NORTH AND SOUTH.
BY THE AUTHOR OF MARY BARTON.

AH, yet, though all the world forsake, Though fortune clip my wings, I will not cramp my heart, nor take Half-views of men and things. Let Whig and Tory stir their blood; There must be stormy weather; But for some true result of good All parties work together.

TENNYSON.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.
"EDITH!" said Margaret, gently, "Edith!"
But, as Margaret half suspected, Edith had fallen asleep. She lay curled up on the sofa in the back drawing-room in Harley Street, looking very lovely in her white muslin and blue ribbons. If Titania had ever been dressed in white muslin and blue ribbons, and fallen asleep on a crimson damask sofa in a back drawing-room, Edith might have been taken for her. Margaret was struck afresh by her cousin's beauty. They had grown up together from childhood, and all along Edith had been remarked upon by every one, except Margaret, for her prettiness; but Margaret had never thought about it until the last few days, when the prospect of soon losing her companion seemed to give force to every sweet quality and charm which Edith possessed. They had been talking about wedding dresses, and wedding ceremonies; and Captain Lennox, and what he had told Edith about her future life at Corfu, where his regiment was stationed; and the difficulty of keeping a piano in good tune (a difficulty which Edith seemed to consider as one of the most formidable that could befall her in her married life), and what gowns she should want in the visits to Scotland, which would immediately succeed her marriage; but the whispered tone had latterly become more drowsy; and Margaret, after a pause of a few minutes, found, as she fancied, that, in spite of the buzz in the next room, Edith had rolled herself into a soft ball of muslin and ribbon and silken curls, and gone off into a peaceful little after-dinner nap.

Margaret had been on the point of telling her cousin some of the plans and visions which she entertained as to her future life in the country parsonage, where her father and mother lived; and where her bright holidays had always been passed, though for the last ten years her aunt Shaw's house had been considered as her home. But in default of a listener, she had to brood over the change in her life silently as heretofore. It was a happy brooding, although tinged with regret at being separated for an indefinite time from her gentle aunt and dear cousin. As she thought of the delight in filling the important post of only daughter in Helstone parsonage, pieces of the conversation out of the next room came upon her ears. Her aunt Shaw was talking to the five or six ladies who had been dining there, and whose husbands were still in the dining-room. They were the familiar acquaintances of the house; neighbours whom Mrs. Shaw called friends, because she happened to dine with them more frequently than with any other people, and because if she or Edith wanted anything from them, or they from her, they did not scruple to make a call at each other's houses before luncheon. These ladies and their husbands were invited in their capacity of friends to eat a farewell dinner in honour of Edith's approaching marriage. Edith had rather objected to this arrangement, for Captain Lennox was expected to arrive by a late train this very evening; but, although she was a spoilt child, she was too careless and idle to have a very strong will of her own, and gave way when she found that her mother had absolutely ordered those extra delicacies of the season which are always supposed to be efficacious against immoderate grief at farewell dinners. She contented herself by leaning back in her chair, merely playing with the food on her plate, and looking grave and absent; while all around her were enjoying the mots of Mr. Grey, the gentleman who always took the bottom of the table at Mrs. Shaw's dinner parties, and asked Edith...
to give them some music in the drawing-room. Mr. Grey was particularly agreeable over this farewell dinner, and the gentlemen staid down stairs longer than usual. It was very well they did—to judge from the fragments, of conversation which Margaret overheard.

"I suffered too much myself; not that I was not extremely happy with the poor dear General,—but still disparity of age is a drawback; one that I was resolved Edith should not have to encounter. Of course, without any maternal partiality, I foresaw that the dear child was likely to marry early; indeed, I had often said that I was sure she would be married before she was nineteen. I had quite a prophetic feeling when Captain Lennox"—and here the voice dropped into a whisper, but Margaret could easily supply the blank. The course of true love in Edith's case had run remarkably smooth. Mrs. Shaw had given way to the presentiment, as she expressed it; and had rather urged on the marriage, although it was below the expectations which many of Edith's acquaintances had formed for her, a young and pretty heiress. But Mrs. Shaw said that her only child should marry for love,—and sighed emphatically, as if love had not been her motive for marrying the General. Mrs. Shaw enjoyed the romance of the present engagement rather more than her daughter. Not but that Edith was very thoroughly and properly in love; still she would certainly have preferred a good house in Belgravia, to all the picturesqueness of the life which

{Page 62 in the original}

Captain Lennox described at Corfu. The very parts which made Margaret glow as she listened, Edith pretended to shiver and shudder at; partly for the pleasure she had in being coaxed out of her dislike by her fond lover, and partly because anything of a gipsy or make-shift life was really distasteful to her. Yet had any one come with a fine house and a fine estate, and a title to boot, Edith would still have clung to Captain Lennox while the temptation lasted; when it was over, it is possible she might have had little qualms of ill-concealed regret that Captain Lennox could not have united in his person everything that was desirable. In this she was but her mother's child; who, after deliberately marrying General Shaw with no warmer feeling than respect for his character and establishment, was constantly, though quietly, moaning her hard lot in being united to one whom she could not love.

"I have spared no expense in her trousseau," were the next words Margaret heard. "She has all the beautiful Indian shawls and scarfs the General gave to me, but which I shall never wear again."

"She is a lucky girl," replied another voice, which Margaret knew to be that of Mrs. Gibson, a lady who was taking a double interest in the conversation, from the fact of one of her daughters having been married, within the last few weeks. "Helen had set her heart upon an Indian shawl, but really when I found what an extravagant price was asked, I was obliged to refuse her. She will be quite envious when she hears of Edith having Indian shawls. What kind are they? Delhi? with the lovely little borders?"

Margaret heard her aunt's voice again, but this time it was as if she had raised herself up from her half-recumbent position, and were looking into the more dimly lighted back drawing-room. "Edith! Edith!" cried she; and then she sank back as if wearied by the exertion. Margaret stepped forward.

