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A Tireless Laborer: Reappraising Anna Richardson

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Excerpt from Bridget Bennett, [Antislavery in the Dissenting Atlantic: Archives and Unquiet Libraries, 1776–1865](#) (Louisiana State Press, 2025), awarded the Shelley Fisher Fishkin Prize for International Scholarship in Transnational American Studies, 2025. The author has written a short preface to this excerpt, which you can read [here](#).

Around 1855, G. M. Gillett visited George Richardson's grocery in Newcastle. While there, she purchased a piece of paisley cloth with an accompanying label stating, "Made by escaped slaves, work which Friends in the United States organised." Half a century later she passed on to her daughter this gift that was, as Bronwen Everill points out, "a piece of family history, but also, by the twentieth century, a point of family pride, an heirloom handed down from mother to daughter and, in 1927, from daughter to the Quaker archives."¹ Like the samplers of Eliza Beavington and Hannah Hoyle, and Ashley's sack, the small piece of cloth gained affective value due to its connection to the history of a family, and to relationships between women. In addition, the carefully saved scrap is significant for the story I am telling here. It connects us to two Ackworth scholars, Anna and Henry Richardson, and to their extensive activism, encompassing correspondence, tract writing, attending and organizing meetings, and working with allies.

In his 1848 free produce tract *A Revolution of the Spindles, for the Overthrow of American Slavery*, Henry Richardson uses a Quaker term, arguing, "Our watchword ought to be 'No commercial union with slaveholders'" (his emphasis). He does not mention that his own grocery shop at 48 Cloth Market stocked free produce, but he does advise his readers that if they want to purchase free produce goods, they need

to make their voices heard. The only way to make such goods easily available is to take action. He urges his readers to take matters into their own hands:

Ask for them. Already are these untainted fabrics to be found in the most respectable shops of several of our large towns. Ask for them always—ask for them everywhere, and we shall be much mistaken if they do not make their appearance. But to be sure they are genuine, buy them of tradesmen on whom you can rely. Ask to see the certificate which generally accompanies these goods, or look for the free-labour stamp which marks their origin. Remember the manufacturers will not make them, not will the shopkeepers keep them unless there be a demand. [...] The spinning jennies of Manchester, with their everlasting twirl, are twisting and drawing closer to the bonds of the Negro; and that so soon as the manufacturers are induced to substitute free grown cotton for the blood-stained fibre, will every revolution of their machines be twisting and strengthening that cord, which is destined to bind the monster of slavery; and which, with God's blessing, at no distant time, if the friends of freedom would unite in the effort, might be found even strong enough to drag the tyrant from his throne.²

In these highly charged and emotive terms, Henry urged his readers to become what we now call ethical consumers. He drew attention to the connection between the purchasing habits of individuals and households, patterns of demand and supply, and the period's larger reform movements. While abolitionist lecturers were displaying chains and shackles, he shows that cotton thread is just as powerful as those other means of violent restraint.

Anna and Henry Richardson were at the forefront of the British arm of free produce campaigning, focusing on the origins of material goods, especially food and textiles. They produced several other powerful pamphlets and organized displays of free produce goods in Newcastle and Gateshead.³ They were also vital participants in several other linked reform movements. Their beliefs were forged in their respective childhoods and the ideas inculcated to them in their daily lives about ethical and social responsibility. Though the couple worked closely together, I particularly focus on reimagining the cultural and social contexts of Anna's political work to understand what made her into such an energetic activist. Her strong religious sensibility undoubtedly governed her labor, but I turn more to the emotional, intellectual, and interpersonal currents shaping her life, and to the networks within which she operated. This adds nuance to the extensive work scholars have already undertaken on the transatlantic impact of Quakers.

Within a few years of each other, Anna Richardson and Eliza Beavington had both traveled from the Cotswolds to West Yorkshire to attend Ackworth School. When

Anna entered the school at the age of just eleven, she encountered a group of individuals who would go on to have a profound influence on her development, including her future husband. She attended from 1817 to 1819, and Henry from 1818 to 1820, meaning the pair overlapped for a year. He came from a powerful and well-off family of tanners with deep connections throughout the North of England. His father, George Richardson, highly regarded for his ministry, ran a grocery store that was managed by his wife, Eleanor, during his absences as a traveling minister.⁴ The family business was the precursor of Pumphrey's Coffee of Newcastle, which still thrives today, though the original premises is now a bar, something that would horrify the teetotal Richardsons.

Following their marriage in 1833, Anna and Henry settled at 5 Summerhill Grove, Newcastle, a substantial terraced house in a quiet square. They had a long, happy, and childless marriage, though Henry suffered from ill health that eventually confined him to a wheelchair after a stroke. Their home was in close proximity to the homes of other members of the tight-knit community of Newcastle Friends. The couple contributed very fully to the familial, social, and reform activities of this group, whose expansive family, business, religious, and political networks extended across the English Channel and the Atlantic. Unlike several of their local circle, they never visited the United States.

