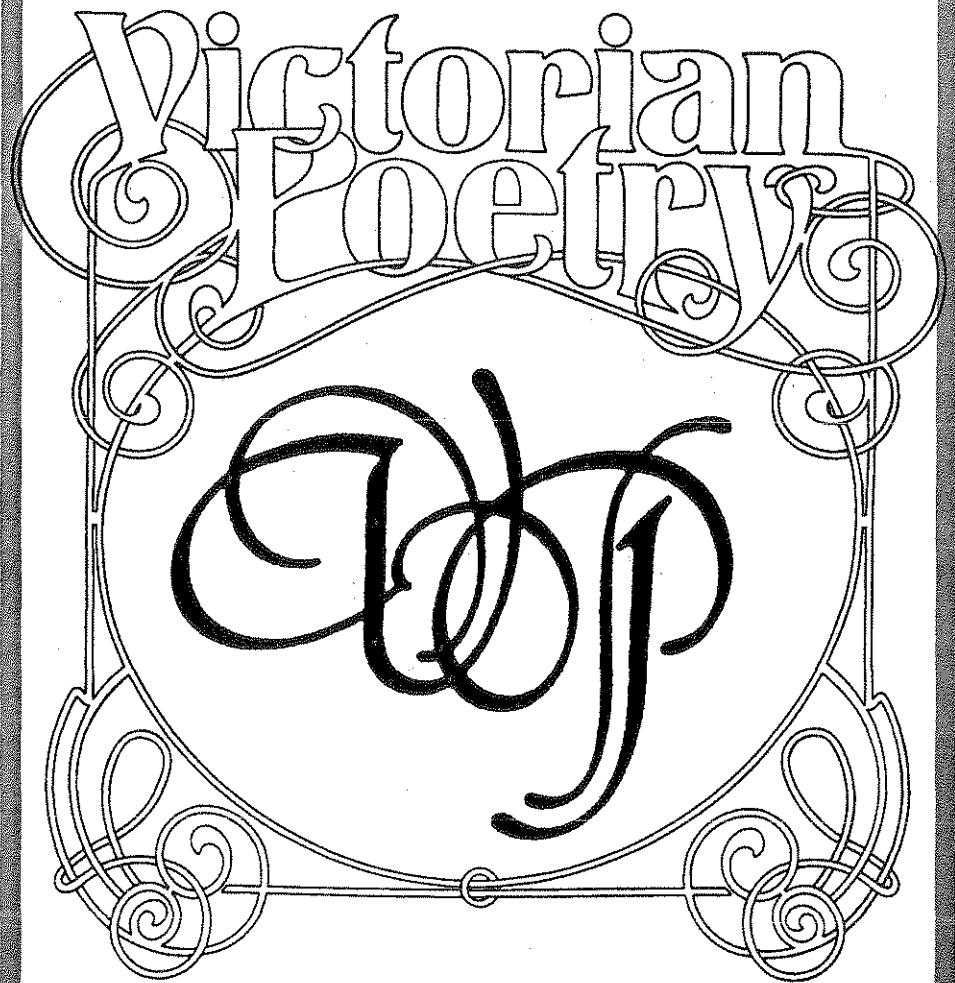


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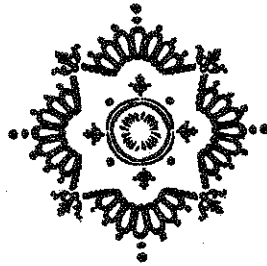


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The "Homely Muse" in Her Diurnal Setting: The Periodical Poems of "Marie," Janet Hamilton, and Fanny Forrester

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CRITICAL ATTENTION TO WORKING-CLASS POETRY AS A GENRE HAS SUFFERED for many years from a tendency to ignore these works' original publication-history.¹ It is easy to comment once again on the stereotypical qualities of a few readily accessible volumes of verse, but difficult to canvass thousands of unindexed pages of long-expired and barely extant periodicals, in search of working-class poets' original audiences, contexts, and modes of expression.²

Most working-class poets sent their work to local newspapers or journals, and many saw their poems "in print" in penny-newspapers and journals. Few seriously hoped to see them in hard covers, despite the support of a few sympathetic editors of working-class periodicals, but the sheer volume and variety of work they did publish belied facile views of these editors as instruments of Foucauldian repression. Several working-class periodical poets developed distinctive voices and identities that were cherished by their peers, and articulated ideals and grievances that were "personal" as well as "political" in the deepest senses of the words.

Such successes were especially ephemeral and precarious for women, whose poems sometimes gave meanings Patrick Joyce may not have intended to his remark that working-class poetry "was not about work, but about the getting of dignity through the realisation of a common humanity" (p. 28). Most editors of reformist journals could be expected to see merit in cases for hard cover publication of "working-men's poetry,"³ but most provided fewer and less detailed descriptions of women contributors, and conscious and unconscious sexism tacitly biased the reception and publication of poor women's work. Coincidentally, more working-class women than men also signed their poems in generic or truncated forms ("Marie," "Adeline," "Racla," or "A Ploughman's Wife").

Some editors, finally, did hold fixed and arbitrary views about the

length and complexity of publishable periodical poetry (as opposed to essays and fiction), and these views seemed to proliferate and harden as the century waned. A model instance of the earlier alliance between poetry and political ideals might be found in Alexander Campbell's active editorial support in the 1860s for Ellen Johnston's efforts to develop her poetic persona as "The Factory Girl," which Judith Rosen has reexamined in this collection.⁴ An elderly radical, Campbell encouraged Johnston's submissions, sought responses to them from her fellow-poets, and organized subscription campaigns which paid for the two editions of her *Autobiography, Songs, and Poems* at the end of her brief poetic career.⁵

Fewer and fewer editors were able or willing to make such gestures in the decades that followed, however, and the temporal undertow was so strong and steady that it suggested poetry itself—time-honored bearer of political ideals in the work of Burns, Shelley, Robert Tannahill, Ebenezer Elliot, and others—might have begun to move away from its populist origins by the end of the century, even as social attitudes and universal elementary education broadened literary magazines' evolving mass-circulation, and impoverished writers began to turn their attention and hopes for publication to essays and serial fiction.

In the present essay, I will sketch the life-trajectories and publication histories of three other working-class women poets:

(1) "Marie," whose work appeared in the London *People's Journal* from 1846 to 1850;

(2) Janet Hamilton, a Scottish poet whose essays appeared in Cassell's *The Working-Man's Friend* and its supplements from 1850-1853; and

(3) Fanny Forrester, who published sixty-odd poems in *Ben Brierley's Journal* between 1870 and 1876. Along the way, I will also try to elicit some conclusions about the ranges of support working-class women could hope to find in the darkling plain of Victorian poetry.

Marie

The *People's Journal* described "Marie" in 1846 as a factory dye-worker from Chorley, and she published over this abbreviated signature thirty-five poems and an essay between 1846 and 1852. Her ardent verses represented an ideal of poetry as *rhapsode*, an instrument to sustain visionary hopes and aspirations in the face of deprivation and impending death, and offer concomitant models of resignation, hopefulness, and self-respect as tokens of sustenance to her fellow workers.

The (London) *People's Journal*—later merged with *Howitt's Journal* to become the *People's and Howitt's Journal*—survived in eight numbers from 1846 to 1851. Under the editorship of John Saunders and William

and Mary Howitt, the *People's Journal* supported abolition, pacifism, communal economic arrangements, and efforts at working-class educational and political advancement, and packaged a blend of literature, political theory, and practical politics in travel essays, translations, and background articles on literary figures and political activists. Contributors included W. J. Fox, Ebenezer Elliot, Charlotte Yonge, and Harriet Martineau, and lesser-known authors such as (Miss) H. M. Rathbone, Mary Leman Gillies, and the Howitts themselves.⁶ It remains a surprisingly good read, even after a hundred and fifty years, and it was "Marie"'s first and best patron.

