THE HIDDEN RILL: THE LIFE AND CAREER OF MARIA JANE JEWSBURY: I

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I. INTRODUCTION

With the exception of Maria Edgeworth, the English women writers of the 1820s and 30s are all largely forgotten today; only the specialists are familiar with Lady Blessington, Lady Morgan, Mrs. Gore, Mrs. Sotherwood, Joanna Baillie, Felicia Hemans, Laetitia E. Landon, Mary Howitt and Mary Mitford. It is important, however, not to neglect those whom we consider minor, but who, in their time, enjoyed great popularity and were admired by tens of thousands of readers. Research into such second-rate, or even third-rate, literary figures sheds further light on the diverse tastes of a heterogeneous reading-public and enhances our understanding of the literary climate in which the major writers worked.

Unlike her "sisters" above, Maria Jane Jewsbury (1800-33) was not even included in the pages of The New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature. As will be argued below, however, success or failure in this respect is not always a fair criterion of a writer's skills. To her contemporaries, Miss Jewsbury was known as a writer given to satire and endowed with an original mind and unusual sense of humour: "she became ... a very distinct, because truly original personality, in the history of the literature of that period, and is remembered as such with respect by those who are familiar with it". An early death prevented her literary talent from reaching maturity, and in the relatively few writings she left behind, we may sense a creative power which remained largely undeveloped. Her intimate friend, the poet Felicia Hemans, confirms this impression in a letter to the journalist Alaric A. Watts:

How much deeper power seemed to lie, coiled up as it were, in the recesses of her mind than was ever manifested to the world in her

1 Alaric Alfred Watts, Alaric Watts. A Narrative of His Life (London, 1884), i. 178-79.
Strange and sad does it seem that only the broken music of such a spirit should have been given to the earth; the full and finished harmony never drawn forth.²

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate how Maria Jane Jewsbury was both typical and atypical of her time. While her mediocre verses, sentimental tales for children, obsession with religion and passion for the beauties of Nature make her representative of the many women writers of the early nineteenth century, her vein of satire and keen sense of humour, as displayed in her essays and literary criticism, open up new vistas: "by the keenness of her intellect and the virility of her humour, [Miss Jewsbury] ... may be taken, ... and in this perhaps lies her chief interest to-day [1884], as a prophecy of the female writer some forty years later".³ Miss Jewsbury also participated in two literary phenomena which emerged in the 1820s—the immensely popular gift-books, known as the Annuals, and the Athenaeum, the first literary weekly to claim independence of publishers and to reject puffery. Yet, for us Maria Jane Jewsbury merits attention, above all, for the ideas she expressed in her writings; her concern with the poor state of female education, her awareness of the difficult position of women writers and her sympathy with the alienation experienced by talented women are all matters of considerable interest, foreshadowing later writers, including her sister Geraldine Endsor Jewsbury (1812-80).

As early as the 1880s, Miss Jewsbury's name had, according to Watts's son, been reduced to "little more than an echo in the age to which I am addressing myself".⁴ Fallen into oblivion today, she has, to my knowledge, attracted the attention of only three twentieth-century scholars—Eric Gillett, Susan Howe and Ellen Moers.⁵ Therefore, in order to assess her role in literary

² Ibid. i. 179. For similar contemporary opinions on Miss Jewsbury's hidden talents see Sarah Stickney Ellis, "Mrs. Fletcher, Late Miss Jewsbury", Christian Keepsake, and Missionary Annual for 1838, p. 30, and William Cooke Taylor, The National Portrait Gallery of Illustrious and Eminent Personages, Chiefly of the Nineteenth Century (London, [1846-48]), iii. 38.
³ Watts, op. cit., i. 204.
⁴ Ibid. i. 178.
⁵ Eric Gillett's Maria Jane Jewsbury: Occasional Papers, Selected with a Memoir (London: Oxford University Press, 1932) is valuable as far as the biographical background is concerned. Nevertheless, it wholly lacks documentation and notes, does not treat Miss Jewsbury's contributions to the Athenaeum, and
history, it is necessary to listen to contemporary voices, those of friends, acquaintances and, particularly, her reviewers. Due to the relative inaccessibility of the literary weeklies and monthlies of the 1820s, not to mention Miss Jewsbury’s own writings, the discussion below will include rather full quotations.

II. ADOLESCENCE AND LITERARY DÉBUT

Maria Jane Jewsbury was born on 25 October 1800 in the little Derbyshire village of Measham, where her father owned a cotton-mill. She was sent to Miss Adams’s school at Shenstone for some time, but was removed at the age of fourteen on account of bad health. A very precocious child, Maria Jane was only nine years old, as she says in a letter to Mrs Hemans, “when the ambition of writing a book, being praised publicly, and associating with authors, seized me as a vague longing”.6 Judging from the character of Julia in her most mature work, The Three Histories (1830), the early phase of which is largely autobiographical,7 Maria Jane’s passion for books and unusual intellect turned her into an isolated girl, out of harmony with young people of her age. In The Literary Women of England (1861), Jane Williams gives the same picture:

Her love of reading, although early manifested, found neither encouragement nor guidance, and took the form rather of desultory enjoyment than that of a constant pursuit of knowledge. Dutiful attachment to her parents, and protecting affection for her brothers and sister, counterbalanced in some measure the isolating consciousness of intellectual superiority, softened the rigour of her resolute will, and restrained the impulsive eagerness of her temperament.8

In 1818, when Thomas Jewsbury’s cotton-mill had run into
financial difficulties, the Jewsburys moved to Manchester. The following year Mrs. Jewsbury died, leaving the nineteen-year-old Maria Jane in charge of her sister Geraldine and her four brothers, the youngest of whom was a mere infant. But the sudden responsibility of managing a large family neither crushed her will to improve her mind by reading and to write, nor her yearning for "emancipation", as she later confessed to Mrs. Hemans:

I wrote and wrote, and wrote faster than I can now, and without a tenth part of the timidity. I was twenty-one before I gained any desire for knowledge, as the natural road to the emancipation I craved; this was consequent on forming a friendship with two individuals, not writers, but highly gifted; they suggested study to me, and by their conversation, awoke me to a sense of my own deficiency. My domestic occupations continued as laborious as ever. I could neither read nor write legitimately till the day was over. It is not needful to say how premature ambition and energy developed themselves: suffice it to say, that the path of literature was opened to me when I least expected it.9

Like so many other women writers, Miss Jewsbury had to work under difficult conditions. With a good portion of humour, she gives Mrs. Alaric A. Watts the following description of the chores of literary composition:

