CHAPTER II

British Romantic Women Poets:
An Overview
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This chapter anticipates the study of the British Romantic women poets who produced their works in the traditional disciplines dominated by the male poets, and contributed significantly in the canonical traditions of the Romantic period. This chapter highlights how the aspiring women poets of the age depicted their concerns in their works with what they witnessed the various issues of contemporary society. This chapter demonstrates also that these women poets used their philosophical and sentimental attitudes, and modulated them in their works.

In the purview of this chapter, I have drawn the biographical account of eighteen British Romantic women poets who captured the culture and tradition of their society and reflected them in their writings. In cases of life span of these women poets, I have mentioned only the year of their birth and death, leaving out the dates of their birth and death, for the dates seemed contradictory to me. Even in some cases I have not mentioned the life span of those notable personalities who became associated with the works and lives of these women poets. The biographical account of these women poets is as follows:

Anna Seward (1742-1809)

Born in 1742 at Eyam in Derbyshire Anna Seward was the eldest daughter of Thomas Seward and Elizabeth Hunter. She was educated at home. After her father’s appointment as Canon Residentiary of Lichfield Cathedral in 1750, she went to Lichfield along with her parents. She formed a close relationship with Honora Sneyd,
who entered in the Seward household as an adopted child. But their relationship came to an end in 1773, when Honora Sneyd got married to Richard Lovell Edgeworth (the widowed father of Maria Edgeworth).

Seward started verse-writing in her early youth. But her literary life was flourished by the publication of her first poem, "Elegy on Captain Cook" in 1780, the year of her mother's death. The following year she composed "Monody on Major Andre" on the subject of hanging of Major Andre. She visited the Lady Miller's home in Bath-Easton for the purpose of meeting with the aspiring poets of the contemporary period. It was here that she published Poems to the Memory of Lady Miller in 1782. Two years later, she published a sentimental and epistolary poetical novel, Louisa. During this time she also wrote a number of sonnets, odes, epilogues and elegies and published them in the Gentleman's Magazine. She won her reputation as a poet and was given the title; The Swan of Lichfield.

Seward became one of the members of a literary circle that was formed by William Hayley, Dr. Erasmus Darwin, Thomas Day, and Richard Lovell Edgeworth. She supported the French Revolution, but she "reprimanded Hellen Maria Williams for her radical attachments, and expressed strong reservations about Charlotte Smith's advocacy of suicide in her translations from Petrarch and Goethe" (Wu 27). She also corresponded with Henry Cary, Robert Southey, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Hannah More, and other intellectuals of the Romantic period.

After her father's death in 1790, Seward decided to spend the rest of her life in Lichfield. In 1795, she visited Llangollen and won admiration of the two famous ladies of Llangollen, Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Sarah Ponsonby. She published Llangollen Vale and Other Poems in 1796.
In her lifetime Seward was greatly influenced by Dr. Erasmus Darwin, Robert Burns and William Wordsworth. She collaborated with Darwin in her publication of *Memoirs of the Life of Dr. Darwin* (1804). She also corresponded with Sir Walter Scott who visited Lichfield in 1807. She urged him to be her posthumous editor. She died in 1809 and was buried in Lichfield Cathedral. After her death, Scott edited her *Poetical Works* in three volumes and published them in *Edinburgh Journal* in 1810. The following year A. Constable published her six volumes of letters, entitled *Letters of Anna Seward 1784-1807* in the same journal.

Anna Laetitia Barbauld (1743-1825)

English Romantic poet, essayist, and children’s author, Anna Laetitia Barbauld was born in 1743 at Kibworth-Harcourt in Leicestershire. Right from her childhood she was keen on learning new subjects. Her mother noticed her enthusiasm and wrote: “I once indeed knew a little girl who was as eager to learn as her instructors could be to teach her” (Le Breton). Her literary interest, thus, helped her learning Latin, Greek, French, Italian, and many more languages.

In 1758, Barbauld went to Warrington, where her father, the Reverend John Aikin was appointed as a theological teacher at Warrington Academy. It was in Warrington where she stayed “for fifteen years and formed long friendships with some of her father’s colleagues and their families, most notably Joseph Priestley and William Enfield” (Ashfield, Vol.2, 41-42). In 1773, she published her first volume of miscellaneous *Poems* that would later elevate her to the position of a renowned literary figure in England. In the same year she collaborated with Dr. John Aikin and published *Miscellaneous Pieces in Prose*. 
In 1774, Barbauld married Rochemont Barbauld, who was a member of a French Protestant family and a former pupil of Warrington Academy. After her marriage, she went to Palgrave in Suffolk with her husband. In Suffolk she started teaching at a boarding school established by her husband. During her teaching career she thought not to have a child of her own and that is why she adopted her brother’s son, Charles. In Suffolk she wrote a book, *Lessons for Children* (1778-9) which became a children’s classic in the Romantic Period. She published another book for children, entitled *Hymns in Prose for Children* (1781).

Barbauld left the boarding school of Suffolk in 1785 and travelled to France with her husband. Next year she and her husband moved to Hampstead, for her husband’s health was deteriorating in France. During her stay at Hampstead she became a close friend of the playwright, Joanna Baillie, and later she involved herself in political writings. She wrote a radical essay, “An Address to the Opposers of the Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts” in 1790. She published “Epistle to William Wilberforce” (1791) that marked the slave trade and highlighted the causes of the social and cultural follies of the then contemporary Britain. In 1792, she published two sermons – “Sins of Government” and “Sins of Nation” – that displayed moral aspects of the citizen and the responsibility of the government. She collaborated with her brother and published a six-volume series of miscellaneous stories, fables, dramas, poems and dialogues, entitled *Evenings at Home* (1793). She also edited Mark Akenside’s *The Pleasures of Imagination* in 1795 and William Collins’s *Odes* in 1797 respectively.

In 1802, Barbauld went to Stoke Newington where her husband took charge of the pastoral duties of a chapel. In Stoke Newington she started editing essays on some prominent literary writers and their works. She edited the most influential essays,
called *Selections from the Spectator, Tatler, Guardian, and Freeholder, with a Preliminary Essay* in 1805. It was here that she reached the peak of her literary career. But a blow came in her life when Rochemont developed a "violent antipathy to his wife and was liable to fits of insane fury directed against her" (Rodgers 136) and was ultimately separated in 1808. In the same year when she got the news of her husband's drowning in the New River, she became heart-broken and stopped her writing career for a while. However, she overcame the situation and wrote a fifty-volume series of *The British Novelists* in 1810. The following year she published an anthology of literature, *The Female Speaker*, comprising the poetry and prose of Alexander Pope, Hannah More, Maria Edgeworth, Samuel Johnson, James Thomson and Hester Chapone. In 1812, she wrote her last radical poem, "Eighteen Hundred and Eleven". The poem was criticized so harshly that she did not write anything else in her life after it. She died in 1825 and was buried in Stoke Newington.