An epigraph-quotation from William Channing on the first title-page of the *People's Journal* in 1846 proclaimed the "grand doctrine that every human being should have the means of self-culture," and its opening editorial promised that the journal would "be open to Employers and Employed, and written in a spirit of calmness and perfect impartiality towards both" (p. 2) and that it would "open freely its pages to those who, in the spirit of Thomas Carlyle, will seek to aid in the solution of the mightiest of all problems—How shall we Emancipate Labour?" (p. 1). The editor(s) also expressed a desire in a later editorial "to give the People a Periodical Literature worthy of them," and proclaimed with brave confidence "that the *People's Journal* is commercially established,—its safety is permanently secured" (*PJ* 2 [1847]: 4). In her *Autobiography* (1889), Mary Howitt later recalled these hopes in slightly patronizing but transparently well-intended terms:

In 1846 my husband, at first merely a contributor, became one of the editors and part-proprietor of a new cheap weekly periodical, *The People's Journal*, which we hoped to make a good work, that would help to better the moral and intellectual condition of the working-classes. . . . Assisted by Samuel Smiles, a most able defender of the rights of industry and the benefits of self-culture . . . we sought in the pages of *Howitt's Journal*, in an attractive form, to urge the labouring classes, by means of temperance, self-education, and moral conduct, to be their own benefactors.⁷

The *People's Journal* actually identified itself more forthrightly and vigorously with the "cause of labour" than these detached remarks in old age might suggest. Several of its most passionate critics of the hardships of poverty—Isabella Varley, Camilla Toulmin, and Miss H. M. Rathbone—seem to have been middle-class,⁸ but the editors also graced its issues with W. J. Linton's eloquent engravings,⁹ and its editors actively and enthusiastically reviewed books of working-class authors, and published original work by (mostly male) "poets of the people," such as John Lawton Owen, Henry Frank Lott, Charles Mackay, John Critchley Prince, Ebenezer Elliot, and George Gilfillan.¹⁰

Must join the phalanx ere too late—
 Must weave the golden thread of Fate,
 Or Death will ope his iron gate,
 Ere half my work is through." ("It Is Not for Long," 1849)

Other alternations of introspection with conventional consolation appeared in "Autumn Evening," her only prose-essay for the combined *People's and Howitt's Journal* (1849). In this semi-autobiographical sketch, an old farmer sought to soothe a young woman's naive complaints:

The old man's eyes bent again gently on us, as he replied,—
 "You're may be fresh in some trouble, just now, but we'll hope you'll over-
 live it yet; you must not be too much cast down, but lay your account with
 difficulties and sorrows. . . . Always in your life," and he spoke softly and slowly,
 "(and I hope it may be a long and pleasant one) do as far as you can what you
 know to be right. . . ."

We . . . rose too; and bidding our old friend good-bye, took a short way home.
 Night falls dimly over the fields and woods; "our good town" is in the distance,
obscure—so is our future. (p. 177; emphasis mine)

Marie often modulated the religiously tinged meliorism of the passage with concrete images and details, and the last line of this passage vibrated with a slight undertone of resignation and repressed despair.

Her last poems for the *People's Journal* ("Labour" and the introspective "Beauteous Night" and "The Evening Groweth Grey") appeared shortly before it went under in 1851, and the *People's Journal* provided no more significant information about this peripheral "dye-worker from Chorley" and semi-anonymous "poet of the people." She did continue to submit poems to other journals for another year or two, and published nine poems in all in Eliza Cook's *Journal*, signing the first of these "Marie, Factory Inspector." Eliza Cook was herself a poet, not a didactic reformer, and some of Marie's choices for submission to Cook's short-lived *Journal* (1849 to 1854¹²) were slightly more satiric. In "Posted Books," for example, she gently critiqued "men of merchandise," who

Each, in his brain, doth quick compute
 His gain by box or bale,
 And rubs his hands in proud delight,—
 Applauds each plan invented,—
 Makes up his ledger for the night,
 And posts his Books, contented.

By contrast, "I count up . . . my merchandize [of nature, imagination, and friends] /And close my Posted Books."

In the narrative poem "The Little Herb Gatherer," one of a "sentimental" genre of verse-reflections on the transmission of values in storytelling from old to young, a child responded to the biblical stories of her indigent grandmother:

Somehow, in the church, on Sundays, when the parson reads that book,
 I can never *feel* the story coming from his meaning look

But when *you*, dear mother! read it, every word like music falls,
 And I see the varying story painted on the grey house walls!

It is easy now to smile at such expressions of gratitude, and forget that mothers and "grannies" were the principal bearers of literacy for small girls with little access to formal education, in a period when grandmothers taught granddaughters to read the bible.

Marie's last poem for *Eliza Cook's Journal* in 1852 was "Influences":

Like that lone brook my Being is,—
 It softly calls to Thee;
 Ah! would thy distant wandering feet
 Turned hitherward to me.
 I have no *special* word to speak,
 But all my soul *would* say,
 Instinctively, from me to thee,
 Would find its subtle way.
 A gentle thrall should hedge thee round,
 And hold thy every sense;
 And as a dream of pleasant things
 Would wander with thee hence.

The distinctly "rhapsodic" "Tree of Liberty" appeared in the same year in John Cassell's *The Working Man's Friend* (new series, vol. 2):

Dark slavish Fear hath held the world
 In close and dismal bondage long,
 Till germs of goodness have grown weak,
 And weeds of wickedness waxed strong.
 Oh, raise up high the great flood-gates,
 The golden gates of radiant Love

 Thus, thus, with earnest hope would we
 Uptrain our Tree of Liberty!

I do not know what happened to Marie, but it is possible that her Schillerian "earnest hope" had a more immediate focus in mind, for she

had already conjured forth personifications of death in several earlier poems.

In any event, Marie's five-year *floruit* clearly reflected her vulnerability and dependence on the few reformist journals that accepted her work. At a deeper intentional level, however, it also vibrated with a more autonomous ideal of authorial integrity she had expressed in one of her earlier poems—"Poet! Why Sing?" (*People's and Howitt's Journal* 7 [1849]):

Heaven hath shed across my skies
Glorious Poesy's rich dies;

.....
And its notes may float abroad,
Skimming o'er life's dusty road,
And amid the toilsome throng,
Find some echo to the song.

Or if not—'tis nought to me,
Weaving thus God's melody,
On my soul descendeth rest,
One life is supremely bless'd!

Janet Hamilton

In her old age, Janet Hamilton (1795-1873) may have become for a time Victorian Scotland's most widely read working-class poet. A home-based tambourer (embroidress), she never attended school, composed oral poetry in her teens, gave birth to ten children, and learned to write in her fifties, but she managed nevertheless to publish four volumes in her lifetime: *Poems and Essays of a Miscellaneous Character* (1863); *Poems of Purpose and Sketches in Prose of Scottish Peasant Life and Character in Auld Langsyne* (1865), and *Poems, Essays and Sketches* (1870).¹³ Two more printings of a "Memorial Edition" of her *Poems, Sketches, and Essays* also appeared after her death.

Hamilton's satiric poems in her beloved Scots Doric were brilliant *tours de force*, her "ballads of memorie" modeled the uses of poetic narrative for "people's history," and her political poems and blunt "defenses" of the Doric denounced linguistic conformity and cultural destruction. Her ballad-descriptions of everyday life in Coatbridge, for example, mordantly documented the brutal effects of the mass immiseration and industrial blight that transformed a small rural village into a polluted and smoke-shrouded sinkhole in two generations' time. I have written elsewhere about these satiric works, and will focus here on the antecedents of the

remarkable circulation she enjoyed in her last years, a unique phenomenon among working-class women of her time.¹⁴

How popular? More than four hundred mourners assembled at her funeral in 1873, many of them people who had walked long distances from neighboring towns, and a public subscription paid for a gravestone and publication of memorial speeches for those unable to attend. The Rev. P. Cameron Black (minister of her parish church),¹⁵ George Gilfillan (a well-known Scottish editor and critic),¹⁶ and Alexander Wallace (a prominent temperance campaigner),¹⁷ wrote memorial appreciations of her life and work, and two other friends eventually published books of reminiscences.¹⁸ A subsequent two-year campaign also raised one hundred and seventy pounds for a small memorial fountain in Coatbridge, and a thirty-one-page penny pamphlet estimated that 20,000 persons gathered to hear Professor A. N. Veitch read and comment on her poetry when it was unveiled.¹⁹

All of this lay in Hamilton's "obscure . . . future" when she began in her mid fifties to submit prose essays for local publication. Her ardent commitment to temperance and relatively unsectarian Christianity no doubt helped her publish essays, and some of the poetry she had mentally composed for many years, in periodicals such as the *Christian News*, *United Presbyterian Magazine*, and *League Record*. But quotations from forty-six laudatory reviews of her work later appeared in the Memorial Edition, from a wide range of Scottish, English, and foreign journals,²⁰ and this posed the question once again: how did a poor and initially unconnected woman from the industrial region of Coatbridge reach such an audience? What brought her to the attention of the "great" and the good?

In her brief prefatory memoir to *Poems and Essays* (1863), Hamilton remarked that the first essays she published after she taught herself to write appeared in John Cassell's *Working-Man's Friend*, published in London. In "Social Science Essay on Self-Education" (1863), a revision of one of her early essays, she explicitly expressed her deep gratitude for "Cassell's Popular Educator," and the many . . . works put forth by that patriotic and liberal publisher, to the use and improvement of the working-classes" (p. 370).²¹

John Cassell (1817-1865) was a largely self-educated son of the "working-classes,"²² and he was personally committed to the extension of literacy, education for the masses, freehold land-movements, and other causes (including temperance) that he hoped would subserve larger aims of working-class political advancement. He also had a genuine flare for bold schemes and attention-getting publicity, and launched a series of periodicals, almanacs, and books after he moved from Manchester to London in the 1840s. There he became the first nineteenth-century publisher to

distribute a wide variety of informative and inexpensive national periodicals such as the *Popular Educator* (1850-1887) and the *New Popular Educator* (1887-1892).²³

When he launched the penny-weekly *Working Man's Friend and Family Instructor* in January 1850, Cassell filled it with articles on history, biography, literature, science, temperance, travel, politics, economics, the abolition of slavery, and "The Laws relating to Masters and Workmen." *The Working Man's Friend* appeared in thirty-two-page numbers from 1850 to 1851, continued in a new series with a modestly illustrated format from 1852 to 1853, and survived for two more years as *The Popular Educator*.