Three dear children are catechizing me at the rate of ten questions in every five minutes. I am within hearing of one servant stoning the kitchen floor; and of another practising a hymn; and of a very turbulent child and unsympathetic nurse next door. I think I could make a decent paper descriptive of the miseries of combining literary tastes with domestic duties.10

At any rate, Miss Jewsbury managed to compose poetry. Her first poem to be printed was "Curiosity and Scandal" which appeared in the Coventry Herald in 1818.11 However, it was Alaric A. Watts, editor of the Leeds Intelligencer and later of the Manchester Courier, who had the honour of actually "dis-

11 "Curiosity and Scandal" is reprinted in Gillett, op. cit., p. xv. Due to the lack of exact references, I have been unable to trace the original.
covering" Maria Jane Jewsbury. In 1823 his attention was caught by some verses in the *Manchester Gazette* of unusual maturity, signed M.J.J. His favourable opinion of Miss Jewsbury’s talent was further confirmed on meeting her in Manchester, an introduction having been arranged by his friend Mr. Aston, the editor of the *Gazette*; her unpublished manuscripts impressed Watts since they displayed “a vein of humour, observation and instinctive knowledge of human character, the first a rare quality in women’s writings at that day, for which he was wholly unprepared”.

Robert Sullivan, a friend of Watts who was editing a London quarterly called the *Album*, found an opening for Miss Jewsbury’s first two prose sketches, “Boarding School Reminiscences” and “The Complaint of a Schoolmistress”.

Nor did Watts’s efforts to help the promising, but unknown, Miss Jewsbury rest here: on one of his many visits to London, where he was busy discussing his forthcoming annual, the *Literary Souvenir*, with his publisher Mr. Robinson, he introduced Miss Jewsbury’s name with such vigour that he succeeded in arousing the publisher’s enthusiasm. “The result was”, writes his son, “that he took back with him to Leeds an agreement from Hurst and Robinson to purchase from the young authoress a work, unseen, and for the most part unwritten, to consist of miscellaneous sketches and essays, for the, to her, magnificent sum of £100”. That Maria Jane Jewsbury was overwhelmed by this offer is hardly surprising and she poured out her gratitude in a letter to Watts.

In April 1825 the first volume of *Phantasmagoria; or, Sketches of Life and Literature* was thus published, containing fifteen essays and tales and more than twenty poems. The dedication, which was to lay the foundations for a long and deep friendship, ran: “To William Wordsworth, Esquire, these Volumes are most respectfully inscribed; as a testimony of grateful feeling, for the high delight, and essential benefit, which the author has

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12 Watts, op. cit., i. 181-82.
14 Watts, op. cit., i. 183-84.
15 Letter of 6 March 1824 to Alaric A. Watts reprinted ibid., i. 187.
derived from the study of his poems". This dedication and the accompanying letter, no doubt flattered Wordsworth, whose reaction to *Phantasmagoria* was very positive. On 4 May 1825 he wrote his first letter to Miss Jewsbury, thanking her for the volume and making the following observations:

I am afraid that it may give you some little pain to be told, that upon the whole, I prefer your Prose to your Verse; but the lines, "to Love" are so excellent that you need not be discouraged even should you coincide with me in thinking this opinion just. ... The Critical Essays, and those that turn upon manners and the surface of life, are remarkable; the one for sound judgment, and the other for acute observation and delicate handling, without exaggeration or caricature, and the episode "the Unknown", highly to be commended for the conciseness and spirit of the style (as indeed is all you have written), shews an acquaintance with the human heart and a power over the feelings from which no common things may be augured.

Since her first letter to Wordsworth, Maria Jane Jewsbury’s friendship with the Wordsworths, above all with the daughter Dora, grew into an intimacy that was only cut off by her own marriage to the Rev. William Fletcher and her departure for India in 1832. As early as 23 May 1825 Maria Jane Jewsbury called at Rydal Mount, and in July she was invited to stay with the Wordsworths in the country, at Kent’s Bank. It was now that Miss Jewsbury proved of service to William, who had heard nothing for three months from his publisher Mr. Murray regarding the publication of *Recollections*. She at once wrote off to Mr. Watts suggesting that Hurst and Robinson, publishers of *Phantasmagoria* and of Watts’s the *Literary Souvenir*, might be able to help. On 5 August 1825 Wordsworth wrote to Watts:

The interest which you kindly take in the publication of my poems, as expressed by Miss Jewsbury, encourages me to trouble you with a letter upon the subject. ... Knowing the friendship which exists between you and that lady, it would gratify me to enlarge upon the pleasure which my family and I have derived from her society, and

18 Maria Jane and Dora Wordsworth cleverly recorded the daily events of this visit in a news sheet called the "Kent’s Bank Mercury", reprinted in part in Gillett, op. cit., pp. 98-108.
to express our high opinion of her head and heart. It is impossible
to foretell how the powers of such a mind may develop themselves,
but my judgment inclines to pronounce her natural bent to be more
decidedly towards life and manners than poetic nature. Yet it would
not in the least surprise me if, with favourable opportunities for
cultivating feelings more peculiarly poetical, Miss Jewsbury should
give proof of capabilities for productions of imaginative enthusiasm.\textsuperscript{19}

That Wordsworth felt indebted to Miss Jewsbury for helping
him in his predicament is evident in his letter of thanks:

A thousand thanks for your services towards procuring me a fair
remuneration through Mr. Watts for my labours—You know how
ignorant I am in these matters, and still better how experienced your
Friend is—so that I regard this opening as very promising—ever most
faithfully yours.

\textbf{W. W.}\textsuperscript{20}

Over the years the Wordsworths stayed several times with
the Jewburys in Manchester. In Dorothy Wordsworth’s letters
we find occasional eye-witness reports of Miss Jewsbury’s role
in the household. In a letter to Catherine Clarkson, she wrote:

On the 10th I went to Manchester, where I stayed a few days with a
Miss Jewsbury, who was introduced at Rydal Mount last summer—
Dora and she became much attached to each other, and we were all
exceedingly pleased with this young Lady. ... She has remarkable
talents—a quickness of mind that is astonishing, and notwithstanding
she has had a sickly infant to nurse and has bestowed this care upon
the rest of her Brothers and Sisters, she is an authoress. She has
published two Miscellaneous volumes entitled Phantasmagoria—which,
before she had seen my Brother, she dedicated to him. ... They shew
uncommon aptitude in discerning the absurd or ridiculous in manners—
rather too much of that—you would conclude her to be a very satirical
person—yet without ill-nature—therefore pray read with charity and
remember too—what I know to be true—that most of the things in
those two volumes were written in ill health—Booksellers urgent—
Children sickly so that she wrote in a sick room, and often sate up
till three or four o’clock to enable her to do so.—I liked Miss Jewsbury
at Rydal Mount, and still more at her own home at Manchester.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{19} Hill, op. cit., iii. 376-77.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., iii. 377. Letter of 6 August 1825.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., iii. 434-35. Letter of April [1826]. See also the letter to H. C. Robinson
of 25 Feb. 1826 (iii. 427).
After her visit to the Wordsworths in May and June 1829, Miss Jewsbury gave the poet a bowl of fish, commemorated in his “Gold and Silver Fishes in a Vase”. There is no reason to doubt that Wordsworth held Miss Jewsbury in high esteem for her personal qualities as well as for her literary talent. In “Liberty”, a sequel to the above poem, addressed to her, he portrays the young poetess in this manner:

