier than ever.

Constance is relieved from the exertion of caring for Charles, so has time for another episode of atheism, which she resolves by deciding that her doubt is invalid, and she is only having it because *she* is crazy.

Charles gets a violent visit from a blackmailer threatening to tell the bank that Charles is hiding the loot, but Charles injures the blackmailer. Marchmont forces Charles to explain what is happening, and Charles tells all, except where the loot is. Bow Street Runners show up, and helped by Marchmont, they figure out where Charles has bricked up the stash. Charles has a stroke and dies, but his dying words falsely implicate Marchmont in the robbery. Marchmont is arrested, and cleared when the real culprit is found, but his other shady doings come to light. He is publicly disgraced, and disowned by Phillip and his wife, and dies a drunk in France. Phillip and his wife are never accepted into county society, and leave Chantry, which is then judged to be haunted.

Constance stays with the Harrops until she recovers her health, then manages her estate as a stronger, more serene person who has renounced love. She makes the Harrops' daughter her heir. Jewsbury homilizes at the end of the novel that doing one's duty makes everything worth it.

## Appendix F

### Summary of *The Sorrows of Gentility*

Simon Morley and his wife, hard-working, money-centred innkeepers in a country town, have sent their daughter Gertrude, to a boarding school for the daughters of gentry. Mrs. Morley has ambitions for her beautiful daughter to rise in the world; Mr. Morley, pathologically unpretentious, is absorbed with his business and his son (another Simon) and pays little attention to his daughter and his wife's dreams. The school charges double fees to keep the low-born Gertrude, and teaches her 1. to do beautiful needlework, and 2. to despise her origins and station. Gertrude leaves school, warned by her teachers not to expect her school acquaintances to know her socially, to steer clear of connections made through her family or the inn, and to watch out for the attentions of young men, likely to be dishonourable. Not surprisingly, Gertrude comes home unwilling to do the inn's bookkeeping and supervise the bar as her parents had hoped. She finds her father and brother too rough, her mother too busy with customers to be company for her, and her former neighbourhood friends, the Slocum sisters- - shopkeeper's daughters- - too vulgar. Deliverance comes in the form of an invitation from a former schoolmate, now bedridden. Gertrude is unaware that the girl's consequential father is checking her suitability to be hired as his daughter's companion. On the visit, Gertrude meets and is wooed by Augustus Donnelly- - handsome, sociable, conceited, lazy, parasitical, Irish, and connected to aristocracy. He proposes. She is not really attracted, but elopes with him to Gretna Green. Her mother has summoned her home to help with an election dinner, and Gertrude considers marriage the lesser of the two evils. She is sixteen.

Though the neighbours are impressed by the wedding announcement, Mrs. Morley grieves, and the unforgiving Morley gives short shrift when Augustus writes (without Gertrude's knowledge) asking for a marriage settlement and bragging about his connections. The young couple live in an inn in Scotland, not paying bills, until they are bailed out by young Lord Southend, a school friend of Augustus. Augustus then dumps Gertrude on his mother and sister Sophia who live in a provincial city, and goes to London to nag his uncle to get him a government job.

Mrs. Donnelly Sr. and Sophia are cold, snobbish, self-important and parsimonious- - albeit penniless- - women who live in a depressing shabby genteel mausoleum. The unexpected arrival of the young couple causes a problem; there isn't enough food in the house. However, the Donnelly women decide it is more elegant to serve less but use the good plates. When they learn of Gertrude's origins, they actively persecute her while taking what little cash she has.