Cassell, moreover, was a more than usually fervent and consequential reformist, and he had clear views about the primacy of labor, the values of worker-autonomy, and the flaws of "culture" imposed from above, which he formulated in the new journal's opening editorial: "Lords and ladies do not feed the hungry, or clothe the naked; they may, and often have, distributed of their abundance to the needy, but then the hands that supplied them with alms were those of the labourer. . . . You must therefore demand the Suffrage; and to get it must join in the Freehold Land Movement. By giving up strong drink, thousands of you can be freeholders; and remember that a healthy House of Commons can sweep every vestige of injustice and tyranny from the realm" (*Working Man's Friend* 1, no. 1 [1850]: 1, 3).

Cassell's levelling sentiments were not unique, of course, but he had an ability to articulate astringent critiques of what academics would now call "hegemonic discourse." He urged working people to study critically history and biography, for example, "because in them you see yourselves" (p. 3), and contrasted this view with more conventional alternatives in "A Word About Books," his editorial for May 1850:

History, in its great moral lessons, and especially history for working men and women, has yet to be written. Our historians have, in too many instances, been Whigs, Tories, Aristocrats, Absolutists . . . and despisers of the operatives and labourers, and their creed has polluted their pages" (p. 131).

In response to this "pollution," he also urged his readers to practice more vigilant emancipatory skepticism, and become—in effect—what Kant had called "autonomous . . . reasonable beings":

Many [books] are . . . poisoned with the creeds of the writers. We would advise our readers to peruse all with caution. . . . Become philosophers in history; comment for yourselves, and draw your own inferences. (p. 132)

In *The Working Man's Friend's* second number, Cassell also announced in 1850 a competition which would reward writers of the best essays with

a book of their choice. When his call elicited two hundred submissions, he announced a new monthly supplement of the *Working Man's Friend* devoted to essays by working-class readers, and this brought in six hundred more submissions. One hundred and fifty of the latter eventually found their way into his supplements, six of these by Janet Hamilton, and Cassell himself upgraded a seventh to the *Working Man's Friend*.²⁴ She was one of two women among the volumes' many contributors, but she placed more essays in them than any other.

Most of Hamilton's earliest essays therefore appeared in these special supplements of the *Working-Man's Friend* in 1850 and 1851, collectively entitled *The Literature of Working Men*. In 1894 Cassell's only nineteenth-century biographer, G. H. Pike, remarked of him that "in after-years it was his lot to publish many very successful books, but perhaps he was never so proud of any other as he was of this" (p. 78).

Cassell assigned the preparation of these supplements to two editors, Benjamin Parsons (vol. 1) and James Ewing Ritchie (vol. 2). Parsons (1797-1855), a radical dissenting minister, founder of a parish school and advocate of pacifism, temperance, and popular education, was also a vigorous feminist (rare in the 1840s), and had already published the *Mental and Moral Dignity of Woman* (1842), an unjustly neglected vindication of equal education for women at all levels.²⁵ J. E. Ritchie (1820-1898) was an advocate of temperance and freehold land societies and the author of an anti-slavery pamphlet,²⁶ who later drafted treatises on *The Public-House Trade As It Is* (1855) and *Freehold Land Societies: Their History, Present Position and Claims* (1853). He also published an autobiographical novel, *Crying for the Light: or Fifty Years Ago* (1895), and a wide variety of biographies, memoirs, travel narratives, and recollections of London life under the pen-name Christopher Crayon.²⁷

In his introduction to the first volume of *The Literature of Working Men*, Benjamin Parsons expressed satisfaction that "the volume . . . we now commend to the careful perusal of our readers is an intellectual and moral prodigy, and will do much to wipe away the reproach which for a long time has been cast on our operative classes." In keeping with his feminism, he also gave special notice to Janet Hamilton: "Only think that the spouse of a working man [Hamilton herself, as I mentioned earlier, was a working-woman who had also raised ten children] . . . should write a discourse on 'The Uses and Pleasures of Poetry to the Working Classes,' and that the ease and elegance, and sentiments and composition would be such as would do no dishonour to Mrs. Ellis or the Hon. Mrs. Norton."²⁸ In his introduction to the second volume, which included several of Hamilton's essays, Ritchie expressed more generic appreciations of "the rise and growth and ultimate triumph of popular power," but he

also declared the hope that readers who understood the circumstances of its composition would "consider this volume of working men's literature as the most remarkable feature of the age."

Hamilton's essays appeared under the byline "Janet Hamilton, A Shoemaker's Wife, Langloane, Lanarkshire, N. B." Cassell himself may have had Hamilton in mind when he responded rather wryly and laconically in the supplement's first number to a hopeful letter from "A Working Man's Working Daughter": "When we announced our intention of devoting a Monthly Supplement to the publication of articles by members of the operative class, we did not expect to receive any communications from working women. We shall not, however, object to insert occasional articles from female pens." He kept his carefully hedged promise in Hamilton's case, and printed "The Mother's Mission," her first contribution on a safe and obviously "suitable" topic, in the supplement's second number for April 1850.

Cassell may also have been a bit impressed by Hamilton's passionate advocacy of early working-class education, for she strongly believed that the "mother's" principal "mission" was to foster intellectual as well as moral growth in her children, and developed this argument in some detail in "The Mental Training of Children" (March 1851). She also interwove passages of verse in "The Uses and Pleasures of Poetry to the Working Classes" (December 1850) to illustrate the effect of imaginative reading, and added that

it is truly consoling for working men and women to know, ay, and feel, that on them, amidst all the toils, privations, and hardships incidental to their position in life, the gifts of God, of Nature, and of the Muses are as impartially and profusely bestowed as on that portion of the community whose highest distinctions are too often found to consist only in the accidents of birth and fortune.

There is some textual evidence that one of Hamilton's sons had been a physically abusive alcoholic, and she shared her editors' ardent hopes for the cause of temperance, which she expressed in "Our National Curse" (August 1850). Even here, however, she enjoined her fellow workers to join in the cause to seek the "glorious inheritance . . . bequeathed to you, . . . all the accumulated mental wealth of both ancient and modern times. . . . Accept the precious boon; use it wisely and well; and so the attainment of all your just rights will inevitably follow,—for 'Knowledge is Power.'"

Explicitly feminist arguments appeared for the first time in "To the Working Women of Britain" (January 1851), in which she called for universal education, and sharply rebuked "reformers" who had tolerated illiteracy among women, and excluded them as a matter of course from popu-

lar movements for "working-men's" rights:

Working men, . . . if you are really in earnest in your endeavours to advance your order, . . . then be assured . . . that you must feel the necessity, ay, and act promptly upon it, of including the females of your class, and more particularly the young—the future mothers of future men—in every movement for furthering the intellectual advancement of your order. If you fail in this, there will be just cause to fear that the 'time coming' will not be productive of such an amount of real and permanent 'good' as you at present anticipate.

These sentiments did not seem bland or concessive in 1851, and they made a pointed and distinctive contribution to the essays of the *Working-Man's Friend*.

In the last of her seven essays, "Sketches of a Scottish Roadside Village Fifty Years Since" (July 1851), Janet Hamilton began to intone an antiphon that became a recurrent motif of some of her best later poems, and one I will return to briefly below: "To hold at times sweet (some will say uncouth) converse with dear old Mother Scotland, before her native Doric, her simple manners and habits, are swept away by the encroaching tides of change and centralisation" (p. 5).

Cassell also published in the journal itself two of the "early" poems Hamilton had begun to write down—"The Wayside Well" and "Summer Voices," both of which reappeared in the *Quiver* for 1863—and she prefaced "The Wayside Well" with a direct tribute in prose to John Cassell:

I have endeavoured to express my feelings of gratitude and respect for the unspeakable boon you have bestowed on the working classes by the weekly and monthly publication of works unrivalled for their worth, utility, and cheapness. I have done this in a rambling parody of Mr. Dickens' beautiful little poem of the "Wayside Well," the ideas contained in which I could not help apply to you, as one who has opened a "wayside well" indeed, in the pages of the *Working Man's Friend*. (WMF 4, p. 28)

The second poem actually appeared in the illustrated new series of the *Working Man's Friend* in 1853, along with other poems by other working-class writers such as "Marie" and John Critchley Prince, and established middle-class authors such as Martin Tupper and H. W. Longfellow.

