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“A POOR MAN I KNOW”: SAMUEL BAMFORD AND THE MAKING OF ‘MARY BARTON’

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Elizabeth Gaskell’s novel *Mary Barton* has been praised, ever since its publication, for its realistic portrait of working-class life in Manchester during the Chartist years. Yet while Gaskell routinely included real places in her work, she rarely mentioned real people; indeed, she later questioned the “objectionable and indelicate practice” of writing memoirs of living people.¹ “Nobody and nothing was real... in *Mary Barton* but the character of John Barton; the circumstances are different, but the character and some of the speeches, are exactly a poor man I know.”² It is nonetheless possible to identify the originals of several working-class characters in the novel.³ There is also one explicit reference to a real working man. After the trade unionist John Barton reports the crushing failure of the Chartists’ march on London to petition parliament, the old weaver-naturalist Job Legh relates the story of his own daughter’s lonely death in the capital. Then, seeking to restore everyone’s spirits, he offers to read:

‘a bit on a poem as is written by a weaver like oursel. A rare chap I’ll be bound is he who could weave verse like this.’

So ... he read aloud a little poem of Samuel Bamford’s he had picked up somewhere.

God help the poor, who, on this wintry morn,
Come forth from alleys dim and courts obscure.
God help yon poor pale girl, who droops forlorn,
And meekly her affliction doth endure...

‘Amen!’ said Barton, solemnly, and sorrowfully.

An unusual footnote explains that Bamford is “The fine-spirited author of ‘Passages in the Life of a Radical’ – a man who illustrates his order, and shows what nobility may be in a cottage.”⁴ These verses of Bamford’s play a key part in subsequent events. John Barton asks his daughter Mary to copy the lines of “Bamford’s beautiful little poem” out for him, and the paper on which she does so is later used as wadding in the gun which kills Harry Carson, the factory owner’s son. Thus Bamford’s “God Help the Poor”

symbolically fuels the revenge of oppressed. This is a powerful role indeed for a verse.⁵

Samuel Bamford's role in *Mary Barton* was however greater than this. He was a significant figure in the Gaskells' lives during the novel's formative period, and their relationship with him shaped the novel in both theme and detail. So: who was Samuel Bamford, and what was he doing in *Mary Barton*?

I

SAMUEL BAMFORD

Samuel Bamford, the radical, was born into the old weaving village of Middleton, north of Manchester, in 1788, and died nearby in 1872.⁶ His life thus ran from the French Revolution to the premiership of Gladstone. Bamford's glory days as a radical were the post-war years, whose climaxes were the Manchester risings of 1817 (which he opposed) and the Peterloo rally of 1819 (which he helped organise). He was one of the radical delegates to London of January 1817, and, like John Barton, saw the desperate attempt to force the attention of parliament on parliamentary reform rudely rebuffed. In connection with both of these he was (unjustly) imprisoned on several occasions totalling some fifteen months. Imprisonment changed him, and after his return home in 1821 he lived quietly as a weaver for several years with his beloved wife and childhood sweetheart Jemima. He published some political and pastoral poetry, became a correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian*, *Morning Herald* and other newspapers, and pursued variously the trades of newsagent, bookseller and beerseller. During the powerloom-breaking of 1826 he undertook a long and successful expedition on foot to dissuade local weavers from taking part. He was locally reviled as a turncoat, and in 1840 moved away from industrialising Middleton to the nearby country district of Blackley. Although Bamford supported nearly all the aims of the People's Charter, he opposed O'Connor and the Chartists as desperate men who lacked the dignity of citizens, and who, in their opposition to the cause of corn law repeal, had themselves become apostates from the cause. He spent the Chartist years of 1839-42 writing and looking back, associating with the Sun Inn circle of working-class and dialect poets in Manchester.

Bamford's response to Chartism was his political autobiography *Passages in the Life of a Radical* (1839-42). He first published it in sixpenny parts. "I am more anxious that the book – "Passages &c." – should circulate amongst the Chartists, and operatives generally, than I am about any profits accruing to myself", he wrote.⁷ In its book form, *Passages* was widely and warmly reviewed in the Liberal press, both national and regional, welcomed particularly for its recantation of the turbulent methods of his youth and its stance on Chartism and the corn laws. *Passages* made Bamford into a minor literary celebrity. Its admiring readers included William Gladstone, Isaac

Disraeli, John Forster, Thomas Carlyle (for whom he was “brave Bamford”, “a fine and a fine stalwart grey old Lancashire Weaver, and a piece of very good human stuff”)⁸, Jane Carlyle (for whom he was “a fine, sturdy old fellow”),⁹ Charles Dickens (who found him “a man honest and true to the core”),¹⁰ George Eliot (who copied out extensive sections of *Passages* in her preparations for *Felix Holt, the Radical*)¹¹, and of course the Gaskells. Bamford’s fellow Sun Inn poet George Richardson put it in verse:

Then you’ll have, with his blunt honest manner and truth,
With the strength, and the fire, and the fervour of youth,
Whose open sincerity all must regard—
The manly, the steadfast, staunch MIDDLETON BARD.¹²

Such tributes to Bamford appealed to the contemporary model of true inner manliness, characterised by ‘manly simplicity’, rugged individualism, inner integrity and outward directness. According to John Tosh, this “became the identifying code of both the business class and the ‘respectable’ working class”. It was later to be exemplified by the factory owner John Thornton in Gaskell’s *North and South*.¹³

A writer’s living beckoned. He developed his journalism, a collection of which was published in 1844 as *Walks in South Lancashire*, including the first chapters of an uncompleted novel, *The Traveller*. He also produced a volume of *Poems* (1843), the softest and least political of his five published collections. Bamford’s literary output then dried up for a time. In 1846 the triumphant repeal of the same corn laws against which Bamford had campaigned a generation before offered an opportunity. When a testimonial fund was launched for Richard Cobden, some of Bamford’s middle-class admirers (not to mention Bamford himself) thought he deserved one too. But as Cobden’s fund soared to a hundred thousand pounds, Bamford’s struggled towards £500. It collapsed in damaging and very public acrimony when Bamford refused to accept that the money should be invested in an annuity and insisted on taking the lump sum. In his own view he was not a pauper to be relieved by a dole but a writer and reformer vindicated by events and receiving a testimonial from a grateful public. Fortunately for posterity he invested the money in producing a second volume of autobiography, *Early Days*, which was first issued in parts in late 1848. It did not make Bamford’s fortune. After publishing some further short writings and a work on *The Dialect of South Lancashire* he accepted the offer of a job with the Inland Revenue and in 1851 left Lancashire for a seven-year spell in London. He was never to meet the Gaskells again, although he returned to Lancashire in 1858 to live out his remaining years as a diarist and local celebrity, dying in 1872 at the age of 84.