"Edith is asleep, Aunt Shaw. Is it anything I can do?"

All the ladies said "Poor child!" on receiving this distressing intelligence about Edith; and the minute lap-dog in Mrs. Shaw's arms began to bark, as if excited by the burst of pity.

"Hush, Tiny! you naughty little girl! you will waken your mistress. It was only to ask Edith if she would tell Newton to bring down her shawls: perhaps you would go, Margaret dear?"
Margaret went up into the old nursery at the very top of the house, where Newton was busy getting up some laces which were required for the wedding. While Newton went (not without a muttered grumbling) to undo the shawls, which had already been exhibited four or five times that day, Margaret looked round upon the nursery; the first room in that house with which she had become familiar nine years ago, when she was brought, all untamed from the forest, to share the home, the play, and the lessons of her cousin Edith. She remembered the dark, dim look of the London nursery, presided over by an austere and ceremonious nurse, who was terribly particular about clean hands and torn frocks. She recollected the first tea up there separate from her father and aunt, who were dining somewhere down below an infinite depth of stairs; for unless she were up in the sky (the child thought), they must be deep down in the bowels of the earth. At home—before she came to live in Harley Street—her mother's dressing-room had been her nursery; and, as they kept early hours in the country parsonage, Margaret had always had her meals with her father and mother. Oh! well did the tall, stately girl of eighteen remember the tears shed with such wild passion of grief by the little girl of nine, as she hid her face under the bedclothes, in that first night; and how she was bidden not to cry by the nurse, because it would disturb Miss Edith; and how she had cried as bitterly, but more quietly, till her newly-seen grand pretty aunt had come softly upstairs with Mr. Hale to show him his little sleeping daughter. Then the little Margaret had hushed her sobs, and tried to lie quiet as if asleep, for fear of making her father unhappy by her grief, which she dared not express before her aunt, and which she rather thought it was wrong to feel at all after the long hoping, and planning, and contriving they had gone through at home, before her wardrobe could be arranged so as to suit her grander circumstances, and before papa could leave his parish to come up to London, even for a few days.

Now she had got to love the old nursery, though it was but a dismantled place; and she looked all round, with a kind of cat-like regret, at the idea of leaving it for ever in three days.

"Ah Newton!" said she, "I think we shall all be sorry to leave this dear old room."

"Indeed, miss, I shan't, for one. My eyes are not so good as they were, and the light here is so bad that I can't see to mend laces except just at the window, where there's always a shocking draught—enough to give one one's death of cold."

"Well, I dare say you will have both good light and plenty of warmth at Naples. You must keep as much of your darning as you can till then. Thank you, Newton, I can take them down—you're busy."

So Margaret went down laden with shawls, and snuffing up their spicy Eastern smell. Her aunt asked her to stand as a sort of lay figure on which to display them, as Edith was still asleep. No one thought about it; but Margaret's tall, finely-made figure, in the black silk dress which she was wearing as mourning for some distant relative of her father's, set off the long beautiful folds of the gorgeous shawls that would have half-smothered Edith. Margaret stood right under the chandelier, quite silent and passive, while her aunt adjusted the draperies. Occasionally, as she was turned round, she caught a glimpse of herself in the mirror over the chimney-piece, and smiled at her own appearance there—the familiar features in the unusual garb of a princess. She touched the shawls gently as they hung around her, and took a pleasure in their soft feel and their brilliant colours, and rather liked to be dressed in such splendour—enjoying it much as a child would do, with a quiet pleased smile on her lips. Just then the door opened, and Mr. Henry
Lennox was suddenly announced. Some of the ladies started back, as if half-ashamed of their feminine interest in dress. Mrs. Shaw held out her hand to the new-comer; Margaret stood perfectly still, thinking she might be yet wanted as a sort of block for the shawls; but looking at Mr. Lennox with a bright, amused face, as if sure of his sympathy in her sense of the ludicrousness at being thus surprised.

Her aunt was so much absorbed in asking Mr. Henry Lennox—who had not been able to come to dinner—all sorts of questions about his brother the bridegroom, his sister the bridesmaid (coming with the Captain from Scotland for the occasion), and various other members of the Lennox family, that Margaret saw that she was no more wanted as shawl-bearer, and devoted herself to the amusement of the other visitors, whom her aunt had for the moment forgotten. Almost immediately, Edith came in from the back drawing-room, winking and blinking her eyes at the stronger light, shaking back her slightly-ruffled curls, and altogether looking like the Sleeping Beauty just startled from her dreams. Even in her slumber she had instinctively felt that a Lennox was worth rousing herself for; and she had a multitude of questions to ask about dear Janet, the future, unseen sister-in-law, for whom she professed so much affection, that if Margaret had not been very proud she might have almost felt jealous of the mushroom rival. As Margaret sank rather more into the background on her aunt's joining the conversation, she saw Henry Lennox directing his looks towards a vacant seat near her; and she knew perfectly well that as soon as Edith released him from her questioning) he would take possession of that chair. She had not been quite sure, from her aunt's rather confused account of his engagements, whether he would come that night; it was almost a surprise to see him; and now she was sure of a pleasant evening. He liked and disliked pretty nearly the same things that she did. Margaret's face was lightened up into an honest, open brightness. By-and-by he came. She received him with a smile which had not a tinge of shyness or self-consciousness in it.

"Well, I suppose you are all in the depths of business—ladies' business, I mean. Very different to my business, which is real true law business. Playing with shawls is very different work to drawing up settlements."

"Ah, I knew you would be amused to find us all so occupied in admiring finery. But really Indian shawls are very perfect things of their kind."

"I have no doubt they are. Their prices are very perfect, too. Nothing wanting."

The gentlemen came dropping in one by one, and the buzz and noise deepened in tone.

"This is your last dinner-party, is it not? There are no more before Thursday?"