Augustus goes to a lot of parties in London, and after a long time gets a job- - a government sinecure with little work and much salary. He borrows a house from Lord Southend, and since he has already spent his salary advance, has to borrow money for Gertrude's travel expenses. Augustus rents furniture so they can live in part of the huge house. Gertrude enjoys housekeeping, and Augustus even builds shelves- - but forgets often to go to his paying job. Gertrude is a popular hostess among the bachelor friends Augustus brings home. Though the young couple are living beyond their means, debt has not yet caught up with them. Lord Southend's mother invites them to a party, which requires expensive clothing and transport, let alone what Augustus loses gambling. Gertrude is snubbed and bored, but gets something out of it by writing a glowing letter

about the elite goings-on to her envious in-laws. This backfires when they ask to come and live with Augustus, offering the use of their furniture as a bribe. Augustus agrees, over Gertrude's objections. Not only is Gertrude stuck with the cartage bill for the gloomy old furniture, but she is deposed from her position when Mrs. Donnelly convinces Augustus Gertrude is too extravagant a housekeeper. The servants quit in the nasty, cheeseparing atmosphere. Mrs. Donnelly gives dinner parties to wheedle herself and Sophia into society, then starves the family for a week afterwards. Sophia's pursuit scares off Augustus's bachelor friends, and Mrs. Donnelly's pretensions and sycophancy repulse Lady Southend. When Lady Southend wants to entertain Gertrude- - and not the Donnelly women- - they do not allow her to go.

Gertrude endures a sickly pregnancy and wants her mother, whom she is not allowed even to write to because of her father's anger. She tries to write in care of the Slocums but there is no response. Gertrude bears a daughter, Clarissa, and prays that the child will not live to behave to her as she did to her parents. She wants only to take care of the baby, but Mrs. Donnelly tries to take over- - as a power ploy, not out of granny-love. Mrs. Donnelly almost poisons the child with a dubious nostrum, and Gertrude manages to antagonize her enough to abandon the nursery.

Meanwhile, Augustus's low-life profligacy and his mother's failure to contribute or pay her bills have built up huge debt- - which they attempt to blame on Gertrude for her one modest bill for baby things. They send Gertrude- - walking, in a snowstorm- - with a letter to Lady Southend suggesting that Lady Southend buy their furniture and then rent it back to them. This would in effect make Lady Southend their pawnbroker, at which suggestion she is furious, but she realizes it is none of Gertrude's doing. She tells

Gertrude that her attempt to change her social class was costly, and will get worse; Gertrude should try to return to her parents and work to support herself and her child. They evaluate Gertrude's skills- - mainly sewing- - and Lady Southend decries the lack of both moral structure and pragmatic skills in Gertrude's education. Lady Southend offers Gertrude tapestry work when she's ready, sends her home in a coach and gives her five guineas for the baby and a really scathing note for Mrs. Donnelly. It is Christmas, no less.

Meanwhile, Augustus has gone to a dogfight with a dissolute friend, and Gertrude's mother, having finally received her letter, arrives and is shown directly to the nursery, desirable aristocratic callers already occupying the drawing room. Gertrude is excoriated by her mother-in-law for Lady Southend's message, but has a joyful reunion with her mother. She also has a good meal. Mrs. Morley has brought a hamper.

Augustus sneaks home, having (a) lost, betting on the wrong dog, and (b) been tipped off that the bailiffs are after him. He must go either to France or to prison. Mrs. Morley, who is taken in by his fawning manner, his mother and Gertrude all give him money and he scarpers. Mr. Morley having relented somewhat, Mrs. Morley offers to take Gertrude home. But first, she tells Mrs. Donnelly off, feeds the starving servants, and registers shock at Gertrude's frivolous outward accoutrements and heavily patched underwear. She takes Gertrude home, but not to the inn, since the senior Morleys have retired and left the business to son Simon and his new wife. They now live in a pleasant, gracious, well-appointed cottage. But there is a bipolar emotional atmosphere. Mrs. Morley won't let Gertrude do any work, and Mr. Morley despises what he considers Gertrude's pretentious, aristocratic idleness. Gertrude occupies herself by making



surprise needlework gifts for both parents; this does placate her father. Then Simon Morley Junior and his wife visit. The sister-in-law, who first met the family when she was hired to help in the inn when Gertrude absconded, resents Gertrude's natural elegance and supposed elevated status. Young Mrs. Simon manages to increase Mr. Morley's hostility to his own daughter; Augustus exacerbates this by writing a cadging letter from Boulogne for money to come home. The situation is resolved by sending Gertrude and Clarissa to live at the inn (in a servant's attic) with her brother and sister-in-law. When Augustus arrives, he flatters Mrs. Simon and sponges off Simon - who doesn't mind, since Augustus is putting his harpy-wife in a better mood. Augustus makes himself generally agreeable to the neighbourhood, leaving Gertrude to do the work and take the criticism.