II LANCASHIRE DIALECT

Bamford may have got to know the Gaskells around 1838, when William Gaskell first gave his popular series of lectures to working men on "Poetry and Poets in Humble Life".¹⁴ Elizabeth apparently helped him read and select poets to include.¹⁵ "We are *picking up* all the 'Poets in Humble Life' we can think of", she wrote to Mary Howitt.¹⁶ William Howitt's favourite topic was said to have been the work of Samuel Bamford.¹⁷ William Gaskell was around this time compiling a preachy collection of *Temperance Rhymes*, dedicated "To the working-men of Manchester. . . in the hope that they may act as another small weight on the right end of that lever which is to raise them in the scale of humankind."¹⁸ In 1838 there appeared an anthology of *Manchester Poetry*, edited by James Wheeler, the author of a recent *History of Manchester*. Wheeler freely admitted that the title was a contradiction in terms: "The antipathy of men of trade to the pursuits of literature is as ancient as the hills, and seems destined to last as long", he wrote. Six of Bamford's poems were reprinted, including "God Help the Poor", along with two of William's own.¹⁹ Bamford was the only working man in the anthology, for the working-class literary scene had yet to become publicly known. The Sun Inn circle of Manchester poets did not start meeting until 1840, and the published work of its future luminaries, Bamford aside, was still confined to periodicals.²⁰ The first wave of Chartist agitation in 1839-42 would provide them with an audience, just as the second wave of 1848 would do the same for Elizabeth Gaskell.

Bamford, now fifty years of age, was a father figure for this generation of working-men poets. His collection *Hours in the Bowers* had been published in 1835. It was his third published volume of verse but the first obviously aimed at the mainstream market; two slim volumes in 1819 and 1821 had consisted mainly of material first published in the radical *Manchester Observer* and *Black Dwarf* newspapers. *Hours in the Bowers* was a mixture of old and new material, its main subjects the natural world, home and family. It saw the first appearance of "Tim Bobbin's Grave", Bamford's great elegy for his forbear, the near-legendary Milnrow dialect writer and satirist John Collier. It was here too that "God Help the Poor" first appeared between hard covers. *Mary Barton* has it as a broadside; if so, no copies have survived, but Bamford had published broadsides in the past.

Before Gaskell, middle-class writers used dialect for comical or folksy effect, underlining the distance between the middle and working classes. In *Mary Barton*, Elizabeth Gaskell, as Rosalind Slater has shown, pioneered the positive use of dialect to convey the emotional fluency and cultural roots of its speakers.²¹ The dialect of *Mary Barton* owed a great deal to Bamford, as did the dialect scholarship of William Gaskell.

In his *Two Lectures on Lancashire Dialect*, published in 1854 and appended to a new edition of *Mary Barton*, William Gaskell included some of Bamford's material. He explained that these published lectures were the outcome of a project to compile a Lancashire dialect glossary begun "a few years ago" by the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society, in which "a pretty large collection of words was obtained, chiefly through the aid of Mr Samuel Bamford".²² This Lit & Phil project seems to have begun in 1840, when John Harland of the *Manchester Guardian* sent Bamford a dialect questionnaire prepared by the Society and asked if he knew anyone he could distribute it to. Bamford didn't: "There is no society here; very little reading of any sort, and you may guess the remainder." But he offered a whole slew of etymological suggestions, adding: "I am of opinion that the origin of the names of many of our streams, hills, and old places of habitation, are celtic, and if I were a young man, I would try to acquire a knowledge of that language as well as Saxon, were it only to gather up as it were, and understand the memorials of the people who have been here before us." He went on to offer some of his own, somewhat speculative, suggestions for the derivation of dialect words.²³ Bamford went on to compile an extensive Lancashire dialect glossary. He donated a copy of this to the society in November 1843, retaining the original. The copy now in the John Rylands Library Special Collections is a manuscript of some 300 quarto pages in Bamford's own hand, a fair copy suitable to go straight to a printer.²⁴

J. H. Nodal later recounted how, "after the Council of the Lit & Phil Society had decided to proceed no further with the undertaking, Mr Bamford obtained permission to publish his own collection of words, and it forms the glossary appended to some of his works."²⁵ This was Bamford's *Dialect of South Lancashire*, published in 1850 and reissued in 1854. Bamford's view that the Lancashire dialect preserved much of the Celtic and Anglo-Saxon tongue was also developed by William Gaskell in his *Two Lectures*, and subsequently became the proud orthodoxy of Lancashire dialect studies.²⁶ Bamford's manuscript glossary was used soon after his death by the Manchester Literary Club, the more formal successor of the Sun Inn circle, of which Bamford was also a member. In the Autumn of 1872, about six months after Bamford's death, a meeting of Manchester Literary Club resolved to compile a Lancashire dialect glossary, and approached the Lit & Phil via Gaskell for permission to use Bamford's manuscript. Notwithstanding the work which had accumulated since, Bamford's collection remained the principal resource for the resulting publications.²⁷

Elizabeth Gaskell tried hard to get the dialect in *Mary Barton* right. In December 1848 she wrote to her publishers: "In looking over the book I see numerous errors regarding the part written in the Lancashire dialect; 'gotten' should always be 'getten'; &c."²⁸ In February 1849 the *Manchester Guardian's* hostile reviewer complained of "the extraordinary incorrectness of the dialect

throughout; the chief peculiarities of which, after the exclusion of one or two obvious Lancashire idioms, are Scotticisms."²⁹ In response, the next edition included corrections, along with footnotes by William to explain 35 of the novel's dialect expressions.³⁰ 22 of these can be found in Bamford's 1850 glossary.³¹ Fourteen were unchanged, but in eight instances Gaskell's usage differed from Bamford's. Five of these were simply differences of orthography, about which Bamford was resolutely idiosyncratic.³² Three were differences of meaning. Two of these were merely matters of nuance, but in the other Gaskell was in error: "baggin" was lunchtime, as both Bamford and Ridings had it, and not the evening meal. The book also footnoted other regional usages used by Bamford, such as "set" meaning "to accompany", or "shut" for "quit", or "sup" for drink. These did not appear in Bamford's glossary; he does not appear to have regarded them as dialect. When William Gaskell came to write up his *Two Lectures on Lancashire Dialect* in 1854, his borrowings from Bamford were less. Bamford was not around to consult, having by then been living in London for three years, and Gaskell's purposes were more scholarly. Even so, on a rough count, nearly half the 116 dialect terms he introduced here are also to be found in Bamford's glossary, 32 without modification and another 24 modified in either sense or spelling.³³ William Gaskell also used a description by Bamford of the custom of stang riding (or ritual humiliation of moral offenders).³⁴

In both his writings and his conversation, Bamford was an important source and critic of the Gaskells' use of dialect. The relationship was not so much that of a scholar to his source but rather that of one scholar to another.