"No. I think after this evening we shall feel at rest, which I am sure I have not done for many weeks; at least, that kind of rest when the hands have nothing more to do, and all the arrangements are complete for an event which must occupy one's head and heart. I shall be glad to have time to think, and I am sure Edith will."

"I am not so sure about her; but I can fancy that you will. Whenever I have seen you lately, you have been carried away by a whirlwind of some other person's making."

"Yes," said Margaret, rather sadly, remembering the never-ending commotion about trifles that had been going on for more than a month past: "I wonder if a marriage must always be preceded by what you call a whirlwind, or whether in some cases there might not rather be a calm and peaceful time just before it."

"Cinderella's godmother ordering the trousseau, the wedding-breakfast, writing the notes of invitation, for instance," said Mr. Lennox, laughing.

"But are all these quite necessary troubles?" asked Margaret, looking up straight at him for an answer. A sense of indescribable weariness of
all the arrangements for a pretty effect, in which Edith had been busied as supreme authority for the last six weeks, oppressed her just now; and she really wanted some one to help her to a few pleasant, quiet ideas connected with a marriage.

"Oh, of course," he replied, with a change to gravity in his tone. "There are forms and ceremonies to be gone through, not so much to satisfy oneself, as to stop the world's mouth, without which stoppage there would be very little satisfaction in life. But how would you have a wedding arranged?"

"Oh, I have never thought much about it; only I should like it to be a very fine summer morning; and I should like to walk to church through the shade of trees; and not to have so many bridesmaids, and no wedding- breakfast. I dare say I am resolving against the very things that have given me the most trouble just now."

"No, I don't think you are. The idea of stately simplicity accords well with your character."

Margaret did not quite like this speech; she winced away from it more, from remembering former occasions on which he had tried to lead her into a discussion (in which he took the complimentary part) about her own character and ways of going on. She cut his speech rather short by saying:

"It is natural for me to think of Helstone church, and the walk to it, rather than of driving up to a London church in the middle of a paved street."

"Tell me about Helstone. You have never described it to me. I should like to have some idea of the place you will be living in, when ninety-six Harley Street will be looking dingy and dirty, and dull, and shut up. Is Helstone a village, or a town, in the first place?"

"Oh, only a hamlet; I don't think I could call it a village at all. There is the church and a few houses near it on the green—cottages, rather—with roses growing all over them."

"And flowering all the year round, especially at Christmas—make your picture complete," said he.

"No," replied Margaret, somewhat annoyed, "I am not making a picture. I am trying to describe Helstone as it really is. You should not have said that."

"I am penitent," he answered. "Only it really sounded like a village in a tale rather than in real life."

"And so it is," replied Margaret, eagerly. "All the other places in England that I have seen seem so hard and prosaic-looking, after the New Forest. Helstone is like a village in a poem—in one of Tennyson's poems. But I won't try and describe it any more. You would only laugh at me if I told you what I think of it—what it really is."

"Indeed I would not. But I see you are going to be very resolved. Well, then, tell me that which I should like still better to know: what the parsonage is like."

"Oh, I can't describe my home. It is home, and I can't put its charm into words."

"I submit. You are rather severe tonight, Margaret."

"How?" said she, turning her large soft eyes round full up on him. "I did not know I was."

"Why, because I made an unlucky remark, you will neither tell me what Helstone is like, nor will you say anything about your home, though I have told you how much I want to hear about both, the latter especially."

"But indeed I cannot tell you about my own home. I don't quite think it is a thing to be talked about, unless you knew it."

"Well, then"—pausing for a moment—"tell me what you do there? Here you read, or have lessons, or otherwise improve your mind, till the middle of the day; take a walk before lunch, go a drive with your aunt after, and have some kind of engagement in the evening. There, now fill up your day at Helstone. Shall you ride, drive, or walk?"
"Walk, decidedly. We have no horse, not even for papa. He walks to the very extremity of his parish. The walks are so beautiful, it would be a shame to drive— almost a shame to ride."

"Shall you garden much? That, I believe, is a proper employment for young ladies in the country."

"I don't know. I am afraid I shan't like such hard work."

"Archery parties—pic-nics—race-balls—hunt-balls?"

"Oh no!" said she, laughing. "Papa's living is very small; and even if we were near such things, I doubt if I should go to them."

"I see, you won't tell me anything. You will only tell me that you are not going to do this and that. Before the vacation ends, I think I shall pay you a call, and see what you really do employ yourself in."

"I hope you will. Then you will see for yourself how beautiful Helstone is. Now I must go. Edith is sitting down to play, and I just know enough of music to turn over the leaves for her; and besides, Aunt Shaw won't like us to talk."

Edith played brilliantly. In the middle of the piece the door half-opened, and Edith saw Captain Lennox hesitating whether to come in. She threw down her music, and rushed out of the room, leaving Margaret standing confused and blushing to explain to the astonished guests what vision had shown itself to cause Edith's sudden flight. Captain Lennox had come earlier than was expected; or was it really so late? They looked at their watches, were duly shocked, and took their leave.

Then Edith came back, glowing with pleasure, half-shyly, half-proudly leading in her tall handsome Captain. His brother shook hands with him, and Mrs. Shaw welcomed him in her gentle kindly way, which had always something plaintive in it, arising from the long habit of considering herself a victim to an uncongenial marriage. Now that, the General being gone, she had every good of life, with as few drawbacks as possible, she had been rather perplexed to find an anxiety, if not a sorrow. She had, however, of late settled upon her own health as a source of apprehension; she had a nervous little cough whenever she thought about it; and some complaisant doctor ordered her just what she desired,—a winter in Italy. Mrs. Shaw had as strong wishes as most people, but she never liked to do anything from the open and acknowledged motive of her own good will and pleasure; she preferred being compelled to gratify herself by some other person's command or desire. She really did persuade herself that she was submitting to some hard external necessity; and thus she was able to moan and complain in her soft manner, all the time she was in reality doing just what she liked.