Gertrude realizes her social position is diminished, rather than exalted, but Augustus looks so good that the neighbours are impressed by him. Soon they begin to valorize him and blame Gertrude's perceived selfishness and extravagance for his misfortunes (the clothes she has privately made for herself look like designer models). Augustus, good at riding, shooting and doctoring horses gets a job offer - land steward to a rich baronet. He rejects it as a servile position. Gertrude points out it would be more honourable than sponging off her brother.

At his point she has an epiphany - that her husband is worthless - and that she really ought to become a milliner-dressmaker - but Augustus is too snobbish to let her. He does not object when Gertrude offers to work as maid at the inn. She then fills in as manager while her sister-in-law has a second baby, and does the work well. Mrs. Simon

keeps trying to humiliate Gertrude, but Gertrude has accepted her fate and developed pride in her work.

Meanwhile, Gertrude's mother-in-law, living off her baronet brother-in-law nags him into getting Augustus appointed to a post - secretary to a dissolute governor going out to a malaria-ridden African coastal country ominously called "Fort Fever-Point". Augustus is inclined to refuse, but one of his creditors catches up with him, so he goes. Gertrude is criticized by others for not leaving her child and accompanying her husband-- who doesn't actually want her. Her father approves her decision - and that she has been useful at the inn. He lets her come home, but he doesn't take to his grandchild. When he spansks and threatens Clarissa, Gertrude writes to Lady Southend asking for work in London.

But part of her father's hostility was a manifestation of gout, and Gertrude nurses him so well that he becomes benign again. Nevertheless, when Lady Southend (who had been abroad) finally responds, having lined up travelling money, lodgings and work, Gertrude takes Clarissa to London. She travels with a stagecoachman who is an old family friend and who promises to keep an eye on her for her parents. En route, Sam the coachman amazes Gertrude with a stream of gossip showing how much of the private foibles and personal circumstances of the neighbourhood aristocracy become common knowledge.

Gertrude and Clarissa settle into comfortable rooms with a kindly landlady, and Gertrude quickly establishes herself as a sought-after *modiste* and embroiderer [too quickly for realism; embroidery is a slow process] earning a comfortable income. But Augustus comes back. He has left Africa under a cloud, and he is worse than ever - no

longer well-groomed or handsome, and morally debased. He cadges money daily, and either lies in bed or goes off on dissolute excursions, sometimes taking Clarissa with him, but never Gertrude. He resents Gertrude's not-surprising coldness, although she waits on him diligently. Clarissa is made much of by his friends, as she is pretty and charming, so he treats her as a trophy. When Gertrude complains to Lady Southend, she is told she's not that badly off- - the late Lord Southend was a wife-beater who tried to pay off his gambling debts with his wife's estates, and gave her jewelry to his mistresses. But Lady Southend cowed him with her stoicism- - so Gertrude tries stoicism on Augustus, which makes him dislike her even more.

Invited to visit the estate of Lord Elvington, Augustus takes Clarissa with him, against Gertrude's wishes. He also leaves Gertrude with a huge tailor's bill. He then writes that he is going to Ireland to help Mr. Vashipot (an arriviste Anglo-Irish landlord) with electioneering, and is taking Clarissa with him. Fearing evil influences on her daughter (though, of course, it is not stated, there is an implication that Augustus has sunk low enough to put his pretty little daughter in the way of sexual predators) and hoping to forestall the journey, Gertrude rushes to the Elvington estate, but they have already left and she has no more money. So she returns to Lady Southend, who tells her Augustus is within his legal rights, but she will get her son to try to intervene to get Clarissa back.

