North and South was Elizabeth Gaskell's third novel. Her first full length novel, Mary Barton: A Tale of Manchester Life, was published in 1848, and in 1853 the same publishers, Chapman and Hall, issued Ruth. Meanwhile the Cranford papers had been published in Household Words and Mrs. Gaskell also had several short tales to her credit.

Dickens saw in her writing qualities which he sought for his new family journal Household Words and it is with this invitation to Mrs. Gaskell to contribute to his magazine that an account of the composition of North and South may profitably begin.

He wrote on 31 January 1850:

I do not know what your literary vows of temperance or abstinence may be, but as I do honestly know that there is no living English Writer whose aid I would desire to enlist, in preference to the authoress of Mary Barton (a book that most profoundly affected and impressed me) I venture to ask you whether you can give me any hope that you will write a short tale, or any number of tales, for the projected pages.

No writers' names will be used neither my own nor any others—every paper will be published without any signature; and all will seem to express the general mind and purpose of the journal, which is the raising up of those that are down, and the general improvement of our social condition. I should set a value on your help, which your modesty can hardly imagine; and I am perfectly sure that the least result of your reflection or observation in respect of the life around you, would attract attention and do good.¹

One may remark upon the extent to which North and South fulfils his expressed policy of "raising up those that are down, and the general improvement of our social condition." This


The symbol (h) after a footnote indicates that the holograph has been examined and that, in some cases, the text used in this article is more correct than the printed source referred to in the footnote.

aim is expounded more fully in the first number of *Household Words* and it is easy to understand how Dickens came to write to Mrs. Gaskell after receiving the first section of the novel introducing all the main characters of high and low degree that "All the MS that I have... might have been expressly written to meet the exigencies of the case".¹

Before turning to contemporary correspondence directly relevant to the composition of *North and South*, comprising chiefly the letters from Dickens to Mrs. Gaskell, the nature and vagaries of the relationship between Charles Dickens, as editor of *Household Words* between 1850 and 1859, and his authors and printer should be indicated.

From the inception of the magazine he was concerned with detail and format as well as with policy. He wrote to Henry Wills, his sub-editor, on matters of the smallest detail; the single inverted comma, a top-heavy title and, of course, uncorrected proofs. In one letter he wrote:

> A great part of Mrs. Gaskell's story² has come in. It is very good, but long. It will require to be printed either in three or four numbers.

By December 1850 he was expressing to Wills a slight irritation with another of Mrs. Gaskell's stories, *The Heart of John Middleton*.

Dickens himself apparently gave it its title and was pleased with its aptness, if not with the conclusion of the tale. His final sentence in this letter is a pungent expression of the dissatisfaction most common among detractors of Mrs. Gaskell's work, and occasionally shared by those who admire it. As a succinct account of a complex emotional response it deserves quotation: "I wish to Heaven her people would keep a little firmer on their legs!"³

It appears that, justifiably, like a captain on the bridge of his ship, Dickens as editor of *Household Words* felt himself ultimately responsible for the perfect performance of every department. Typeface, punctuation, proof-reading at every stage, titles for his authors' contributions, division of contributions into numbers and, of course, selection of material—he directed the whole in every part.

¹ Dexter, ii. 562 (h). ² *Lizzie Leigh*. ³ Dexter, ii. 250.
There is enough material here in Dickens' side of the correspondence to point already to attitudes and conditions which could lead to more serious difficulties. Though his letters to Mrs. Gaskell were often light and bantering, a mood to which she readily responded, there is sufficient firmness, perhaps stubbornness, in both their characters to provide material for a clash.

*Household Words* continued to publish contributions from Mrs. Gaskell through its early years although according to Dickens' letters to her not as frequently as he wished. After referring to the printing of one of her *Cranford* papers he continues, writing from Tavistock House on 13 April 1853: "I do assure you that you cannot write too much for *Household Words*." ¹

It may be that at this point there was stirring in Mrs. Gaskell's mind the possibility of writing something on a larger scale than anything she had so far sent to Dickens; she cannot have doubted that her short tales and ghost stories would be welcomed at the office of *Household Words*. Presumably something new in length and intention must have been contemplated to cause her to seek reassurance about its suitability in advance of composition. Having already published *Mary Barton* and *Ruth* in book form with Chapman and Hall it is not clear why she should offer her next major work to *Household Words* to be published serially, unless one may speculate that she hoped, while giving expression and form to a theme about which she felt strongly to stay for a time Dickens' pressing invitations to contribute to *Household Words*. Certainly the theme was in accordance with the reforming aims of his magazine. Further, she may have been misled by the ease with which the *Cranford* papers, after publication in *Household Words*, were to be gathered into a book.²

Three weeks later, Dickens wrote again to Mrs. Gaskell, assuring her that "the subject is certainly not too serious,"³ asking her to send the papers, and promising to think of a title.

Presumably, after receiving an encouraging response to what she later called a "half-promise" of a more substantial contribution in different mood, Mrs. Gaskell outlined to Dickens the field of concern of the new novel, and expressed her doubts about the public's response. After the misunderstanding of her purpose

¹ Dexter, 457 (h). ² Ibid. ii. 457 (h). ³ Ibid. ii. 459 (h).
and viewpoint which had greeted both *Mary Barton* and *Ruth* it seems very likely that she would be anxious about taking up again a more serious theme, particularly after the success of the very different *Cranford* papers.

In 1854 Dickens wrote a new year's greeting expressing his appreciation of her "valuable aid to *Household Words* during (his) absence abroad". It is a most generous appreciation of her work.

On 5 February Dickens wrote to Mr. Gaskell and included a message for his wife that he had "all the calculations" ready for her.

Within two weeks Dickens had received a letter from Mrs. Gaskell. In his reply, dated 18 February, Dickens refers to "the distraction of (his) mind in (his) story", which suggests strongly, when taken in conjunction with the final paragraph, that Mrs. Gaskell herself had owned to some perturbation about the difficulties of dividing her story into the sections of roughly equal length that serial publication demanded. Presumably the "calculations" which Dickens offered had been sent to her and she was finding it difficult to mould her story in accordance with them. It is ironical that the calculations proved to have been incorrect. In this letter lies the seed of the difficulty and disagreement which arose before the novel was completed. The reassuring tone of the final paragraph was deceptive:

Don't put yourself out at all as to the division of the story into parts. I think you had far better write it in your own way. When we come to get a little of it into type, I have no doubt of being able to make such little suggestions as to breaks of chapters as will carry us over all that easily.