It was in this way she began to speak of her own journey to Captain Lennox, who as- sented, as in duty bound, to all his future mother-in-law said, while his eyes sought Edith, who was busying herself in re-arranging the tea-table, and ordering up all sorts of good things, in spite of his assurances that he had dined within the last two hours.

Mr. Henry Lennox stood leaning against the chimney-piece, amused with the family scene. He was close by his handsome brother; he was the plain one in a singularly good-looking family; but his face was intelligent, keen, and mobile; and now and then Margaret wondered what it was that he could be thinking about while he kept silence, but was evidently observing, with an interest that was slightly sarcastic, all that Edith and she were doing. The sarcastic feeling was called out by Mrs. Shaw's conversation with his brother; it was separate from the interest which was excited by what he saw. He thought it a pretty sight to see the two cousins so busy in their little arrangements about the table. Edith chose to do most herself. She was in a humour to enjoy showing
her lover how well she could behave as a soldier's wife. She found out that the water in the urn was cold, and ordered up the great kitchen tea-kettle; the only consequence of which was that when she met it at the door, and tried to carry it in, it was too heavy for her, and she came in pouting, with a black mark on her muslin gown, and a little round white hand indented by the handle, which she took to show to Captain Lennox, just like a hurt child, and, of course, the remedy was the same in both cases. Margaret's quickly-adjusted spirit-lamp was the most efficacious contrivance, though not so like the gipsy-encampment which Edith, in some of her moods, chose to consider the nearest resemblance to a barrack-life.

After this evening all was bustle till the wedding was over.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

MARGARET was once more in her morning dress, travelling quietly home with her father, who had come up to assist at the wedding. Her mother had been detained at home by a multitude of half-reasons, none of which anybody fully understood, except Mr. Hale, who was perfectly aware that all his arguments in favour of a gray-satin gown, which was midway between oldness and newness, had proved unavailing; and that, as he had not the money to equip his wife afresh, from top to toe, she would not show herself at her only sister's only child's wedding. If Mrs. Shaw had guessed at the real reason why Mrs. Hale did not accompany her husband, she would have showered down gowns upon her; but it was nearly twenty years since Mrs. Shaw had been the poor, pretty, Miss Beresford, and she had really forgotten all grievances except that of the unhappiness arising from disparity of age in married life, on which she could descend by the half-hour. Dearest Maria had married the man of her heart, only eight years older than herself, with the sweetest temper, and that blue-black hair one so seldom sees. Mr. Hale was one of the most delightful preachers she had ever heard, and a perfect model of a parish priest. Perhaps it was not quite a logical deduction from all these premises, but it was still Mrs. Shaw's characteristic conclusion, as she thought over her sister's lot: "Married for love, what can dearest Maria have to wish for in this world?" Mrs. Hale, if she spoke truth, might have answered with a ready-made list, "a silver-grey glacé silk, a white chip bonnet, oh! dozens of things for the wedding, and hundreds of things for the house." Margaret only knew that her mother had not found it convenient to come, and she was not sorry to think that their meeting and greeting would take place at Helstone parsonage, rather than, in the confusion of the last two or three days, in the house in Harley Street, where she herself had had to play the part of Figaro, and was wanted everywhere at one and the same time. Her mind and body ached now with the recollection of all she had done and said within the last forty-eight hours. The farewells so hurriedly taken, amongst all the other good-byes, of those she had lived with so long, oppressed her now with a sad regret for the times that were gone never to return. Margaret's heart felt more heavy than she could ever have thought it possible in going to her own dear home, the place and the life she had longed for years—at that time of all times for yearning and longing, just before the sharp senses lose their outlines in sleep. She took her mind away with a wrench from the recollection of the past, to the bright serene contemplation of the hopeful future. Her eyes began to see, not visions of what had been, but the sight actually before her; her dear father leaning back asleep in the railway carriage. His blue-black hair was gray now, and lay thinly over his brows. The bones of his face were plainly to be seen—too plainly for beauty—if his features had been less finely cut; as it was, they had a grace if not a comeliness of their own. The face was in repose;
but it was rather rest after weariness, than the serene calm of the countenance of one who led a placid, contented life. Margaret was painfully struck by the worn, anxious expression; and she went back over the open and avowed circumstances of her father's life, to find the cause for the lines that spoke so plainly of habitual distress and depression.

"Poor Frederick!" thought she, sighing. "Oh! if Frederick had but been a clergyman, instead of going into the navy, and being lost to us all! I wish I knew all about it. I never understood it from aunt Shaw; I only knew he could not come back to England because of that terrible affair. Poor dear papa!

{Page 66 in the original}

how sad he looks! I am so glad I am going home, to be at hand to comfort him and mamma."

She was ready with a bright smile, in which there was not a trace of fatigue, to greet her father when he awakened. He smiled back again, but faintly, as if it were an unusual exertion. His face returned into its lines of habitual anxiety. He had a trick of half-opening his mouth as if to speak, which constantly unsettled the form of the lips, and gave the face an undecided expression. But he had the same large, soft eyes as his daughter,—eyes which moved slowly and almost grandly round in their orbits, and were well veiled by their transparent white eyelids. Margaret was more like him than like her mother. Sometimes people wondered that parents so handsome should have a daughter who was so far from regularly beautiful; not beautiful at all, was occasionally said. Her mouth was wide; no rosebud that could only open just enough to let out a yes and no, and "an't please you, sir." But the wide mouth was one soft curve of rich red lips; and the skin, if not white and fair, was of an ivory smoothness and delicacy. If the look on her face was in general too dignified and reserved for one so young, now, talking to her father, it was bright as the morning,—full of dimples, and glances that spoke of childish gladness, and boundless hope in the future.