Rachel Priestman of Newcastle spent 1843 to 1844 engaged in public ministry in the United States, where she met Ann and Samuel Rhoads, keen abolitionists and supporters of free produce (also known as free labor or free labor produce). The Rhoads subsequently stayed in her home in Newcastle when they visited the United Kingdom, and there they met Anna and Henry. Ann Rhoads was already familiar with Anna by reputation, noting in her journal that Anna's "interest and exertions on behalf of the slave is well known."⁵ They all became lifelong correspondents and friends, and Anna frequently entrusted Samuel with sums of money to help fugitives.⁶ She also participated in a transatlantic speaking and writing commons, with the couple's home and business the center of transatlantic operations. They hosted American visitors to Newcastle, while their letters, along with financial contributions, tracts, and other items crisscrossed the Atlantic, building campaigns, solidarities, and friendships. The artist William Bell Scott, with whom she formed an unlikely friendship, mentioned that she was never seen without her "inseparable bag of letters."⁷ Famously, Frederick Douglass stayed in the Richardsons' house during his first visit to Britain and Ireland, and it was there that Anna and her sister-in-law Ellen lobbied for his manumission. It may also have been there that he first met Julia Griffiths.⁸ Anna's wholesale embrace of the range of networking possibilities offered by the intersection of print, conversation, and letter writing allowed her to operate with considerable success within activist circles on both sides of the Atlantic.

Though many elements of her activism are now increasingly well known, a good deal of work remains to be done to do justice to her legacy and to understand its relationship to the interlinked communities within which she moved. In particular, the importance of her early home life and her education at Ackworth need further investigation to understand the extent to which she moved to Newcastle already primed

for a life of daily undertakings of committed labor. These involved public and private acts ranging from letter-writing and proselytizing, to cajoling, editing and publishing, hospitality, and conversation. Searching through archives, public records, and the writings of her wider circle has produced fruitful revelations about her experiences, enabling a reappraisal of her activist life.

Anna lived a life made up of what William Still described as “unwearied labours” on behalf of “the wants of the oppressed in various directions.”⁹ She participated in many of the reform causes and forms of benevolence embraced by middle-class dissenters, such as prison visiting, temperance, educational provision, free produce, peace, and abolition. She corresponded with well-known abolitionists and other reformers and assisted the enslaved in their efforts to achieve self-emancipation by fundraising, publicity drives, and acts of personal generosity. Like today’s community organizers and activists, she saw these as part of a broader and connected spectrum rather than as discrete or atomized areas of activity. Rather unfairly though, her reputation is mainly due to her successful role in seeking Douglass’s manumission.

Following her lead, this chapter will focus on the relational quality of her activities, linking them to key elements of her biography as well as to her immediate community. I will start my discussion with her *Annual Monitor* obituary, which speaks not just to the values of her own long life, which spanned almost a century, but to those of other late nineteenth-century Friends looking back on an admired member of the community. Importantly, it includes quotations from what it describes as autobiographical “reminiscences, penned in her old age for the benefit of relatives in Canada and elsewhere.”¹⁰ Unfortunately, they have only survived in tantalizingly brief extracts quoted in the obituary and in a short and little-known memorial book published by Emma and Thomas Pumphrey in 1892, which also contains several photographs that have not been reproduced until now. Some of her prolific correspondence, chiefly regarding slavery, was published in the nineteenth century, as were several juvenile antislavery tracts. Many of her letters remain scattered in archives on both sides of the Atlantic.

Turning first to discuss her childhood, and then to her adult life in Newcastle, I situate her within the wider transatlantic sphere of the Society of Friends to understand how, and why, she developed her interests. I investigate her varied modes of campaigning, including editorial work, letter writing, face-to-face meetings, tract writing, and what can best be described as the drudgery of political campaigning. Combining her own words with those of activist allies, friends, and family, I also draw upon existing work on Quaker women’s antislavery labor.¹¹ I end the chapter with a consideration of the particular significance of two little-known pamphlets, aimed at juvenile readers. The first, *Who Are the Slaveholders? A Moral Drawn from “Uncle Tom’s Cabin,” Respectfully Submitted to Readers of that Work* (1852[?]), is set in rural England and suggests to its young readers that they can become ethical consumers, like the children it depicts. Starting as a didactic tale, it ends as a shopping advice manual and includes a highly practical list of products that householders could purchase if they

want to avoid slave-produced goods. The second, titled *Little Laura, the Kentucky Abolitionist* (1859), uses the example of a girl named Laura Bailey to persuade “the young friends of the slave” of the importance of developing abolitionist principles.