Thus, gifted Friend, but with the placid brow
That woman ne’er should forfeit, keep thy vow;
With modest scorn reject whate’er would blind
The ethereal eyesight, cramp the winged mind!
Then, with a blessing granted from above
To every act, word, thought, and look of love.
Life’s book for Thee may lie unclosed, till age
Shall with a thankful tear bedrop its latest page.

In a note, added in 1835, Wordsworth is more explicit about the circumstances of Miss Jewsbury’s life:

There is now, alas! no possibility of the anticipation, with which the above Epistle concludes, being realised: nor were the verses ever seen by the Individual for whom they were intended. She accompanied her husband, the Rev. Wm. Fletcher, to India, and died of cholera, at the age of thirty-two or thirty-three years, on her way from Shalapore to Bombay, deeply lamented by all who knew her.

Her enthusiasm was ardent, her piety steadfast; and her great talents would have enabled her to be eminently useful in the difficult path of life to which she had been called. The opinion she entertained of her own performances, given to the world under her maiden name, Jewsbury, was modest and humble, and, indeed, far below their merits; as is often the case with those who are making trial of their powers, with a hope to discover what they are best fitted for. In one quality, viz. quickness in the motions of her mind, she had, within the range of the Author’s acquaintance, no equal.

Miss Jewsbury’s friendship with the Wordsworths, a relationship which must have proved highly stimulating and beneficial to the young Manchester writer, thus began with the publication of Phantasmagoria and continued during the few years she had left.

23 Ibid., p. 414.
24 Ibid., p. 414, n. 1.
III. PHANTASMAGORIA (1825)

Wordsworth's enthusiasm for Phantasmagoria had few counterparts among contemporary reviews. Like Dorothy Wordsworth and the Literary Chronicle, the Monthly Review deplored Miss Jewsbury's unhappy choice of title which was "unsuitable, and is even disavowed in the second or explanatory name of the book". The Literary Gazette justly found "the prose ... generally humorous", but the "poetry ... rather stamped by the good taste and successful imitation of a cultivated mind, than by the original inspiration of genius". One exception was the New Monthly Magazine, which published a short, but very favourable, notice in which the author's prose and poetry were equally praised. Unlike the contemporary reviews, none of which emphasised Miss Jewsbury's sense of humour and satire, Mrs. Sarah Ellis wrote after Miss Jewsbury's death that in Phantasmagoria, "much of her natural tendency to satire is exhibited". In fact, it was not until the 1880s, a long time after its publication, that Watts's son was in a position to do Phantasmagoria justice by placing it against the literature of the period. He observed that it displays a ready grasp of the limited experiences of a young woman, considerable perception of human nature, and a vein of humour in character and quality greatly in advance of its age, at all events in the writings of women. In this respect it may be affirmed to have preceded its day by at least thirty years.

As Wordsworth asserted, Maria Jane Jewsbury's forte lay in her prose rather than her poetry. Therefore this paper will focus on the former and devote little space to her many poems, most of which are mediocre. Of the more than thirty poems in the volumes of Phantasmagoria—lyrical poems, ballads, dirges and

25 Letter by Dorothy Wordsworth to H.C. Robinson of 26 Nov. 1825: "The Title of the volumes is Phantasmagoria—a title which would not be very taking to me were the Author a Stranger" (Hill, op. cit., iii. 405; Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review, 22 October 1825, p. 673; Monthly Review, cviii (1825), 134-35).
26 Literary Gazette and Journal of Belles Lettres, 29 October 1825, p. 692.
27 New Monthly Magazine, xv (1825), 547.
28 Ellis, "Mrs. Fletcher, Late Miss Jewsbury", Christian Keepsake for 1838, p. 41.
29 Watts, op. cit., i. 184.
historical poems—a few nevertheless do deserve mention. "To
Death, Written in Severe Sickness", with an epigraph from
Beaumont and Fletcher, uses poetical stereotypes and a pompous
rhetoric. Yet, in a dramatic way it evokes the anguish felt by
the author facing death:

MINE ENEMY—that from mine infant years
Hast vexed my soul with phantasies and fears,
Flung over life, e'en in its brightest bloom,
Sepulchral visions, shadows of the tomb,—
They came as heralds to proclaim thee near,—
And now, mysterious monarch, thou art here!
Here, but invisible;—I feel thy dart
Come every moment nearer to my heart;
Thou watchest by my pillow, yet I see
Though in thy grasp, no lineaments of thee;
Thy terror and thy strength surround me now,
But Thou, grim, formless tyrant, where art Thou?
DEATH!—DEATH!—why is it thou art ever sent—
Invisible, and yet Omnipotent!30

Of the poems about foreign countries, "Song of the Hindoo
Women, While Accompanying a Widow to the Funeral Pile of
Her Husband" is the best. First published in 1824 in Watts's
annual the Literary Souvenir for 1825, it was included, perhaps
on his recommendation, in Phantasmagoria.31 Miss Jewsbury
here displays her interest for foreign customs and caters for
the popular passion for exotism. Derivative as the poem may be,
it nevertheless possesses a colourful and tragic end:

The Gooroo, and the wild Fakeer,
Pilgrim, and Parsee crowd thy bier,
And there, the Brahmin nobles far
With flowing robe and white zennaar,
Is waiting with the sacred fire,