During the two months which elapsed between the surviving letters from Dickens to Mrs. Gaskell it appears that Mrs. Gaskell had referred her anxieties about the introduction of a strike into her story to John Forster who on 18 April suggested that she should make a direct enquiry to Dickens, although he felt that their different purposes in *Hard Times* and *North and South* would obviate any clash.

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1 Dexter, ii. 531.  
2 Ibid. ii. 539 (h).  
3 Ibid. ii. 542 (h).  
4 From a copy of an extract from a letter to Mrs. E. C. Gaskell in the Brotherton Collection in the University of Leeds. By kind permission.
Apparently Mrs. Gaskell immediately took Forster’s advice for on 21 April Dickens wrote to Mrs. Gaskell denying any intention of striking and advising her to look at the first parts of *Hard Times*.1

Two days later Mrs. Gaskell wrote at length to John Forster, relieved that Dickens was not going to strike and proposing to introduce a new character in “Margaret”, a young girl from the country “to be in love with Mr. Thornton in a passionate despairing way”.2

The first specific reference to a strike in Milton occurs in chapter 15 (eighth part),3 but in chapter 10 (sixth part) where Mr. Thornton takes tea with the Hales the industrial conditions which give rise to the strike are sketched and phrases such as “masters and men”, later to be used as a title for chapter 15, and the “battle between the two classes”4 are introduced. One would guess that Mrs. Gaskell’s query to Dickens as to whether he was proposing to include a strike in *Hard Times* would have been raised not later than the writing of chapter 10. There are close parallels between Dickens’ letter and the discussion in chapter 10 in the dual theme of the tyranny of the masters and the discontent and hopelessness of the men which suggest an unconscious echoing or even an interchange of ideas between the two writers.

During May Mrs. Gaskell sent to Forster seventy-six pages of her novel with the comment that she had “got the people well on—but... in too lengthy a way”, admitting that she had “never had time to prune it”.5 It appears that at about the same time she had speculated also to her friend Emily Shaen (née Winkworth) on the possible introduction of the new character which she had mentioned to Forster. Mrs. Gaskell valued Mrs. Shaen’s appreciation of the story, “she, trained in German criticism”. Mrs. Shaen found the story “cramfull of possible interests” and advised against introducing another character. “Still”, Mrs. Gaskell wrote, “I feel it to be flat and grey”.6

The next letter from Dickens is the most important of those

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which refer to *North and South*. The corrected date reads Thursday Evening (Fifteenth) June 1854:

I have read the MS. you have had the kindness to send me, with all possible attention and care. . . . It opens up an admirable story, is full of character and power, has a strong suspended interest in it (the end of which, I don't in the least foresee), and has the very best marks of your hand upon it. . . . If I had had more to read, I certainly could not have stopped, but must have read on.

Now, addressing myself to the consideration of its being published in weekly portions, let me endeavour to show you as distinctly as I can, the divisions into which it must fall. According to the best of my judgement and experience, if it were divided in any other way—reference being always had to the weekly space available for the purpose in *Household Words*—it would be mortally injured.

I would end No. 1—With the announcement of Mr. Lennox at the parsonage.

I would end No. 2—With Mr. Hale's announcement to Margaret, that Milton-Northern is the place they are going to. This No. therefore, would contain Lennox's proposal, and the father's communication to his daughter of his leaving the church.

I would end No. 3—With their fixing on the watering-place as their temporary sojourn.

I would end No. 4—With Margaret's sitting down at night in their new house, to read Edith's letter. This No. therefore, would contain the account of Milton, and the new house, and the Mill Owner's first visit.

I would end No. 5—With the Mill-Owner's leaving the house after the tea-visit.

This No. therefore would contain the introduction of his mother, and also of the working father and daughter—the Higgins family.

I would end No. 6—With Margaret leaving their dwelling, after the interview with Bessy when she is lying down.

These Nos. would sometimes require to be again divided into two chapters, and would sometimes want a word or two of conclusion. If you could be content to leave this to me, I could make those arrangements of the text without much difficulty. The only place where I do not see my way, and where the story—always with a special eye to this form of publication—seems to me to flag unmanageably, without an amount of excision that I dare scarcely hint at, is between Nos. 2 and 3, where the dialogue is long—is on a difficult and dangerous subject—and where, to bring the murder out at once, I think there is a necessity for fusing two Nos. into one. This is the only difficult place in the whole 114 sides of foolscap.

As nearly as I can calculate, about 18 sides of your writing would make a weekly No. On about this calculation, the MS I have, would divide at the good points I have mentioned, and pretty equally. I do not apologize to you for laying so much stress on the necessity of its dividing well, because I am bound to put before you my perfect conviction that if it did not, the story would be wasted—would miss its effect as it went on—and would not recover it when published complete. The last consideration is strong with me, because it is based on my long comparison of the advantages and disadvantages of the periodical form of appearance.

I hope these remarks will not confuse you, but will come out tolerably clear.
after a second reading, and will convey to you the means of looking at your whole
story from the weekly point of view. It cannot, I repeat, be disregarded without
injury to the book. All the MS. that I have—with the exception I have mentioned
and allowing a very reasonable margin indeed for a little compression here and
there—might have been expressly written to meet the exigencies of the case.

Saturday Seventeenth June.

That my calculations might be accurate, I thought it well to stop my note and
send eighteen of your sides to the Printer’s (I took them out at random) to be
calculated. Their estimate exactly accords with mine. I have therefore no doubt
of its correctness.

Is there anything else that I can tell you, or anything else you want to ask me?
Pray do not entertain the idea that you can give me any trouble I shall not be
delighted to encounter.

My address is,

Villa du Camp de droite
Boulogne sur Mer.

—where I shall be anxious to hear from you that you comprehend this long dull
story of mine. That you may the more easily do so, I will make it no longer.

Have you thought of a name? I cannot suggest one without knowing more of
the story. Then perhaps I might hit upon a good title if you did not.¹

At this point we should consider the appearance of the
manuscript which Dickens had before him. Although the
manuscript of *North and South* is lost, it seems reasonable to
suppose from Dickens’ letters² to Mrs. Gaskell about the batches
of manuscript of *North and South* which she sent to him that they
would closely resemble those which survive: foolscap sheets in a
large hand flowing steadily on with little correction and no
indication of any kind of division. It is not clear why, having
asked Dickens for “calculations”, Mrs. Gaskell did not initially
suggest breaks herself; perhaps she was thinking solely of the
length of the novel as a whole.