III

LITERARY CIRCLES

It was as a fellow writer, as much as a model working man, that Bamford became acquainted with the Gaskells and their circle, gaining a social entrée into the wider literary scene. He was (we are told) an occasional visitor both to the Gaskells' house at Upper Rumford Street and also to the Jewsburys', across Oxford Road near the entrance to Greenheys Fields. Here the vivacious future writer Geraldine Jewsbury, a close friend of the Carlyles, "unmarried and lonely", kept house for her brother Frank.³⁵ George Richardson, the Sun Inn poet who had lionised Bamford, also lived at Greenheys, and may also have been acquainted with this circle. At the Jewsburys Bamford met Thomas Carlyle, apparently some years before Gaskell met him in London following the publication of *Mary Barton*.³⁶ It seems to have been Jane Welsh Carlyle who read *Passages in the Life of a Radical* first; in March 1843 she wrote to her sister, "Have you ever tried Bamford's book?"³⁷ A month later Thomas Carlyle wrote enthusiastically to Bamford about *Passages*, urging him get it

properly published and counselling him to stick to the his own “authentic experience” and dump the ghost stories: “Fact is eternal; all Fiction is very transitory in comparison.”³⁸ Bamford in turn sent appreciative comments on Carlyle’s *Chartism*, in which Carlyle had characterised the movement as “bitter discontent grown fierce and mad”. Carlyle in January 1847 sent Bamford an inscribed copy of *Past and Present*.³⁹

Jane Welsh Carlyle visited him at his cottage in Blackley in August 1846 while she was staying with Geraldine Jewsbury and her brother at Green Heys. From Manchester she wrote to her sister: “Geraldine arranged a pleasure excursion for me tomorrow to the house of Bamford “The Radical” and my love of punctuality was not equal to my putting a veto on it.”⁴⁰ The next day she wrote to her husband Thomas before setting out: “having walked four or five miles through the fields last night after dark, I lay too long in bed this morning, – considering that we have to start at twelve to spend the day with – Bamford! Who promised to tell us witch-stories among the glens of Balachly [Blackley]. He is a fine, sturdy old fellow, Bamford ...”⁴¹ She wrote to Thomas again about her week spent exploring contemporary Lancashire and its factories: “two days were spent at Manchester; one with Bamford in his ‘Cloughs,’ and the other with a very interesting lady at Bolton.”⁴² She liked the honest directness of Lancashire people; other than that, we have no account of her day with Bamford. It has been suggested that the central role of John Barton in Gaskell’s novel drew on Carlyle’s sense of the hidden importance of the lives of the “unknown great ones” of the working class; if so, Thomas Carlyle’s vision drew in turn on his wife’s experience of visiting Bamford and others in the summer of 1843.⁴³

Both Carlyles later enjoyed *Early Days* as it came out in parts in the Autumn of 1848. Thomas Carlyle wrote again, urging him “to be *brief* ... to be *select* ... [and] to be *exact* to the truth”. He soon afterwards bestowed similar advice, at greater length, on Elizabeth Gaskell after reading *Mary Barton*: “learn ever more ... to be concise ... in thought and conception ... reject the inessential, at whatever cost of sacrifice ... hit the nail on the head, always ... In short, brevity and clear veracity”, and so on.⁴⁴

Gaskell and Bamford had plenty to talk about.⁴⁵ Both loved ghost stories, and told them well. They loved, and wrote about, the region’s old halls, which for both of them were part of a childhood landscape in which they felt a kind of ownership. Gaskell wrote about Clopton Hall; Bamford about Radcliffe Old Hall, which he compared to the great hall of Cedric the Saxon in Walter Scott’s *Ivanhoe*.⁴⁶ Both loved the novels of Walter Scott. Both wrote nostalgically about the calendar customs of their youth; the year-round account of Middleton’s calendar customs in Bamford’s *Early Days* may be modelled on Gaskell’s similar account of Cheshire customs for the Howitts’ *Rural Life of England*.⁴⁷ Their attitudes to working people, arrived at from

different starting points, were very similar, and they also shared an undogmatic set of Christian values.

IV TWO WRITERS

Some of the most vivid letters in the Gaskell archives concern Bamford. In February 1849 he was probably at a low point, after completing his second volume of autobiography *Early Days* and then finding himself the only guest at a thinly attended dinner in honour of the Lancashire poets in Ardwick, snubbed by his fellow writers.⁴⁸ Bamford's feelings at finding his own verse used to lift the souls of John Barton and his family at their low point, and at seeing himself immortalised as a "noble-spirited" bard of his class, are not hard to imagine. On 9 March he wrote "To the authoress of "Mary Barton"".⁴⁹

Dear Madam,

I finished reading Mary Barton last night, my feelings having become so interested in the narrative that I could not lay the book down until I had read to the end.

You have drawn a fearfully true picture: a mournfully beautiful one [which] also have you placed on the tables of the drawing rooms of the great, and good it must there effect; good for themselves, and good also I hope for the poor of every occupation.

You are a genius of no ordinary rank; I care not what the critics say... A sorrowfully beautiful production it is, few being able to contemplate it with tearless eyes – I could not, I know ...

The dialect I think might have been given better, and some few incidents set forth with greater effect, but in describing the dwellings of the poor, their manners, their kindness to each other, their feelings towards their superiors in wealth and station, their faults, their literary tastes, and their scientific pursuits, as old Job Legh for example, you have been very faithful; of John Barton, I have known hundreds, his very self in all things except his fatal crime, whilst of his daughter Mary, who has ever seen a group of our Lancashire factory girls or shop workers* either, and could not have counted Mary? Nor is Jem Wilson, and I [am] proud to say it, a solitary character in the young fellows of our working population, noble as he is; but my heart fills as I write, and I cannot go on.

In October 1849 Elizabeth Gaskell wrote to John Forster to secure a presentation copy for him of Tennyson's poems, explaining: "Bamford is *the* most hearty, (and it's saying a good deal) admirer of Tennyson I know. I dislike recitations exceedingly, but he repeats some of Tennyson's poems, in so rapt, and yet so simple a manner, utterly forgetting that any one is by, in

the delight in the music and the exquisite thoughts, that one can't help liking to hear him. *He* does not care one jot whether people like hearing him or not, in his \own/ intense enjoyment. Then once I saw him blaze up when some one in an argumentative moral & utilitarian spirit 'wondered what Tennyson had done for his pension'. He had been 'minding his manners' till then, but this was too much; so he first choked, & then broke out into beautiful broad Lancashire, and then as that hardly served to carry him high enough, he took to Bible language till his adversary fairly stood rebuked." Lamenting that he was unable to afford even second hand copies, Bamford then "brightened up, & said 'Thank God, he had a good memory, and whenever he got into a house where there were Tennyson's poems he learnt as many as he could of[f] by heart; & he thought he knew better than twelve', — & he began (*Enone*, & then *the Sleeping Beauty*)."

A signed copy duly arrived and on 7 December 1849 Gaskell walked with two friends the six miles to Bamford's "little whitewashed cottage" to find him. Mima welcomed them in, "gave us bread and butter, and many kind gentle words" and suggested they look for him back in Manchester.