It was the latter part of July when Margaret returned home. The forest trees were all one dark, full, dusky green; the fern below them caught all the slanting sunbeams; the weather was sultry and broodingly still. Margaret used to tramp along by her father's side, crushing down the fern with a cruel glee, as she felt it yield under her light foot, and send up the fragrance peculiar to it,—out on the broad commons into the warm scented light, seeing multitudes of wild, free, living creatures, reveling in the sunshine, and the herbs and flowers it called forth. This life— at least these walks—realised all Margaret's anticipations. She took a pride in her forest. Its people were her people. She made hearty friends with them; learned and delighted in using their peculiar words; took up her freedom amongst them; nursed their babies; talked or read with slow distinctness to their old people; carried dainty messes to their sick; resolved before long to teach at the school, where her father went every day as to an appointed task, but she was continually tempted off to go and see some individual friend—man, woman, or child—in some cottage in the green shade of the forest. Her out-of-doors life was perfect. Her in-doors life had its drawbacks. With the healthy shame of a child she blamed herself for her keenness of sight, in perceiving that all was not as it should be there. Her mother—her mother always so kind and tender towards her—seemed now and then so much discontented with their situation; thought that the bishop strangely neglected his episcopal duties, in not giving Mr. Hale a better living; and almost reproached her husband because he could not bring himself to say that he wished to leave the parish, and undertake the charge of a larger. He would sigh aloud as he answered, that if he could do what he ought in little Helstone, he should be thankful; but ev-
every day he was more overpowered; the world became more bewildering. At each repeated urgency of his wife, that he would put himself in the way of seeking some preferment, Margaret saw that her father shrank more and more; and she strove at such times to reconcile her mother to Helstone. Mrs. Hale said that the near neighbourhood of so many trees affected her health; and Margaret would try to tempt her forth on to the beautiful, broad, upland, sun-streaked, cloud-shadowed common; for she was sure that her mother had accustomed herself too much to an in-doors life, seldom extending her walks beyond the church, the school, and the neighbouring cottages. This did good for a time; but when the autumn drew on, and the weather became more changeable, her mother's idea of the unhealthiness of the place increased; and she repined even more frequently that her husband, who was more learned than Mr. Hume, a better parish priest than Mr. Houldsworth, should not have met with the preferment that these two former neighbours of theirs had done.

This marring of the peace of home, by long hours of discontent, was what Margaret was unprepared for. She knew, and had rather revelled in the idea, that she should have to give up many luxuries, which had only been troubles and trammels to her freedom in Harley Street. Her keen enjoyment, of every sensuous pleasure, was balanced finely, if not overbalanced, by her conscious pride in being able to do without them all, if need were. But the cloud never comes in that quarter of the horizon for which we watch for it. There had been slight complaints and passing regrets on her mother's part, over some trifle connected with Helstone, and her father's position there, when Margaret had been spending her holidays at home before; but in the general happiness of the recollection of those times, she had forgotten the small details which were not so pleasant.

In the latter half of September, the autumnal rains and storms came on, and Margaret was obliged to remain more in the house than she had hitherto done. Helstone was at some distance from any neighbours of their own standard of cultivation.

"It is undoubtedly one of the most out-of-the-way places in England," said Mrs. Hale, in one of her plaintive moods. "I can't help regretting constantly that papa has really no one to associate with here; he is so thrown away; seeing no one but farmers and labourers from week's end to week's end. If we only lived at the other side of the parish it would be something; there we should be almost within walking distance of the Stansfields; certainly the Gormans would be within a walk."

"Gormans," said Margaret. "Are those the Gormans who made their fortunes in trade at Southampton? Oh! I am glad we don’t visit them. I don't like shopy people. I think we are far better off, knowing only cottagers and labourers, and people without pretence."

"You must not be so fastidious, Margaret, dear!" said her mother, secretly thinking of a young and handsome Mr. Gorman whom she had once met at Mr. Hume's.

"No! I call mine a very comprehensive taste; I like all people whose occupations have to do with land; I like soldiers and sailors, and the three learned professions, as they call them. I am sure you don't want me to admire butchers and bakers, and candlestick makers, do you, mamma?"

"But the Gormans were neither butchers nor bakers, but very respectable coach-builders."

"Very well. Coach-building is a trade all the same, and I think a much more useless one than that of butchers or bakers. Oh! how tired I used to be of the drives every day in Aunt Shaw's carriage, and how I longed to walk!"

And walk Margaret did, in spite of the weather. She was so happy out of doors, at
her father's side, that she almost danced; and with the soft violence of the west wind behind her, as she crossed some heath, she seemed to be borne onwards, as lightly and easily as the fallen leaf that was wafted along by the autumnal breeze. But the evenings were rather difficult to fill up agreeably. Immediately after tea her father withdrew into his small library, and she and her mother were left alone. Mrs. Hale had never cared much for books, and had discouraged her husband, very early in their married life, in his desire of reading aloud to her, while she worked. At one time they had tried backgammon as a resource; but as Mr. Hale grew to take an increasing interest in his school and his parishioners, he found that the interruptions which arose out of these duties were regarded as hardships by his wife, not to be accepted as the natural conditions of his profession, but to be regretted and struggled against by her as they severally arose. So he withdrew, while the children were yet young, into his library, to spend his evenings (if he were at home), in reading the speculative and metaphysical books which were his delight.