However, it may be shown that disregard was not her attitude
to serial divisions in the case of *North and South*. A comparison
of the scheme of divisions put forward by Dickens with that to
which Mrs. Gaskell adhered is deferred until a later letter from
Dickens, suggesting the divisions to be made in the second
batch of manuscript which he received from Mrs. Gaskell, can be
considered in conjunction. Early in July, however, Dickens
wrote denying that he had “any ambition to interpose (his) own

¹ Dexter, ii. 561 (h).
² Ibid. 561 and 570.
words of conclusion to the divisions. (He) merely wished to smooth everything for (her) as much as (he) possibly could."1 If Mrs. Gaskell wished the text to be entirely her own Dickens' undertaking to "make . . . arrangements of the text" where "a word or two of conclusion" was needed could reasonably be expected to cause her some concern.

It appears that she had closely considered the implications of his June letter and, seeing further into one aspect of the problem than Dickens, she doubted the wisdom of beginning to print before the novel was complete, but his answer was indefinite. Probably the title "Margaret Hale" was now mooted for Dickens wrote:

Margaret Hale is as good a name as any other; and I merely referred to its having a name at all, because books usually have names, and you had left the title of the story blank.2

His manner is haughty as he disposes of her reticence in matters of advertising:

I should propose to advertise the story, exactly as I allow my own stories to be advertised; and I assure you that I have a very considerable respect for my art and a very considerable respect for myself.3

Over a month passed between the two letters in which Dickens recommended the part divisions in the two batches of manuscripts and there is a marked change in tone between them.

There is evidence that the disagreement between Dickens and Mrs. Gaskell was bruited abroad at least among the circle of her correspondents. In a letter to Catherine Winkworth dated 27 July the newly married Charlotte Brontë concluded thus:

I can write no more at present; only that under the circumstances I can't see that Mrs. Gaskell is one whit in error. Mr. Dickens may, I think, have been somewhat too exacting, but if she found or thought her honour pledged, she does well to redeem it to the best of her ability—as she will—and I have no doubt it will be worthily done.4

One must at some stage lament the absence of so much of Mrs. Gaskell's side of the correspondence. The obscurity of Charlotte

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1 Quoted by A. B. Hopkins, *HLQ*, ix (1946), 370.
2 Quoted by A. B. Hopkins, loc. cit.
3 Ibid.
Brontë's reference to a pledge of honour may be dissipated a little by reference to Mrs. Gaskell's phrase in a letter to Mrs. Anna Jameson "a half-promise . . . understood as a whole one".¹

After a short visit to London Dickens returned to Boulogne and on 26 July wrote to Mrs. Gaskell concerning the second batch of manuscript of *North and South*. The tone is cool and businesslike, with none of the former friendly references to family affairs:

... Confining myself as in my last note, strictly to the business of the subject (that I may be the better understood), I proceed, first, to say how I would divide it.

I would make five weekly parts of it. The first to close with the end of the strike conversation held by Margaret and her father with Mr. Thornton. The second to close with the receipt of the dinner invitation. The third to close with Margaret's leaving Higgins's house after Boucher has charged his miseries upon Higgins and the Union. The fourth to close with her being admitted into the Mill on the day of the Riot, and the porter's shutting the gate. The fifth to close with the end of the Thornton declaration scene, and the end of the MS I have.

This fifth part would be a long one, but the interest and action are strong, and it would not be too long. It appears to me that the conversation in the first part is unnecessarily lengthy, and I think that portion—not only as a portion but as a part of the book—could be very materially improved if you would not object to make some curtailment in the printed proof.

*North and South* appears to me to be a better name than *Margaret Hale*. It implies more, and is expressive of the opposite people brought face to face by the story.

I should be happy to begin the publication at once, having so much MS. in hand. I should advertise the tale as to be completed in about 20 weekly portions, and as being by the author of *Mary Barton*. These particulars, and its name, would be all that the announcement need state. By the expression "at once", I mean on Saturday the Second of September, nominally: but really on the preceding Wednesday—the No being always actually published on Wednesday, though dated Saturday.

I do not understand whether you permit me to divide the story with chapters. But I believe you are aware that it will at least be necessary to begin every weekly portion as a new chapter.

May I ask you to be so good as to reply to me, as soon as you can, whether you are content to have the story announced as I have proposed. It is very important that early advantage should be taken of all the usual channels of literary advertisement. There is no time to spare.²

Taking the simpler points of the letter first:

The title of *North and South*, proposed in this letter, is generally regarded as Dickens' suggestion. There seem to be

¹ Chapple & Pollard, 328. ² Dexter, ii. 570 (h).
firmer grounds for assuming that the title of *Margaret Hale* was Mrs. Gaskell's own; not only is it in line with the titles of her two earlier novels, *Mary Barton* and *Ruth*, but she herself had referred to the novel in letters to friends as *M. Hale*.

The second point concerns the wisdom of Dickens' decision to begin publication of a novel which was only half completed. In retrospect one may see that the "MS. in hand" amounted to something less than half the novel as it was published in 1855. Yet Dickens himself had already by his scheme of divisions used up eleven of the suggested twenty weekly portions, while making the assumption that the quite extensive excisions which he ordered would be acceptable—even possible—to the author. One recalls his words after reading the first batch of manuscript: "the end of which I don't in the least foresee". It seems that neither did he at this point foresee the extent of the novel foreshadowed by the development of the plot so far. In the event by "the end of the Thornton declaration scene" the novel had entered into its thirteenth weekly part.

In the second half of this letter Dickens appears to be referring to matters raised by Mrs. Gaskell, covering the date of publication, the amount of space available and the manner of advertisement. The last two were matters which had come under discussion before, but even at this late stage with publication to begin only two numbers ahead of that which was already proof Dickens remained indefinite in one important particular; in using the phrase "about 20 weekly portions" he still left in doubt the total amount of space to be made available in *Household Words* for *North and South*. It was not made any clearer by the advertisement which Dickens instructed Wills to insert in the number dated 19 August which promised readers that the new serial would be "completed in Five Months".

On 31 July Dickens wrote a long letter to Mrs. Gaskell, clearly she had shown some distress at his previous curt tone. He excuses himself without admitting the existence of any irritation with her:

I merely confined myself to the business-part of our communication, because you seemed a little to resent my doing anything else. Your pleasant letter blows

1 Chapple & Pollard, 282.
all that seeming, away in a breath. So here I am in my own natural proportions with all my imperfections on my head.

I have given out the announcement in the manner we have agreed on, for beginning on (erasure) Saturday the Second of September—that is (as I have already said) nominally: the real day being the Wednesday previous to that date. I cannot positively reply about the Bills. My own impression is, in every case, that they do no good. But it is a publisher's question, and I have told Bradbury and Evans that if they consider it must be done—why then it must. But I have laid this injunction on them—that the advertising is in no case to be different from that of Hard Times as I approved of it. And I am sure you will find that to be as unobjectionable as such a thing can be.