At last we pounced upon the great grey stalwart man coming out of a little old-fashioned public house, where Blakeley people put up. When he came up I kept my book back, (like a child eating the paste before the preserve), till we had got through all the common-place crust of our conversation. Then I produced it; and he said 'This is grand!' I said 'Look at the title page', for I saw he was fairly caught by something he liked in the middle of the book, & was standing reading it there in the street. 'Well! I am a proud man this day,' he exclaimed, — then he turned it up and down, & read a bit, (it was a very crowded street), and his grey face went quite brown-red with pleasure ... we left him in a sort of sleep[-]walking state, & only trust he will not be run over.⁵⁰

Years later, Bamford chose to read Tennyson's *Dora* at a tea party held by the local Mechanics' Institute at Blackley Wakes in 1858.⁵¹ Later still, Bamford's friend James Dronsfield recalled, "when, in consequence of his failing sight, he was no longer able to read for himself ... nothing gave Bamford greater pleasure than to sit and listen, especially to the reading of Tennyson's "Idylls of the King" ... and as Mr. Milner read the poems in a half chant, Bamford would sit with his hand hollowed against his ear, so that not a word might be missed; and never failed, when the finer passages were reached, to note them, and to ejaculate, with a kindling face, "Aye, aye; that's grand, that's grand!"⁵² George Milner, a near neighbour of Bamford in Moston, later noted how Tennyson, like Lancashire dialect writers, used plain Saxon and Celtic terms - "blue sky", for example, rather than "cerulean"; no doubt Bamford approved.⁵³

V TWO BEREAVEMENTS

Bamford's letter on *Mary Barton* draws attention to one more bond between himself and Gaskell, deeper than any mentioned so far. This was a bond which in both *Mary Barton* and *North and South* is presented as the most fundamental reminder to the classes of their common humanity: the loss of a child. Gaskell had suffered a still birth in 1833, and in 1836 wrote a poem on visiting the "small, nameless grave" of "my stillborn little girl".⁵⁴ Of the death of her nine-month-old son William in 1845 she wrote: "that wound will never heal on earth; although hardly anyone knows how it has changed me."⁵⁵ Writing *Mary Barton* was her therapy.⁵⁶ Of her October 1849 visit to Bamford, she reported: "One more thing—he says when he lies awake at night, as in his old age he often does, and gets sadly thinking of the days that are gone when his child was alive, he soothes himself by repeating T's poems." Bamford's only child Ann had died of consumption in 1835, aged 25 and single. Bamford kept her body in the house for so long, ostensibly for fear of grave-robbers, that the authorities had to intervene to insist on burial.⁵⁷ He told of how her death "withered the only young hope which clung around his heart."⁵⁸ In Bamford's cottage at Blackley, visitors could see the couple's two fine old wooden rocking chairs either side of the fire, with the names "Sam" and "Mima" carved upon them in old English lettering. In the empty space between them, on the mantelpiece, was displayed Bamford's "Lament for my daughter":

My angel child! my angel child !
Gentle, affectionate, and mild;
Her arms round my neck she coiled,
And looked, and wept, my angel child !

She wept that we so soon must part,
She knew that death was at her heart;
'Ye were but three, O, God above !
Could'st thou not spare that group of love?

Oh, mournful hour! Oh, anguish deep!
She, weeping, bade me not to weep;
And, meekly, in her tears, she smiled,
Like sunbeam cast on ruin wild.

Sweet flowers unto her grave I bring,
To bloom, to die in early Spring;
All pure, and beautiful, and mild,

Like my lost dove, my only child.

THE EPITAPH.

To the gentle and blest,
'Tho hath come to her rest,
 An offering meet
 In season appears
All beautiful and sweet –
Flowers nursed in tears.

Bamford took the then unusual step of planting wild flowers on her grave in Middleton's churchyard, and in the summer of 1841 led a party of literary friends to view the place.⁵⁹ One of them, John Bolton Rogerson, had been a childhood friend of Ann for a short time while her father was imprisoned in Lincoln castle. He was shortly to edit *The Festive Wreath*, the volume celebrating the Sun Inn circle of Manchester writers of whom Bamford was one.⁶⁰ He recalled: "We were all struck with the beautiful and poetic feeling which had led to the decoration of the grave ... 'I have planted,'" said Mr. Bamford, "no garden flowers about her grave. I thought that wild ones would be more characteristic of a simple peasant girl." He and John Critchley Prince agreed to write poems about the event. Rogerson's was "The Maiden's Grave", which came with a note describing how, as a child, he had played affectionately with young Mima while her father was imprisoned in Lincoln gaol after Peterloo.⁶¹

No tear is flowing from that father's eye,
 No sorrow utters he in wailings weak;
But there is grief which has not tear nor sigh,
 And there is woe which doth no language seek:
Most tenderly that humble grave he tends,
 And watcheth it throughout the varying year,
And carefully each weed doth he remove;
 There childhood never wends
To pluck the flowers, but with a holy fear,
 And reverent thoughts, is shunn'd the grave of love.

Prince's poem was "The Poet at the Grave of his Child":⁶²

A Bard stood drooping o'er the grave
 Where his lost daughter slept,
Where nothing broke the stillness, save
 The breeze that round him crept;

And as he plucked the weeds away
That grew above her slumbering clay,
 He neither spoke nor wept:
But then he could not all disguise
The sadness looking from his eyes.

Ann's death came in the aftermath of a period of bruising quarrels with old allies in the early 1830s surrounding Bamford's unhappy year as one of the parish constables of Middleton in 1832-3. Bamford had been attacked and ridiculed by the radical *Manchester and Salford Advertiser* and disowned by former comrades. Youths mocked him and despoiled his garden. In his efforts to police unlicensed pubs, arrest those who insulted him and reclaim his expenses, he ended up appealing for backing from some of the Tory authorities in Rochdale who had persecuted him years before.⁶³ In darker moments, he attributed the onset of Ann's weakness to the neglect she had endured while he was imprisoned. Her death brought him up cold and taught him to transcend his wordly conflicts, just as did those of the children of the warring protagonists in *Mary Barton*. To Gaskell, Bamford wrote:

Sorrow, it seems, has revealed to yourself and the world, the secret of your powerful mind, and the force and truth of your benign feeling. A noble gift have you discovered; a blessed, humanizing thing is sorrow. Let us be thankful for our afflictions, for, "whomsoever He chasteneth, those he loveth."⁶⁴

She in turn described him to Forster as:

A great, gaunt, stalwart Lancashire man, formerly hand-loom weaver... — age nearly 70, and living in that state which is exactly 'decent poverty', with his neat, little apple-faced wife; they have lost their only child.⁶⁵

We pause here to recall the context in which Bamford's *God Help the Poor* was read in *Mary Barton*: old Job Legh's expedition to London to retrieve the body of his daughter, told in the context of John Barton's failed expedition to London to seek reform. Bamford would have read through these accounts with a sharp sense of recognition, and then found himself cast as the noble bard of these people, the healer of souls – his life's work, as he had come to imagine. The book's core theme, of the redemption of a conflict-ridden human society through the common experience of suffering and bereavement, first appears in this moment, and it is a Bamford moment through and through.