30 Maria Jane Jewsbury, "To Death", Phantasmagoria; or, Sketches of Life
and Literature (London: Hurst, Robinson and Co., 1825), i. 37. Subsequent
references to Phantasmagoria are incorporated in the text. I should like to thank
Mr. Peter Spofforth of the Language and Literature Department, Manchester
Central Library, for helping me to acquire copies of Miss Jewsbury's writings.
31 Maria Jane Jewsbury, "Song of the Hindoo Women, While Accompanying a Widow to the Funeral Pile of Her Husband", Literary Souvenir for
1825, pp. 205-207 and Phantasmagoria, ii. 131-34.
Lillah, the phoenix of the pyre!
Each precious gum and odorous bough,
Have grove and forest yielded now,
To rear a costlier shrine for thee,
Than blest the bird of Araby.
Haste then, with glittering fingers dress
The couch thy faithful limbs must press;
And scatter with a tearless eye
Thy flowers upon each passer by;—
While shouts of triumph to thy fame,
Shall mingle with the mounting flame
That bears thee as a chariot bright,
To Vishnoo's thousand halls of light:—
Haste, Lillah haste, the rites are done,
Thy last bright thread of life is spun! (Ph., ii. 133-34)

For a modern reader the best parts of Phantasmagoria are the essays where Miss Jewsbury tries her pen at literary criticism or aims at revealing the hypocrisy of contemporary society. Both categories serve as outlets for her wit and humour, qualities which distinguished her from other minor writers of the day. As we have seen, Dorothy Wordsworth thought that these “essays shew uncommon aptitude in discerning the absurd or ridiculous in manners”. Miss Jewsbury saw through respectability, so important to the petty bourgeoisie, cleverly dissected fine appearances, and held up realities for the observation of her readers. This art was continued by her sister Geraldine, particularly in her novels The Half-Sisters (1848) and Marian Withers (1851); it is by no means unlikely that she was influenced by Maria Jane's writings as well as by the atmosphere prevailing in the Jewsbury home. There, honest work was respected and a person's ability to make his own fortune, combined with honesty and a good heart, was rated above society's emphasis on splendid appearances. It is difficult to discern what the two sisters imbibed in the Manchester home, what was innate and what was perfected through hard work, but we may safely assume that Maria Jane's candid ridicule of society was instrumental in shaping Geraldine, the novelist.

In “An Old Bachelor's Trip to Paris” and “A Young Lady's Trip to Paris”, Miss Jewsbury presents exactly the same trip and the same incidents from two opposite points of view. While mocking at the old bachelor's insularity, the author deplores his
total lack of imagination, which makes everything unlike its English counterpart slightly suspect:

I slept in a bed fastened to the wall, having no curtain at the feet; which I considered as at once uncomfortable and indecorous. My wash hand basin was flat bottomed, and shaped much like my old fashioned soup tureen. ... If you want to see fine scenery, I advise you to remain at home, for there is none here. ... What business have the stomacks of a free, wise, constitutional people, like ourselves, with rognons de mouton au vin de Champagne, or le carbonnade à la chicorée, or le ragout mélé, and half a hundred other kickshaw fricassées, and fricandeaux? (Ph., i. 86-88)

It is the biting contrast between the old bachelor's and the young lady's reactions to the same phenomenon that creates the humour. This is how the latter sees the French cuisine:

And then their names so different from your low plough-boy English ones—"boiled beef and greens!" roast goose and apple sauce!" horrid! I am sure after poulet nouveau en fricassée pigeons de volière aux pointes d'asperges—omelette soufflée and beignets d'abricot, I shall never bear to pronounce, much less partake of, the gross aliments of our own country. (Ph., i. 96)

The old bachelor's lack of insight into other epochs is blatant, and one can sense the author chuckling in the background as she has him describe the catacombs in Paris: "The Catacombs are galleries under ground, filled and ornamented with millions of human skulls and bones, which any one may see for a franc. God grant that I may die in England, and have a grave to myself" (Ph., i. 90). "Thus it is", Miss Jewsbury concludes the essay, "one person travels and sees only a naked desert, whilst another person of different habits and dispositions, follows and discovers a paradise" (Ph., i. 92).

If Miss Jewsbury's portrait of the old bachelor mocks at her countrymen's lack of tolerance and understanding, her description of the young lady satirises fashionable education for women which engenders in them a love of artificiality. The young lady kept two albums, one for pictures and one for poetry. She acquired a taste,—a taste for polite literature, for scenery, for satire, for sentiment; a taste, in short, for every thing elegant and intellectual. She had visited the Lakes by moonlight, and sketched a part of them;—she doted on Moore's melodies, and wept over Lord Byron's descriptions of his own miseries. (Ph., i. 94)
"An Old Bachelor's Trip to Paris" and "A Young Lady's Trip to Paris" clearly demonstrate Miss Jewsbury's aptitude for gauging the absurd side of her countrymen. The two protagonists represent two generations, two worlds—the eighteenth-century rural gentleman versus the insipid and flippant young girl of the 1820s, a product of an education which the author found sorely lacking. For a young writer exposed to the energy, vitality and enterprise of Manchester, neither of these two worlds possessed the candour, honesty and simplicity she strived for.

In "Going to Be Married" Miss Jewsbury contrasts appearances and reality and again criticises an educational system which encourages superficiality and artificiality in young girls. The future bride, a true product of such an education, "is a pretty little simpering girl of eighteen; one, to whom Thought never occasioned a head ache, until it became necessary to 'decide' on the colour of the wedding pelisse" (Ph., ii. 137). It is a hectic time, when the milliner is of "infinitely more importance than the lover himself" and great responsibilities rest on the bride's mother, for "does not all the eclat of the bridal depend upon her exertions? The happiness or misery of the married life is a secondary, or at least an after thought" (Ph., ii. 138). Miss Jewsbury's implication is clear; keeping up a respectable surface is more important than the future bride's happiness. Moreover, Miss Jewsbury deplores the fact that the education provided for girls does little to eradicate vanity and materialism. To her, love of finery and eagerness to show off in front of one's friends are equally repulsive: the young bride displays "the costly baubles with affected indifference and ill-concealed triumph" (Ph., ii. 139), and welcomes a party of "spiteful vulgar creatures", three of whom are spinsters, only as an excuse for demonstrating her own happiness, a happiness based merely on fine clothes and jewelry. In this essay, Miss Jewsbury's satire implicitly raises important questions: Why should girls be brought up to value the surface—appearances—more than important matters? Why should they become the victims of an education that only too often turned them into thoughtless simpletons, devoid of serious interests?