In 1854, financial reverses constrained Cassell to close down several of his early publications, the *Working-Man's Friend* among them, but he remained a salaried editor in the firm he had once owned, and continued to sponsor prizes and competitions for working-class writers, a practice later emulated in newspapers such as the Dundee and Forfar *People's Journal* and the *People's Friend*.

In one of his competitions (in 1859), for example, Cassell offered

five pounds to ten writers of "social science essays," and smaller amounts to second- and third-place entries (Eliza Stark, for example, the wife of a shipsmith in Liverpool, earned two pounds ten shillings). When he and his collaborators published the winning essays of this competition in *Social Science: Being Selections from John Cassell's Prize Essays, by Working Men and Women in 1861*, its editor reported that one hundred and thirty-six essays had come in for the category "self-education" (out of five hundred-odd in all), and that

Mr. Cassell [had become] convinced that while, on the one hand, Social Reformers among the educated classes could suggest improvements, legislative or otherwise, according to their views of the subject, it was most important, on the other, to elicit from the operative class their opinion as to how far they could work out for themselves the question understood by the designation Social Science.

Nine years after Cassell's first competition, five of the twenty-three prize winners in this one were women, and four were Scots.²⁹ Janet Hamilton's essay on "self-education" won her a two-pound third prize in this category, after those of William Glazier, a London carpenter, and H. C. Edwards, a Birmingham gun-engraver. The volume's editor actually printed only a brief extract from Hamilton's essay (which later appeared as "Social Science Essay on Self-Education" in *Poems, Essays and Sketches* [1870]), but devoted five pages to his own impassioned appeal for women's education. Hamilton's "Letter to Working Women" and two earlier essays on women's education had clearly provided an initial feminist leaven to *The Literature of Working Men*,³⁰ and influenced Cassell's growing sympathy for a movement that was slowly gathering momentum in 1859.

John Cassell himself never regained his financial independence before his death in 1865, and Hamilton eulogized him in her 1868 *Poems and Ballads* as:

A leader in the van of knowledge still,
He won his laurels on the field of mind,
In combat keen with ignorance and ill—
The trophies of his power remain behind!

("On the Death of John Cassell, The True and Esteemed Friend
of the Working Man")

The prosody was florid, but the praise was genuine. Despite the usual traces of middle-class *noblesse oblige*, Cassell's active engagement with and eagerness to print the works of working class writers—rather than literature for them and animadversions about them—gradually widened the scope of his own views, and catalyzed the early stages of Janet Hamilton's writing

career at fifty-five (already a remarkable phenomenon in itself). This in turn helped her secure an initial base for later efforts to publish the volumes of Doric recollections and "ballads of memorie" that were closest to her sensibilities and dearest to her heart.

Fanny Forrester

Fanny Forrester (1852-1889) was a Lancashire dye-worker who published about sixty poems in *Ben Brierley's Journal* from 1870 to 1876, and eleven more in the *Quiver* (one of Cassell's journals) from 1874 to 1885. Complex romantic conflicts framed several of her poems, in which people at the margins of "polite" society (orphans, immigrants, handicapped people, and "fallen" women, for example)—confronted the straitened circumstances of their lives. Some of her more intriguing dramatic monologues probed complex intertwined attachments of victim and victimizer, traced out ambivalent fluctuations of attraction and remorse, and rendered bitter accounts of love and deception across social and sexual divides.

Ben Brierley (1825-1885), her initial editor at his own eponymous *Journal*, had been a Mancunian textile-factory worker before he became a journalist, poet, writer of stories in Lancaster dialect, and editor of *Ben Brierley's Journal* (1869-1891),³¹ which claimed a circulation of 13,000 in the 1870s. He actively used the *Journal* to circulate his own writings, publicize the works of other Lancastrian dialect writers, and develop his own idiosyncratic blend of humor, social commentary, and genial regional chauvinism. Fanny Forrester and John Lawton Owen effectively became the *Journal's* "house"-poets in the early to mid-70s,³² and the melancholy social protest of Forrester's poems briefly served Brierley's principal aim—to provide class-based political news and entertainment for working-class Mancunian readers—before she vanished abruptly from the paper's pages in 1876.

In the *Journal's* issue for January 23, 1875, Brierley published a brief and vague sketch of Forrester's life in a full-page feature-article with an accompanying print:

From the slight materials which have been furnished us respecting the past life of this gifted girl—for girl she is only [Forrester was 22]—we do not gather that her career has been either an eventful or a happy one. Born in Manchester of poor parents, and parents whom misfortune seems to have marked for its own, the cradle of her muse has been in the nursery of toil and vicissitude, as may have been gathered by an observer who has noted the sombre tints in which most of her pictures of life are painted, and the deep sympathy with suffering humanity that breathes through every note of her music. (p. 37)³³

Brierley did not mention in this article that Forrester's mother Ellen Forrester, an Irish immigrant and seamstress who raised five children after the death of her alcoholic husband, was also a poet. Ellen Forrester had published poems in English as well as Irish newspapers, and even managed—more strikingly—to publish a volume of her own verse (*Simple Strains*, 1863), as well as *Songs of the Rising Nation* (Glasgow and London, 1869),³⁴ a book co-authored with her son Arthur (1850-1895),³⁵ a Fenian activist who served time in prison and later emigrated to the United States.

In an 1872 application to the Royal Literary Fund, Ellen Forrester had described herself as an indigent "cripple," "sunk step by step into deep poverty," and supported now by the factory labor of her two daughters, "one [Fanny] in delicate health and one little more than a child." She also concluded this (unsuccessful) application with a burst of motherly pride in her older daughter, who "tho' only nineteen years of age has written more than I have—and better too."³⁶

After Ellen Forrester died in 1883, Fanny also wrote heartfelt poetic tributes to her mother,³⁷ and recalled her in a prose memoir³⁸ "singing and sewing (for very small pay indeed, generally) so that if we were stinted in the world's goods we had always an abundance of poetry . . . for she lived not for herself but for others" (*Irish Graves*, pp. 142, 144). Fanny's uncle and sister Mary Magdalene were also poets, and I know of no other instance of two men and three active versifying women in a single working-class Irish family.³⁹

A few months before Brierley published his 1875 article, quoted above, a reader had pointed out that Fanny Forrester had already published poems in *The Rising Nation* and Irish and American newspapers, and Brierley responded a bit defensively that "Fanny Forrester was unknown to the English public before her name appeared in this Journal" (July 11, 1874). A tactful letter from Fanny in the next issue acknowledged this, and thanked Brierley for his patronage:

Whatever little name I may have made, here or elsewhere, has been through the medium of your paper. Until I wrote for your journal I had written nothing except a few short poems. . . . I am prouder of my place in your paper than ever I shall be of any place I may hereafter hold. (July 18, 1874)

Brierley's sense of editorial proprietorship in this exchange was obvious, as was Forrester's evident need for his help. At a different level, the exchange also documented the serious regard in which the readers, authors, and editor of *Ben Brierley's Journal* seemed to hold contemporary periodical poetry in 1874.

I have already suggested that Forrester's projections of fragile or fragmentary identities conveyed the life-situations and consciousness of the

underclass to which she belonged. Forrester's characters struggled with the self-reproach and lonely aspirations of the rejected and displaced, and some of them seemed to be in shock, able only to express the rawest and most rudimentary emotions and hopes. A sense of self—however pained, rejected, or deformed—was a heroic achievement for Forrester's most marginal figures, and their literary identities dramatized the cumulative emotional and intellectual toll of many deprivations.⁴⁰ In "Little Singers" (December 1875), for example:

Nigh fainting on the reeking flags
Two wretched city singers
Wrung out their scant and dripping rags
With blue and trembling fingers;
Then sat them down to rest awhile,
For Oh, they were so weary!
And they had journeyed many a mile,
And life was, Oh, so dreary!

Some aspects of Forrester's poetic portraits of "fallen women" were standard enough, as the published works of Augusta Webster, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Christina Rossetti, Alice Meynell and others made clear. Yet she was the only working-class woman poet I know of who expressed open and direct poetic sympathies with abandoned women and prostitutes. In "Magdalene—A Tale of Christmas Eve" (December 1871), when a prostitute returns to her former home and

sees the grey church, with its quaint-looking gate,
Worn, faint, and exhausted she pauses awhile,
And she seems to forget e'en her desolate fate,
As she wearily leans on the old broken stile.
'Tis the same little stile where the girls often met
To sing and to chat when their spinning was done;
Where they sat till their gowns with the dew-drops were wet,
And their bright faces tinged with the red setting sun.