Hannah More (1745-1833)

Hannah More, daughter of Mary Grace and Jacob More, was born in 1745 in Gloucester, United Kingdom. Under the guidance of her parents she learnt Latin, French and Mathematics at an early age. She attended a boarding school that was established by her elder sister, Mary at Trinity Street in Bristol. She was appointed as a teacher in the same school in her early twenties.

Her literary career started with the publication of some innovative pastoral dramas. In 1772, she wrote *The Search After Happiness: A Pastoral Drama* that brought success to her immediately in the Romantic Period. Two years later, she produced another drama, *The Inflexible Captive* that made her even more famous in the literary world. She went to London in 1774, the year of her disengagement with
William Turner. In London she met Joshua Reynolds, Frances Boscawen, Samuel Johnson, David Garrick, Edmund Burk, Elizabeth Carter, Elizabeth Vesey and Hester Chapone, some of whom became her lifelong friends. It was here that she wrote some tales and essays that reflected her reformist views of the contemporary society. In 1779 she wrote a drama, *The Fatal Falsehood* that brought about a change in her literary fame. The production of her *Sacred Dramas* in 1782 regained her literary success, for the theme of this dramatic piece centered on the subjects taken from the Bible.

There was a gradual transition in her literary career, for she started writing poetry on serious aspects of life. Her poems – “Florio” (1786) and “Bas-Bleu” (1787) – reflected her attitude to contemporary social realities of life. In her “Slavery: A poem”, published in 1788, she highlighted the causes of slave trade and the struggle of middle-class women. This poem “articulates its author’s impatience with the caution of the proposed measures, arguing instead for complete abolition” (Wu 54).

She devoted herself in writing religious and philanthropic works. She collaborated with her sister, Martha, in the establishment of Sunday school at Cheddar in 1789. She and her sister also opened other boarding schools for the underprivileged people of the contemporary society. She wrote religious tracts and novels regarding social and religious precepts which are: *Village Politics, by Will Chip* (1792), *The Sorrows of Yamba; or The Negro Woman’s Lamentation* (1795), *The Story of Sinful Sally Told by Herself* (1796), *Cheap Repository* (1796), *Strictures on Female Education* (1799), *Hints Towards Forming the Character of a Young Prince* (1805), *Coelebs in Search of a Wife* (1809), *Practical Piety* (1811), *Christian Morals* (1813), *Character of St. Paul* (1815), *Moral Sketches* (1819), and *The Feast of Freedom* (1827). Thus she spent her later life in religious writing and gave the money she
earned from her works to many institutions and charities. At the age 88 she died at Clifton in Bristol.

Susanna Blamire (1747-1794)

Susanna Blamire was born in 1747 at Cardell Hall, near Dalston in Cumberland. She was brought up by her father, William Blamire (1703-1758) and mother, Isabella Simpson (1709-1753). An emotional crisis arose in her early childhood as her mother died in 1753 and her father married Mary Stevenson Simpson (1703-1785), with whom Susanna was to live at Thackwood. After her father’s death in 1758 she attended Dame School at Raughton Head, where “she learned the rudiments of reading, writing, and arithmetic” (Feldman 103). She acquired knowledge of verse in her early youth. She captured the interest of the contemporary people by growing “from girlhood into womanhood and into the flowering of her poetic strength” (Maycock 1). Apart from verse, she was also fond of dancing.

At the age of nineteen, Blamire visited Northumberland, where she met Charles Bennet, son of the 3rd Earl of Tankerville at Chillingham Castle. It was here that Charles Bennet fell in love with her, for she had “a graceful form, somewhat above the middle age, and a countenance – though slightly marked with the smallpox – beaming with good nature; her dark eyes sparked with animation and won every heart at the first introduction” (Lonsdale and Patrick xxiii). But the affair seemed meaningless to her, because the Earl and Countess dismissed the affair by sending Charles Bennet to Italy. This break-up haunted her much and motivated her to produce her masterpiece, Stoklewath.
In 1766, Blamire went to Scotland on the occasion of her sister, Sarah Graeme’s marriage with Colonel Graham of Gartmore House. Feldman has pointed out the fact that “she so enthusiastically embraced Scotland and the Scottish manners, language, legends, and music that she began writing soon in Scot’s dialect” (104). She visited Ireland and London along with her sister and brother-in-law. During her stay in London, she published some of her best poems: “The Nabob”, “The Old Pensioners”, “Hope”, and “The Siller Croun”.

After her brother-in-law’s death in 1773, Blamire returned to Cumberland and decided to spend the rest of her life there. In Cumberland she published her highly creative and nostalgic poem, “To the Flower Love” in 1790. During this time, she involved herself in politics, and later wrote an allegorical poem, “The Nun’s Return to the World by the Decree of the National Assembly of France”. She wrote also many poems, some of whom were published anonymously in her lifetime while others were published posthumously. She became the only one who encapsulated the transition from the formal poetry of the Augustan Age to the major Romantics. At the very close of her life, she suffered from Rheumatic fever and died of heart disease in 1794.

Anna Maria Jones (1748-1829)

Born on 5th December of 1748 Anna Maria Shipley was the eldest daughter of Rt.Rev. Jonathan Shipley (1713-1788) and Anna Maria Mordaunt (1716-1803). At an early age she became interested in her father’s literary purview and learned modern and classical languages from him. In 1766 she visited the home of Lady Spencer at Althorpe along with her father. It was here that she met Sir William Jones (1746-1794), “an Oxford-educated scholar, author, and philologist, remembered today as a pioneer in comparative linguistics and the first to perceive the common ancestry of
the Indo-European languages" (Feldman 358), and later formed a close relationship with him. During her correspondence with Sir William Jones she developed an active interest in literary writing and Oriental studies.

She got married to Sir William Jones in 1783 and became known as Anna Maria Jones. Shortly after their marriage, the Joneses travelled to India, for Mr. Jones was appointed as a judge to the High Court of Calcutta. She shared her keen interest in things Oriental with her husband, thus acquiring her first-hand knowledge of India.

In her decade long stay in India she saw much of India, although her “health suffered, especially during the warmest season, and she was frequently ill with digestive disorders, colds, fevers, rheumatism, and, on at least one occasion, dysentery” (Feldman 359). In Calcutta she published her first poetic collection, entitled *The Poems of Anna Maria* in 1793. Among the poems in this collection, her poem, “Adieu to India” captured her thorough knowledge of India. In this poem she displayed the dominant nature of the Hindu religion in India, thus pointing out the authority enjoyed and exercised by the Hindu priestly figure, Brahman. Besides, she edited some works of her husband that brought her popularity both in India and England.