Bamford's appearance in *Mary Barton* did much to restore his morale, and perhaps his public reputation, following the wounding testimonial affair of 1846-7. After the publication of *Early Days* he seems to have considered publishing some more poetry, but *Mary Barton* prompted him instead to dust off his old dialect glossary and publish it as part of *The Dialect of South Lancashire*. This was a bold (not to say rash) revision of Tim Bobbin's classic *Tummus and Meary* of a century before. Collier's Lancashire dialect, argued Bamford, "was not the spoken dialect of any one part of the county" but was gathered from all over, particularly from Collier's native Mersey region. Bamford used his own ears to correct Tim Bobbin for the south-east Lancashire where the dialogues were set.⁶⁶ The Preface was dated 10 April 1850, and found Bamford in introspective mood. He described how 'old people who have left the place we live in' seemed at times so close that he would go out and look down the lane for them.

A book, however, in the midst of our regret, attracts our notice; we open it, and therein we find, not only the portraiture of those we have been regretting, but their old stories, their uncouth words, and almost the tones of their voice are therein preserved for us. We sit down happy in the prize, and enjoy the mental pleasure which it provides.

Such a book would I place on the shelf of the old house ere I depart.

He was probably talking about Tim Bobbin's *Tummus and Meary*, but he could easily have been describing *Mary Barton*. *The Dialect of South Lancashire* was an attempt both to capitalize upon the recognition given to both himself and his dialect by *Mary Barton*, and to make Bamford's reputation (and perhaps fortune) as the modern heir of Tim Bobbin. It backfired badly, provoking instead a savage anonymous satire, *The Ghost of Tim Bobbin*, which reopened old sores with inspired cruelty. Bamford was depicted, in both verse and picture, as being visited by the indignant ghost of his predecessor, like Scrooge visited by the ghost of Christmas past.⁶⁷ The author turned out to be none other than George Richardson of Greenheys, now transformed from Bamford's admirer to (in Bamford's words) "one of the carrion grubs, of our lowest literary putrescence". Bamford chose to put down Richardson's hostility to the testimonial affair.⁶⁸

Within a few months Bamford had left Lancashire for London for a job with the Inland Revenue, thanks to the patronage of the Liberal politician Sir John Wood, chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue, with whom he had exchanged letters in the mid-1840s on the subject of class reconciliation.⁶⁹ Thus, Bamford's stance as a social mediator in the end drew him into the ranks of the clerks. From this secure post in central London he planned to continue his autobiography, developing it into a recent history of Lancashire.

Perhaps too he hoped to gain an entry into the London literary scene after his undignified exit from that of Manchester, but an introduction from Thomas Carlyle to John Forster brought him nothing, although is said to have visited the Carlyles at their Chelsea home.⁷⁰ He was later to complain that “Mrs Gaskell had totally forgotten her humble friend, since she went to London and became located in the house of a Lord ... Lord Atherton.”⁷¹

Bamford did keep up some links with Lancashire, writing occasional letters to the local press and even a short memoir of a one-time fellow-reformer Amos Ogden⁷², but his ambition to write a history of Lancashire in his own time was frustrated by the demands of employment at Somerset House.⁷³ Then in the early Spring of 1854 John Harland of the Manchester Guardian (another writer with whom Bamford shared the bond of bereavement) lent him a copy of William Gaskell’s *Two Lectures on the Lancashire Dialect*. The lectures, as he explained to Harland, awakened his old interests.

They are very interesting, and on the whole Mr Gaskell’s inferences and suppositions, where not undisputably true, are very near what appears to be fact. Some inaccuracies of course there would be, and I had thought to have corrected one or two of them in a letter to your paper, but on second thoughts I have deemed it best not to do so: it would seem presumptuous in me to do so, though on practical points about which I know as much as most people. It is too late for one of my years (67) to begin working that mine of old English: the work I could do, as no other person can, is before me, but my time is employed in other matters. I am however re-writing, arranging, and adjusting my old Glossary, adding new, or rather old lost words, as fast as they come to memory; and on the whole doing my best to leave something useful behind me.⁷⁴

A few months later there appeared the second edition of Bamford’s *Dialect of South Lancashire*.

VII CONCLUSION

Was Bamford the ‘poor man I know’ upon whom John Barton was based? He is a plausible candidate, for there were times in his life when he found himself close to acts of political violence by others, and when he was moved to violent thoughts. Bamford had lived among the incendiaries of 1817 even as he denounced them, by his own account protecting one misguided rebel from the authorities.⁷⁵ He was still trusted enough in 1826 for his warnings against powerloom-breaking to be heeded.⁷⁶ His anger after Peterloo knew no bounds, and at his sentencing hearing he made this rash outburst:

I will never recommend such conduct again until justice is obtained for such activity for such unprovoked massacre that took place on that day before my eyes. I feel it my duty as an Englishman to avow that I never will inculcate that patience which I did that day ... I am not a friend to blood but after what has taken place at Manchester I can hardly confine my expressions.⁷⁷

This may have contributed to Bamford's twelve-month sentence which in turn brought deprivation to his family. So although Bamford himself may not have been a model for John Barton, he had certainly lived close to rage and despair. As he wrote, 'of John Barton, I have known hundreds, his very self in all things except his fatal crime'.

This said, the evidence of Bamford's pacific principles and resilient character argue against identifying him with John Barton. By the time he had met the Gaskells he had become an apostle of peace and social reconciliation (albeit a somewhat prickly one prone to falling out with his fellow-reformers). While he was living in London, the bitter Preston strike (or rather lockout) of 1853-4 was extensively covered in the London press. Before either Gaskell (in *North and South*) or Dickens (in 'On Strike' and *Hard Times*) put pen to paper on the subject, Bamford offered a fictional commentary in "A Scene in North Lancashire", a series of three sketches for *Cassell's Illustrated Family Paper* in early 1854. In it, an imaginary local character, obviously Bamford's idealised view of himself, uses homely dialect and an appeal to family values to persuade the strikers to go back to work.⁷⁸ Bamford was always committed to the mobilisation of communities for rights rather than the struggle of classes for interests, and like Gaskell sought improvement through social reconciliation and a recognition of the common humanity of all classes. In a pivotal incident in his autobiography, he wrote of how he returned home after several days on the run in 1817 to find his wife Mima reading the Sermon on the Mount to his young daughter.⁷⁹ At the start of his 1844 *Walks in South Lancashire*, Bamford, writing from Blackley and childless for nine years, again chose the language of the Sermon on the Mount to explain himself:

God has ... led me to dwell amongst this people, one of them, and still apart ... he has so fortified my heart by severe experience, that I can judge in charity, and disapprove without anger; that I can support the right without wishing to retaliate in wrong; that I would feed the hungry without robbing the plenteous; that I would free the enslaved, without enchaining their task-masters ... As the greatest reformer and patriot that ever lived, once said, 'Blessed are the peace-makers,' may it

be my endeavour to deserve a place – however humble – amongst those blessed.⁸⁰

Elizabeth Gaskell would have added her 'amen'.