Then Gertrude gets a letter that her mother is on her deathbed, so she returns home. Lord Southend writes to Augustus, so offending him that he says he will never give the child back (though he doesn't really want her- - and he wants no more to do with Gertrude). Mrs. Morley gets better- - and Gertrude feels able to tell her parents about her

predicament, so the Morleys finance her trip to Ireland. She travels from one Donnelly relative or friend to another, searching in vain for Augustus and Clarissa. With the aid of a kindly priest, she finally finds them at a farm cottage which houses victims of the fever epidemic which is currently raging. Augustus is being nursed by little Clarissa because he has fever, though not the same fever as the epidemic (since Jewsbury doesn't say it is malaria, it is possible she means syphilis or some other venereal disease). Gertrude takes her husband and daughter back to London and nurses the invalid and eventually paralyzed Augustus for two years, developing compassion for him. Then he dies, having developed a somewhat nicer nature in his affliction.

Gertrude and Clarissa go to live with the Morleys, and two years later Gertrude marries a wealthy, gentle and bookish tradesman who had admired her as a young girl. She has several more children and raises them to eschew pretensions to gentility.

## Appendix G

### Summary of *Right Or Wrong*

The novel is set almost entirely in Paris, *circa* 1720 to *circa* 1760. The narrative is fraught with flashbacks, afterthoughts and tales within tales, and heavily padded with philosophical pontification, but basically what happens is this:

Simon Méry, a younger son of Alsatian minor gentry, had been a soldier too poor to buy promotion, but since he was wounded in an act of great gallantry, he is invalided out with a small pension. He marries a beautiful Spanish girl, works her family's farm, and fathers a daughter. His wife dies, the King goes broke and cancels the pension, and Simon settles in Paris with the now teenage Marguerite, hoping to get his pension back or obtain a commission in a new regiment. Simon is promised a job, but Louis XIV is dead, and the Regent reneges on the promise. Simon becomes a water carrier, then has an accident and cannot work or afford medical care. They live on the convent-trained Marguerite's lace, which she makes and takes to a local mercer's.

Pious but gorgeous Marguerite is noticed by two men. At mass, the panderous valet of a foppish Vicomte spots her, compiles a dossier, and arranges for his master to see her with a view to future consumption. A thirty-seven year-old monk called Paul (who used to be an army officer called Sieur Antoine de Flesselles), with a tragic romance in his past that parallels Simon's rescues Marguerite from being run over by a carriage. He is struck by her resemblance to his lost Spanish lady. Trained as a doctor, Paul acts as almoner/district nurse to the poor people in the vicinity of his convent. They don't know he's a monk. He visits Simon and Marguerite (now sixteen), leaving

medicine and advice for the former, and orders for the latter- - never to go out anywhere, even mass: he will find buyers for her lace. He leaves her money to live on.

He says he will come again; he doesn't know when. He then goes back to the convent where he has to sort out various bureaucratic and moral messes, caused by the laxity of the good but moronic old Superior, Michael, and the venality of the various monks. This takes Paul over a month. Then he asks permission to leave the convent, explaining the plight of the father and daughter who need his help. Paul is unaccountably peeved when Michael suggests Marguerite would be best off if she should become a nun.