When Margaret had been here before, she had brought down with her a great box of books, recommended by masters or governess, and had found the summer's day all too short, to get through the reading she had to do before her return to town. Now there were only the well-bound little-read English Classics, which were weeded out of her father's library to fill up the small book-shelves in the drawing-room. Thomson's Seasons, Hayley's Cowper, Middleton's Cicero, were by far the lightest, newest, and most amusing. The book-shelves did not afford much resource. Margaret told her mother every particular of her London life, to all of which Mrs. Hale listened with interest, sometimes amused and questioning, at others a little inclined to compare her sister's circumstances of ease and comfort with the narrower means at Helstone vicarage. On such evenings Margaret was apt to stop talking rather abruptly, and listen to the drip-drip of the rain upon the leads of the little bow-window. Once or twice Margaret found herself mechanically counting the repetition of the monotonous sound, while she wondered if she might venture to put a question on a subject very near to her heart, and ask where Frederick was now; what he was doing; how long it was since they had heard from him. But a consciousness that her mother's delicate health, and positive dislike to Helstone, all dated from the time of the mutiny in which Frederick had been engaged,—the full account of which Margaret had never heard, and which now seemed doomed to be buried in sad oblivion,—made her pause and turn away from the subject each time she approached it. When she was with her mother, her father seemed the best person to apply to for information; and when with Mr. Hale, she thought that she could speak more easily to her mother. Probably there was nothing much to be heard that was new. In one of the letters she had received before leaving Harley Street, her father had told her that they had heard from Frederick; he was still at Rio, and very well in health, and sent his best love to her; which was dry bones, but not the living intelligence she longed for. Frederick was always spoken of, in the rare times when his name was mentioned, as "poor Frederick." His room was kept exactly as he had left it; and was regularly dusted and put into order by Dixon, Mrs. Hale's maid, who touched no other part of the household work, but always remembered the day when she had been engaged by Lady Beresford as lady's maid to Sir John's wards, the pretty Miss Beresfords, the belles of Rutlandshire. Dixon had always considered Mr. Hale as the blight which had fallen upon her young lady's prospects in life. If Miss Beresford had not been in such a hurry to marry a poor country clergyman, there was no knowing what she might not have become. But Dixon was too loyal to desert her in her affliction and down-
fal (alias her married life). She remained with her, and was devoted to her interests; always considering herself as the good and protecting fairy, whose duty it was to baffle the malignant giant Mr. Hale. Master Frederick had been her favourite and pride; and it was with a little softening of her dignified look and manner, that she went in weekly to arrange the chamber as carefully as if he might be coming home that very evening. Margaret could not help believing that

{Page 68 in the original}

there had been some late intelligence of Frederick, unknown to her mother, which was making her father anxious and uneasy. Mrs. Hale did not seem to perceive any alteration in her husband's looks or ways. His spirits were always tender and gentle, readily affected by any small piece of intelligence concerning the welfare of others. He would be depressed for many days after witnessing a death-bed, or hearing of any crime. But now Margaret noticed an absence of mind, as if his thoughts were pre-occupied by some subject, the oppression of which could not be relieved by any daily action, such as comforting the survivors, or teaching at the school in hope of lessening the evils in the generation to come. Mr. Hale did not go out among his parishioners as much as usual; he was more shut up in his study; was anxious for the village postman, whose summons to the household was a rap on the back-kitchen window shutter—a signal which at one time had often to be repeated before any one was sufficiently alive to the hour of the day to understand what it was, and attend to him. Now Mr. Hale loitered about the garden if the morning was fine and if not, stood dreamily by the study window until the postman had called, or gone down the lane, giving a half-respectful, half-confidential shake of the head to the parson, who watched him away beyond the sweet-briar hedge, and past the great arbutus before he turned into the room to begin his day's work, with all the signs of a heavy heart and an occupied mind.

But Margaret was at an age when any apprehension not absolutely based on a knowledge of facts is easily banished for a time by a bright sunny day, or some happy outward circumstance. And when the brilliant fourteen fine days of October came on, her cares were all blown away as lightly as thistle-down, and she thought of nothing but the glories of the forest. The fern-harvest was over; and now that the rain was gone, many a deep glade was accessible, into which Margaret had only peeped in July and August weather. She had learnt drawing with Edith; and she had sufficiently regretted, during the gloom of the bad weather, her idle revelling in the beauty of the woodlands while it had yet been fine, to make her determined to sketch what she could before winter fairly set in. Accordingly, she was busy preparing her board one morning, when Sarah, the housemaid, threw wide open the drawing-room door, and announced, "Mr. Henry Lennox."
Article: ‘North and South [ii]’ by Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell

Journal: Household Words, Volume X, Magazine No. 232, 2 September 1854, Pages: 61-68

Author(s):

- Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell

Gaskell, Elizabeth Cleghorn (Stevenson) I Mrs Gaskell I 1810-1865, novelist. Attended the Misses Byerley's school in Stratford-on-Avon. In 1832 married William Gaskell. Her first published writing, verse written in collaboration with her husband, appeared in Blackwood's, 1837. Thereafter contributed to Howitt's Journal, Sunday School Penny Magazine, both of Dickens's periodicals, Cornhill; occasionally to other periodicals. Published in book form Mary Barton, 1848; Ruth, 1853; and Sylvia's Lovers, 1863; published her other novels first as serials in periodicals; Wives and Daughters was appearing in Cornhill at time of her death. Author also of The Life of Charlotte Brontë, 1857.