To look at Bamford as a model for any of the working-class characters in the novel may be barking up the wrong tree. When he and Elizabeth Gaskell first met, Bamford was already living out in his own mind the kind of ideals which she later mapped out in her fiction. Middleton and Knutsford were not exactly North and South, but the debt which Elizabeth Gaskell owed to Samuel Bamford – dialect scholar, fellow author, and archetype of the noble working man – was profound. Bamford's life experience merged with Gaskell's own, and in *Mary Barton* she embraced him in return. In doing so she paid tribute not simply to a poor man but to a fellow-writer, dialect scholar, and apostle of social reconciliation whose example she revered from the other side of a social divide that was still too great for the debt to be properly acknowledged.

New material.

Proceedings of the Philological Society (Oxford) Friday 25 June 1847 include a note: 'Laid on the table. Ms Glossary of Certain Words and Phrases in use amongst the Rural Population of South Lancashire, by Samuel Bamford 1846. Presented by the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester.'

Bamford, *Dialect of S Lancs* 1854 edn. Copy in Manchester Central Library annotated by J R Wise.

Glossary here has minute notes showing translations, variations, alternative spellings, revisions. Many entries have "W" to indicate used in Warwickshire.

Manchester Times 26 Aug 1854. 2nd edn of Bamford Lancashire Dialect advertised. 12mo, 3s 6d. London: J. Russell Smith, Soho Square, also Manchester & Liverpool booksellers.

Manchester Times 1 April 1854. William Gaskell gave lecture on Lancashire Dialect in Manchester Mechanics Institute, first of 2. 'Somewhat numerous audience'.

The author would like to thank Anne Secord and Frank Emmett for comments on this article, and the Gaskell Society for the helpful interest shown in versions delivered at the *Gaskell and Manchester* conference in July 2005 and at a day event in Middleton in June 2007.

¹ Letter of 1863 Linda Hughes, "Gaskell the Worker", *Elizabeth Gaskell and Manchester* conference, Manchester, July 2005, in *Gaskell Society Journal* vol. 20 (2006).

² Gaskell to Eliza Fox, 29 May 1849, in J.A.V. Chapple & A. Pollard, *The Letters of Mrs Gaskell* (M/C, 1966) (henceforth Gaskell, *Letters*).

³ Terry Wyke, "The culture of self-improvement: real people in *Mary Barton*", *Gaskell Society Journal* 13 (1999); Anne Secord, 'Elizabeth Gaskell and the Artisan Naturalists of Manchester', *Gaskell Society Journal* 19 (2005). The working-class figures identified by Wyke are James Crowther the naturalist, Thomas Wright the prison visitor, and Jacob Butterworth the musician. At another point the Margaret Jennings' voice is compared to that of the professional singer Deborah Travis. Two middle-class figures, William Roscoe and Sir James Edward Smith are also mentioned in passing by name. Anne Secord (p.44) has argued that Edward Hobson is a more likely model than James Crowther for Job Legh.

⁴ This episode is discussed by Sarina Gruver Moore in "Courts obscure: the architectural shaping of identity in "Libby Marsh's Three Eras", *Gaskell Society Journal* vol. 20 (2006), p. 73.

⁵ Michael Wheeler, 'Dives versus Lazarus: Mary Barton', in his *The Art of Allusion in Victorian Fiction* (1979). See also his 'Two Tales of Manchester Life', *Gaskell Society Journal* vol. 3 (1989).

⁶ For short accounts of Bamford's life, see R. Poole, "Samuel Bamford", *Dictionary of Labour Biography* xii ed. D. Howells and K. Gildart (Palgrave, Basingstoke/New York, 2005), pp. 13-19; M. Hewitt & R. Poole (eds), *The Diaries of Samuel Bamford* (Sutton, 2000), Introduction; M. Hewitt & R. Poole, "Samuel Bamford and northern identity", in *Northern Identities*, ed. Neville Kirk (Ashgate, 2000), pp. 111-131; R. Poole, 'Samuel Bamford: the Lost Years', *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society*, 2008 (forthcoming).

⁷ Letter of 25 May 1841, pasted in to William Henry Brockett's copy of *Passages in the Life of a Radical* John Rylands Library Deansgate R129643.

⁸ Carlyle to Forster, 7 Dec. 1845, Victoria and Albert Museum library, Forster MS III 48.E.3 item 84; Carlyle to John Forster, 7 March 1851, Victoria and Albert Museum Forster MS 48.E.18, item 47. Bamford at this time had just arrived in London, and evidently visited Carlyle in search of patronage. Carlyle sent him to John Forster with a letter of recommendation, but in a more private note on 17 April described him to Forster as "a terrible servilio of a fellow": Forster 48.E.18, item 48.

⁹ Jane Welsh Carlyle to Thomas Carlyle, Manchester, 17 Aug. 1846, in L. Huxley (ed.), *Jane Welsh Carlyle: Letters to her family, 1839-1863* (1924), 206.

¹⁰ Charles Dickens, *All the Year Round*, cutting from Manchester Weekly Times supplement 15 June 1867, in G. H. Rowbottom, *Roads out of Manchester* iv 57-8 (MCL).

¹¹ Gordon Haight, *George Eliot: A Biography* (Oxford, 1968) 381-2; Kathryn Hughes, *George Eliot* (1998), 263.

¹² George Richardson, "A Poetical Replication", in John Bolton Rogerson, *The Festive Wreath: a Collection of Original Contributions read at a Literary Meeting...on March 24th, 1842, at the Sun Inn, Long Millgate*. (Manchester, 1842), 12-16.

¹³ John Tosh, "Gentlemanly politeness and manly simplicity in Victorian England", *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 12 (2002), pp. 455-72.

¹⁴ Angus Easson, *Elizabeth Gaskell* (1979), 37-9. It will be apparent from what follows that Easson's view that "Bamford's active life was virtually over when Gaskell knew him" now needs revision.

¹⁵ Barbara Brill, *William Gaskell 1805-1884* (Manchester, 1984), 46.

¹⁶ J.A.V. Chapple & A. Pollard, *The Letters of Mrs Gaskell* (Manchester, 1966), no. 12.

¹⁷ John Levitt, "William Gaskell and the Lancashire Dialect", *Journal of the Lancashire Dialect Society* 31 (1982). There is a laudatory pen-portrait of Bamford by Samuel Smiles in *Howitt's Journal of Literature and Popular Progress* (2v, 1847) ii, 242-4. Howitt's novel *A Man of the People* (3v., 1860) drew heavily on Bamford's autobiography and featured Bamford himself as "the wisest and soundest-headed of the artisan reformers": vol. ii 54-7 and 95-8.