Early Life in Chipping Norton

Anna Atkins was born on January 5, 1806, to a family of moderate means. Her father, Samuel Atkins, was a meal man (a dealer in meal), and her mother, Esther (Millard) Atkins, directed her labor to the household. Samuel’s early death in 1821 left Esther, “a saintly woman—one who resorted much to earnest prayer for herself and her family,” to bring up their children alone.¹² In later life Anna wrote, “When I think of my mother [...] and remember the various times in circumstances of extreme distress under which I have seen her leave the family circle with a pale and almost agonized countenance, and return to it from her private retirement in half an hour bright and cheerful, it is difficult now, as it was then, to resist the imperative conviction that God had comforted her. No mental struggle, no mastery over nature’s feelings, could possibly have effected the change.”¹³

Her recollection of her early life reveals the way in which her political and ethical beliefs, especially regarding peace and abolition, developed within the family home, and how “the seeds were there sown of that philanthropy which so remarkably characterised her in after days.” These brief comments on her earliest years suggest that lessons taught to her at home were applied just outside of its doors, within and beyond the local community. This in turn helps to create a larger picture. She learned about global social justice issues while still a young child, an early introduction that would influence her throughout the rest of her long life. Her parents showed her that the home was not a sanctuary from the influences of outside world (as nineteenth-century domestic ideology would later insist). Instead, what went on outside its walls had an impact that required reflection and management. They taught her a set of religious ethics that influenced their consumer choices and had a significant impact on decisions regarding appropriate reading and behavior. Thinking back on the lasting influence of her parents, Richardson notes,

Perhaps my *Peace* sympathies were first awakened then (the time of Napoleon’s wars), for I well remember that when there had been a great victory, the stage-coaches from London used to be adorned with laurel. One of them passed near our premises on its way to Worcester, and as we had plenty of evergreens, my father was asked for a fresh supply. But no; he did not wish to assist in giving any approval to slaughter and bloodshed. But in 1815, when the war was over, the good people of Chipping Norton were at liberty to have as many evergreens as they pleased for making wreaths and bowers in celebrations of Peace.¹⁴

Her father's death may have made the memory of his commitment to peace especially precious. He was clearly a man of strong principles who was unafraid to stand up for them in the period of the Napoleonic wars (1803–1815). His peaceful refusal was courageous, given the pressure produced by the xenophobic nationalism, especially the anti-French feeling, sweeping the country.

Pacifists were vulnerable. In 1814, three members of the Ackworth staff were imprisoned in the Wakefield House of Correction for refusing to serve in the militia.¹⁵ The (in)famous story of the Hartlepool monkey (an event that may or may not have its basis in truth) draws from that febrile moment. It goes like this: After a French vessel was shipwrecked off the coast of Hartlepool in the North East of England, the wreck's sole survivor was a monkey, dressed in French military uniform. The townspeople believed it to be a French sailor, accused it of spying, and subjected it to a trial, death sentence, and execution by hanging. The current inhabitants of Hartlepool are still known as "monkey hangers," and they cheerfully take pride in the dubious honor.

Elsewhere, fears of an invasion by Napoleon's forces were so great that fortified Martello towers were built along the English coast from Sussex to Kent (in the south), Essex to Suffolk (in the east), as well as in Ireland. But the anxiety about what would happen in the event of an invasion was also experienced further inland. A plan was made to move the gold at the Bank of England from London to the security of Worcester Cathedral. Had this happened, it would have traveled through, or near, Chipping Norton. Though the invasion never took place, Richardson doubtless returned to the memory of her father's steadfast pacifism throughout a life in which she consistently campaigned for peace.

In addition to describing her father's pacifist principles, Anna discusses a further lesson she learned at home, related to aiding the enslaved. She wrote, "Another early remembrance in connection with public subjects is, that *coloured* applicants for assistance were never to be turned away from our door without a little help; 'for, perhaps they might be slaves.'" ¹⁶ Richardson does not explain who these seekers for help might have been or even whether any appeared at the door, though they certainly would later in her life. Her words are simultaneously tentative ("perhaps they might") and definite ("be slaves"). What is unequivocal is the understanding that help should always be given, suggesting both general and explicit behavioral principles.

But how could the abstraction be enacted? What might the moment of the fugitive encounter, or moment at which the knock on the door or its equivalent took place, be like? Arguably, her long-standing work with figures such as Frederick Douglass and Henry Highland Garnet fulfilled this parental injunction. Metaphorically speaking, she was responding to the knock on the door. By the end of her long life, she had repeatedly helped fugitives from slavery in many ways, including by putting them up in her own home when they passed through Newcastle.

Beyond noting this important principle, it is worth pausing for a moment to reflect further upon the possibility that "*coloured* applicants for assistance" might appear at the door of a Friends' house in Chipping Norton. The distinctive clothing and

speech codes of Friends (elements a guarded education sought to protect) were widely recognizable, including by fugitives who had learned how to decode the ciphers that enabled them in their quests for self-emancipation. Examples of this valuable knowledge being acknowledged are evident in ephemeral moments.