Meanwhile, Léonce, the Vicomte's valet, a master of disguise, manages to settle Marguerite and her father in an apartment with a female minder, on the assumption that arrangements are being made to restore Simon's pension. Léonce then arranges a series of sightings so that Marguerite and the Vicomte fall in love with each other. Because Simon is suspicious, and demanding of Marguerite's attention, the Vicomte manoeuvres to have him thrown into the Bastille (which Jewsbury spells "Bastile"). Marguerite is distraught, but she loves the Vicomte, and thinks he is trying to help free her father. After various trials (fainting, illness, objectification, seduction attempts) Marguerite agrees to marry the Vicomte in a secret ceremony- - secret, since the Vicomte's father would disapprove of the marriage. A marriage takes place, but unbeknownst to Marguerite, it is totally bogus. Nevertheless, they live in bliss, and produce a daughter. The Vicomte's interest starts to wane, and he is wounded in a duel (don't even ask), and his pushy aunt comes to nurse him. Marguerite finds out he lied about his father, who is long dead, and about the validity of the marriage. She takes her daughter, and her

father- - whom the Vicomte now has released- - and leaves, returning to her old apartments. Here, she is visited by Paul, who never gave up looking for her- - and spying on her, when he found out where she was.

The Vicomte tries in vain to get Marguerite back, and her relationship with Paul grows, as he brings her large, remunerative orders for needlework, and helps with her father and child. Eventually, he confesses his love for her. She says she is too guilt-ridden to respond, and reproaches him, as she had counted on his friendship. After a lot of to-ing and fro-ing, her heart grows fonder, aided by his (unexplained to her) long absences at the convent. His monastic vows, Jewsbury carefully explains to her Protestant readers, would get him into some trouble if he got married, but this would not be sacrilegious, since he is not a priest. So he decides to make a living being a doctor in Marguerite's neighbourhood for six months of each year, and to be a full-time, enthusiastic monk living in the convent for the other six, and to win Marguerite's heart and become her husband (seasonally). He begins by buying a fixer-upper house and remodelling it himself into a home and a doctor's office- - taking a six-month break to bring order to his Order. He comes back to find that Marguerite's father and little daughter have just died and Marguerite lies deathly ill of smallpox. Nursed by him and a couple of nuns, she recovers (though disconcerted at having lost some of her looks), and marries him. They move into the house, and (Jewsbury is never very good with gauging the passage of time, but this is an outstanding gaffe) six months after he has come back from the convent, when Margaret is momentarily about to give birth to their first child, he goes back to the convent. He can't bring himself either to lie to her or to tell her the truth

about where he goes, but he provides her with a cock-and-bull story that will satisfy the neighbours.

This goes on for twenty years, in which Paul and Marguerite produce many children, four of whom live, all of whom she has to raise herself for half the year. Her love for Paul grows so great as to be termed idolatry. Then, just as he is about to begin his domestic six months, doddering old Superior Michael retires, and directs the monks to elect Paul next Superior. This is going to be a full-time job, so he confesses to Marguerite, and she helps him to stage a mock death, so that she can continue as a widow, while he lives as Superior of the convent, a few blocks away. By this time, the convent is so corrupt that Paul must rule with great severity to straighten it out. He is made even harsher by his pain at losing his family. The monks grow to hate him. When a neighbour of Paul and Marguerite, a man who was executor of his false will, discovers Paul in the convent church, seated in the Superior's throne, he reveals all. The monks are enraged, and the Archbishop has ordered arrests, so Paul flees with Marguerite to Brussels. He goes into a depression, and Marguerite takes in more needlework to support him. When an old newspaper reveals that Paul has been tried and condemned to death, carried out in effigy, he perversely decides they should go back, and he should attempt to get a retrial. After all, he was not a priest, so the offence was not quite so great.

But the messy French legal system does not want to know, and Paul is taken into custody. Then, in a series of long-drawn-out coincidences, Marguerite has the opportunity to get the Vicomte's valet and the Vicomte to intervene. She is loth to take their help, but she must. Paul is set free, on condition he and Marguerite leave Paris forever. They return to Brussels, where they ultimately realize that Paul's "holiness" had



been based on vanity and a sense of superiority, and he was really no better than anyone else. They grow old- - at least Paul does, he is now close to eighty, whereas Marguerite is twenty-one years younger- - and manage to entertain their four children, children-in-law and grandchildren in a final family reunion before Paul and Marguerite die within a few weeks of each other- - she first.

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