After her husband’s death in 1794, she returned to England, for she felt isolated and lonely in India. After her return to England, she decided to spend the rest of her life at Worting House, near Basingstoke, although she spent long periods in London. She edited voluminous works of her husband and published them as *The Works of Sir William Jones* in 1799. In 1806 she adopted the children of her sister, Georgiana Shipley (1755-1806). In her later life, she became stern and turned to evangelical activities. She died on 7th July in 1829.
Charlotte Turner Smith (1749-1806)

Charlotte Turner Smith, the eldest daughter of Nicholas Turner and Anna Towers, was born in London on 4th May of 1749. After her mother's sudden death in 1753, she was brought up by her unmarried aunt, Lucy Towers. She “first went to school in Chichester and then attended a school in Kensington, London” (Feldman 671). It was in London where she developed her interest in writing poetry. But the burden of fresh problems came in her life in 1764 when her father married a middle-aged heiress, Henrietta Meriton on the condition that Charlotte would be detached from the family. As per condition, her father arranged her marriage with Benjamin Smith, son of Richard Smith, and thus she “began a child-bearing career that would span the next twenty-two years, producing twelve children” (Wu 78).

As her married life was not a happy one, Smith thought of literary activities and thus started contributing to the European Magazine. She wanted to earn money to support her family. In 1784 she published Elegiac Sonnets and Other Essays in which she reflected almost all of the hardships that pulled her family into poverty. She started translating works from French into English. She translated Prevost’s Manon Lescaut and published it anonymously in 1785. She also translated Francois Gayot de Pitaval’s Les causes celebres and published them under the title, The Romance of Life in 1787.

After her separation from her husband, she began writing novels that truly captured her life experiences. In 1788, she produced her first novel, Emmeline, the Orphan of the Castle, followed by Ethelinde, the Recluse of the Lake (1789). In 1791, she formed a close friendship with Helen Maria Williams, and published her third novel, Celestina in the same year. She wrote an epistolary novel, Desmond in 1792.
that dealt the theme of unconventional love of a man’s desire for a married woman. This novel also reflected her radical views that were in favor of French Revolution and her sympathy for the reform movement in England.

During this period she visited William Hayley’s home where she met with the artist George Romney and the poet William Cowper. It was here that she composed the text of her next novel, *The Old Manor House* in 1793. In the same year she published her long political poem, “The Emigrants”. In this poetical piece she explored “personal isolation against the background of larger themes of the exile of classes and the conflict of nations” (Ashfield 33). In 1794, she wrote two novels: *The Wanderings of Warwick* and *The Banished Man*.

She wrote poetry for children. She published *Rural Walks: in Dialogues, Intended for the Use of young Persons* in 1795, the year of publication of her novel *Montableri*. In 1796, she produced another collection of poems for children, entitled *Rambles Father: A Continuation of Rural Walks: in Dialogues, Intended for the Use of young Persons*, followed by her novel, *Marchmont*. Two years later, she published her last novel, *The Young Philosopher* that was followed by her comedy, *What Is She?* (1799).

At the end of her literary career she decided to spend the rest of her life in Surrey. It was Surrey where she devoted herself in writing some collections of tales and other prose works. She wrote *The Letters of a Solitary Wanderer* in 1799, followed by *Conversations Introducing Poetry: Chiefly on Subjects of Natural History* (1804). But her health worsened and she died at Tilford, near Surrey in 1806, the year of publication of her prose work, *A History of England*. Two of her works –
Ann Yearsley (1752-1806)

Ann Yearsley was born in a humble family, and then lived off selling milk, at Clifton Hill, near Bristol. Because of her poor family background she was not able to complete her formal education, yet “her brother taught her to read and her mother borrowed books for her” (Lonsdale 392). She married John Yearsley, a yeoman farmer, in 1774.

A decade later when the family fell on hard times during the severe winter of 1783-1784, she rushed to Hannah More and Elizabeth Montagu who rescued her family by their charity. During these years, she developed her writing skills that later supported herself and her family members. She captured Hannah More’s attention by her literary abilities and began her literary career.

She achieved literary fame by the publication of Poems, on Several Occasions in 1785. In this collection of poems she included “poems on comic, tragic, and religious themes” (Carey). But within a year, an acrimonious problem arose between More and her; she decided to publish works herself. She wrote a detailed account of her disagreement with More in Autobiographical Narrative that was appended to the fourth edition of Poems, on Several Occasions in 1786.

By 1787 she published a new volume, Poems, on Various Subjects. She composed her most famous poem, “A Poem on the Inhumanity of the Slave Trade” in 1788 and dedicated it to Frederick Augustus Hervey, Bishop of Derry and Earl of Bristol. This poem, much like More’s “Slavery: A Poem”, concerned with the
numerous laws that brought about the abolition of Slave Trade in Britain. She produced a historical play, *Earl Godwin* that was performed in 1789. She continued to publish other verses in various periodicals that manifested her political personality: “Stanzas of Woe” (1790), “Reflections on the Death of Louis XVI” (1793), “An Elegy on Marie Antoinette of Austria” (1795?). In connection with her political thought, Wu points out that her “attitude compares with that of Charlotte Smith in *The Emigrants*” (157).

In 1793, she opened a circulating library at Hot Wells Crescent in Bristol and “received some assistance from Joseph Cottle, the bookseller, Ralph Griffiths, editor of the Monthly Review, and Thomas Beddoes, a local physician” (Ashfield, Vol.2, 32). She wrote *The Royal Captives* in 1795 which brought her literary success in the world of novel. In 1796, she published her last volume of poems, *The Rural Lyre*. In 1799, she corresponded with Robert Southey and longed to include her poem in his edition of *Annual Anthology*. But the deaths of her two sons in the same year left her grief stricken and she could not write for the rest of her life. After her husband’s death in 1803, she moved to Melksham in Wiltshire, near Trowbridge, hoping to live with her third son. It was there that her health drastically worsened and she died in 1806.

Mary Robinson (1758-1801)

The daughter of John Darby and Maria Seys, Mary Robinson was born in 1758 in Bristol. She was sent to a boarding school run by Hannah More’s sisters in 1765, the year when her father went to Lapland and America for commercial purpose. After her father’s arrival from abroad, her mother sent her to “a school in Chelsea, where she was taught by the gifted but alcoholic Meribah Lorington” (Wu 246). However, she completed her formal education from a school in Marylebone.
From her childhood she was interested in acting, and thus, with the help of her dancing master, she formed a correspondence with the actor of the Drury Lane Theatre, David Garrick. But her dream of acting on stage came to an end in 1774 when her parents arranged her marriage with Thomas Robinson, who falsely represented himself as a rich person to her family. She gave birth to a daughter, Mary Elizabeth in Wales in the same year of her marriage. All things went downhill in 1775 when her husband was imprisoned for heavy debt. She struggled a lot and, much like Charlotte Smith, started literary writing in order to help herself and her little daughter. She won her popularity just after the publication of Poems (1775).