Mrs. Gaskell sent Dickens a copy of Mary Barton soon after the book was published; she seems to have first met him in 1849. In that year she was among the guests at the David Copperfield celebration dinner. Later, Dickens at times visited the Gaskells when he was in Manchester. On occasion, in the early years of their acquaintance, Mrs. Gaskell asked him for information or assistance in helping people in whom she was interested - an unfortunate girl to be helped to emigrate to Australia, the Manchester prison philanthropist Thomas Wright to be championed in H.W. as worthy recipient of a Government pension. Otherwise, their association was entirely that of contributor and editor, and, in that relationship - until their dissension concerning the serialization of North and South [X, 61-68. Sept. 2,1854, and the 21 following nos., ending X, 561-70. Jan. 27,1855] - she held him in friendly regard. In a letter of 1852 (addressee unknown), she stated that she was not in the habit of writing for periodicals and wrote occasionally for H.W. only "as a personal mark of respect & regard to Mr Dickens" (Letters, No. 519, misdated 1862). Mrs. Gaskell, naturally, shared "the well-grounded feeling of dislike to the publicity" that Dickens gave to his domestic affairs in 1858. It had, she wrote, made him "extremely unpopular," and she did not wish to be announced as a contributor to his new periodical that was to appear in April of the following year (Letters, No. 418). Mrs. Gaskell was among the first writers whom Dickens asked to contribute to H.W. "... I do honestly know," he wrote to her, Jan. 31, 1850, "that there is no living English writer whose aid I would desire to enlist in preference to the authoress of Mary Barton (a book that most profoundly affected and impressed me). ..." If Mrs. Gaskell preferred to speak with him about the matter of contribution, he would be glad to call on her in Manchester to explain whatever she might wish to know. In response to the request, Mrs. Gaskell sent Dickens "Lizzie Leigh," [I, 2-6. March 30, 1850, and the 2 following nos.] the first chapter of which appeared in the opening number immediately following Dickens's "Preliminary Word." Thereafter, at Dickens's repeated urging, she sent him from time to time additional stories, as also articles, for some of which he had exceedingly high praise, and for their author pretty compliments. The "Cranford" stories ["Our Society at Cranford [lead]", IV, 265-74. Dec. 13, 1851; "A Love Affair
at Cranford", IV, 349-57. Jan. 3, 1852; "Memory at Cranford", IV, 588-97. March 13, 1852; "Visiting at Cranford", V, 55-64. April 3, 1852; "The Great Cranford Panic", VI, 390-96. Jan. 8, 1853, and the following no.; "Stopped Payment, at Cranford", VII, 108-15. April 2, 1853; "Friends in Need, at Cranford", VII, 220-27. May 7, 1853; "A Happy Return to Cranford", VII, 277-85. May 21, 1853] were delightful; "The Old Nurse's Story" [Christmas 1852, pp. 11-20] was "Nobly told, and wonderfully managed." Mrs. Gaskell was his "Schéherazade"; she could not write too much for H.W. and had "never yet written half enough"; anything that she might write would please Dickens; "it only needs be done by you to be well done" (Dec. 5 [4], Dec. 21, 1851; Nov. 6, 1852; Nov. 25, 1851; April 13, Sept. 19, 1853). When he felt it advisable to make more than slight changes in her stories he did so in consultation with her and did not insist on changes that she did not approve. (The letter in which Mrs. Gaskell objected to Dickens's alteration in "Our Society at Cranford" - his substituting mention of Hood and Hood's writings for her mention of Boz and Boz's writings - reached Dickens only after the number in which the story was to appear was already in print. He hoped that she would not blame him for what he had done "in perfect good faith." "I would do anything rather than cause you a minute's vexation arising out of what has given me so much pleasure ..." Dec. 5 [4], 1851).