In a Forresterian overview of social inequities, "The Gloaming in the City" (August 1874), a "piteous wreck" has drowned herself in despair:

May her name be hushed for ever
In oblivion, dark and deep,
Uttered by the ingle never,
Lest those lovely eyes should weep:
If some quivering voice should name her,

When the evening prayers are said,
May the hearts that will not blame her,
In their mercy, think her dead.

Forrester also focused on the wider vulnerabilities of working-class women, barely able to defend their "good name" and personal integrity against the rigid social codes of a more favored class. Even her position as a mill worker aroused suspicion at one point, for Brierley replied to a "concerned reader" that "Miss Forrester is neither vulgar nor unladylike. . . . [It is wrong to assume that] because a poor girl works at a mill she must, of necessity, be deficient in those qualities that are supposed to adorn her wealthier sisters" (August 1, 1874).

Often Forrester's verse also dramatized erotic loss and rejection as subtle forms of injustice, reflected in the effects of poverty on familial and personal relations. "In the Workhouse.—A Deserter's Story" (November 1872), for example, portrays a former soldier broken for his love of a colonel's daughter, who dies later in a poorhouse:

raving! I am raving! as the wretched ever rave
In the ignominious shadow of the dreaded Union grave;
And the portly master, turning from my white, distorted face,
Prates of "idle scamps not earning such a decent resting-place."

In "The Bitter Task," an impoverished seamstress hired to sew a wedding dress for her former lover's bride, recalled to her son his father's desertion:

He came to me, dearest, and offered me *pay*;
But his gold in wild fury I caught,
Declaring, as proudly I hurled it away,
That my *silence should never be bought!* (April 1873)

In "Deformed," a young woman looked into the waters of a stream at an (unspecified) "deformity" that has left her alone and unloved:

"Deformed! deformed!" the mocking breeze
Kept singing through the wondering flowers—
'Unhappy maiden!' sighed the trees,
'Dead, dead, are all thy happiest hours.'
My scared white face look[ed] back at me,
As over the laughing stream I hung,
Moaning, 'Oh, God! it cannot be—
I am so young! I am so young!'" (September 1875)

Socially conditioned anxieties about appearance recurred in the poetry of Victorian women of all classes, of course, but they also reflected medical disabilities, mutilations, and untreatable "marks of weakness, marks of

woe," endured in penury as well as silence by the urban poor.⁴¹ In the poem's conclusion, Forrester called for solidarity and "sisterhood" across lines of class, appearance, or romantic fortune.

In 1875, Forrester wrote a poem in which she varied the conventions of "love"-poetry to express gratitude for the "precious love" of "Sabina,"⁴² another writer whose stories had appeared in the *Journal*. Declarations of "love" between women were commonplace:⁴³

E'en as I speak my hand steals into thine,
Like a tired bird that seeks some resting-place—
And well I know thy precious love is mine,
By thy fond eyes and sympathetic face.
(*"To 'Sabina,'"* October 25)

Another poem in 1876 vowed lifelong "love" to someone whose voice was "deep and tender, / Faint and broken with regret" ("*Come, My Darling,*" September 30, 1876), and the speaker of an apparent reply, "To Fanny Forrester. (From *the Frigid Zone.*)" by "Sabina" a week later asked:

who plucks the lilac's first flower?
I can see it now, it hangs over the bower
Where Fanny and I—'twas only last year—
Sat breathing our vows, her warm tresses near
So near—so fond, yet I clasped her nearer,
And kissed her and told her to me she was dearer
Than aught in the world beside. (*"To Fanny Forrester,"* October 7)

The speaker turned out to be a polar explorer, who exhorted a ship's crew in erotically charged imagery to "rend" the "frigid zone"'s "great jagged peaks":

The throne of the ice-king is rent in twain,
Its great jagged peaks dissolve in the main.
To heave, my lads, ho! stout hearts for our goal;
Never say die till we reach the North Pole.
Sabina.

This exchange (or the editor's or readers' reactions to it) apparently ended Fanny Forrester's publishing career in *Ben Brierley's Journal*—about which Brierley had remarked two years earlier that "J. L. Owen and Fanny Forrester have shared, between them, almost the whole of our space devoted to this class of literature during the past year. . . . (February 1874)."⁴⁴ Brierley had in fact helped Owen publish his verse in book form, but this exchange seems to have brought his patronage for the melodramatic intensity of Forrester's poetic personae to an abrupt end.

Fanny Forrester did later manage to publish eleven well-illustrated poems in Cassell's *Quiver*, as I mentioned earlier, but only six of these were new, most of them were bland, and all of them were short, and her convoluted monologues of prostitutes, deserters, and angry unwed mothers effectively disappeared from the contemporary periodical horizon in 1876.

In "Mother, I Come" (1878), her most poignant poem for *The Quiver*, Fanny Forrester reflected on her "polar journey" of failed hopes and disappointed ambitions:⁴⁵

I sought the world, and found it cold and dreary,
E'en youth seems vanished—I have grown so wise.

I sought for fame, and found it base and hollow;
I sought for wealth, and found it nought but dross;
I lost them both—how vainly did I follow
Whither they went, deploring for their loss.

Long did I toil, my efforts were rejected,
My dreams of glory brought but grief and blame;

Mother, I come; for oh, I am so lonely,
In all this desert world no friend have I,
All, all are gone.

These plain lines had the stark eloquence of direct and perhaps autobiographical utterance.

A final retrospective glimpse into the all-importance of periodical publication for the entire Forrester family and other working-class poets may be elicited from another passage of Ellen Forrester's failed application to the Royal Literary Fund in 1872, cited earlier:

My eldest daughter [Fanny] used to add considerably to our little income, by poetical contributions to various magazines—English, Irish, and American. But this also has ceased. Her health is bad, and she can no longer write the short poems and songs that used to take so well.

In ways she could not anticipate, Ellen was right in the end that Fanny's "long melancholy poems" had a precarious future. For six years, however, Brierley's willingness to print sixty of these poems did help Fanny Forrester support her family, as well as convey her distinctive poetic preoccupations to a large and for the most part receptive audience. Ellen Forrester died in 1883, Ben Brierley in 1885, and Fanny Forrester in 1889.

Less irenic than "Marie," and more despairing than Hamilton, Fanny

Forrester strove to record the pride, anxieties, instabilities, dislocations, and willed cohesion of Victorian lower-class experience, and the prismatic narratives of her best *Journal* poems enacted a wide range of responses to the direct and indirect effects of poverty—anger, jealousy, madness, self-pity, self-assertion, spiritual aspiration, familial cohesion under stress, and empathy for impoverished "black sheep" of both sexes. In her brief window of publication, she dramatized a wide range of stereotyped but real experiences of the urban poor, and offered tribute to their capacity for love and solidarity in the face of emigration, disruption, and early death.

Conclusion

I have tried to gloss in this essay some of the constraints and opportunities working-class women encountered in their efforts to publish poetry in newspapers and journals between 1846 and 1880, and offer some partial explanations for the disappearance of this modality of publication in the decades that followed.⁴⁶

Ironically, one of the more pointed documentations of this disappearance may appear in an essay in which the Rev. Paul Anton, editor of the Dundee-based *The People's Friend*⁴⁷ and a tireless campaigner for literary culture for the poor,⁴⁸ introduced the work of "Elizabeth Horne Smith, Farmworker and Poetess" in January 1898. Anton wrote that "my conscience is clear. Never, at any time, have I encouraged any writer whatsoever to send me manuscript verse [emphasis mine]. I am almost afraid to indicate the number of such requests to which I have given for reply a resolute 'No.'"

We have this unguarded remark because the poignance of Smith's circumstances had softened Anton's generic resistance, but the volume he recommended for publication—her *Poems of a Dairymaid* (Paisley, 1898)—was an isolated exception, and *The People's Friend* was one of very few surviving venues in which poor poets of the 1880s and 90s might still hope to publish their verse. It is painful therefore to imagine ("I am almost afraid to indicate. . . .") the larger implications of Anton's self-righteous refusals.

Some of this undertow may have reflected the growing appetite of mass-circulation popular magazines for fiction, mentioned earlier, but such answers would beg the reasons for this shift in editorial and profit-driven taste. If Anton was typical by the end of the century—and he seems to have been—the sternly principled decisions of this man and a handful of his colleagues may have killed the poetic aspirations of scores of working women and men.

But then the path for most working-class poets has always led through

a painfully strait gate. *The People's Journal*, *Eliza Cook's Journal*, *The Working Man's Friend*, and *Ben Brierley's Journal* had brief and precarious lives, almost as brief and precarious as the lives and careers of the poets who depended on them. John Cassell's early efforts to provide a showcase for working-class essayists had an indirectly generative effect on Janet Hamilton's poetic career, but even he had to suspend this ambitious initial experiment in worker authorship after only two years.