One is recounted in the journal that Anna Deborah Richardson, part of the wider Newcastle Richardson family, wrote about a trip she undertook in Ireland in August 1852.¹⁷ A committed abolitionist, she was living in 6 Summerhill Grove in 1846 when Douglass stayed next door with Anna and Henry. She later met Harriet Beecher Stowe and her entourage when they stayed first with her maternal grandfather in Edinburgh and then in her parents' home in Newcastle. Her journal tells of a carriage journey in the west of Ireland, from Cork to Glengariff, taken on the advice of the abolitionist printer Richard Webb. She had "quite agreeable companions—a retired military officer, who talked of the service he had seen in the Peninsular War; another gentleman, who covered us up with waterproofs; and a negro, who looked pleased and interested at every sound of a 'thou' or 'thee.'"¹⁸ She suggests that he recognized the distinctiveness of Quaker speech, welcoming its implications.

Fragmentary details such as this are tantalizing and frustrating in equal measure. She says nothing more about this fellow traveler, though she would have known that Black antislavery lecturers, including Henry Highland Garnet, Charles L. Remond, Moses Roper, and James Watkins, all traveled throughout Ireland in the 1840s and 1850s. Douglass had toured Ireland in 1845, giving lectures and traveling across the same route.¹⁹ Even sparse accounts of fleeting encounters challenge earlier understandings of a homogeneous British racial demographic. It is now well established that people of African origin lived in the ports and cities of Britain (especially London) and would have been a visible presence. More research is revealing that the Black experience in Britain is not just limited to urban spaces but also exists in rural locations, especially on or around transport routes.²⁰

In Anna's childhood, a local Black presence likely comprised individuals enslaved by West Indian planters. Since Chipping Norton was on the stagecoach route from Worcester to London, it was a stopping point for travelers in the years before railways were built. One figure who might have stopped there was Jane Harry, the daughter of Charity Harry, a Jamaican woman, and Thomas Hibbert, a plantation holder whose own origins were in Manchester. Jane and her sister Mary were born in Jamaica, baptized as Anglicans, and sent to England for their education. Jane met Mary Morris Knowles, and supported and inspired by their friendship, became a Quaker. Thomas Knowles, a doctor and the husband of Mary Morris Knowles, was part of a transatlantically connected British-based Quaker group distributing and publishing abolitionist tracts and pamphlets.²¹

In 1782, Harry married Joseph Thresher, a Quaker physician, and moved from London to Worcester, where she died two years later, a few months after giving birth to their son. She had planned to return to Jamaica to free the enslaved individuals who had passed to her mother after her father's death, but this would be prevented by her

own untimely death. Realizing that she would not be able to make the journey, she instructed her husband to make any necessary payments for the individuals' freedom once her mother had died.

In addition to Harry and other figures like her, there is also evidence of a Black presence in Moravian settlements, including Bristol but also East Tytherton, Wiltshire, about forty-five miles southwest of Chipping Norton and twenty-five miles east of Bristol, with its well-established commercial links to slavery. In the period of Anna's childhood, five formerly enslaved women from Antigua were living in East Tytherton. Leonora Casey Carr was the daughter of Fanny Loving, an enslaved woman, and a planter named George Carr. She was born in 1808 and came to England in 1817. In the same year, she, her sister Catherine, and her brothers Stephen and Edward were all manumitted.²² Edward's full name, Edward Colston Carr, suggests a connection to the infamous slave trader Edward Colston, whose statue was toppled in Bristol in June 2020 during protests against the murder of George Floyd.

Transport hubs like Chipping Norton provided opportunities for static and mobile individuals to encounter each other; the world could come to the doorstep of someone who remained at home. Indeed, it was during a meeting of what Anna called "a few minutes' duration whilst the stage-coach was changing horses" in Chipping Norton that Henry became convinced that the girl he had come to love twelve years earlier at Ackworth had become the woman he now wished to marry.²³ More obviously, unexpected encounters can take place not just in vehicles such as stage-coaches, carriages, trains, and ships but also in liminal or interstitial sites such as railway stations. It is not surprising that so many nineteenth-century novelists, from Nathaniel Hawthorne and Edith Wharton to Leo Tolstoy, were fascinated with unexpected railway encounters.