Will you send up to London, addressed to Wills, the MS I had at first, and returned to you? We will have a quantity of it got into type, and I will merely divide it into chapters. If I ever have a suggestion to make, I will intimate it on the proof in pencil. You will take no notice of it, if you don't approve of it.¹

After business was dealt with Dickens resumed in his lively manner a long and entertaining version of events at Boulogne.

Unless it is to concede that he will make no drastic editorial alterations it is difficult to understand what Dickens could mean by promising to "merely divide it into chapters": a promise reinforced by his concession that if Mrs. Gaskell does not approve of his suggestions she "will take no notice".

If one assumes that to his implied questions of 26 July, "I do not understand whether you permit me to divide the story with chapters", Mrs. Gaskell had returned her consent, is it possible to suppose that while "(lying) so much on the grass, reading books and going to sleep"² at Boulogne, Dickens had forgotten that in the first batch of manuscript he had wished for "an amount of excision that (he dared) scarcely hint at"³? During the preceding months there may have been some further discussion and a measure of agreement may have been reached about the extent of cutting and who was to do it; but against this one must weigh the implication in a letter from John Forster to Mrs. Gaskell on 18 April that there was not free communication between editor and author and that the author felt some hesitancy in approaching Dickens. It is possible that both author and editor had pushed to the back of their minds an intractable problem.

Two days later a letter to Wills from Boulogne indicates

¹ Dexter, ii. 573 (h). ² Ibid. 574 (h). ³ Ibid. 562 (h).
Dickens' complete confidence that the publication of *North and South* would go ahead as he planned. In his mind it is already a fixed event.

Since finishing *Hard Times* on 17 July, Dickens had enjoyed a mood of relaxation in which he presumably forgot the pressures of writing a weekly number which were now to fall upon Mrs. Gaskell. Although Dickens continued to express confidence that *North and South* would appear on schedule, Will's agitation about the non-appearance of copy caused him to exercise a degree of caution. Mrs. Gaskell's refusal to acquiesce quietly to editorial demands was felt as an irritant.

On 9 August Dickens wrote to Wills proposing a stratagem which he presumably felt certain would extract copy from Mrs. Gaskell in time for the opening date:

I would *decidedly* put in the advertisement of *North and South*. Then I would write to Mrs. Gaskell, saying that you had heard from me you were to receive a batch of MS. for press; and that not having done so, you were uneasy (fearing it might have miscarried) and therefore wrote to say none had come to hand. 2

Clearly an attempt to preserve good relations through a polite fiction.

On 21 August the number for 2 September was in Dickens' hands for final revision and in returning it to Wills he could no longer cover his rejection of *North and South*. His objection centred immediately upon its length, and was aggravated by his fear that the printers had erred in the calculations which they made at his request in June. If this were so it meant that Dickens' own estimate of the length of the batch of manuscript which Mrs. Gaskell first submitted was wrong also; such an error would involve the planned length of the whole novel. The degree of his agitation may be shown in the two letters which he wrote to Wills on successive days. They refer to the numbers of *Household Words* dated 2 September and 9 September which would contain the first and second parts of *North and South*.

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1 Dexter, ii. 569. 2 Ibid. 578 (h).
artfully devised story. It suggests to me (but I may be wrong) that the Whitefriars casting-off was incorrect. Therefore you will do what follows.

[Here follow complicated instructions about keys to a drawer]

... and in that drawer you will find a rough slip of notes in my writing, concerning the divisions of Mrs. Gaskell's story: and (if I do not mistake) a note from yourself, stating the Whitefriars estimate of quantity. If you cannot read my notes for your own guidance, let me have them in the next parcel: and at any rate bring them when you come. . . .

Sunday, Twentieth August, 1854.

It is perfectly plain to me that if we put in more, every week, of North and South than we did of Hard Times, we shall ruin Household Words. Therefore it must at all hazards be kept down.

I hope the first portion is not printed "Part " 1. It ought be be " Chapter ". The amount you have got into 233 is quite out of the question, but this is the part from which a great deal was to be taken out. You may possibly have received the Proof from Mrs. Gaskell so altered. But in case you should not have received it, I wrote to her by this post, begging her to send you the cut down proof immediately. . . .

Dickens presumably intended that the two novels, Hard Times and North and South, should serve similar purposes as Household Words serials, and should be comparable in length. A calculation made to the nearest weekly quarter-column shows that Hard Times occupied in total 233 columns, whereas North and South ran for 321. While these figures are necessarily artificial and are based upon the appearance of the pages of Household Words and not upon the entries in the Office Book, they nevertheless show how widely first Dickens himself, and then his printers, had miscalculated. Calculating in comfort a century later it is possible to see that if Dickens hoped from his reading of the early manuscript of North and South to shape it into a novel of the same proportions as Hard Times he was hoping for the impossible.

In the event, in spite of Dickens' threats and fears for the ruin of his magazine, having undertaken to publish North and South with so few of the arrangements cut and dried, he was compelled to print longer weekly parts than those of Hard Times. As editor, Dickens was concerned with the effect of the lengthy parts on the magazine as a whole. He held constantly in mind the balanced composition of a number.

1 Dexter, ii. 580 (h). 2 Ibid. 581 (h).
Leaping forward for a moment in the series of Dickens’ letters to one dated 14 October 1854, and directed to Wills, one finds almost a gloomy satisfaction that his August prophecies of ruin were coming to pass:

I am sorry to hear of the Sale dropping, but I am not surprised. Mrs. Gaskell’s story, so divided, is wearisome in the last degree. It would have scant attraction enough if the casting in Whitefriars had been correct; but thus wire-drawn it is a dreary business. Never mind: I am ready to come up to the scratch on my return, and to shoulder the wheel.  

From Mrs. Gaskell’s viewpoint as an author undergoing the normal, if not abnormal, anxieties of writing, the next letter which Dickens wrote in haste and, one suspects, some fury can have been only a hindrance to composition. It is quoted here in full:

Sunday Twentieth August 1854.

I have just received from Wills, in proof, our No for the 9th of September containing the Second Part of North and South, as it originally stood, and unaltered by you.

This is the place where we agreed that there should be a great condensation and a considerable compression, where Mr. Hale states his doubts to Margaret. The mechanical necessities of Household Words oblige us to get to press with this No immediately. In case you should not already have altered the proof and sent it to Wills (which very possibly you have: and in that case forgive my troubling you) will you be so kind as to do so at once. What I would recommend—and did recommend—is, to make the scene between Margaret and her father relative to his leaving the church and their destination being Milton-Northern, as short as you can find it in your heart to make it.