In a sense, then, the very evanescence of such aid finally underscored the all-importance of a few reformist editors and publishers for the tenuous survival of working-class poetic expression. Without John Saunders, Eliza Cook, the Howitts, John Cassell, and Ben Brierley, Marie and Fanny Forrester would have been silenced from the start. Without Alexander Campbell, John Cassell, Benjamin Parsons, and James Ritchie, Ellen Johnston and Janet Hamilton would probably not have published their poetry in hard covers. Only a few copies of these ephemeral and self-consciously populist periodicals are extant, but they offer the most tantalizing primary sources we have for our tenuous knowledge of mid-nineteenth century working-class women's poetic tastes, practices, resources, and contemporary audiences.

Notes

- 1 A review of books and anthologies on working-class poetry may be found in the introduction to this issue.
- 2 A discussion of some of the political aspects of newspaper publication may be found in Aled Jones, *Powers of the Press: Newspapers, Power and the Public in Nineteenth-Century England* (Brookfield, Vermont: Scolar Press, 1996).
- 3 The owner-editors of *The People's Journal* and *Ben Brierley's Journal*, for example, promoted such republication in the case of Henry F. Lott and John Lawton Owen.
- 4 "Queen of the Far-Famed Penny Post: Ellen Johnston and Working-Class Newspaper Publication," RSVP conference paper. See also Judith Rosen's article in this collection.
- 5 Other studies of Johnston have appeared in Susan Zlotnik, "'A Thousand Times I'd Be a Factory Girl': Dialect, Domesticity, and Working-Class Women's Poetry in Victorian Britain," *VS* 35 (1991): 7-27; and *Women, Writing, and the Industrial Revolution* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1998); Florence Boos, "Cauld Engle-Cheek: Working-Class Women Poets in Victorian Scotland," *VP* 33 (1995): 53-73; "Ellen Johnston," *Nineteenth Century British Women Writers: A Bibliographical Critical Sourcebook*, ed. Abigail Bloom (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2000); Susan Alves, "A Thousand Times I'd Be a Factory Girl . . ." Diss., Northeastern University, 1996; and H. Gustav Klaus, *Factory Girl: Ellen Johnston and Working-Class Poetry in Victorian Scotland* (New York: Peter Lang, c. 1998).
- 6 Hannah Mary Rathbone edited *Selections from the Poets, By A Lady* (London, 1840), and published many stories in periodicals. Mary Leman Gillies wrote children's books,

including *The Voyage of the Constance. A Tale of the Polar Seas* (London, 1860). William and Mary Howitt edited *Howitt's Journal of Literature and Popular Progress* (London, 1847-51), and wrote several books together, including *The Literature and Romance of Northern Europe* (London, 1847). Mary Howitt also published many translations from French, Danish, and Swedish literature, including the works of Frederika Bremmer and Hans Christian Andersen.

- 7 *Mary Howitt, Autobiography*, ed. Margaret Howitt (Boston and New York, 1889), 1:39, 42-43.
- 8 Isabella Varley (afterwards Banks) wrote *Ivy Leaves: A Collection of Poems* (London, 1844) and other works. Camilla Toulmin (afterwards Crosland) published *Poems* (London, 1846) and several books of fiction for children.
- 9 The radical poet, engraver, and editor William James Linton (1812-97) edited *The National: A Library for the People*, the *Odd-Fellow*, and the *English Republic*, prepared many engravings and essays for radical periodicals, and wrote *Claribel and Other Poems* (1865). Anne Janowitz has considered his poetry in *Lyric and Labour in the Romantic Tradition* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998).
- 10 John Lawton Owen's works included *Lyrics from a Country Lane* (London, 1873) and *Railroad Romances* (London, 1897). Henry Frank Lott published *One Hundred Sonnets* (London, 1850). Charles Mackay's (1814-1889) volumes of poetry included *Songs (with Memoir)* (London, 1855) and *The Poetical Works of Charles Mackay* (London, 1857). John Critchley Prince wrote *Hours With the Muses* (Manchester, 1841) and *Miscellaneous Poems* (Manchester, 1861). Ebenezer Elliott published *The Poetical Works of Ebenezer Elliott, the Corn-Law Rhymer* (Edinburgh, 1840). For George Gilfillan, see note 16 below.
- 11 Susan Zlotnick has commented briefly on Marie in "'A Thousand Times I'd Be a Factory Girl,'" pp. 17-19. She sees her as a poet who was "not enmeshed in the Victorian cult of domesticity," who also "reveall[ed] an understanding of the word 'worker' that encompasses both men and women."
- 12 In *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1957), Richard Altick estimated that 50,000 to 60,000 copies of the journal circulated during its first year of publication. Eliza Cook (1818-1889), a self-educated brazier's daughter, published *Melaia and Other Poems* (London, 1838) and *New Echoes and Other Poems* (London, 1864). For a further discussion of her poetry see the essay by Solveig Robinson in this collection.
- 13 Janet Hamilton, *Selected Works* ([Coatbridge]: Monklands Library Services Department, 1984), also reprinted several of her poems with a biographical sketch.
- 14 Florence Boos, "Janet Hamilton," *Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. Colin Matthews, forthcoming Oxford Univ. Press; "Janet Hamilton," *Victorian Women Poets*, ed. William Thesing (Detroit: Gale Research, 1998); "'Oor Location': Victorian Women Poets and the Transition from Rural to Urban Scottish Culture," *Victorian Urban Settings*, ed. Debra Mancoff and Dale J. Trela (New York: Garland, 1996); and "Cauld Engle-Cheek: Working-Class Women Poets in Victorian Scotland," *VP* 33 (1995): 53-73.
- 15 *Sketch of the Late Mrs. Janet Hamilton; with Addresses at Her Funeral and Grave*, by the Rev. P. Cameron Black, Old Monkland, and Rev. Dr. Alex. Wallace, Glasgow. With Prefatory Note by Rev. George Gilfillan (Glasgow, 1873).
- 16 Gilfillan (1813-1878) was a prolific editor of literary works and the author of *Night:*