The Leeds-based Quaker abolitionist Wilson Armistead and the Baptist minister Thomas H. Jones met by chance on a train in New England when Armistead was on a short visit to the United States. On July 15, 1850, the two men struck up a conversation when they traveled from Lynn to Boston, a route often taken by abolitionists. Armistead was visiting from Yorkshire and Jones had recently emancipated himself from enslavement in Wilmington, North Carolina. Armistead wore recognizable Quaker dress, which might have prompted Jones to hand (or more likely sell) him a copy of his newly published pamphlet, *The Experience of Thomas H. Jones, who was a Slave for Forty-Three Years* (1850). The meeting moved Armistead, who substantially reproduced the other man's narrative in the retrospective account of his visit he published in the *British Friend*. This resulted in the appearance of the only British edition of Jones's narrative, bringing his story to a sympathetic audience of Friends, something I have discussed elsewhere.²⁴

Harriet Beecher Stowe famously drew wider public attention to Quaker recognizability in chapter 13 of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), "The Quaker Village." The idealized home of Rachel and Simeon Halliday is an Underground Railroad station where Eliza and George Harris and their son, Harry, are given sanctuary. In later life, Richardson

was extremely familiar with the Underground Railroad, and William Still called her a figure

whose generosity and benevolence knew no bounds; whose friendship devotion and liberality, were felt in all the principal stations of the Underground Rail Road; whose heart went out after the millions in fetters, the fleeing fugitive, the free, proscribed, the ignorant deprived of education, whose house was the home of the advocate of the slave from the United States, especially if he wore a colored skin or had been a slave. We would not venture to say how many of the enslaved this kind hand helped to purchase (Frederick Douglass and many others, being of the number.)²⁵

Richardson was both pragmatic and uncomfortable about purchasing manumissions, something Garrisonians opposed. But faced with what her parents might have described as “coloured applicants for assistance,” she always offered whatever “little help” she could manage. For instance, she raised funds in Newcastle to purchase the family of Henry Highland Garnet’s adopted daughter, Stella Weims, though the campaign was messy and only partially successful.²⁶ In 1854, she and Ellen purchased the manumission of William Wells Brown after a campaigning process spanning the Atlantic. Their efforts opened at the Friends meeting house in Newcastle on 15 February and concluded in St. Louis in early July, with the exchange of the deed of emancipation.²⁷

Four years later, she played a leading role in purchasing the manumission of two formerly enslaved women, Cornelia Williams Reed, whom she describes as Henry Highland Garnet’s “bright young niece,” and her mother, Dinah Williams.²⁸ James E. Crawford describes the assiduity of her commitment to the pair in an article in *The Liberator* drawing attention to a careful process. Anna received a request to help raise funds for Reed after she had raised five hundred dollars to purchase the freedom of Reed’s mother. The request “was immediately responded to by an interesting and feeling letter [...] followed by others, and by an effort which resulted in the raising and sending to this country \$481 through Mr. Lewis Tappan of New York. For this great assistance, we would return to our trans-Atlantic friends our heartfelt thanks and deepest gratitude.”²⁹ A few years after Reed’s manumission she married William B. Gould, formerly of Wilmington, North Carolina. His aunt was Rynar Jones, the second wife of Thomas H. Jones, the man Wilson Armistead had met by chance in 1850.³⁰

This pattern of activity and generosity characterized Anna Richardson’s long career. She was a shrewd and effective fundraiser, making sure she updated her correspondents about the activities of figures such as Douglass, Wells Brown, Reed, and others to maintain momentum and encourage antislavery. For instance, she acted as the British collector of subscriptions and contributions for *Frederick Douglass’s Paper*,

and distributed antislavery information, including a twelve-page tract titled “Anti-Slavery Memoranda.”³¹ She also sent regular updates titled “Monthly Illustrations of American Slavery” to newspaper editors to make antislavery copy readily available to them, adding editorial comments glossing some of the material she clipped from other sources.³²

Another vital principle Anna learned from her childhood related to ethical consumption. Esther Atkins was a participant in the eighteenth-century abstention from slave-produced sugar. Years after her mother’s death Anna asked, “Why did our dear mother take no sugar in her tea? Because it might be made by poor negroes who had been stolen from Africa.” The campaign for sugar abstention was promoted by William Fox in his *Address to the People of Great Britain on the Propriety of Refraining from the Use of West India Sugar and Rum* (1791). This was quickly reprinted in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. James Gilray published his caricature “Anti-Saccharrites, or John Bull and his family leaving off the use of sugar” in 1792, depicting King George, Queen Charlotte, and their family as sugar abstainers, albeit ones who do not much like the taste of unsweetened tea. In May 1792, the *New York Journal and Patriotic Register* copied an item from the British press noting that three hundred families in Worcester were abstaining from sugar, while the Philadelphia-based *Dunlap’s Daily American Advertiser* (which had reprinted Fox’s *Address*) claimed that more than twelve thousand people in Limerick were also abstainers.³³

The campaign was boosted by the publication of Elizabeth Heyrick’s *Immediate, not Gradual Abolition* (1824), an event of great significance to Anna, who was to emerge as a firm supporter of the nineteenth-century free produce movement. First printed in England, Heyrick’s pamphlet was then sent to Quaker abolitionists in Philadelphia, where it became an important stimulus for US antislavery.³⁴ Thus, on both sides of the Atlantic a wide range of activists felt the impact of her work. Heyrick used the language of rights to articulate powerful claims based on social justice for the enslaved. Specifically, she recognized and championed the political rights and human dignity of all individuals, regardless of color. She argued that women could carry out key political interventions by being actively involved in consumer (thus economic) choices. Women were frequently responsible for managing household budgets and engaging in purchasing networks, and their involvement in sugar boycotts showed that they were familiar with the operations of global capitalism.