I have made a break at Lennox’s going away, and begin a new chapter (not a new weekly part, you understand) with “He was gone.”

I omitted in my last to thank you for the Edwin Chadwick story: which appears to me the most wonderful story in the world.  

In this letter Dickens returns to his recommendation of 15 June that she should “fuse two No’s into one”. At that time he had claimed that the story was unsuitable at this point for serial publication—“the only difficult place in the whole 114 sides of foolscap”. In effect, he left this cutting to the author, although he proposed to make the part and chapter divisions himself.

Examination of the manuscript of this letter3 shows that the

1 Dexter, ii. 598.  
2 Ibid. 582 (h).  
3 I am indebted to Dr. F. Taylor, Librarian and Keeper of Manuscripts, the John Rylands Library, for confirmation of my surmise.
sentence "I've not a notion what he means", which has so far been incorporated into the text at the conclusion of the third paragraph, is in the hand of Mrs. Gaskell. Its position associates it most closely with the third paragraph, but the third paragraph is unambiguous. It is difficult to suppose that Mrs. Gaskell had "not a notion" of the difference between a weekly part and a chapter; the break occurs in the text just as Dickens indicates: chapter 3 concludes "... Goodbye, Margaret—Margaret!" and chapter 4 opens with "He was gone". One can at the same time imagine that Mrs. Gaskell wrote through this episode continuously and also that Dickens found here a skillfully chosen dividing point without disturbing the author's text. It is difficult in this passage to see signs that Dickens had exercised his editorial prerogative of adding a few words of conclusion and thus caused Mrs. Gaskell to be quite unable to recognize the point in the story to which he referred.

A second possibility is that Mrs. Gaskell's annotation refers to the concluding paragraph of the letter. The separation of her sentence from the paragraph below and its spatial association with what lies above makes this less probable. Looking at the whole series of letters from Dickens to Mrs. Gaskell, however, it seems more likely that it was the tone and assertiveness of the whole communication as far as it concerned North and South which caused her to scribble her only comment on the whole series. One may speculate further that it was written for her husband's benefit when he later intervened in the dispute and presumably read the correspondence.

During this late August Dickens frequently alluded to the problems of serializing North and South. On 24 August he wrote to Wills, squashing a postscript at the head of the page:

* Your P.S. informs me that all the 45 Cols, are set up. If they are in your parcel, I will divide them and return them with this proof.

Thursday, Twenty-Fourth August, 1854.

There seems to me to be far less difficulty about Mrs. Gaskell's story than you suppose. You know what we want in a N°. You can have of the 45 columns as much set up as will make about 2 N°s. and send it to me to divide. As to waiting for the Proofs, it simply cannot be done. You must tell Mrs. Gaskell, in so many words, when you must have the proof back, or go to Press without it. As to Forster, put him entirely out of the question and leave the settlement of any such dispute
to me: saying to him, merely that it was necessary to go to press, and that I persisted in going to press.

(*See P.S. above.)

The real difficulty is in the reckless casting-off at Whitefriars, and upon this point I must beg you to make, from me, a grave representation to Bradbury & Evans that it is impossible to proceed if such tricks are played with us. When I read the beginning of this story of Mrs. Gaskell's I felt that its means of being of service or dis-service to us, mainly lay in its capacity of being divided at such (erasure) points of interest as it possesses. Rejecting my own estimate on that subject, I referred it to them, the Printers (of course) for a correct one. (erasure) A (erasure) statement was furnished to me in reply, which turns out to be entirely wrong. It I had known how it was to turn out, and that when they said in Whitefriars "white," they meant "black" or when they said "Ten" meant "Twenty," I could not, in my senses, have accepted the story. I want to know what the Masters in Whitefriars say to this mode of doing business. It is a matter of perfect indifference to me what anybody else says. They enter into a certain agreement with us, upon their fidelity and exactness in discharging which, we rely. I want to know what they say to not discharging it and to shirking and shuffling it off, anyhow. And I say to them that I am perfectly convinced there is not another house in the trade to which I could refer a question so vital to a periodical, who would lazily mislead me altogether. . . .

Can't you make up another number at once; assuming North and South not to exceed an average portion of Hard Times by more than a column or two? Then, if you bring another N°. with you, surely you will be easy and well beforehand.

I am unspeakably vexed by all this needless trouble and (erasure) bewilderment. There is no more reason for it, than there is for a calomel pill on the top of the Cross of St. Paul's.1

Dickens had by now reached a state of general indignation with the world at large, the mood of "must" and "cannot be done" and "persist". Delicate handling of Mrs. Gaskell was no longer advocated. If she cannot keep to Dickens' timetable she must forego the privilege of correcting the proofs. This shortage of time was partly of Dickens' own making since he was responsible for pressing forward with the opening date of the novel. Perhaps he counted on the fact that a deadline usually has a stimulating effect on a writer; but perhaps he forgot that there were certain duties which this author could not defer. The intervention of Forster who had been Mrs. Gaskell's confidant in writing the novel rather than Dickens seems to have touched on a point of jealousy; Dickens was probably right in feeling that under the present pressures of time the action of an intermediary would only worsen the basic problems of delay. Yet he was

1 Dexter, ii. 583 (h).
dealing with the same author to whom he had playfully written two years before: "O what a lazy woman you are and where IS that article!"  

The long diatribe against his printers is justified only by the extensive difficulties which a simple miscalculation had caused. That the initial error was committed is not inconsistent with Dickens' complaints about his printers' unreliability and carelessness which date from the early numbers of *Household Words*. In his heat he has forgotten that he did not "reject" his own estimate of the length of Mrs. Gaskell's early copy; after sending it to the printers he found that "their estimate exactly (accorded) with (his)". Hardly a fib for which one could hang Dickens but a gauge of the steam being generated at Boulogne at this time.

The following month found Dickens still directing *Household Words* from Boulogne, and Mrs. Gaskell still in disgrace. Dating his letter 21 September, he wrote to Wills:

I return you the N° which is a very fair one. Some of Mrs. Gaskell's dialogue is in execrable taste but I will not bring a correspondence upon you by touching it.

Subsequent comment upon one of the articles in the same number shows that he was referring to chapters 14 and 15 which include three main passages of dialogue: the expository conversation between Margaret and her mother which relates the history of the mutiny, the formal call paid by Margaret and her father upon Mrs. Thornton, and the three-cornered discussion between Margaret, Mr. Hale and Mr. Thornton which gives chapter 15 its title, "Masters and Men". When Dickens first read this passage he suggested that the conversation was "unnecessarily lengthy" and politely suggested "some curtailment".