- A Poem (London, 1867), *Specimens with Memoirs of the Less-Known British Poets*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh, 1860), and several theological treatises. He wrote introductions to the volumes of several working-class poets of the period, including Ellen Johnston, Elizabeth Campell, and Janet Hamilton. His diary for November 1863 notes: "I have written a short notice of that extraordinary woman Janet Hamilton's poems for the *Dundee Advertiser*. . . . The marvel lies in an old woman of no education, who can hardly write, inditing so many fair and well-composed things, possessing so much good sense, correctness, taste, and fluency of expression" (p. 338). His brief eulogy for her formed a prefatory note to *Sketch of the Late Mrs. Janet Hamilton*. More details may be found in Robert A. Watson and Elizabeth S. Watson, *George Gilfillan: Letters and Journals, with Memoir* (London, 1892).
- 17 Alexander Wallace, D. D. (1816-93) was a prominent Glasgow minister and temperance advocate. John Young's allusion on p. 11 of his memoir of Hamilton to a generous patron who enabled her to publish her works was likely to Wallace.
 - 18 John Young, *Pictures in Prose and Verse; or, Personal Recollections of The Late Janet Hamilton, Langloan* (Glasgow, 1877); Joseph Wright, *Janet Hamilton and Other Papers* (Edinburgh, 1889), contained two epistolary poems which did not appear in Hamilton's published works.
 - 19 *Unveiling of the Janet Hamilton Memorial at Langloan, Together with a Report of the Great Public Demonstration*. Reprinted . . . from [the Coatbridge and Airdrie] "Advertiser" of Saturday, July 17.
 - 20 These included the *London Athaeneum*, the *London Weekly Record*, the *London Scotsman*, *The Freeman*, *The Literary World*, *The Eclectic*, *The Bookseller*, the *Londonderry Standard*, *The Presbyterian Witness* (of Nova Scotia), and the *Scottish American Journal*.
 - 21 Simon Nowell-Smith, *The House of Cassell: 1848-1958* (London: Cassell, 1958), provided information about Cassell's life and publications, but made no mention of the supplement and its editors, a striking and unfortunately rather characteristic omission.
 - 22 Cassell's father was a Manchester tavern owner who had died when John was a small child, and his mother worked thereafter as a coach-house servant. A Methodist and early convert to the temperance movement, in London he became a wholesale supplier of tea, coffee, and other produce to temperance societies and their supporters. The first magazine he published was *The Teetotal Times: or, Monthly Temperance Messenger* (1846-1851), followed by *The Standard of Freedom* (1848-1851), and a number of other annuals and almanacs devoted to temperance and other topics. Later ventures included *The Freeholder* (1850ff), a threepenny monthly for a "freehold land" society; *The Popular Educator* (1852-1855); *Cassell's Magazine* (1852ff); *The Quiver* (1861-1926); and *Cassell's Illustrated Family Paper* (1853-1932, under various titles). In later years he also pioneered an inexpensive line of serious books, e.g., Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Hamilton shared Cassell's interests in temperance, abolition, and European independence movements. G. Holden Pike, *John Cassell* (London, 1894), gave some attention to his early life and endeavors.
 - 23 In *The House of Cassell*, Nowell-Smith cites testimonials to the benefits of Cassell's publications by distinguished people of working-class origins, among them David Lloyd-George (p. 48).
 - 24 "Counteracting Influences" appeared in the *Working Man's Friend* for April 1850, with the following note: "The above, from a Working Man's Wife, was intended to have been inserted in our Supplementary Number; but our communications for that number were so numerous from *Working Men* themselves, that in conformity with our design, we were compelled to make it give way. We are so pleased with its spirit, however, that we have found a place for it in our regular issue.—Ed." (p. 24).
 - 25 Edwin Paxton Hood, *The Earnest Minister: A Record of the Life, and Selections from Posthumous and Other Writings of the Rev. Benjamin Parsons, of Ebley, Gloucestershire* (London, 1856). Parsons identified with working-class interests, especially popular education, and had a flare for pithy and inventive argument.
 - 26 J. E. Ritchie, *Thoughts on Slavery and Cheap Sugar* (London, 1844).
 - 27 Ritchie's books included *The Night Side of London* (London, 1857) and *Christopher Crayon's Recollections: The Life and Times of the Late J. E. Ritchie, as Told by Himself* (London, 1898).
 - 28 Mrs. Caroline Norton (1808-1877) was a novelist and poet, also known for her campaign on behalf of the Infants' Custody Bill of 1839. Mrs. Sarah Ellis (1812-1872) was a prominent author of advice books, including *Wives of England* (London, 1843).
 - 29 Hamilton's home village was routinely misspelled—as "Langloane" in the *Working-Man's Friend*, and as "Langham" in the list of awardees in *Social Science*.
 - 30 "Mother and Daughter," a related essay, appeared in *Poems of Purpose* (Glasgow, 1865), but was not reprinted in *Poems, Essays and Sketches* (Glasgow, 1880).
One other contributor to the *Working-Man's Friend*, G. Woodward, a shoemaker from Kingsland Road (London), wrote "On Female Education," pp. 23-26. A true egalitarian, Woodward argued that "the powers of the mind have been equally marked in the female, as in the male."
 - 31 Born in Failsworth, Ben Brierley began work at age six tending a bobbin-wheel, and learned to read at a Sunday School. He wrote many books, including *Popular Edition of Tales and Sketches of Lancashire Life*, 5 vols. (Manchester and London, 1882-1886) and *Home Memories, and Recollections of a Life* (Manchester and London, 1886).
 - 32 In 1873, Owen published *Lyrics from a Country Lane* (see n. 10 above). Owen's poems, unlike those of Forrester, were straightforward, undramatic, and filled with references to a (male) working-class poetic tradition.
 - 33 Brierley's sketch also mentioned that Forrester's poems had appeared in *The Nation*, *Chambers Journal*, *Cassell's Magazine*, *The Quiver*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Home Journal*, and *Figaro*. A list of her extant publications appears in the appendix.
 - 34 Ellen was born in Clones, County Monaghan, c. 1828, the daughter of a schoolmaster Magennis (or McGuinness), and sister of a poet, B. Magennis. Ellen Magennis' poems appeared in Irish newspapers, including the *Nation* and the *Dundalk Democrat*, and in such English papers as the *Weekly Budget*, and as mentioned above, she published *Simple Strains* as well as the coauthored *Songs of the Rising Nation*. According to *Irish Graves in England* (Dublin, 1888), she emigrated to England at the age of seventeen and settled first in Liverpool, where she worked as a seamstress. See also *The Poets of Ireland*, ed. D. J. O'Donoghue (London, 1912), p. 151.
 - 35 Arthur Forrester joined the Fenian movement at seventeen, was sentenced to a year's imprisonment for carrying arms in a proclaimed district, and was arrested again in Liverpool in 1869. He emigrated to the United States around 1882, where he contributed to the *Irish World* and other U. S. papers (*Irish Graves in England* describes him as "on the staff of the *Irish World*," p. 144). He died in south Boston in 1895 (*The Poets of Ireland*, p. 151).

- 36 Like all other appeals of other working-class women poets to the Royal Literary Fund, this one was rejected for "insufficient authorship" (Royal Literary Fund, File 1902, Reel 75).
- 37 Fanny Forrester's address was listed in *Ben Brierley's Journal* as 14, Gavin Street, Clarendon Road, Salford.
- 38 "Lines Inscribed to ——" described a family member whose "lyre . . . lies 'mid the dust and the lumber," now crowned with the "laurels" of "silvery hair."
- 39 Other working-class Victorian English poets included Mary Smith, Ruth Wills, Ethel Carnie, and of course "Marie."
- 40 Susan Zlotnick has suggested that the "bardic persona [in Forrester's poem "The Lowly Bard"] remains incomplete," and interpreted Forrester's failure to establish "a stable, univocal poetic identity" and use of "pseudonyms, male personae, and poetic masks" as signs of her sense of the "fabricated nature of all identity" ("Lowly Bards and Incomplete Lyres: Fanny Forrester and the Construction of a Working-Class Woman's Poetic Identity," *VP* 36 [1998]: 23). See also her *Women, Writing and the Industrial Revolution*.
- 41 Cf. "In Darkness," June 1876, in which a mother becomes reconciled to her child's blindness, and "The Lark and the Cripple Boy," April 1872, in which a saintly cripple rejoices that in heaven "His grace / Shall make me fair when the friendly sod / Hides my white unlovely face!"
- 42 Forrester also employed a wide variety of male personae and monologuists ("Parted for Ever," "In the Workhouse," "The Lowly Bard"), including a number in which a man or unidentified narrator proclaimed love for a woman ("To Mary," "The Poet to His Love," "A Love Song to My Wife," "Come My Darling"), and several poetic expressions of a woman's romantic interest in a man ("The Sister and the Bard," "A Woman's Soliloquy").
- 43 "Sabina" was the author of "Jenny's Choice: A Tale of Home Life," serialized in the *Journal* during 1875. Her *Stanley Meredith. A Novel* was published in London (1875), and *Jenny's Choice* reappeared in 1890 (Wakefield: W. Nicholson and Sons).
- 44 Brierley had also included in the *Journal* the full-page feature article mentioned earlier (January 1875), and publicized Forrester by printing a long poetic tribute to her by John Lawton Owen in March 1876.
- 45 In another poem printed in *The Quiver*, "A Mother's Letter" (1880), a speaker cries as she rereads the letters of her dead mother, which gave "a whisper of hope to the few flowers that bloom / In the bleak desert of my cheerless life."
- 46 Among the very few Scottish working-class women who published books of English-language poetry in the 1890s were Jeannie Graham Paterson, born 1871 in Glasgow, whose *Short Threads from a Milliner's Needle* appeared in 1894, and Elizabeth ("Lizzie") Horne Smith, mentioned in the text.
- 47 The *People's Journal* appeared for more than ninety years. According to the *Waterloo Directory of Scottish Newspapers and Periodicals, 1800-1900*, it claimed a circulation of 120,000 in 1871 and 200,000 in 1891, and offered prizes for an annual Christmas writing competition for its readers. Its literary supplement, *The People's Friend*, ran from 1869 to 1918.
- 48 Anton had printed dozens of feature articles on literary and/or reformist personages such as Dorothy Wordsworth, Frances Power Cobbe, and James Whitcomb Riley, and published and praised the work of middle-level serial fiction authors such as Agnes Falconer, Agnes Marchbank, Adeline Sargeant, and Mrs. J. K. Lawson.