US and British free produce groups found Heyrick’s work a vital intellectual and political resource, echoing her arguments about using personal purchasing decisions to undermine the economic basis of enslavement. They argued that in this way the market for slave-produced goods would be fatally undermined. The pamphlet was reprinted in Benjamin Lundy’s *Genius of Universal Emancipation* in 1825 and reissued in 1847 in the American free produce periodical the *Non-Slaveholder*. The latter was founded the previous year by its editors, Abraham L. Pennock, Samuel Rhoads, and George W. Taylor, further extending the reach of her arguments. Rhoads also gave an

inscribed copy to Martin Delany the same year that he and his wife, Ann, first met Anna Richardson in Newcastle.

Heyrick's politics had their roots in the combined traditions of rational dissent within which she was raised, and female ministry and leadership which she embraced when she became a Quaker by conviction at the age of twenty-five. Her antislavery radicalism was marked by a distinctive edge, emphasizing political rights over feeling and benevolence. Heyrick was one of the founding members of the Birmingham Ladies' Society for the Relief of Negro Slaves in 1825, an avid writer of pamphlets, and a prison visitor. Her circle of Quaker friends extended to figures known to the Richardsons' circle, including the Tuke family, whom she met when she lived in York in 1802. Anna was connected to the Tukes by marriage but also through their shared interests in education and social causes. It is easy to see the connected ethos of the activities with which this group was engaged. William Tuke was a pioneer of mental health reform and founder of the York Retreat, an asylum for the insane. Unlike existing institutions, the York Retreat aimed to create an environment of tranquility and calm, in which patients were not restrained by chains or violently punished. His second wife, Esther Maud Tuke, founded the York School for Girls in Trinity Lane in 1785. Several family members were Quaker ministers and some of the couple's children attended Ackworth.³⁵

By the time the young Anna Atkins arrived at Ackworth in 1817 the principles she had learned at home had been fully absorbed. They would continue to reverberate for the rest of her life, guiding her work and sustaining her through difficult personal situations. The environment at Ackworth was strict and the school was largely segregated, yet Henry admired, and grew to love, Anna there. Cousins and siblings were able to meet for outdoor walks after Sunday worship, and there was overlap between the Atkins and Richardson families, especially among the sisters.³⁶ Anna's sister Martha and Henry's sister Rachel both left Ackworth in the same year. Rachel remained involved with Ackworth, especially after her husband, Thomas Pumphrey, who was from Worcester, became its superintendent in December 1834, remaining in the post for twenty-seven years.³⁷

Although Ellen Richardson left the school in 1822, her obituary reveals that Ackworth remained in her thoughts, rather negatively it seems, for she "often spoke of her school-days at Ackworth as a time of Spartan discipline."³⁸ When Anna moved to Newcastle, the pair deepened their relationship. Quakers encouraged careful fostering of close relationships between the family members of couples, especially their siblings. This helped to create tight-knit and attached kinship circles, connected by ties of family, religion, and business.³⁹ Evidence of the lasting quality of such relationships can be found in a letter Anna wrote to Ann Rhoads in October 1872. She told her that, "I am thankful to say that my dear Henry and I are still permitted to enjoy a comfortable show of health. Our surviving sister Ellen Richardson lives a little way from us and also our dear widowed cousin Jane Edward Richardson" (the mother of Anna Deborah, who had died after a prolonged illness).⁴⁰

Anna settled into a married life that was busy but also materially comfortable. In the initial period of their marriage the couple chafed against some of what her obituary calls “the restraints at that time customary in the Society of Friends”—restrictions on reading as well as behavior.⁴¹ She and Henry had sufficient wealth to be able to spend time outside of Newcastle, sometimes in the fishing village of Cullercoats, which Douglass visited while in the North East. A near neighbor was the abolitionist and journalist Harriet Martineau, who lived in Tynemouth between 1840 and 1845, recuperating from illness.