She revived her interest of acting and joined the Drury Lane Theatre when she and her little daughter became separated from her husband. She entertained her audience by her personal charm and talent. She became a well known actress in 1776 when she played the role of Juliet at the Drury Lane Theatre. Her successful acting career “continued with the roles of Ophelia, Viola, Rosalind, Lady Macbeth and Perdita” (Wu 246). During this time she wrote a poem, “Captivity” (1777), followed by a musical farce, The Lucky Escape (1778). Her acting career turned her life around in 1779, when she played the role of Perdita in a production of Shakespeare’s The Winter’s Tale and attracted the eyes of the Prince of Wales. She became involved in an affair with the Prince. But the Prince lost his interest in her and, a year later, rejected her. Thus, she was ridiculed in the society and retired from the stage. To avoid all rumors and personal attacks she travelled to France where she became acquainted with Marie Antionette. But after her return to London she again involved herself in a relationship with Colonel Banastre Tarleton, who fought for the American War of Independence, though the affair was never materialized.
By 1788 she started contributing her poems to the Della Cruscan poetry magazines. She regained her popularity with the publication of her Poems in 1790. She also showed her interest in publishing novels, including Vancenza; or The Dangers of Credulity in 1792, The Widow; or A Picture of Modern Times in 1794, Angelina and Hubert de Sevrac: A Romance of the Eighteenth Century in 1796, the year of publication of her sonnet sequence Sappho and Phaon and The Sicilian Lover, a verse tragedy in five acts, Walsingham; or The Pupil of Nature in 1797, The False Friend: A Domestic Story, and The Natural Daughter: A Novel with Portraits of the Leadenhead Family in 1799. During this period she became a close friend of William Godwin, Mary Wollstonecraft and John Wolcot. She also became a “part of Coleridge’s London literary circle, which included women writers such as Mary Hays, Charlotte Smith, and Anna Laetitia Barbauld” (Ledbetter 43).

At the end of her career she fell seriously ill and left London and went to Windsor to live with her daughter, Mary Elizabeth. It was here that she published her brilliant work, Lyrical Tales in 1800. The following year she died of pulmonary edema and was buried at Englefield Green in Windsor.

Helen Maria Williams (1761-1827)

Helen Maria Williams, the daughter of Charles Williams, a Welsh army officer and Helen Hay, of Scottish descent, was born in London in 1761. After her father’s death in 1769, she went to Berwick-upon-Tweed along with her family members; there she spent her childhood and was educated by her mother’s guidance. She returned to London in 1781 and asked her family members to join her. She formed a correspondence with Dr. Andrew Kippis, the dissenting minister of Westminster, who helped her in the publication of her first poem, “Edwin and
Eltrude: A Legendary Tale” (1782). Shortly after the publication of this poem, she achieved literary success and won admiration of some prominent literary figures, notably Fanny Burney, William Hayley, Samuel Johnson, Elizabeth Montagu, Anna Seward, Samuel Rogers, Joseph Warton and Thomas Warton, and Charlotte Smith.

She went on publishing a large number of poems, and most of them were dedicated to her new correspondents. In 1783, she published “An Ode on the Peace”, followed by “Peru” (1784) which she dedicated to Elizabeth Montagu. She wrote a new collection of poems in two volumes in 1786, entitled Poems and dedicated it to the Queen. In 1788, she produced her most successful poem, called “Poem on the Slave Trade”, reflecting how the lives of the lower class people were suppressed by the social and political policies of the bourgeois people. This poem contained “a subject which inspired poems by Hannah More and Ann Yearsley in the same year” (Lonsdale 413).

By the end of 1778 she travelled to France to her elder sister, Cecilia; there she was caught up in the spirit and ideals of the French Revolution. During her stay in France she produced her one and only novel, Julia in 1790, the year of publication of her another poem, “The Bastille, A Vision”. Her enthusiasm for the French Revolution was reflected in her Letters Written in France in the Summer of 1790. She returned to London in 1791; but within a year she visited France and determined to spend the rest of her life there. She provided an account of her departure in her poem, “A Farewell for Two Years to England” (1791).

She involved herself in the Girondists Movement and made correspondence with Mary Wollstonecraft, Francisco de Miranda, and Thomas Paine. She wrote Letters from France, pointing out the events taking place in France. But due to sudden
rise of the Reign of Terror, she was detained in the Luxemberg prison. In her imprisonment she continued to publish her impressions on the Post-Revolutionary France. She translated St. Pierre's novel, *Paul et Virginie* and it was published as *Paul and Virginia* in 1795. After her release from the Luxemberg prison, she became involved in a relationship with a married Englishman, John Hurford Stone, who divorced his wife for her; but their relationship confirmed some rumors in the society. To avoid all kind of rumors and personal attacks, she and Stone went to Switzerland. She published her travelling experience in *Tour in Switzerland* (1798).

In her later life she continued to publish a number of translations and other prose works on France. In 1817, she became a naturalized French citizen. Two years later, she visited Amsterdam hoping to live with her nephew, Athanese Laurent Charles Coquerel, a pastor to the French Protestant congregation. However, she returned to France in 1820 and became acquainted with William Wordsworth. She published her last collection of poems, entitled *Poems on Various Subjects* in 1823. She died in 1827 and was buried next to Stone at Pere Lachaise cemetery.

Joanna Baillie (1762-1851)

Born in 1762 at Bothwell in Hamilton, Joanna Baillie was the youngest daughter of James Baillie who was a Presbyterian minister at Bothwell and a Professor of Divinity at the University of Glasgow, and Dorothea Hunter who was of Scottish descent. In her early age she was sent to a boarding school in Glasgow where she learned drawing, music, and mathematics. It was here that she also developed her interest in dramas, for she made a habit of reading stories by some great writers. After her father's death in 1778, she went with her mother and elder sister, Agnes to London where her brother, Matthew Baillie became a celebrated physician and
anatomist; there she became interested in writing verse and published her first
collection, entitled *Poems; Wherein it is Attempted to Describe Certain Views of
Nature and of Rustic Manners* in 1790 anonymously. Following her brother’s
marriage with Sophia Denman in 1791 she went to Colchester and began writing
some verse dramas that brought her fame immediately in the literary tradition of the
Romantic period. She wrote her first volume of *Plays on the Passions* and published
anonymously under the title of *A Series of Plays* in 1798. In this volume of plays she
designed two tragedies – *Count Basil* and *De Monfort* – and a comedy, *The Tryal* on
the deepest and strongest passions of the human mind, such as love, hate, fear and
jealousy. These dramas in this collection, of course, “represented a reaction against
the highly mannered and overblown acting favoured in her day” (Wu 308). She
acknowledged the authorship of her works in 1800 when her *De Monfort* was
performed at the Drury Lane Theatre.