¹⁸ [William Gaskell], *Temperance Rhymes* (Simpkin, Marshall, London [1839]).

¹⁹ James Wheeler, *Manchester Poetry* (Manchester, 1838). Bamford's other poems were: "Lines on the death of Lord Byron", "Hymn to Spring", "The pass of Death", "Ode to Death", and "The Wind Unbound". William Gaskell's were "Death and Sleep", and "Come and Pray".

²⁰ Martha Vicinus, "Literary Voices of an Industrial Town: Manchester 1810-1870", in H. J. Dyos (ed.), *The Victorian City* ii (1973); Vicinus, *The Industrial Muse* (1974), ch. 4; Brian Maidment, "Class and Cultural Production in the Industrial City: Poetry in Victorian Manchester", in Alan Kidd & K. W. Roberts (ed.), *City, Class and Culture* (Manchester, 1985); R. A. Douglas Lithgow, *The Life of John Critchley Prince* (Manchester, 1880), 37-48. It is worth noting that Elizabeth Gaskell's position a decade latter was similar: published only in periodicals, and awaiting a period of Chartist agitation to arouse the necessary public interest.

²¹ Rosalind Slater, 'The Novelist's Use of Dialect', *Gaskell Society Journal* vol. 8 (1994).

²² William Gaskell, *Two Lectures on Lancashire Dialect* (Manchester, 1854), 5, 30.

²³ Bamford to John Harland, 13 November 1840. (MCL Harland collection MS F091 H15, p. 28).

²⁴ *A Glossary of some Words and Phrases in use amongst the Rural Population of South Lancashire. Noted Down By Samuel Bamford, 1843*. John Rylands Library, English MS. 969. The copy in the John Rylands is Bamford's own, with ms. additions

for the 1854 edition of *Dialect of South Lancashire*. It was donated in 1944 by one G. Whittall esq. of Reddish.

²⁵ J. H. Nodal, "The Dialect and Archaisms of Lancashire; being the first report of the glossary committee of the Manchester Literary Club" (Manchester 1873), 18-19.

²⁶ George Milner, *The Dialect of Lancashire considered as a vehicle for poetry*. Trans. Manchester Literary Club, 1874-5; Slater, 'The Novelists's Use of Dialect', pp. 89-90. For a pro-Celtic dissenting view, see Revd John Davies, *The Races of Lancashire, as indicated by the local names and the dialect of the county* (London, 1856).

²⁷ Nodal, "Dialect and Archaisms of Lancashire"; "The Dialect of Lancashire", Manchester Literary Club Proceedings 1873-4, 19-24; George Milner & J H Nodal, *A Glossary of the Lancashire Dialect* (Manchester, 1875), introduction. The decision was supported on the Lit & Phil side by E.W. Binney, who had been an admirer and patron of Bamford in his late years.

²⁸ Elizabeth Gaskell to Edward Chapman, 5 Dec. 1848 (Pollard and Chapple, no. 33).

²⁹ Manchester Guardian 28 Feb. 1849, reprinted in Angus Easson (ed.), *Gaskell: the Critical Heritage*. The reviewer went on, inconsistently, to complain that the remaining "one or two obvious Lancashire idioms" confused Manchester usage with that of Liverpool and Westmorland. This whole criticism was unfair, as will be seen.

³⁰ [Check which edn].

³¹ Gaskell in fact footnotes 42 expressions, but I have not included seven which seem to be matters of usage rather than dialect, none of which are glossed by Bamford: at after, pick over (weave), may happen (used by Bamford as standard English), letting on (ditto), not ... no, down-lying (lying-in), and disremember (forget).

³² Ben Brierley recalled how, in 1863 or 1864, he was helping Bamford prepare the final edition of his poems for publication. "He would adhere to quaint forms of spelling that jarred on my ear", recalled Brierley. He queried Bamford's spelling of "wynder" (as in bobbin-winder): "'w-i-n-d-e-r would be *winder*,' he said, sounding the i as in window. 'An' if theau spells it that way I'll bag thee.' It was no use contending further; I had to give way." Ben Brierley, *Home Memories*, xx; also in *Manchester Guardian*, 1 March 1888.

³³ Levitt, "William Gaskell and the Lancashire Dialect". I have used Levitt's list of William Gaskell's dialect words from both the footnotes to *Mary Barton* and the *Two Lectures*, omitting for this second count those which appear in *Mary Barton* to leave those added in the *Two Lectures*. My count for *Mary Barton* differs slightly from Levitt's.

³⁴ Gaskell, *Two Lectures*, 30. I have not been able to identify the printed source of Bamford's used by Gaskell here. On 'rough music', see E. P. Thompson, *Customs in Common* (1991), ch. 8.

³⁵ *Selection of the Letters of Geraldine Ensor Jewsbury to Jane Welsh Carlyle* (1892) ed. Mrs Alexander Ireland, p. vi. Annie Ireland was Geraldine Jewsbury's biographer. Her husband was Alexander Ireland, a friend of Thomas Carlyle, editor of the liberal *Manchester Examiner* (which gave Bamford plenty of column inches in the 1840s) and publisher in 1864 of Bamford's collected poetry, *Homely Rhymes*: see Bamford-Ireland correspondence, MCL M146, and Ireland's obituary *Manchester Weekly Times* 14 Dec. 1894.

³⁶ John Mortimer, "Concerning the 'Mary Barton' Fields", *Manchester Literary Club Papers* 37 (1911), 1-8; J. G. Sharps, *Mrs Gaskell's Observation and Invention* (1970), p. 250.

³⁷ L. Huxley (ed.), *Jane Welsh Carlyle: Letters to her family, 1839-1863* (1924), p. 98.

³⁸ Carlyle to Bamford, 13 April 1843, *Proceedings of the Manchester Literary & Philosophical Society* xx (1880-1), pp. 103-10, and in W. E. A. Chaloner (ed.), *The Autobiography of Samuel Bamford I: Early Days* (London and New York, 1967), 26-34.

³⁹ Carlyle to Bamford, 13 April 1843, *loc. cit.*; Thomas Carlyle, *Selected Writings*, ed. Alan Shelston (1971), 151; Bamford's copy of *Past and Present*, Middleton Local Studies Library. The significance of *Past and Present*, with its melodramatic denunciation of the sinister "gas lighted histrios" who roused Chartist mobs, is explored in Peter Gardner's paper at the July 2005 conference on *Elizabeth Gaskell and Manchester*, "The Seductive Politics of Mary Barton".

⁴⁰ Jane Welsh Carlyle to Helen Welsh, Manchester, Sat 16 August 1846, L. Huxley (ed.), *Jane Welsh Carlyle: Letters to her Family, 1839-1863* (1924), p. 280.