The purpose of "A Rural Excursion", on the other hand, is solely to amuse. Here, the narrator is a young man who participates in a picnic arranged by a group of ladies. The caterers are old maids who grossly underestimate the appetite
of the company and consequently, the narrator suffers from hunger. With subtle humour Miss Jewsbury renders this scene:

Six mouths in addition to my own, and that of a great lubberly gormandising lad, one of those interesting beings called "fine children"—whom his mother had smuggled into the party on the plea of his "being useful". I knew better; my prophetic eye perceived, that his only "use" would be to make our "little less". To mend matters, the ladies, as usual on such occasions, could eat "no breakfast"—but one and all declared, what excellent appetites they should have for the "cold collation". Unfortunately the more clearly I perceived that starvation awaited me, the more impossible it was I saw to escape. There was not time to get up a tooth-ache, or head-ache, or indeed an available ache of any kind. (Ph., ii. 213)

In "A Rural Excursion" it is evident that Maria Jane Jewsbury knew her Jane Austen. The acute sense for the comic situation, the clear perception of the interaction between characters, expressed in witty dialogue, and the delight in delineating human weaknesses, are all strongly reminiscent of the latter, particularly the excursion to Box Hill in *Emma*.

"Religious Novels" is outstanding in the group of essays dealing with literary criticism or the relationship between literature, the writer and the reading public. Disgusted with writers letting fashion direct their choice of subject, Miss Jewsbury does not withhold her satire. Literature should emanate from the writer's convictions, from his having something to say and not be "got up" to suit the taste of the readers, thus benefiting the writer's pocket:

There is a fashion in literature, as well as in dress ... Both emanate, in the first instance, from individual fancy; both eventually become more or less the fancy of the public. A fashionable colour, and a fashionable writer—a trimming and a tale—a pattern and a poet—are only the rage for a short period: ... Some writers, fully aware that the public is an animal given to change, avoid being superseded by others, by always taking care to supersede themselves. As soon as one child of the brain is nursed, clothed, christened, and established in the world, another, and another still succeeds—Each stepping where its brother stood ... It is not merely that different authors have thus in turn "their exits and their entrances", but from time to time distinct species of books appear, wearing the fashionable colours of the day, and evidently got up to suit the manner, whim, taste, and temper, uppermost on the surface of the passing moment; (Ph., i. 41-43)
In satirising the religious novelists, whom she generally found defective both in inventive and descriptive powers, Miss Jewsbury does not spare the lash:

Go into a bookseller's shop and observe what publications chiefly cover his counter. You will find them religious fictions—dressed out in some shape or other, to catch all ages, suit all tastes, and please all sects. Numerous as the frogs and flies of Egypt, first appear the novels for the nursery—sentimental sixpenny histories, and equally sentimental twopenny tracts, which embody as much wisdom and goodness in the character of a little hero just out of petticoats, as might dignify a man six feet high. These are destined for the "juvenile and curly"—may our nurseries speedily afford proof that they have not been written in vain! and may the Tommies, and Billies, and Johnnies, and Harries of the rising generation, be but half as wise, and a quarter as good, as their namesakes in print! Then comes the full grown religious novel,—written to allure "both the grave and the gay"; taking you therefore by easy stages from the prayer-meeting to the ball-room—from the church or chapel, to the theatre—with its choice poetry, and affecting death beds—its descriptions of nature and character, and its caricatures of both!—Lastly, follows its first cousin the religious tale—designated by some pretty and sounding and selling name—"Henry, a tale", by the author of "Eliza, a tale"; or a "tale for Sundays", not a whit different from those written to be read on Saturdays; (Ph., i. 44-45)

The light, mocking tone, in which "Religious Novels" opens, gives way, however, to a more serious note, caused by the author's doubts about the kind of religion presented in religious novels. For Maria Jane Jewsbury religion was too serious a subject to be trifled with, and in her opinion sentimental religion dressed in a "rose-coloured dress" had been substituted for genuine faith. Miss Jewsbury concludes "Religious Novels" with advice to writers of such books. Here, her rejection of set patterns for characters and plots takes the form of overt ridicule, and is rendered with a Wittiness that characterises the whole essay:

In the first place, they may have the full benefit of the novelist's privilege,—that of making the heroine a beautiful doll, and the hero a handsome simpleton. They may kill either the one or the other, or both, by the help of consumption or love;—I recommend the latter disease, as being the more lingering of the two, and therefore more profitable both for the author and the apothecary ... One, or perhaps two characters may be thus permitted to do nothing but love, and
die, and go to heaven, but it will be highly expedient that the rest, if less interesting, should be more active characters. (Ph., i. 48-49)

In “The Young Author” Miss Jewsbury portrays a young, vain fop convinced of his own excellence and literary talents. He “commenced his career by reading every new novel—sporting every new opinion—circulating the cant of the most commonplace critics—and adopting the pet phrases of the worst periodicals” (Ph., i. 189). Affectation takes the place of simplicity:

As a “young author”, he would have considered it very wrong to have been reasonable, or, to use his mother’s phrase, “like other people”; and he accordingly adopted all those eccentricities and affectations by which little geniuses endeavour to make themselves appear great. (Ph., i. 191)

In exposing the young author’s method of composition, revealed in his diary, Miss Jewsbury again takes up the subject of women. Any ideas propounded by the young author, by now an epitome of vanity and affectation, automatically assume an air of ridicule. Thus, when he denounces women writers, his denunciation becomes Miss Jewsbury’s instrument for condemning the stupidity of those who judge the quality of literature by the sex of the writer rather than by its inherent qualities:

“Mem:—To read over the Old Essayists, in order to see whether something may not be stolen from them and dressed up again—perfectly benevolent, since no one reads them now—have been most dreadfully overpraised ... Wrote yesterday six Sonnets in imitation of Milton’s best—found it very easy. Parodied “Auld Robin Gray”; and gave the “Improvisatrice” a regular cutting up—perfectly infamous for a woman to write, and to write well; ought to be satisfied with reading what men write. Shall make a point of abusing every clever book written by a woman. (Ph., i. 194-95)

As a parody of different types of literary criticism flourishing at the time Miss Jewsbury’s essay, “First Efforts in Criticism”, is striking. Besides featuring examples of exaggeratedly negative and positive reviews, it assails with considerable humour the tendency of the quarterlies to publish very long reviews. To appreciate the audacity of Miss Jewsbury’s venture, it is important to recall that Southey, the Poet Laureate, was prone to writing such reviews. As Alaric A. Watts explains:

It is necessary to bear in mind that the “great and good” Mr. Southey,
as it was the fashion with a large section of the community to designate him ... enjoyed in Tory circles somewhat of the moral pre-eminence over the rest of the world so universally ... and that to laugh at him involved a daring only to be paralleled by that of Sydney Smith's man who had been heard to speak disrespectfully of the Equator.\textsuperscript{32}

When Wordsworth, desirous of promoting his young protégé’s interests, sent \textit{Phantasmagoria} to Southey and asked him to review it in the \textit{Quarterly}, it is likely that Wordsworth had not read the two volumes very carefully. It is hardly surprising that the Poet Laureate should have left the work wholly unnoticed, finding, we may assume, Miss Jewsbury's parody too clever to be a laughing matter. With what must have seemed as impertinence to Southey, Miss Jewsbury rails at the absurd practice of critics of making these long, grave reviews a stepping-stone for their own ponderings, more or less irrelevant to the works reviewed. No less than six works on arithmetic, land surveying, navigation, decimal fractions and algebra are treated in this review-parody:

We have prefaced our paper with rather a long list of publications, but as they all relate to the same important subject, though written by different authors, they may be classed together with peculiar propriety. This arrangement precludes, it is true, the necessity of noticing any of the works themselves, but affords ample scope for some highly important remarks on a subject, which having long employed our thoughts, appears well worth the attention of every reflective and well principled mind. (Ph., i. 245)

“First Efforts in Criticism” criticises the power of the critic. The essay is written in the form of a confession of how “I turned critic”. It was only disappointment with authorship that had made the narrator take up criticism, for he had “thought (it was rather unprofessional) that the honour of producing a work of genius, was decidedly above the honour of passing opinions upon it” (Ph., i. 233). The contrast between one negative and one positive review of “Love and Idleness, with other Poems, by Edgar Percival Clerimont” is very amusing. The negative review opens:

And who the deuce is Mr. Edgar Percival Clerimont? And what is

\textsuperscript{32} Watts, op. cit., i. 185.
the reason he cannot be satisfied with his own name?—for that the above lot of syllables was ever pronounced in Christian baptism, passes our belief at any rate. Seriously, we must put a stop to this most vile affectation. If men will rant in rhyme, let them rant away under their own natural cognomens of John Jenkins, or Sam Simkins, or whatever else it may be, instead of assuming some jingling, broken-backed quiz of a name, that tries one's jaws as much as the mastication of a hard crust. (Ph., i. 234-35)

With equal candidness Miss Jewsbury mocks the undeserved praise bestowed on Mr. Clerimont in the positive review:

Edgar Percival Clerimont has a deep feeling of the beautiful (we see it even in his choice of a name, for his own name it certainly is not) and a fine taste for those strongly resembling, but slightly connected analogies, which link the world of nature to that of passion. He manifests too, in every page, a fervent aspiring after the unattained and incomprehensible;—after those beauties which mock mortal eyesight, and come to the longing spirit, in midnight dream and vision. (Ph., i. 238)

The implication of Miss Jewsbury’s parody is clear; critics judge works too superficially and a writer is as likely to become the victim of a negative reviewer as to be turned into an object of admiration by a positive critic—irrespective of the qualities inherent in the work under examination. Her ultimate target is, no doubt, the society which showed the critics undue respect. In “First Efforts in Criticism” there are flashes of genius which indicate that Miss Jewsbury might have become a significant writer in this genre, had she only been allowed to continue her career.

IV. CONVERSION—LETTERS TO THE YOUNG—LAYS OF LEISURE HOURS

The success and growing literary fame following in the wake of Phantasmagoria were dampened by a protracted illness. By June 1826 there was little hope of Miss Jewsbury’s recovery, and Wordsworth wrote to Mr. Watts: “The state of Miss Jewsbury’s health gives me and all her friends very great concern. She is a most interesting person, and would be a great loss should she not recover”.33 After the summer, however, Wordsworth

33 Hill, op. cit., iii. 455. Letter of 18 June 1826. The letter is also reprinted in Watts, op. cit., i. 288.
had occasion to “write a few words to congratulate you upon the turn of the tide of health in your favor”; it gave him “inexpressible pleasure to learn that a streak in the East was appearing after the long night of sickness”. Miss Jewsbury was removed to Leamington for a change of air, and here Dr. Jephson’s treatment restored her to convalescence. It was during her severe illness that her mind turned to religion and became obsessed with Death, and all her subsequent writings are deeply imbued with religious sentiment. Her numerous letters written during the convalescence to her teenage sister Geraldine, then at school at Tamworth, reflect her desire to inculcate Christian virtues in her younger sister; in fact, she tries to endow Geraldine with her own deep religious beliefs:

Whenever that summons comes—God will have a right to reckon with you—ask yourself this serious question in connection—Who will answer for me?—remember a general hope is no hope at all—to know that there is a Saviour will profit nothing—unless he is your Saviour in this life—he cannot, will not, be your Saviour then—in the commencement of a new era of life, resolve in prayer, to resign yourself to his gracious guidance—tell him your disinclination if you find it in your heart, & ask him to enable you by his Spirit to say from this time “My father thou shalt be the guide of my youth”—Soon very soon the trials & employments of womanhood will commence—earthly relatives & chosen friends may die, may deceive, & certainly cannot always help you—choose then this one friend—who became man that he might pity, those whom as God he designed to save—I am earnest with you my love, for in the precarious state of my health, I naturally think much of the future, not for myself only but for you—if it pleases God to restore me, think how health will be sweetened by finding that in my Sister I have a friend with whom I can take sweet counsel on the things that belong to our everlasting peace ... If on the contrary, God should remove me in comparative youth—let me at least have the consolation of having you in possession of that “pearl of great price”—which is well <...> by the sacrifice of all that we have.

The religious crisis through which Maria Jane passed not only

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35 Unprinted letter by Maria Jane Jewsbury to Geraldine Jewsbury dated 18 August 1827 in the John Rylands University Library, Rylands English MS. 1310. I should like to thank Miss Glenise Matheson, Keeper of Manuscripts, for permission to quote from Miss Jewsbury’s letters there. See n. 38 below.
influenced her views on fame, society and "earthly" enjoyments, but also convinced her that life without faith in God was not worth living. This newly-gained insight found expression in her *Letters to the Young* (1828), a series of letters which, as she put it in the "Advertisement",

comprise a real, and not fictitious correspondence. They are the fruit of a protracted recovery from long illness; and are published with a chastened hope, that although originally designed for individual characters and cases, they may not admit of a less restricted application.\(^{36}\)

*Letters to the Young* was so much in demand that a second edition was published in 1829 and a third, "revised and enlarged", edition appeared in 1832. Nevertheless, it was largely ignored by contemporary reviewers, perhaps because it may have been considered a series of private letters.\(^{37}\) The epigraph, by Waller, sets the tone of the book:

No, though arrived at all the world can aim,  
This is the mark and glory of our fame—  
A soul capacious of the Deity.