The Quakers of Summerhill Grove

The community of Friends who lived in and around Summerhill Grove had memorializing customs that make it possible to piece together details of their lives and beliefs. This allows us to have a better sense not just of public activities but also of the more intimate environments in which members of the community gathered. In a discussion of Margaret Wood (another Ackworth scholar), Sandra Stanley Holton suggests that Wood’s journal and letters revealed a life of purpose and of dedication to her family and community. Holton draws attention to the multiple modes of recollection and history-making practiced by Newcastle Friends. Wood was well traveled, and after the death of her mother and sisters had spent 1831–1832 visiting family members who had settled in and around Philadelphia. Holton writes,

The creation and maintenance of family memory among this circle was encouraged through oral storytelling and its written recording, through the passing on of houses, furniture, books and, most of all, of old diaries and letters [...] Almost two hundred years after her birth, subsequent generations of her kin might sit in her rocking chair, “very handsome, but high and severe,” enjoy the sampler on “Industry” that she sewed as a pupil at Ackworth School, read her family chronicle, journal and letters, share recorded memories of her from those who had known her in life, and so learn from her cultural legacy.⁴²

Anna’s sampler has not survived, but doubtless the younger generation of Newcastle Friends would have encountered Ackworth samplers on the walls of the various houses they visited. They were a visible reminder of shared family history and faith, and a legacy of the childhoods of previous generations who were now middle-aged, elderly, or dead. If Anna Deborah Richardson is anything to judge by, however, these younger women were less willing than the previous generation to take up the needle.

Anna Deborah’s indifference to sewing started early. Jane Richardson noted in her diary that her four-year-old daughter “improves in learning to read and spell. She

puts up cleverly four or five maps and has some knowledge of the counties.” By the age of five she was able to “read nicely, write tolerably, and has some general intelligence but an extreme dislike to all handicraft occupations.” It seems unlikely that the spirited girl would have wanted to sew a sampler, though by the time she was seven Jane was able to write, “[s]he has made some progress in reading and writing—a good deal in spelling and sewing, and is gaining a slight knowledge of geography.”⁴³

She did not follow the previous generation’s path to Ackworth, though she certainly received a Quaker education. Anna Deborah was first educated locally, followed by a period at a school in Durham, before attending a strict school run by three Quaker women in Lewes, Sussex. She developed few ambitions to sew, though there was a single exception outlined in January 1860 in a letter to Kate O’Brien, thanking her for a pair of embroidered slippers. She marveled, “What a long, long, time it must have taken your dear tiny fingers to put in all those delicate stitches!” She confided, “I quite remember the time when I so disliked sitting still to sew more than half-an-hour at a time, that Papa promised me a watch when I had made six shirts for him [...] and I set to work, and in about three years—think of it, some of the poor slopwomen make a shirt in a day, and only get eightpence. I finished the task, and won the watch.”⁴⁴

Anna Deborah was committed to supporting women’s education, a subject enthusiastically pursued by several women in her wider circle, including Emily Davies, who lived for a period in Gateshead, near Newcastle. They corresponded on a subject in which “she took the warmest interest”—the foundation of Girton College, Cambridge.⁴⁵ This pioneering institution would host Virginia Woolf in 1928, delivering the lecture which became “A Room of One’s Own,” in which she argued that women were rendered silent not due to inferiority but because the subjects and activities that interested them were considered insignificant by men.

Events taking place within the private houses of Newcastle Friends or in nearby public venues demonstrate the developing intellectual and social community creating sustaining contexts for antislavery. The establishment of a Book Society on 27 April 1826 resulted in serious discussions about appropriate reading. Novels were not the only texts regarded with suspicion. Charles Bragg proposed Aaron Smith’s first-person captivity narrative, *The Atrocities of the Pirates* (1824). The popular work recounts the experiences of a young British sailor who was kidnapped by Cuban pirates in 1823 and then forced into piracy. Eventually escaping, he was arrested, brought back to England, and tried for piracy at the Old Bailey. Bragg’s proposal was rejected by members, as were the works of Walter Scott.⁴⁶ Indeed, Anna Deborah would get into trouble at school in Lewes some years later when she quoted seemingly innocuous lines from Scott’s poem *Marmion* describing the effect of the morning sun: “And tinged them with a lustre proud / Like that which streaks a thunder cloud.”

The reading of the pupils at her school followed a familiar pattern. She was also encouraged to read Quaker biographies of William Allen, Stephen Grellett, and Elizabeth Fry, but she called them “Dreary works, which I used to devour for the sake of

the thread of narrative which ran through them.”⁴⁷ Novels were not acceptable, but the poetry of William Cowper, James Montgomery, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was considered appropriate for young readers—Anna Deborah was especially fond of Longfellow’s poem “Evangeline.” Longfellow not only made financial contributions to abolition but also hosted two well-known formerly enslaved men, Josiah Henson and Lunsford Lane, in his home in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Wilson Armistead doubtless knew this when he wrote to him on the headed paper of the Leeds Anti-Slavery Association in 1854 asking for a contribution to an antislavery collection he was compiling.⁴⁸