On Aug. 19, 1854, H.W. announced the forthcoming publication in its pages of "NORTH AND SOUTH. By the AUTHOR OF MARY BARTON." The same authorship ascription appeared with the title of the novel in each instalment - this being the only instance, except for Hard Times, in which statement of authorship accompanied a title. North and South was unsuited to Dickens's serialization formula, and its publication disrupted the amicable relationship that had existed between author and editor. Points of dispute centred on the condensing of material, the quantity to be included in each H.W. number, and the fitting of chapters into weekly instalments. Divided as Mrs. Gaskell insisted, wrote Dickens, the novel was "wearisome in the last degree," and the resultant decrease in H.W. sales was not to be wondered at. The whole matter was "a dreary business" (to Wills, Oct. 14, 1854). His version of the vexatious author-editor relationship during the months of the novel's serialization Dickens gave in a letter to Wilkie Collins, March 24, 1855: "You have guessed right! The best of it was that she [Mrs. Gaskell] wrote to Wills, saying she must particularly stipulate not to have her proofs touched, 'even by Mr. Dickens.' That immortal creature had gone over the proofs with great pains - had of course taken out the stiffennings - hard-plungings, lungeings, and other convulsions - and had also taken out her weakenings and damagings of her own effects. 'Very well,' said the gifted Man, 'she shall have her own way. But after it's published show her this Proof, and ask her to consider whether her story would have been the better or the worse for it.'" Mrs. Gaskell admitted, to Anna Jameson, that toward the end of the novel she had infringed "all the bounds & limits they set me as to quantity," but that every page had been "grudged" her (Letters, No. 225). She was acutely distressed by the unsatisfactory state in which the novel had appeared. In bringing it out in book form, she explained that the serial publication had made impossible the development of the story as she had originally planned and that she had, toward the close, been compelled "to hurry on events with an improbable rapidity." To remedy these matters in some degree, she made various alterations and additions in the book publication. Despite the altercation, Mrs. Gaskell continued to contribute to H.W. (the instalment division of one of her stories - "Half a Life-Time Ago" [XII, 229-37. Oct. 6, 1855, and the 2 following nos.] - again caused contention). To A.Y.R. Mrs. Gaskell did not wish to
become a contributor. Concerning a story for which she hoped to find an American publisher, she wrote to C. E. Norton, March 9, 1859: "I know it is fated to go to this new Dickensy periodical, & I did so hope to escape it" (Letters, No. 418). Mrs. Gaskell did not comply with Dickens's request that she write a novel for A.Y.R., though she did contribute shorter items. After she became a contributor to Cornhill, she reserved for that periodical what she considered her best writing; Dickens got the second best. She made the distinction clear in a letter to George Smith: a story "not good enough" for Cornhill "might be good enough" for Dickens's periodical (Letters, No. 451a). Some of the material that Mrs. Gaskell contributed to H.W. she had used before in an essay and a story published in Sartain's Union Magazine. The social background of the country town described in "The Last Generation in England," and some of the incidents related in that essay, appeared in the "Cranford" stories; "Martha Preston," in revised and expanded form, became 'Half a Life-Time Ago' (see Hopkins, Elizabeth Gaskell, and Sharps, Mrs. Gaskell's Observation and Invention). Mrs. Gaskell obviously contributed the material to H.W. as previously unpublished, and Dickens so accepted it. Mrs. Gaskell was generously paid for most of her H.W. contributions, though for some she was paid at the standard rate. In a letter written after she had been almost three years a contributor, she stated that she did not know the rate at which she was paid (Letters, No. 519, misdated 1862). The overgenerous twenty pounds that she received for her first contribution, however, so startled her that she wondered whether she were "swindling" the proprietors (Letters, No. 70). Mrs. Gaskell was "extremely annoyed & hurt" by the way in which an incident related in her "Disappearances" [III, 246-50. June 7, 1851] was handled in Morley's "Character-Murder," Jan. 8, 1859. In her article Mrs. Gaskell had told of the disappearance of an apprentice, with unmistakable implication that "the poor lad" had been murdered - a suspicion that had been disproved more than fifteen years before. Morley, quoting part of her account, cited it as an instance of the public's unwillingness to let rumours and scandals die even "after all the truth had been most publicly and perfectly explained." He did not, of course, mention the author of "Disappearances"; but since Mrs. Gaskell had reprinted the article in Lizzie Leigh; and Other Tales, her authorship was not a secret. Mrs. Gaskell wrote to Wills, protesting that Morley's article made her "say by implication" more than she had actually said; Wills's reply gave her no satisfaction (Gaskell, Letters, No. 418). Before the appearance of "Character-Murder," two short H.W. items ("A Disappearance" and "A Disappearance Cleared Up") had printed letters from readers stating facts that disproved the murder-rumour (see author details for John and William Gaunt). The first of the items was appended to "Disappearances" in the Tauchnitz Edition of the Lizzie Leigh collection. In addition to contributing to H.W., Mrs. Gaskell at times sent to the editorial office writings of her friends and acquaintances. Not all were accepted for publication. Those that did appear in H.W. were the poem "The Outcast Lady," a story by Mme. De Meray, and two papers by Mrs. Jenkin. A commendatory reference to Mrs. Gaskell's novels appeared in the H.W. article "Doctor Dulcamara, M.P.," written by Wilkie Collins and to some extent revised by Dickens: to recover from the effect produced by reading The Heir of Redclyffe, stated the article, the writer had had recourse to the "restoratives" provided by better women novelists than Charlotte Yonge, among them Mrs. Gaskell. H.W. readers probably liked Gaskell's "Cranford" stories best of her contributions to the periodical; among the many admirers of the stories were Forster, Ruskin, Charlotte Brontë, Monckton Milnes, and Charles Eliot Norton. Landor stated that a story related in Gaskell's "Modern Greek Songs"
had provided him with "the rudiments of a story" on which he based his poem "A Modern Greek Idyl." Of the items listed below as not reprinted by Gaskell, "Cumberland Sheep-Shearers" [VI, 445-51. Jan. 22, 1853] is established as her writing by Forster's letter to her, Jan. 20, 1853 (typescript in Brotherton Collection, University of Leeds Library); "Modern Greek Songs" [IX, 25-32. Feb. 25, 1854] is so established by a letter from Dickens to her, Feb. 18, 1854. Mrs. Gaskell's being a guest, in the spring of 1852, at Lord Hatherton's seat, Teddesley Park, where John Burton was head gardener from 1851 to 1853 (Sharps, Mrs. Gaskell’s Observation and Invention, p. 145n), authenticates her authorship of "The Schah's English Gardener" [V, 317-21. June 19, 1852]. Bibliographers and biographers have attributed to Gaskell three verse items published in H.W.: "Bran," "The Scholar's Story," and "A Christmas Carol." The first two are by William Gaskell, with the brief prose introduction to "The Scholar's Story" being written, according to J. A. Green, by Mrs. Gaskell. The authorship of the third has not been ascertained. Its attribution to Mrs. Gaskell rests on a misunderstanding of the Office Book system of recording. Harper's reprinted seven of Gaskell's H.W. contributions (one, only in part), two of them acknowledged to H.W.; of the two, one was "Lizzie Leigh," listed in the table of contents as "By Charles Dickens." The New York publishers De Witt & Davenport brought out a pirated edition, 1850, of "Lizzie Leigh" as "By Charles Dickens." They included "Lizzie Leigh" in a collection (n.d.) of three stories "By Charles Dickens" (the first item in the collection was one of Georgiana Craik's H.W. stories; the third, one of Howitt's). "Lizzie Leigh" "By Charles Dickens" appeared as the first of the "spirit-stirring sketches of imagined or of real life" that constituted the Irving Offering, 1851, the picture that served as frontispiece bearing the legend "Lizzie Leigh." "Lizzie Leigh" was included in Choice Stories from Dickens' Household Words, pub. Auburn, N.Y., 1854. "Disappearances" was included in the Putnam volume of selections from H.W.: Home and Social Philosophy, 2nd ser. D.N.B.

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

© Anne Lohrli/University of Toronto Press, 1973

Genre(s):
- Prose: Serial Fiction
  Fictional narrative 'published in successive instalments' (OED) of a periodical, i.e. involving publication in anything more than a single instalment.

Subject(s):
- Country Life; Rural Conditions; Rural Conditions in Literature; Rural Development
- Family Life; Families; Domestic Relations; Sibling Relations; Kinship; Home;
- Marriage; Courtship; Love; Sex
- Religion; Religion and Culture
- Religion—Buddhism
- Religion—Christianity—Church of England
Religion—Christianity—Protestantism; Dissenters, Religious

Social classes; Class distinctions; Aristocracy (Social Class); Aristocracy (Social Class)—Fiction; Middle Class; Working Class; Servants;

Citation (MHRA): Gaskell, Elizabeth Cleghorn, ‘North and South [i]’, Household Words, X, 2 September 1854, 61-68

N.B. The layout of prose articles exported to PDF follows the two-column format of the original, but does NOT preserve the original line breaks. The layout of poems exported to PDF follows the original line breaks, but does NOT attempt to replicate the original indentation or stanza structure. For all these features please refer to the facsimile pages on DJO.