Like Miss Jewsbury's letters to her sister Geraldine,\(^{38}\) *Letters to the Young* contains many and sincere admonitions about the importance of a Christian way of life. Unlike her letters to her sister, however, which are in part very chatty and informal, *Letters to the Young* possesses a unity of tone and ideas; Maria Jane Jewsbury's religious views dominate the work and are emphasised in every "Letter". For her, religion is joy and permeates all of life:

Religion, is not in reality, a gloomy, unintelligible thing; a principle, which, when admitted into the human mind, is destructive of intellect and happiness ... Religion is not a thing of Sundays and sermons,

\(^{36}\) Maria Jane Jewsbury, *Letters to the Young* (London, 1828). All page references are to this edition and are included in the text. Susan Howe contends that *Letters to the Young* was "originally composed of actual letters to Geraldine away at school" (Geraldine Jewsbury, p. 11).

\(^{37}\) The *Edinburgh Review* lists *Letters to the Young* among new publications (xlviii (1828), 537).

\(^{38}\) In 1979 the John Rylands University Library acquired 53 letters written by Maria Jane Jewsbury to her sister (now Rylands English MS. 1310). See Miss Matheson's note in the *Bulletin*, lxii (1979), 1-3.
creeds and commentaries; ... it is a life-giving, life-pervading spirit ... True religion is cheerful. (LY, 63)

She also stresses that religion should rule our actions: religion is action rather than contemplation: “I know well that man was made for occupation: that a life wholly contemplative, is not a Christian life” (LY, 64). Besides treating religion itself, Miss Jewsbury investigates the many sides of life which should be influenced by religion. Without true faith young people are likely to experience unhappiness, emptiness and vanity. This is what she writes about literature:

The ardent love of literature, though a healthy taste in itself, is not healthily exercised when it does not refresh our spirits, stimulate us to action, and, by invigorating our minds, reconcile us to whatsoever may be painful in our lot. (LY, 113-14)

In several of the twenty-four letters Miss Jewsbury warns her young friends against intellectual snobbery: “beware of two things”, she says, “of so estimating what is intellectual, that you turn with disgust from that which is common-place; and of so tolerating the latter, that you lose your zest for that which is superior” (LY, 142). Worldly fame and erudition sought for its own sake are far removed from the true spirit of Christianity, according to Miss Jewsbury, who asks: “Would you then be some sparkling wit, or admired poet, or erudite scholar, who, having wholly sought his own glory, and wholly received his reward in this life, has nothing further to expect”? (LY, 162) Letters to the Young voices Maria Jane Jewsbury’s message about the futility of fame in this world. After all, this life is only a preparation for our eternal life and it is how we fulfil our Christian duties here that will count on the Day of Judgment. One example is her views on education; facts and fashionable accomplishments are not its ultimate purpose:

“What is the true end of education?” To store the memory with facts? to grace the person with accomplishments? to enrich the understanding with noble sentiments? These are but the means—the way. The true end of education, is, to fit a thinking being for the part she is to perform in life, as the true end of life is to prepare the same being for eternity; so that merely to be well informed is not to be well educated ... Will others benefit by our education, as well as ourselves? When you leave school you become a member of society, and, as such, the duties of society devolve upon you. (LY, 140)
To sum up, Maria Jane Jewsbury’s basic message in *Letters to the Young*, a message to which she was going to give further emphasis in *The Three Histories*, is—forget fame and look to the Lord. Obsessed with religion, she attributed the misery of young people to one sole reason—lack of faith. Even if she had a somewhat simplified vision of how to solve the anxiety of teenagers, her book manifests frankness and immediacy; by pouring out her own faith she hopes to spread to others the spiritual values she finds necessary to meet the temptations of the world.

While Dora Wordsworth was Maria Jane Jewsbury’s most intimate friend during her youth, Mrs. Hemans, the fashionable poetess, was to take her place during Maria Jane’s mature years. Chorley tells us how Mrs. Hemans “would enrich and mellow the quick and naturally somewhat harsher mind” of Maria Jane, while the latter “would sometimes playfully exercise her great natural powers of reasoning”.

Just as Miss Jewsbury found a kindred spirit in Mrs. Hemans, she herself occupied a very special place among Mrs. Hemans’s literary friends—Miss Mitford, Joanna Baillie and Mary Howitt. As Chorley saw it, she deserved to be singled out “both for the warm and energetic heartiness of regard displayed by her in a long and unbroken intimacy, and because her brilliant talents and high worth have passed away without receiving the honour of exciting the regret which they deserved”.

Despite great differences in temperament, the two writers had mutual interests, or rather obsessions, which colour their writings: they were “cemented by the sympathy of their souls, on what appears to have been to both, a subject of absorbing and profound interest—that of death and eternity”.

Desirous of getting to know Mrs. Hemans better, Maria Jane Jewsbury rented a cottage in Wales in the summer of 1828 for herself, Geraldine, and her brothers.

As a consequence of her intimacy with Mrs. Hemans, Maria Jane Jewsbury inscribed her *Lays of Leisure Hours* (1829) to

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39 Chorley, op. cit., i. 172.
40 Ibid., i. 163.
41 Ellis, "Mrs. Fletcher, Late Miss Jewsbury", *Christian Keepsake for 1838*, p. 35.
42 See *Memoir of the Life and Writings of Mrs. Hemans by Her Sister* [Harriet Hughes] (Philadelphia, 1839), pp. 157-58.
the poetess, "in remembrance of the summer passed in her society, and as a memorial alike of admiration and affectionate regard". Unlike Phantasmagoria, this volume contains no suggestive ballads or powerful dirges, but is wholly devoted to lyrical poems such as "Dreams of Heaven", "Love's Likeness", "I Love Thee Rose", and "The Wounded Spirit". Taylor comments in 1846, that "as her strength did not lie in poetry, these contributed little to her literary reputation". This is also proved by the feeble reaction of contemporary periodicals. To my knowledge, only the Literary Gazette paid any attention to the appearance of her book, but it is evident that there was a certain market for this kind of poetry, even if the poems fail to make an impression on a modern reader. The Literary Gazette writes:

The production of elegant and cultivated taste, rather than of original genius, these Lays shew at least that leisure so employed both refines and elevates the mind; and we recommend this little volume cordially to our readers, as awakening various thought and gentle feeling, for a spring morning's companion, associating somewhat of sad but pleasant reflection with every leaf and flower around.

Maria Jane Jewsbury's letters to her sister also testify to the success of her volume. In March 1829 she writes to Geraldine that "I have sent a parcel ... It contains no 'Lays'—I have not a single copy by me—& I have had to give so many commercially, that I can afford to give none for friendship", and she notes how the "Lays go on exceedingly well—I have saved some of the notices to read to you—which are all complimentary—some of them untruly so". Though mediocre, and sometimes trite, Lays of Leisure Hours evidently attracted some attention and may be seen as reflecting the contemporary taste for meditative poetry.