⁴¹ Jane Welsh Carlyle to Thomas Carlyle, Carlton Terrace, Green Heys, Manchester, Monday 17 August 1846, A. Alexander (ed.), *New Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle* 2 vols (1903), I. p. 206. The printed version then omits a passage; I have not been able to consult the original.

⁴² Jane Welsh Carlyle to Thomas Carlyle, Carlton Terrace, Manchester, Sunday 23 Aug. 1846, Alexander, *New Letters & Memorials*, p. 209.

⁴³ Angus Easson, Introduction to *Mary Barton* (Halifax: Ryburn, 1993), p. 15. Subsequent references are to this edition.

⁴⁴ Carlyle to Bamford, 4 Sept. 1848, 9 Sept. 1849, *loc. cit.*; Carlyle to Gaskell, 8 Nov. 1848, John Rylands English MS 730/14.

⁴⁵ The following paragraph owes much to Jenny Uglow, *Elizabeth Gaskell* (1993), e.g. pp. 244-5. On ghosts, see also Laura Kranzler, 'Gothic Themes in Elizabeth Gaskell's Fiction', *Gaskell Society Journal* vol. 20 (2006), pp. 49-50.

⁴⁶ Bamford, *Walks in South Lancashire (1844; 1972 edn ed. J. D. Marshall)*, pp. 281-8.

⁴⁷ Bamford, *Early Days (1848-9)*, chs 14-16; Gaskell to Mary Howitt, 18 Aug. 1838, Chapple and Pollard, *Letters of Mrs Gaskell*, no. 12.

⁴⁸ *Manchester Guardian* 14 Feb. 1849.

⁴⁹ John Rylands English ms 730/4. Reproduced in Angus Easson, *Elizabeth Gaskell: the Critical Heritage* (1991) 150-1, and originally in Ross D. Waller, *Letters Addressed to Mrs Gaskell by Celebrated Contemporaries* (Manchester, 1935), 7-8. My transcription differs slightly from those of Waller and Easson.

⁵⁰ Gaskell, *Letters*, nos. 50, 56 and 59.

⁵¹ *Manchester Guardian*, 9 Aug. 1858. On this episode, see R. Poole, "Samuel Bamford and Middleton Rushbearing", *Manchester Region History Review* viii (1994) pp.14-20.

⁵² James Dronsfield, *Incidents and Anecdotes of the Late Samuel Bamford* (Oldham, Manchester & London, 1872), pp. 32-3. Bamford's signed copy of Tennyson was shown after his death to a meeting of Manchester Literary Club by J. C. Lockhart: *Manchester Literary Club Papers* xii (1886), 416. 1 Feb 1886; John H. Swann, *Manchester Literary Club* (1906), p. 25. Its subsequent fate is not known.

⁵³ George Milner, "The Dialect of Lancashire considered as a vehicle for poetry", *Manchester Literary Club Proceedings* 1874-5, pp. 10-11.

⁵⁴ Reproduced in J. A. V. Chapple & Anita Wilson (eds), *Private Voices: the Diaries of Elizabeth Gaskell and Sophia Holland* (Keele University Press, 1996) 121.

⁵⁵ *Private Voices*, 25.

⁵⁶ *Mary Barton*, Easson, Preface p.

⁵⁷ MCL cuttings F942.7389 M79 vol 12, p.92 (*Manchester Weekly Times Notes and Queries* 20 Nov 1891). There had been a report in early 1832 of the theft of a child's body from Middleton churchyard, an episode about which Bamford as parish constable would have known a great deal: *Manchester and Salford Advertiser*, 11 Feb. 1832.

⁵⁸ Samuel Bamford, *Hours in the Bowers* (1834), Preface.

⁵⁹ R. W. Procter, *Literary Reminiscences and Gleanings* (Manchester, 1860), 126-34.

⁶⁰ John Bolton Rogerson, *The Festive Wreath: a Collection of Original Contributions read at a Literary Meeting...on March 24th, 1842, at the Sun Inn, Long Millgate*. (Manchester, 1843).

⁶¹ John Bolton Rogerson, *A Voice from the Town* (Manchester, 1842), pp. 107-12. There were several verses. The whole book was dedicated to Bamford, who was also described in Rogerson's autobiographical poem "A Voice from the Town":

Who is that veteran grey, with port erect,
And frame of sinewy make?—Go, ask of Fame,
And it will tell thee more than pen of mine...

⁶² John Critchley Prince, *Hours With the Muses*, (2nd edn, 1841) pp. 193-5.

⁶³ The full story can be traced in the columns of the *Manchester and Salford Advertiser* for this period, and is hinted at in his diary for ; I am grateful to Martin Hewitt for extensive references here.

⁶⁴ Bamford to Gaskell, 9 March 1849.

⁶⁵ Gaskell letters no. 50.

⁶⁶ Samuel Bamford, *Dialect of South Lancashire* (Manchester, 1850), Preface and xxii.

⁶⁷ *The Ghost of Tim Bobbin. A Tale in Rhyme for Christmas Time*. By Judd o'lkes o'Jacks. Illustrated by the Author. Manchester, Abel Heywood, and all Booksellers. 1850.

⁶⁸ Bamford diary, 3 Sept. 1861, 31 Oct. 1861. Richardson had been one of the Bamford Testimonial Committee in 1846-7 and had subscribed a guinea under the name "Port Wine": Manchester newspaper cutting, October 1846, Middleton Library; *Manchester Examiner* 28 Nov. 1846.

⁶⁹ Bamford, *Homely Rhymes*, pp. 2-3.

⁷⁰ See note 8 above.

⁷¹ Bamford Diaries, 16 May 1859.

⁷² Bamford, *Some account of the late Amos Ogden, of Middleton* (1853).

⁷³ Bamford to John Harland, from 2 Chapel Place, Portland Town, 31 March 1852. (MCL Harland collection).

⁷⁴ Bamford to John Harland, 2 Chapel Place, Portland Town, 16 April 1854. (MCL Harland collection MS F091 H15). An associated note mentions that Bamford had had a communication from the Secretary of the Philological Society in London and even attended a meeting, but no more since.

⁷⁵ Bamford, *Passages I*, ch. 12.

⁷⁶ Bamford, 'A Passage from my Later Years', *Walks in South Lancashire*, pp. 216-27.

⁷⁷ National Archives TS 36/2 The King vs Henry Hunt & others, King's Bench May 1820, pp. 196-202. It is tempting to mention here the evidence of a government spy of Bamford's consorting with pike grinders in Manchester in late 1820, quoted in E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1968), pp. 759-60, but there must be serious doubt about the accuracy of the spy's identification of Bamford.

⁷⁸ *Cassell's Illustrated Family Paper* 28 January, 11 February and 25 March 1854.

⁷⁹ Bamford, *Passages I*, ch. 11.

⁸⁰ Bamford, *Walks in South Lancashire*, 16-17.