In 1802, she moved to Hampstead, near London; she formed literary
acquaintances with Anna Laetitia Barbauld, Maria Edgeworth, Lucy Aikin, Samuel
Rogers, William Wordsworth, and Sir Walter Scott. It was here that she published her
second volume of *Plays on the Passions* comprising two tragedies – *Ethwald* and *The
Election* – and a comedy, *The Second Marriage* based on hatred and ambition. In
1804, she produced a new collection of plays, entitled *Miscellaneous Plays*. She wrote
her *Family Legend* on a Scottish theme and published it in 1810. Two years later, she
brought out her third volume of *Plays on the Passions* that included two gothic
tragedies, *Orra* and *The Siege*, a comedy, *The Alienated Manor*, and a serious musical
drama, *The Beacon*.

During the later period of her literary career, she continued to write verse on
historical figures, such as William Wallace, Christopher Columbus, and Lady Grizel
Baillie. In 1821, she published *Metrical Legends of Exalted Characters*. She produced *Dramatic Poetry* in three volumes in 1836, the year of publication of three volumes of *Miscellaneous Plays*. In 1840, she published her last collection of poems, *Fugitive Verses* in which she relocated few poems of her earlier collection, *Poems* (1790). In her poetic works she “succeeded better in her delineation, as a didactic poet, than as a dramatist” (Bethune 160). Her *The Dramatic and Poetical Works* was published in 1851, a month before her death. She died in Hampstead and was buried next to her mother’s tomb in the Hampstead parish churchyard.

**Maria Edgeworth (1768-1849)**

Maria Edgeworth, daughter of Anna Maria Elers and Richard Lovell Edgeworth, was born in 1768 at Black Burton, Oxfordshire. She spent her early childhood in better care of her parents, yet she underwent a predicament in 1773, when her mother died of puerperal fever and her father immediately married Ann Seward’s adopted sister, Honora Sneyd. At the age of seven she attended a boarding school in England and acquired some conventional educational instructions. A second blow entered her educational life in 1780, when she received the news of Honora Sneyd’s death and her father’s third marriage with Honora’s sister, Elizabeth Sneyd. However, at her father’s urge she moved to Edgeworthstown in 1783 and helped in running her father’s estate. It was here that she translated Madame de Genlis’s educational work, *Adel et Theodore*.

She accompanied her father and stepmother to London, but returned briefly to Ireland in 1793; she formed literary acquaintances with Joseph Johnson, Anna Laetitia Barbauld, Joseph Priestley, and others. In 1795, she published her first version of *Letters for Literary Ladies* which mainly dealt with the rights of female education. In
the following year she involved herself in drafting short-stories for children and produced a collection, *The Parent’s Assistant* (1796) which reflected educational facilities for young children. She collaborated with her father and published *Practical Education* (1798) in which she theorized some practical aspects of education.

In 1799, she visited London for the second time along with her family members. It was here “she and her father proposed to Anna Laetitia Barbauld that they start a liberal journal for women, to be called *Feminead*, but Barbauld rejected the idea, believing that ideological; differences between women authors would keep the journal from succeeding” (Feldman 232). However, she determined herself for novel writing. In 1800, she published anonymously her first novel, *Castle Rackrent* which was considered perhaps to be “the memoirs of the Irish servant of a family of feckless Anglo-Irish gentry” (Manly). This novel brought her literary success immediately, for in this novel she explored a new colloquial Irish style and the theme metaphorically dealing with corrupt aristocratic society. The following year she produced her second novel, *Belinda* which portrayed almost the same way the allure and evil nature of London society. In this year she published also two other new works, including *Early Lessons*, based on programme of education for children of diverse ages, and *Moral Tales*, a collection of stories for young people. She collaborated with her father for the second time in the publication of *Essays on Irish Bulls* (1802). During this period she received many offers of marriage, but she kept herself away from marriage. In 1803, she visited Edinburgh and Glasgow where she formed correspondences with Dugald Stewart, a Scottish empiricist, and the satirical novelist, Elizabeth Hamilton.

In 1804, she returned to Edgeworthstown and published a collection of stories for young people, *Popular Tales* (1804), followed by *The Modern Griselda* (1805), a
satirical piece on the domestic lives of women, *Leonora* (1806), an epistolary novel, and *Essays on Professional Education* (1809) in which she talked about the "moral and intellectual instruction and advocating professions independent of the patronage system" (Feldman 233). In 1809–12, she produced a series of her *Tales of Fashionable Life* that included *Ennui, The Absentee, Manoeuvring, Vivian, Emile de Coulanges, Madame de Fleury, Almeria,* and *The Dun.* In 1813, she accompanied her family members to England; she made acquaintances with William Roscoe, Mary Berry, Thomas Malthus, Lord Byron, Thomas More, Jane Marcet, and Etienne Dumont. She published her longest novel, *Patronage* in 1814, followed by her memoir of Elizabeth Hamilton in 1816, two novels – *Harrington* and *Ormond* – written in 1817 for adults, and a *Memoir* published on the occasion of her father’s death in 1820.

During the later period of her life she continued to write short-stories. In 1822, she published her most celebrated collection of short-stories, entitled *Early Lessons.* In 1823, she visited Scotland where she became a friend of Sir Walter Scott. Again, she developed her interest in writing novels and produced her last novel, *Helen* (1834) based on a theme primarily dealing with "women’s friendships, the dangers of capitulation to male authority, and women’s influence in public life" (Manly). She kept herself busy in producing literary works throughout her life. But she fell in a trap of series of illness at the end of her career and died in 1849 at Edgeworthstown.

Amelia Opie (1769-1853)

Daughter of Dr. James Alderson and Amelia Briggs, Amelia Opie was born in 1769 in Norwich, England. Though she grew up in a Unitarian family, she learned music and French at an early age. After her mother’s death in 1784 she quite involved
herself in radical principles and formed correspondences with William Godwin, James Mackintosh, Thomas Holcroft, John Aikin, and Harriet Martineau whose works motivated her interest in literary genres. Influenced by John Aikin, she published anonymously her first novel, *The Dangers of Coquetry* (1790), which was followed by her many poems published under the title of *The Cabinet*, and a play, *Adelaide* in 1791.

As her earlier works received little critical attention, she went to London where she became a part of the London literary circles which included William Godwin, Mary Wollstonecraft, and Elizabeth Inchbald. During her stay in London she received many offers of marriage, but she set her relationship for marriage with John Opie, a portrait artist in 1798. Encouraged by her husband she published her novel, *The Father and Daughter* in 1801 under her own name. This novel hailed her as a famous novelist in the Romantic period, for she produced a theme primarily dealing with the pathetic lives of the ordinary people of the contemporary society.