Appendix

Checklist of Periodical Poems by "Marie," Janet Hamilton,
and Fanny Forrester

Poems by "Marie"

The People's Journal/People's and Howitt's Journal (PJ and PHJ)
(volume numbers are not always consistent):

- "Encouragement," PJ 2 (1847): 280 (Chorley 1846)
 "Light, More Light!" PJ 2 (1847): 64-65 (Chorley 1846)
 "Fellow Workers," PJ 3 (1847): 21 (Chorley, November 1846)
 "Heroisms," PJ 3 (1847): 163 (Chorley)
 "I Yearn for the Spring," PJ 3 (1847): 216-217
 "The Cuckoo," PHJ 2 (1848): 77
 "Love Without Speech," PHJ 2 (1848): 257
 "Sonnet: On the Bell-buoy at Sea," PHJ 2 (1848): 146
 "The Indomitable Will," PHJ 3 n. s. (1848): 63
 "Idealise the Real," PHJ 3 n. s. (1848): 175
 "Crucified Spirits," PJ 4 (1848): 260-261 (Chorley)
 "Look for the Flowers," PJ 4 (1848): 336 (Chorley)
 "An Autumn Evening," [memoir], PHJ 1/6 (1849): 176-177
 "My Soul's Flight," PHJ 1/6 (1849): 298
 "It Is Not for Long," PHJ 1/6 (1849): 315
 "Our Better Moments," PHJ 1/6 (1849): 62
 "Sweet Poetry," PHJ 1/6 (1849): 164
 "The Seers Are Not Dead," PJ 6 (1849): 204-205 (Chorley)
 "We've All Our Angel Side," PJ 6 (1849): 331 (Chorley)
 "Striving Upwards," PHJ 6 (1849): 8-9 (Chorley)
 "I Fear to Think How Glad I Am," PHJ 6 (1849): 177
 "I'm So Happy," PHJ 7 (1849)
 "Poet! Why Sing?" PHJ 7 (1849): 275
 "Beauteous Night!" PHJ 2/7, vol. 4 (1850): 260
 "The Evening Groweth Grey," PHJ 2/7, vol. 4 (1850): 189
 "Labour," PHJ 2/7, vol. 4 (1850): 62
 "Sybil, the Far-Seer," PHJ 2/7, vol. 4 (1850): 132

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- "My Mission," 3.53 (May 4, 1850)
 "I Love Thee," 3.66 (August 3, 1850)
 "Each to Each," 3.74 (October 26, 1850)

- "We Can Wait," 4.90 (January 18, 1851)
 "Childish Fancies," 4.101 (April 5, 1851)
 "Posted Books," 5.117 (July 26, 1851)
 "The Little Herb Gatherer," 6.137 (December 13, 1851)
 "To the Loyal Heart," 6.150 (March 13): 1852
 "Influences," 7.167 (July 10, 1852)

Working Man's Friend and Family Instructor.

"Trees of Liberty," *Working Man's Friend*, 2 n. s. (1852): 152.

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- "The Wayside Well," *Working Man's Friend* (1850)
 "Summer Voices," *Working Man's Friend*, 3 n. s. (1853): 255; reprinted in *Poems and Essays*, 1863
 "The Mourning Mother," *The Adviser: A Monthly Magazine for Young People* 1, n. s. (February 1853); reprinted in *Poems and Essays*
 "The Child and Her Adviser," *The Adviser* 2 n.s. (March 1854)
 "Sweet May-Morn," *The Adviser* 2, n. s. (June 1854); reprinted in *Poems and Essays*
 "Spring Scene in the Country," *The Adviser* 2 n. s. (April 1854); reprinted in *Poems and Essays*
 "A Faithful Mother's Love," *The Adviser* 2, n. s. (August 1854); reprinted in *Poems and Essays*
 "Woman," "Lines on the Calder," *The Quiver* (July 18, 1863); reprinted in *Poems and Essays*
 "Rhymes for the Times," *Commonwealth* (Glasgow) (September 22, 1860); cited in John Young, *Personal Recollections of the Late Janet Hamilton*, 1877; reprinted in *Poems and Essays*

Essays in *The Working Man's Friend* and *The Literature of Working Men* (WMF and LWM):

- "Counteracting Influences," WMF 2.14 (April 1850): 23-24
 "The Mother's Mission," LWM 2 (April 1850): 18-20
 "Our National Curse," (August 1850): 25-27
 "The Uses and Pleasures of Poetry to the Working Classes," (December 1850): 7-9
 "To the Working Women of Britain," (January 1851): 13-16
 "The Mental Training of Children," (March 1851)
 "Sketch of a Scottish Roadside Village Fifty Years Since," (July 1851):

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- 1870: "Homeless in the City" (March): 42
 "Toiling in the City" (April): 58
 "Dying in the City" (May): 66
 "The Poor Man's Darling. A Tale of Hard Times" (June): 78
 "To Mary" (August): 102; also published in *The Quiver*
 "An Old Tune" (October): 126
 "After the Battle" (December): 146.
- 1871: "Parted for Ever. An Emigrant's Story" (February): 184
 "Magdalen—A Tale of Christmas Eve" (December): 297
- 1872: "Sad Memories" (January): 1
 "The Lark and the Cripple Boy" (April): 48; also published in *The Quiver*
 "Our Three Pictures" (June): 61
 "Song of Returning Emigrants" (August): 90
 "In the Workhouse.—A Deserter's Story" (November): 121
- 1873: "Christmas Eve" (January): 145
 "Celt and Saxon" (March): 169
 "The Bitter Task" (April): 181
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 "Lancashire Pictures.—Part First. Saturday Noon" (August): 233
 "Lancashire Pictures.—Part Second. Saturday Evening" (September): 246
 "Lancashire Pictures.—Part Third. Saturday Night" (October): 253
 "The Lowly Bard" (November): 265
 "Second Love" (December): 277
- 1874: "Christmas Tide" (January): 289
 "Nevermore" (February): 306
 "Musings in the City" (March): 323
 "To Mrs. F.—, A Poor Collier's Wife, on the Death of Her Infant Daughter" (April): 329
 "The Blacksmith and the Daisy" (June): 349
 "A Woman's Soliloquy" (July 4): 11
 "To the Little Children" (July 18): 31; also published in *The Quiver*
 Letter from Fanny Forrester (July 18): 32
 "The Gloaming in the City" (August 15): 58-59
 "Song.—My Lost Aileen" (September 12): 91

- "Crossed Lives" (October 19): 122-123
 "The Sister and the Bard" (October 31): 146-147
 "To My Wife" (December 5): 191.
- 1875: "Mother's Wish" (January 2): 3; also published in *The Quiver*
 "My Poor Black Sheep" (January 23): 37-39
 M. Harriet Smith, "To Fanny Forrester" (January 30)
 "Parting Words" (February 13): 63-64
 "Lines Inscribed to —" (March 6): 81
 "At Sea" (March 27): 5
 "The Poet to His Love" (May 15): 162-163
 "She Is Not Dead. (Inscribed to Mrs. Brierley)" (June 26): 212
 "Morning" (July 24): 242-243
 "Song—Good Night, Aileén! Good Night!" (August 28): 288
 "Deformed" (September 25): 315-316
 "To Sabina" (October 16): 339
 "The Village Flirt. (A Little Story for Scornful Maidens.)" (November 6): 364
 "Youth and Summer" (November 27): 388
 "Little Singers" (December 11): 403
- 1876: "At the Gate" (March 4): 44
 John Lawton Owen, "An Epistle to Fanny Forrester" (March 11): 89-90
 "Forsaken" (March 25): 107
 "Springtide Wooing" (April 8): 127
 "The Sisters" (May 27): 178-179
 "In Darkness" (June 24): 212
 "The Recent Sad Calamity at Ayr" (July 1): 220
 "A Love Song to My Wife" (July 29): 252; also published in *The Quiver*
 "Come, Little Brother" (September 2): 292
 "Come, My Darling" (September 30): 326-327
 Sabina, "To Fanny Forrester" (October 7)

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- "To the Little Children," 9 (1874): 721-722; published in *Ben Brierley's Journal*
 "Spring Breezes," 12 (1877): 322-323
 "Poor Little Madge," 12 (1877): 817-818
 "Poor Little Robin," 13 (1878): 58
 "Mother, I Come," 13 (1878): 208
 "Mother's Wish," 13 (1878): 273-274; published in *Ben Brierley's Journal*
 "To Mary," 13 (1878): 312, illustration p. 313;

- "The Lark and the Cripple Boy," 13 (1878): 561-562; published in *Ben Brierley's Journal*
 "A Mother's Letter" (1880): 314
 "Thy Will Be Done" (1882): 131
 "A Love Song to a Wife" (1885): 306

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- "The Poor Man's Darling: A Tale of the Famine" (October 23, 1869): 154 (Manchester, October 5, 1869)
 "Sad Memories" (March 12, 1870): 474
 "A Scene from the War: A Sister of Charity's Story" (July 1, 1871): 674
 "Returning Emigrants" (August 26, 1871): 867
 "Little Singers" (March 18, 1876): 10
 "The Sister of Mercy: A Life Sketch" (February 7, 1880): 10
 "An Old, Old Story [Told in the City]" (May 15, 1880): 10
 "A Summer Evening" (July 3, 1880): 10
 "Spring in the Alley" (June 11, 1881): 10
 "Sing Little Bird" (December 17, 1881): 5
 "Poet's Treasures" (July 21, 1883): 10
 "Forgive and Forget" (September 22, 1883): 10
 "Christmas Night" (December 22, 1883): 10-11

The Home Journal

- "The Bitter Task" (July 12, 1873); published in *Ben Brierley's Journal*

In 1874 Fanny Forrester also claimed to have published in *Harper's Bazaar*, *Chambers's Journal*, and *The Irish Times*, but I have been unable to locate any poems published by her in these journals between 1868 and 1880. *Harper's Bazaar* and *Chambers* published many anonymous poems, so hers may be among these.

I wish to thank Mary Hayes, Donna Parsons, and Keith Wilhide for help in locating poems by "Marie" and Forrester.