Shortly after this the question of American publication of the novel was raised by Mr. Gaskell, the first indication that Mrs. Gaskell might have retired hurt from her business negotiations with Dickens. Dickens' reply left Mrs. Gaskell "free to act" provided that nothing published "out there" could return to be pirated by English publishers. Mr. Gaskell subsequently moved into the more thorny field of negotiation concerning the amount of space available to his wife in *Household Words*. Exactly one month later Dickens wrote to Wills:

1 Dexter, ii. 380 (h).  
2 Ibid. 587 (h).  
3 Ibid. 592.
Mr. Gaskell anticipates what I recommend to you today. I would write in reply that the quantity shall be increased by all means; at the same time impressing upon him the vital importance of faith being kept with the public.¹

After this interchange the length of each part was usually about sixteen columns. Since the increase in length of each number was not sudden, and fairly long numbers had already been printed, it seems that the concession was forced by events rather than by negotiations. The negotiations may have produced an assurance that five months would be interpreted as twenty-two weeks rather than twenty; this would enable Dickens still to feel that he had kept faith with his public in publishing the end of the serial within the promised period.

In the autumn of 1854 the weight of references to *North and South* in contemporary letters shifted from the series from Dickens to Mrs. Gaskell to comments upon the published numbers from a varied group of literary people, including some letters to friends from Mrs. Gaskell herself.

On 30 September, which was the date of the number containing chapters 6 and 7, Charlotte Brontë wrote to Mrs. Gaskell a letter of encouragement which she must surely have needed:

Do not suffer yourself to be either vexed or in low spirits about what you have 'gone and done'.

We all know that it is not precisely advantageous to a really good book to be published piecemeal in a periodical—but still—such a plan has its good side. 'North and South' will thus be seen by many into whose hands it would not otherwise fall.

What has appeared I like well, and better and better each fresh number, best of all the last (to-day's). The subject seems to me difficult; at first, I groaned over it. If you had any narrowness of views or bitterness of feeling towards the Church or her Clergy, I should groan over it still; but I think I see the ground you are about to take as far as the Church is concerned; not that of attack on her, but of defence of those who conscientiously differ from her, and feel it a duty to leave her fold.

Well—it is good ground, but still rugged for the step of Fiction; stony—thorny it will prove at times—I fear. It seems to me you understand well the Genius of the North. Where the Southern Lady and the Northern Mechanic are brought into contrast and contact, I think Nature is well respected. Simple, true and good did I think the last number—clear of artificial trammels of style and thought. . .²

¹ Hopkins in *HLQ*, ix, no. 4, 372.
One is grateful for the fresh wind of Yorkshire criticism. Especially must Mrs. Gaskell have valued Charlotte Brontë's acceptance of the religious conflict, low-toned though it is; for isolation from her friend after Charlotte's marriage to the rigid cleric, Mr. Nicholls, was a personal fear for Mrs. Gaskell.

At this period Mrs. Gaskell had found welcome quiet in the home of the Nightingales. She "declined manfully" social invitations which would take her away from writing, and late in October she wrote to Catherine Winkworth:

... I have refused to go there,... so ought not "Margaret Hale" to stand a good chance? I do think she is going on nicely; I have not written much but so well: There's modesty for you. . . .

Do write. What do you think of a fire burning down Mr. Thornton's mills and house as a help to failure? Then Margaret would rebuild them larger & better & need not go & live there when she's married. Tell me what you think: MH has just told the lie, & is gathering herself up after her dead faint; very meek & stunned & humble.

This point in the story forms the conclusion to chapter 34, although not the end of a part. It is an effective break in the story and was apparently a point where Mrs. Gaskell laid down her pen in the course of writing. This reference supports the view that she had taken into her own hands the responsibility of chapter and part divisions.

Writing on 27 October to Mrs. Shaen she reports further progress:

I've got to (with Margaret—I'm off at her now following your letter) when they've quarrelled, silently, after the lie and she knows she loves him, and he is trying not to love her; and Frederick is gone back to Spain and Mrs. Hale is dead and Mr. Bell has come to stay with the Hales, and Mr. Thornton ought to be developing himself—and Mr. Hale ought to die—and if I could get over this next piece I could swim through the London life beautifully into the sunset glory of the last scene. But hitherto Thornton is good; and I'm afraid of a touch marring him; and I want to keep his character consistent with itself, and large and strong and tender, and yet a master. That's my next puzzle. I am enough on not to hurry; and yet I don't know if waiting and thinking will bring any new ideas about him. I wish you'd give me some.

Mrs. Gaskell was ready to discuss by letter the progress and problems of her novel with her friends. With them she wrote of satisfactions and difficulties with greater freedom than she appears

1 Chapple & Pollard, 308. 2 Ibid. 310. 3 Ibid. 321.
to have felt with Dickens. The implication of this last letter, and particularly of the phrase "Mr. Bell has come to stay with the Hales ", is that the author was then writing chapter 40 ; Mr. Hale was killed off in the following chapter. Perhaps the device of removing Mr. Hale from the scene of his wife's death to Oxford was a last minute solution which enabled her to "get over this next piece ". She must have been aware of the pitfalls of repeating a death scene in the same house so shortly after Mrs. Hale's death and funeral.

Assuming that she had reached this point in the story by 27 October she had in hand about ten numbers beyond what was already published, and may have felt with justification that she was "enough on not to hurry ". One does not know how much of this copy Dickens or Wills had already seen, but it is during this section that the weekly parts lengthened steadily.

It is worth noting that in her résumé of what she had written she did not place the events in the same order as that in which they were published; and, especially, that she omitted all mention of the Higgins family, Boucher's suicide and the first moves of reconciliation between Thornton and Higgins, the master and the man. Her account, thus, presents the novel entirely in terms of a middle class romance and lays no emphasis on its involvement with social problems.

The time of quiet freedom to write was over and the last months of the year were pressing. On Christmas Eve 1854 she wrote of her exhaustion, though in phrases which suggest that North and South was well nigh complete. The last number was not to be published for five weeks but the author's task must have been nearly over:

... I've been as nearly dazed and crazed with this c-, d-, be h- to it, story as can be. I've been sick of writing, and everything connected with literature or improvement of the mind; to say nothing of deep hatred to my species about whom I was obliged to write as if I loved 'em. Moreover I have had to write so hard that I have spoilt my hand, and forgotten all my spelling. Seriously it has been a terrible weight on me and has made me have some of the most felling headaches I ever had in my life, so having growled my growl I'll go on to something else.¹

Towards the close she was forced to allow the editorial

¹ Chapple & Pollard, 352.
office to shorten the penultimate instalment in the interests of *Household Words*.