Following her husband’s death in 1807, Mrs. Opie moved to Norwich where she thought of spending the rest of her life. At the time of her stay at her father’s residence, she corresponded with Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Madame de Stael, and Sir Walter Scott, and was again motivated to compose a few volumes of poems and prose works. In 1808, she published a collection of poems, entitled *The Warrior’s Return and Other Poems*, followed by *Memoir of John Opie* (1809), a prose work. In 1812, she produced another prose work, *Temper* which was followed by *Tales of Real Life* (1813). The influence of her friends also ensured her active engagement in the field of religious writing. She wrote *Valentine’s Eve* on the didactic or moral ground and published it in 1816. In 1818, she published another didactic work, *Tales of the Heart*, followed by *Madeline* in 1822, *Illustrations of Lying, in All Its Branches* in
1825, *Black Man's Lament* and *Detraction Displayed* in 1828. Though she continued to publish a large number of works in her later life, her popularity gradually declined due to her active involvement in didacticism. In 1834, she published her last collection of poems, *Lays for the Dead* which received mixed critical attention and revived her popularity again to some degree. At the end of her literary career, she fell under the attack of a series of illnesses and died in 1853. She was buried next to her father at the Gildencroft Quaker Cemetery in Norwich.

**Mary Tighe (1772-1810)**

Born in Dublin in 1772, Mary Tighe was the daughter of Rev. William Blachford and Theodosia Tighe. After her father’s death in 1773, she was brought up by her mother who was then influenced by the strong-religious features of the Methodist movement. In her early childhood she learned Italian, French, music and drawing under her mother’s supervision and developed an extensive habit of writing verse.

She was involved in a romantic affair with her first cousin, Henry Tighe, a member of the Irish parliament and married him in 1793. Shortly after her marriage, she accompanied her husband to London where she spent a few years of her marriage happily. But she felt embarrassed at the moment when her husband proved himself extremely jealous and possessive of her and she was disallowed to meet her friends. In 1801, she returned to Dublin and started forming a strong correspondence with Thomas Moore who helped her revive her childhood zeal of verse writing. She composed “Psyche; or, the Legend of Love”, an allegorical poem in Spenserian stanzas. She wrote a long autobiographical novel, *Selena* which was never published. She continued her literary career, thus producing many other shorter poems.
In 1804, when she was caught up by the serious attack of tuberculosis, she thought of publishing her "Psyche; or, the Legend of Love" privately. The publication of this epical poem in 1805 immediately gained her literary admiration and she was hailed as a notorious woman poet in the Romantic period. But her health declined in a way that she had to move to her brother-in-law’s estate at Woodstock, County Wicklow, Ireland. It was here that she was not cured completely. After a series of sufferings she died in 1810 and was buried at Inistioge church, Kilkenny. Her most successful collection of poems, *Psyche, With Other Poems* was published posthumously in 1811.

**Felicia Dorothea Hemans (1793-1835)**

Felicia Dorothea Browne, daughter of George Browne and Felicity Dorothea Wagner, was born in 1793 at 118 Duke Street, Liverpool. When her father suffered a lot from business problems in 1800 and consequently retired from business reversal in the same year, the family moved to Gwyrch, near Abergele in North Wales. It was here that she “read avidly, memorized poetry, studied music and art, and learned French, Portuguese, Spanish, and Italian from her mother, Latin from the local vicar, and later, German” (Wolfson xxi). She also made an effort to read William Shakespeare (1564-1616) as her favorite recreation in her childhood.

In 1808, at the age of fifteen Miss Felicia published her first poetical work, entitled *Poems* which portrayed her varied interests about beautiful scenes and sounds of the rocky landscape. It won critical attention and she was praised in various contemporary literary magazines. In the same year she published *England and Spain; or, Valour and Patriotism* which reflected her enthusiasm in terms of her brothers’ active participation in the peninsular wars. P.B. Shelley became captivated by the
style of her writing and sent a proposal of friendship to her, but she refused to give a shape of friendship with him. In 1809 when the “family moved to Bronwylfa, near St. Asaph in Flintshire, in the valley of the Clwyd” (Feldman 276), she happened to meet Captain Alfred Hemans who fought in the peninsular war along with her brothers, and later fell in love with him. Her father’s death in 1810 brought a heavy blow in her life, yet she was consoled by Captain Hemans. Just before her marriage with Captain Hemans she wrote a volume of poems, *The Domestic Affections, and Other Poems*, which was published along with her other long piece of verse, *War and Peace* in 1812. This collection of poems displayed “the activities and the sentiments of this period in her life” (Trinder 11).

After her marriage, Miss Felicia was named Felicia Dorothea Hemans. She accompanied her husband to Daventry, for he was appointed adjutant to the Northamptonshire Militia. Here she spent a quite peaceful life with her husband and continued her writing career. She felt an emotional crisis when her husband went to Italy for his health and consequently she was separated from him. At this stage she made an effort to improve her mind from emotional catastrophe and resumed her writing career that strengthened her determination to support her family. She published *The Restoration of the Works of Art to Italy* in 1816, followed by *Modern Greece* in 1817 and *Translations from Camoens, and Other Poets, with Original Poetry* in 1818.

In 1819, she produced a series of narrative poems, entitled *Tales, and Historic Scenes in Verse*, which featured her exotic interests in terms of politics and culture. She also published “Wallace’s Invocation to Bruce; a Poem” and was praised by the popular Romantics, namely William Wordsworth (1770-1850), Walter Scott (1771-1832), Lord Byron (1788-1824), and John Keats (1795-1821). The *Edinburgh
Monthly Review issued in 1819 commented that “the more we become acquainted with Mrs. Hemans as a poet, the more we are delighted with her productions, and astonished by her powers” (qtd in Wu 1243). By 1820 she had corresponded with Reginald Heber who later became an inspiration in writing her plays. Within the next six years she upheld her literary success by publishing some significant works, notably “The Sceptic; a Poem” and “Stanzas to the Memory of the Late King” in 1820; “Dartmoor; a Poem” in 1821; “Welsh Melodies” in 1822; The Siege of Valencia, and Other Poems in 1823; The Vespers of Palermo; a Tragedy in 1823; The Forest Sanctuary, and Other Poems in 1825; and Lays of Many Lands in 1826. She also composed many other shorter poems and essays which appeared in the contemporary periodicals and magazines.

The second emotional blow came in her life in 1827 when her mother died. To escape all hardships, she left Wales and moved in with her younger sons in Liverpool. In 1828, she published her most successful collection of poems, called Records of Women, with Other Poems, and dedicated it to Joanna Baillie. This volume demonstrated “the influence of women as they are moved by domestic sympathies, most of all by the maternal passions which remain for Mrs. Hemans the touchstone of human sentiment” (Trinder 47). Two years later, she set off for a trip to Scotland and the Lakes where she corresponded with William Wordsworth and Walter Scott. She became also acquainted with Lord Jeffrey, Maria Jane Jewsbury, Rose Lawrence, Mary Howitt, Caroline Hamilton, and other notabilities of the age. During this time, she published two self-reflective poems: “Corinne at the Capital” and “Woman and Fame”.