44 Taylor, op. cit., iii. 37.
45 Literary Gazette, 21 Feb. 1829, p. 123.
46 Letter from Maria Jane Jewsbury to her sister Geraldine, postmarked 28 March 1829 (Rylands-Eng. MS. 1310).
47 Letter from Maria Jane Jewsbury to her sister Geraldine of 14 March 1829 (ibid.).
From the early 1820s until the 1850s there flourished a number of yearly published gift-books known as the Annuals. Famous as a producer of finely illustrated books, Rudolph Ackermann started the vogue in November 1822 when he produced the *Forget Me Not, A Christmas and New Year's Present for 1823*. It combined two forms of publication: the English ladies' pocket-book or diary, long in existence, and the German counterpart, *Das Taschenbuch*. When Frederic Shoberl, the editor, saw the success of the German volumes, he surmised that this type of book would find support in England. "The results", as Faxon observes, "must have exceeded his fondest hope, for the 'gift-book' demand increased until it can only be called a fad or a craze".48 This is not an exaggeration, since by 1831 sixty-two different annuals were published in England,49 and during the period 1823 to 1851 Tallent-Bateman lists no less than one hundred and nine annuals published over the years.50 The year 1824 saw the appearance of *Friendship's Offering, or Annual Remembrancer* and by 1825, when Alaric A. Watts's the *Literary Souvenir* was first published, the almanac or diary motif of the first numbers had been discarded and the annuals consisted of steel engravings and original literary contributions—poems, tales and essays. The appeal of the early annuals lay partly in the steel engravings, which were a novelty. Commissioned artists produced engravings first of famous paintings, and then of works of contemporary artists such as Turner, Stothard, Landseer, Wilkie and Eastlake.51 The result was engravings of an exceeding-ly high quality, one single plate of which could cost as much as one hundred and fifty guineas.52 At a time when most paintings were in private collections, the annuals fulfilled a mission by

49 Ibid., p. 130.
giving thousands of people the opportunity of enjoying great works of art.

In most cases the letter-press was subordinate to the illustrations. True, the early annuals appealed to a large reading-public because of the eminent names adorning their tables of contents. Editors pursued writers and paid them lavishly, and it is reported that Sir Walter Scott was offered as much as five hundred pounds for contributions to one annual. Minor writers were commissioned to write poems or stories accompanying the illustrations: the nowadays nearly-forgotten Anna Maria Hall, L. E. L. (Laetitia Elisabeth Landon), Mrs. Opie, Mary Howitt, Felicia Hemans and Maria Jane Jewsbury were all prodigious contributors to the annuals. As Renier notes, "the major writers tended to toss off some trifle or rout out some less successful manuscript; the minor writers produced their usual mediocre lucubrations".

The beauty of the embellishments was rivalled, however, by the sumptuous bindings. Glazed boards and volumes in slip-cases gave place in the late 1820s to silk bindings, gilt morocco, satin, velvet, and even embossed leather. All this made the annuals very popular as gifts for a literary audience, composed mainly of ladies: "'The Annuals', wrote Southey in 1828, "are now the only books bought for presents to young ladies".

With the appearance of the Amulet (1826), the Pledge of Friendship (1826), the Keepsake (1828), the Gem (1829) and the Anniversary (1829), the annuals constituted an important feature in English bookselling. The Literary Souvenir for 1826 sold 6,000 copies, and the annuals were reviewed regularly in the literary monthlies and quarterlies. Flourishing from 1823, losing some of their vogue in the 1830s and dying out in the 1850s, the annuals were an important event on the contemporary literary scene.

With over seventy contributions to thirteen different annuals, Maria Jane Jewsbury is one of the most prolific contributors listed in Boyle's Index to the Annuals. On the whole, these
writings epitomise her "typical" side. Regarding the annuals, no doubt, as a steady source of income, Miss Jewsbury conformed to the accepted pattern: her poems and stories savour of the propriety and refinement required from annuals intended as ornaments for the drawing-room table and would not have given offence to the most fastidious mind. Consequently, her contributions betray little of the original mind and satirical vein displayed in Phantasmagoria and The Three Histories and are, in their mediocrity, of little interest to a modern reader. Watts's the Literary Souvenir, the Amulet and the Winter's Wreath (est. 1828) published some thirty poems and tales by Miss Jewsbury. When the first issue of the Literary Souvenir appeared, it included her "The Young Author", a sketch which was to be reprinted in Phantasmagoria. Besides Miss Jewsbury, it listed contributors such as Coleridge, Southey, Campbell, Miss Mitford, Mrs. Hemans and Miss Landon. Unlike the Literary Souvenir, the Amulet, or Christian and Literary Remembrancer was a religious annual, but, as Renier observes, "apart from a more solemn than romantic preoccupation with deaths, graves, church-yards, infanticide and the sufferings of slaves, and an occasional reference to angel visits, The Amulet differs not very much from its more secular companions". Here, Miss Jewsbury published her tale "The Hero of Coliseum", which is an attempt to evoke the past and render the atmosphere of other civilisations. With "The Sisters of Bethany", illustrating a painting by C. R. Leslie, and "Sophie", a poem accompanying a drawing, she became one of the many contributors commissioned to write suitable tales or poems for already existing engravings. The Winter's Wreath printed her "The Bergsman and His Guest", a tale exploring the popular subject of the early years of Sweden's King Gustavus Vasa. With her vivid sense of imagination and sense of humour, she creates a racy tale, set in sixteenth-century Dalecarlia in Sweden.

Miss Jewsbury's contributions to juvenile annuals, such as Mrs. S. C. Hall's the Juvenile Forget-Me-Not (1829) and Mrs.

59 "The Young Author", Literary Souvenir for 1825, pp. 85-93.
60 Renier, op. cit., p. 7.
Alaric Watts's the *New Year's Gift*, take us into a different sphere. On perusing her poems and moral tales for children, one gets the impression that they must have seemed dusty and overdidactic even in the 1830s and that they corresponded more to the parents' idea of what their offspring ought to be exposed to than the children's own taste. Here Miss Jewsbury follows the example set by, for instance, Mrs. Sherwood in *The History of the Fairchild Family* and conveys instruction, aiming at correcting little vices and errors under the guise of amusement. Behind titles such as "Recreation and Dissipation; or, the Two Harrys and Lucys" and "Temper in Trifles", are tales the plots of which are easily predictable and the style of which is sentimental and moralistic. The importance of Miss Jewsbury's many contributions to the annuals lies not in their literary value so much as in the fact that she participated actively in a literary vogue with compositions which reflect the popular taste of the time.

The second part of this article will be published in the following number of the *Bulletin*.

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