I have tried to shorten and compress it, both because it was a dull piece, & to get it into reasonable length. . . . I never wish to see it's face again; but, *if you will keep the MS for me, & shorten it* as you think best for HW. I shall be very glad. . . .¹

Charlotte Brontë had written in praise of *North and South* to Catherine Winkworth who relayed the letter to Mrs. Gaskell. On the first day of 1855, still unwell, she wrote in reply:

Miss Brontë's letter is very nice; I wish she'd write to me,—should I to her? . . . I'm glad she likes 'North and South'—I did not think Margaret was so over good.²

Immediately following publication of the last number of *North and South* in *Household Words* Dickens wrote to the author:

Twenty Seventh January, 1855

Let me congratulate you on the conclusion of your story; not because it is the end of a task to which you had conceived a dislike (for I imagine you to have got the better of that delusion by this time), but because it is the vigorous and powerful accomplishment of an anxious labor. It seems to me that you have felt the ground thoroughly firm under your feet, and have strided on with a force and purpose that must now give you pleasure.

You will not, I hope, allow that not-lucid interval of dissatisfaction with yourself (and me?) which beset you for a minute or two once upon a time, to linger in the shape of any disagreeable association with *Household Words*. I shall still look forward to the large sides of paper, and shall soon feel disappointed if they don't begin to reappear.

I thought it best that Wills should write the business letter on the conclusion of the story, as that part of our communication had always previously rested with him. I trust you found it satisfactory? I refer to it, not as a matter of mere form, but because I sincerely wish everything between us to be beyond the possibility of misunderstanding or reservation.³

Such a letter must have been unexpected; comments upon Mrs. Gaskell's reaction to it would be conjectural, but for Dickens' last word on *North and South* one must wait two months. Then he wrote to Wilkie Collins:

You have guessed right. The best part of it was that she wrote to Wills, saying she must particularly stipulate not to have her proofs touched, "even by Mr. Dickens". That immortal creature had gone over the proofs with great pains—had of course taken out the stiflings—hard-plungings, lungeings, and other convulsions—and had also taken out her weakenings and damagings of her own.

¹ Chapple & Pollard, 323. ² Ibid. 327. ³ Dexter, ii. 618 (h).
Very well," said the gifted man, "she shall have her own way. But after it's published show her this Proof, and ask her to consider whether her story would have been the better or the worse for it." 1

Before the final instalment was published in *Household Words* she was in correspondence with her friend, Mrs. Anna Jameson, seeking advice about whether or not to try to recast the ending of the novel:

And then 20 numbers was, I found, my allowance, instead of the too scant, 22 which I had fancied were included in "five months," and at last the story is huddled and hurried up, especially in the rapidity with which the sudden death of Mr. Bell succeeds to the sudden death of Mr. Hale, but what could I do? Every page was grudged me, just at last, when I did certainly infringe all the bounds & limits they set me as to quantity. Just at the very last I was compelled to desperate compression. But now I am not sure if, when the barrier gives way between 2 such characters as Mr. Thornton and Margaret, it would not all go smash in a moment, and I don't feel quite certain that I dislike the end as it now stands. But the question is, shall I alter it and enlarge what is already written, bad and hurried-up though it be? I can not insert small pieces here and there—I feel as if I must throw myself back a certain distance in the story & rewrite it from there; retaining the present incidents, but filling up intervals of time. Would you give me your very valuable opinion as to this? ...2

In reply Mrs. Jameson gave general advice about publication of any future novel, which is balanced between regret at the compression made necessary by periodical publication and confidence in Mrs. Gaskell's power as a novelist. To the particular questions posed by the harassed author she remained non-directive:

...Since you ask my opinion so distinctly you shall have it. I do think the conclusion hurried—and what you call huddled up; there should be more gradation in effect, and the rapidity of the incidents at the close destroys the proportions of your story as a work of art. ... This is a fault of construction—but what is done is so beautiful and complete that it is only in considering the work as a whole that we feel too great compression—we want to know something more about other characters. I do not know whether to advise you to alter it—what has been once thrown warm off the mind and has run into the mould seldom bears alteration—but do not with your powers, engage to write periodically. 3

Mrs. Gaskell's reply dated from Plymouth Grove on 30 January gives some idea of the extent to which the limitations imposed by publication in *Household Words* altered her original conception of the novel:

No! indeed, you have not been a bit too abrupt. I wanted just what you tell me,—even more decidedly if need were; & truth is too precious and valuable a thing to need drapery,—you tell me just what I wanted to know. If the story had been poured just warm out of the mind, it would have taken a much larger mould. It was the cruel necessity of compressing it that hampered me. And now I can't do much, I may not even succeed when I try, but I will try for my own satisfaction even if it does not answer and I have to cancel what I am now meaning to write, and all before the end of next week: so I have sent today since receiving your letter, to stop the press.¹

Her contemporary critics did not waste many words on the variations between the serialized version and the extended first edition.

There are two areas in which we may now place side by side two “versions” of the novel. In the first eleven numbers of the published serial it is possible to put side by side the divisions which Dickens recommended and those which were finally adopted; and we may contrast the highly compressed final numbers published in *Household Words* with the more leisured conclusion of the novel as it was published in two volumes. Neither of these areas affords a simple comparison of editor’s choice versus author’s choice; the error in casting-off prevented simplicity of arrangements at any stage of serial publication, and it is clear that the final chapters were also rewritten under pressure of time.

Variations of part divisions in the early numbers show not so much differences in the technique of serialization between Dickens and Mrs. Gaskell, as emphasis upon one aspect of the novel rather than another. The first three serial parts were published as Dickens first divided them; his wish to shorten severely the second and third numbers so that they became one was overruled. Dickens made breaks following passages which would introduce an element of suspense (the announcement of Mr. Lennox at the end of part one)² or point forward to a new prospect (the plan to stay at Heston at the end of part three).³ Mrs. Gaskell did not disdain the device of simple suspense; indeed, she exploited it fully at the end of part eleven, when, after Margaret is admitted to Thornton’s millyard, she hears “far away, the ominous gathering roar”⁴ of the rioters.