At the end of her career she sent her two sons to her husband to Italy and she herself moved to Dublin as her health deteriorated day by day. Despite her bad health,
she published few collections of melodic poems, notably *National Lyrics, and Songs for Music* and *Scenes and Hymns of Life, with Other Poems* in 1834. She lost her mental energy at the end of her life and died of fever and delirium in 1835 at 20 Dawson Street, Dublin.

Emma Roberts (1794-1840)

Emma Roberts was born in 1794 at Methley, Leeds. After her father's death, she accompanied her mother and elder sister to Bath where she spent her childhood. She was encouraged by her mother's literary interests and later she went to London where she became acquainted with Letitia Elizabeth Landon (1802-1838). Her literary career flourished with the publication of her first book, entitled *Memoirs of the Rival House of York and Lancaster, or the White and Red Roses* (1827). It was 1828 when her mother died. She visited India along with her married sister and brother-in-law. In 1830, she published a volume of poems, entitled *Oriental Scenes, Dramatic Sketches and Tales, with Other Poems* about her lively experiences in India and dedicated it to Letitia Elizabeth Landon. In this volume she provided "her readers with a version of India focusing on landscape and scenery" (Fhlatuin 188) and thus received immediate literary success. But her sister's death in 1831 and consequently the burden of her work compelled her to return to England. During her stay in England she wrote several articles on India and the Anglo-Indian society and contributed them to the *Asiatic Journal*. In 1835, she published these articles as *Scenes and Characteristics of Hindostan, with Sketches of Anglo-Indian Society*. She also contributed a number of poems, tales, and dramatic sketches to various literary journals.

In 1839 she visited India for the second time. She wrote *The East India Voyager, or Ten Minutes' Advice to the Outward Bound* (1839). During this period
she also edited *The Bombay United Service Gazette*. Apart from that, she published articles on the Orient in the periodicals of both England and India. By 1840 she was in deteriorating health and died in Poona, now known as Pune.

**Maria Jane Jewsbury (1800-1833)**

Maria Jane Jewsbury, the eldest daughter of Thomas Jewsbury, a cotton manufacturer and Maria Smith, was born at Measham, Derbyshire in 1800. At an early age she was sent to a school at Measham run by Miss Adams. Almost all the teachers and her fellow-students noticed her unusual intellect and her passion for books. Her interest in reading literary books grew suddenly. But unfortunately the deterioration of her health forced her to leave the school in 1814.

In 1818 when her father's business fell into financial crisis, the family moved to Grosvenor Street, Manchester. She was moved by the literary facilities of the libraries and became engrossed in the contemporary society. She composed her first poem, "Curiosity and Scandal", which appeared in the *Coventry Herald*. An emotional crisis surrounded her life in 1819 when her mother died. After her mother's death she took upon herself all the domestic responsibilities, thus caring for her father and her younger siblings as well. She started contributing her writing to various literary magazines. In 1823, she contributed a few verses to the *Manchester Gazette* under her initials M.J.J. The following year she produced two prose works, "Boarding-School Reminiscences" and "The Complaint of Schoolmistress" which appeared in the *Album*, a London quarterly edited by Robert Sullivan.

By 1825 Miss Jewsbury had published a collection of poems, essays and tales, known as *Phantasmagoria; or, Sketches of Life and Literature*, and dedicated it to William Wordsworth. Just after the publication of this autobiographical work, she
began sending letters to Wordsworth and later formed a strong friendship with him. She also became acquainted with Wordsworth’s sister, Dorothy Wordsworth and daughter, Dora Wordsworth. Reviews that regarded her *Phantasmagoria* most favourably appeared in various literary magazines. Most importantly, the reviews of the *Literary Gazette* appeared in 1825 praised the rhythmical qualities of her writing. The *New Monthly Magazine* issued in the same year also marked her talents in terms of prose and poetry.

Of the poems published in the *Phantasmagoria*, “Song of the Hindoo Women, While Accompanying a Widow to the Funeral of Her Husband”, which was first appeared in the *Literary Souvenir*, displayed Jewsbury’s interest in exotic customs. This poem abounded in Oriental elements. Most of the essays of this voluminous work revealed her satirical sense for the hypocritical notion of contemporary society. “A Rural Excursion”, a wonderful example from among her essays, depicted her friendship with Jane Austen (1775-1817) on one hand and her humorous presentation on the other. This essay displayed her acute sense of comic-plot and witty dialogues between characters. There was only one essay, titled “Religious Novels” which reflected her sentimental and religious attitude toward literature, writers and readers.

At the age of 26, Jewsbury’s health deteriorated because of a protracted illness and her literary career was impeded. After her recovery she completely devoted herself “to religion and became obsessed with Death, and all her subsequent writings are deeply imbued with religious sentiment” (Fryckstedt 195). In 1828, she published *Letters to the Young*, a collection of letters written to her younger sister. In this collection of letters she pointed out all the virtues of the Christian religion. At the same year, she went to Wales to spend a joyous holiday with Felicia Dorothea Hemans. It was Wales where she published *Lays of Leisure Hours* in 1829 and
dedicated it to Hemans. Apart from her close and sympathetic relationship with Hemans, she formed literary connections with Mary Russell Mitford, Emma Roberts, Joanna Baillie, Letitia Elizabeth Landon, and Mary Howitt. Her strong religious belief in the Christian faith was further expressed in her longest volume of novels, entitled *The Three Histories* (1830), followed by her collection of essays which was published in the *Athenaeum* in 1831.

In 1832, at the age of 32 Miss Jewsbury married Rev. William Kew Fletcher, then appointed as chaplain in the East India Company. The following year she travelled with her husband to India. During her voyage to India she composed a poem, “Oceanides”, which vividly drew her life experience. After her arrival in India she continued her writing career, but unfortunately died of cholera that year.

Letitia Elizabeth Landon (1802-1838)

The eldest daughter of John Landon and Catherine Jane Bishop, Letitia Elizabeth Landon was born in 1802 at Chelsea, London. At the age four she attended a school at Hans Place run by Frances Rowden. It was at this school where she acquired knowledge of English poetry and French accent. After her nursery education she accompanied her parents to Trevor Park in East Barnet in 1810. At this new place she was educated in history, geography, grammar, and other disciplines by her cousin, Elizabeth Landon. She also learned English classics and travel literature.

When the long war between England and France came to an end in 1815, Miss Landon’s parents fell into financial difficulties which forced the family to move back to London and then they later settled at Old Brompton in 1816. At this juncture, she became acquainted with the editor of the then *Literary Gazette*, William Jerdan, who noticed her talent in writing verses. In 1818 she contributed a short poem, “Rome” to
the Literary Gazette under her initial "L". She frequently contributed her poems to same magazine and earned money for her family members. Most of the poems which appeared in this magazine were “on the subject of paintings and mass-produced engravings of contemporary artists” (McGann and Riess 12).

By 1821, Miss Landon had published a collection of poems, entitled The Fate of Adelaide: a Swiss Romantic Tale; and Other Poems under her own initials L.E.L and dedicated it to her grandmother’s friend, Sarah Siddons. The publication of this collection immediately brought her literary fame and she became known as L.E.L. Three years later, she produced another collection of poems, The Improvisatrice; and Other Poems under her signature L.E.L. She contributed a series of her Poetical Sketches to the Literary Gazette issued in the same year. In addition, some other magazines which contained reviews of her literary works were Gentleman's Magazine, Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, and New Monthly Magazine. In 1825, she published her The Troubadour; Catalogue of Pictures, and Other Historical Sketches in the Westminster Review.

After her father’s death in 1825, Miss Landon fully devoted herself in prolific writings which achieved literary admiration and became a major source of income for her and her family. In 1827, she published The Golden Violet, with its Tales of Romance and Chivalry; and Other Poems. Two years later, she produced The Venetian Bracelet, the Lost Pleiad, a History of the Lyre, and Other Poems. She became acquainted with John Forster in 1831. By this year she took charge of the editorship of Fisher’s Drawing-Room Scrap-Book, an annual, and published her first novel, entitled Romance and Reality in three volumes, which was followed by her poetical work, The Easter Gift; a Religious Offering in 1832. She contributed a few of her works to Heath’s Book of Beauty in 1833. The following year she published her
novel, *Francesca Carrara*, which was followed by *The Vow of Peacock, and Other Poems* in 1835, *Traits and Trials of Early Life*, a collection of prose tales for children in 1836, and a novel, *Ethel Churchill, or The Two Brides* in 1837. In most of her works published at this period she witnessed "the romantic tradition of Hemans, Scott and Byron" (Wu 1447). She continued her literary life and gained popularity in the Romantic period, thus publishing a large number of works.

During the days of her literary success Miss Landon made friendships with Emma Roberts, Mary Russell Mitford, Maria Jane Jewsbury, and many others. But her association with William Magin and then with Daniel Maclise sparked malicious rumors about her, because of which she halted her successful literary career for a short period of time. To avoid all rumors raised against her, she gave up the editorship of Fisher's *Drawing-Room Scrap-Book* in 1838 and became acquainted with George Maclean, then appointed as governor of Cape Coast Castle, Africa. She married him at St. Mary's Church on Bryanstone Square in the same year. Shortly after her marriage, she accompanied her husband to Africa. Moved by the exotic land of Africa she continued her literary career. But bad luck befell her and she died at the age of thirty six in Africa in a mysterious circumstance. Some critics supposed that she died of taking an overdose of prussic acid that she used for her ailment.

**Caroline Norton (1808-1877)**

Born in London in 1808, Caroline Norton was the second daughter of Thomas Sheridan, a colonial representative serving at the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa, and Caroline Henrietta Callander, a Scottish novelist. At the age of five she accompanied her brothers and sisters to Scotland to live with her maternal relatives, because her father was caught under the attack of unidentified illness and the family
increasingly fell into financial difficulties. After her father’s death in 1817, her mother moved the family to Hampton Court Palace and then to Westminster where young Caroline attended a school. It was here that her mother resumed her fiction writing in order to support her family. To complete her childhood education young Caroline went to a school at Wonersh, Surrey for a short period of time.

At the age of sixteen Miss Caroline met George Chapple Norton, a non-practicing barrister and Member of Parliament for Guildford. Moved by her beauty George Norton sent to her mother a proposal of marriage with her, yet she discarded the proposal at first chance. In her youth she became familiar with social and cultural traditions of London society. But in 1827 when her mother created a pressure for marriage, Miss Caroline married George Norton.

Caroline’s early married life was not a happy one, because her husband proved himself a jealous and possessive of her. She was often beaten up by her husband as she established literary and political connections with Samuel Rogers, Edward Bulwer Lytton, Edward John Trelawney, Benjamin Disraeli, Mary Shelley, Frances Kemble, and Lord Melbourne. The “moody, violent, selfish, coarse, and childish” (Feldman 507) behavior of her husband thus became burden in her life and hence she chose writing career as a means of earning money for the family. In 1829, she anonymously published a collection of poems, entitled The Sorrows of Rosalie: A Tale with Other Poems, which displayed her intense emotional experience. The following year she composed The Undying One and Other Poems based on the legend of Wandering Jew, and published it in her own authorship. These two works brought immediate literary success to her and she won admiration in the Romantic period.
In 1833, Caroline was shattered by another emotional crisis, because her husband became more unfaithful to her and accused her of adultery with Lord Melbourne, though in truth she was not involved in any sexual crime. In 1835, she published two prose tales – “The Wife” and “Woman’s Reward” – which portrayed autobiographical events of her life. Another blow came in her life in 1836, when she was separated from her husband and disallowed from seeing her sons. At this stage she became obsessed with social problems of contemporary period. She pointed out the poor conditions of child labor and the evils of industrial capitalism in her *A Voice from the Factories* (1836). The passionate expression of this work increasingly received critical appreciation and she was tagged as the “Byron of modern poetesses” in the *Quarterly Review*. She turned her life to political pamphlet writing. Her political works that reflected various problematic issues of contemporary society were *Separation of Mother and Child by the Laws of Custody of Infants Considered* (1837), *A Plain Letter to the Lord Chancellor on the Infant Custody Bill* (1839), *Letters to the Mob* (1848), *English Laws for Women in the Nineteenth Century* (1854), and *A Letter to the Queen on Lord Chancellor’s Marriage and Divorce Bill* (1855).

Caroline shared her tense experience received from different corners of society in some of her later collections of poems. In *The Dream, and Other Poems* (1840), *The Child of the Islands* (1845), and *The Lady of La Garaye* (1862) she raised the questions of poor people which were suppressed by upper class people. Like her poems, her novels, notably *Stuart of Dunleath* (1851), *Lost and Saved* (1863), and *Old Sir Douglas* (1866) reflected “the realities of her own life, centering on loss and on love turned painful or tragic” (Feldman 510). She continued her successful literary career, thus producing large number of works. The style of her writing influenced the
works of some prominent novelists and poets of the Victorian era, namely George Meredith, Charles Dickens, and Lord Alfred Tennyson.

After her husband’s death in 1875, Caroline revived her old friendship with Sir William Stirling-Maxwell, a Scottish historian. She married Maxwell in 1877. But she was attacked by a series of illnesses and her health condition became poor day by day. At the age of sixty nine she died at Upper Grosvenor Street.
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