¹ Chappie & Pollard, 331. ² *North and South*, 53. ³ Ibid. 87. ⁴ Ibid. 227.
The fourth part was carried by Dickens beyond the Hales' arrival in the new house at Milton-Northern to the moment which turns the reader nostalgically back to the luxury of Margaret's London connections. The unreality of this part of Margaret's life is emphasized as she sits down to read Edith's letter from Corfu. At this point Dickens proposed to close the part.\(^1\) The division was actually made a few paragraphs earlier with the Hales' arrival at their new house. The significance of the change is that the final sentence now brings before the reader most effectively the power of Mr. Thornton: "There was no particular need to tell them, that what (the landlord) did not care to do for a Reverend Mr. Hale, unknown, in Milton, he was only too glad to do at the one short sharp remonstrance of Mr. Thornton, the wealthy manufacturer."\(^2\) It is an effective ending. Linger­ing with the reader, it suggests to him a set of northern values to which the Hales are strangers, directs his attention to the almost entirely unexplored territory of Milton, which is the novel's central setting, and opens the possibility of a developing connection between the Hales and Mr. Thornton.

The following part division again shows Mrs. Gaskell's preference for leaving the reader with his attention focused upon a new character. Dickens would have taken the number to Mr. Thornton's departure from the Hales after the tea-visit,\(^3\) when a conversation which lays emphasis on the north/south conflict is animated by a misunderstanding of manners upon leave-taking which leaves Mr. Thornton angry with Margaret's seeming haughtiness. The part thus closes without any promised incident in view. In publication this part concluded with a spirited disagreement between Mr. Thornton and his mother.\(^4\) The result is to lay emphasis again on the Thorntons, to invite the reader's attention to follow the development of Mrs. Thornton's aggressive character and to look forward with curiosity to the figure which this Northern manufacturer will cut in Mrs. Hale's drawing-room.

The proposed sixth part again closed with a leave-taking; again the published part held a visit in promise—\(^5\)—that of Mrs.  

\(^1\) *North and South*, 105. \(^2\) Ibid. 103. \(^3\) Ibid. 127. \(^4\) Ibid. 118. \(^5\) Ibid. 135.
Thornton to the Hales, a mixing of characters as yet untried by the reader and promising a clash of temperaments. Dickens' division brought into prominence the working-class Higgins family, whereas Mrs. Gaskell continued for the third time to direct the reader's attention as the part closed to the Thorntons.

Comparison of the two plans of division for the second batch of manuscript is more difficult for the end of the published eighth part coincided with the end of Dickens' proposed seventh part and the discrepancy was increasing with each number. The overall difference seems to lie in the degree to which the divisions of the published parts emphasized these aspects of the novel which Dickens, for obvious reasons, could not foresee. The seventh part calls forth anxiety about Mrs. Hale's illness, the ninth part looks forward to the possibility of Margaret sinning. The tenth part closes quietly soon after Boucher's outburst has shown him to be emotional and unreliable, a necessary preparation for a later scene.

Dickens' skill in finding convenient dividing points in a manuscript is evident, but the variations made from his first scheme suggest that the advantage lay with the author who had already in her mind the outline and conclusion of the whole novel.

In preparing the first edition most of Mrs. Gaskell's attention was directed towards reshaping the material compressed into chapter 44 which forms the latter part of the penultimate number in Household Words. This single chapter was expanded to make five. With the exception of breaking the original chapter 45 into two, she made no substantial changes to the final number. One may assume therefore that it was the original chapter 44 which she felt to have suffered most severely from the "desperate compression" to which she "was compelled" by the editors of Household Words. The appearance of the chapter itself, long unbroken passages of description relieved by only a few brief exchanges of dialogue, would certainly suggest this, and there is evidence that Dickens or Wills was partly responsible for its character.

It was thus that she carried out the intention expressed to

1 North and South, 149. 2 Ibid. 188. 3 Ibid. 209. 4 Above, p. 88. 5 Chapple & Pollard, 325-7.
Mrs. Jameson\(^1\) of "(throwing herself) back a certain distance in the story and (re-writing) it from there". Although the first two pages of chapter 44 include in much the same order the material used in the first two paragraphs of the original chapter 44, there follows an extensive development of events only briefly mentioned in *Household Words* and considerable additional material. Chapter 45 is represented by a single sentence in the serial version, and there is no vestige of chapter 46, the visit to Helstone. Chapters 47 and 48, the last of the "new" chapters, return more closely to material found in the *Household Words* chapter 44 and sometimes present it in exactly the same order.

It has been indicated that the material in chapter 44 is most closely tied in with the writing of the additional chapters at their beginning and at their end. In some parts there are only slight variations of punctuation between the *Household Words* version and the first edition; other passages have been re-written. It is notable that the two sentences which are used twice in the first edition appear in pairs, as it were, on the first occasion just at the point where Mrs. Gaskell moves away from material taken from the original chapter 44 and on the second occasion just after she resumes close contact with the *Household Words* version. This suggests that during her free excursion into the new material she had forgotten which passages of chapter 44 had been "used up" already and that in writing new chapters she was working without a systematic plan.

The sentences which have been re-written show two main changes: the sharpening of a word or phrase (e.g. "profound calculation" for "profound purpose") to produce a stylistic improvement, and some additions or omissions of material appropriate to the new ending. Making allowance for the possibility that as a housewife Mrs. Gaskell may have done a good deal of phrase-shaping in her head without benefit of paper and pen to hand, the versions correspond so closely that it seems more probable that the variants are deliberate alterations made while copying out a first text, rather than that they arose because whole paragraphs were re-written from memory.

In the new chapters it is possible to discern an attempt to

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\(^1\) Above, p. 88.
restore the balance of the novel by dwelling upon its southern aspects. There are London scenes which counterbalance those at the beginning of the novel and there is a delicious strawberries-and-cream visit to Helstone. Yet in Harley Street there is acerbity, ambition and petulance, and in Helstone there is the odour of roasted cat. Through these scenes Mr. Bell travels; here he is developed with some of the detail which he deserves as the agent of the Hales' removal to Milton, the source of Margaret's wealth, and indeed the matchmaker in the romance. Henry Lennox is given a second chance to prove himself worthy of Margaret before he brilliantly and bad-temperedly fails. The reader has no regrets that Margaret lost the opportunity of continuing the life of a London lady surrounded by "those Lennoxes". The hopes first raised in Milton, that Frederick might be exonerated and be free to return to England, are dispelled at sufficient length to enable the reader to share Margaret's feeling that one more of her supports is denied her. Indeed, these chapters might be seen as a measured and relentless process of stripping from Margaret all her attachments in preparation for her solitary encounter with Mr. Thornton in which she recognizes and acknowledges to the reader's satisfaction her only remaining support.