The Book Society was so popular that a second was formed, but eventually both dwindled. Friends were increasingly able to access books and printed works in other ways. A key local resource was the library of the Literary and Philosophical Society, founded in 1793 (but only admitting women in 1804) as a mobile organization that hosted conversations and lectures. By 1825 it had a fixed location in a fine neoclassical building on Westgate Road, close to Anna and Henry’s future home and the family grocery. It had a substantial library that was available to members, which some Friends utilized for the works they contributed to the meetings of the Essay Society, formed in the early 1830s. A letter from Sarah Richardson to her sister Susan Balkwill, dated 24 January 1832, gives a vignette of a Newcastle Essay Meeting attended by a large group:

We attended at a short notice with an essay of sister Rebecca’s on “Fortitude.” Sister Ann’s a very good and pretty description of the neighbourhood of Keswick. Edward and Jane’s [Anna Deborah’s parents] two poems on the promised “Aurora”—Edward’s much remarked upon as a very *original* metre, or no metre at all but irregular verse. Some of the other subjects were Contentment, on Prayer, on History, The Cholera, Friendship, Parting, The Grave, The Speedwell, The Holly Evergreen. A Magazine Ditty, by Joseph Watson, a very clever six-line verse on the events of the Past and the Coming Year. William Doeg’s, a very long piece, good and clear, proving that great talents are not opposed to the possessor uniting amiable qualities, and that it is not merely to be affectionate that we are amiable, &c., &c.⁴⁹

The wide-ranging combination of subjects was unlikely to have met with disapproval from more conservative Friends. These pieces focus on relatively conventional themes and only the “very *original* metre” of Edward Richardson’s poem, as Sarah Richardson archly calls it, attracts specific attention.

The society was so successful that in 1833 it issued a literary annual titled *The Aurora Borealis* (the “promised” publication noted in the quotation).⁵⁰ News of its appearance circulated widely, including as far afield as Philadelphia, where John Sharp

carefully clipped from a local paper and kept a notice about its appearance, evidence that he continued to keep up with news from English Friends long after settling in the United States.⁵¹ Perhaps he even purchased a copy and circulated it to other immigrants, continuing a family practice of distributing periodicals and newspapers throughout their scattered circle. Had he done this, he would have encountered two contributions by Henry Richardson. One of them, written in December 1831, was titled “To a Boy, on Hearing Him Whistling in the Street ‘The Bonnets of Blue,’ during the Prevalence of the Cholera.” Overall, the poem reads like a piece of kindly but firm chastisement (which it is) and contains at least one terrible rhyme. But it does speak to a contemporary crisis: the first death from what would become a devastating outbreak of cholera emerged in Sunderland in October 1831. Two months later the disease had appeared in Newcastle, and by early in 1832 it had spread to Scotland before making its way across England. Henry would not yet have known of its terrible impact, but he expressed a solemn sense that his young addressee’s cheerfulness was not to be encouraged. He admonishes the boy,

Yes, indeed it is good to be wise,
It is good to be honest and true;
And the heart in which cheerfulness reigns, is a prize
Surpassing the mines of Peru.

But it is not a season for mirth,
Nor should pleasure our moments employ,
When the Angel of Pestilence walketh the earth,
Commissioned to blast and destroy.

Our neighbours around us are falling,
By the arm of his vengeance laid low;
And a voice from the tomb is impressively calling,
“Be ye also ready to go!”

Then can this be a time to rejoice?—
Away with thy light-hearted rhymes,
Or tune the soft notes of thy musical voice,
To a strain more befitting the times.⁵²

“The Bonnets of Blue” was a well-known song expressing Jacobite sympathies. It celebrated and encouraged incursions into England by the Scottish laborers and farmers whose woolen bonnets protected them from the harsh northern weather. The fact that the song centers on the unstoppable movement of young men across the border would certainly seem sinister in the context of a rapidly spreading epidemic. A subsequent outbreak in 1853–1854 led to the deaths of one hundred people a day in

Newcastle. During this period Jane Richardson and other Quaker women visited those sick with cholera, despite the personal risk.⁵³

Anna and Henry were married two years after the poem was published, on July 4, 1833, just before the Slavery Abolition Act passed into law. Henry worked at, and eventually took over, the grocery business. Anna immediately directed her energies to various kinds of philanthropic labor considered acceptable for female Friends. She was a keen supporter of educating working-class children who had little access to the advantages associated with literacy and numeracy. She offered wholehearted support, over many years, to Henry and Ellen, both of whom were involved in founding schools in and around Newcastle. Henry was closely connected to a boy's ragged school, to educate impoverished boys deprived of access to education or even sufficient food.⁵⁴

Shortly after she left Ackworth, Ellen participated in the activities of the Royal Jubilee School for Girls in Newcastle, continuing her involvement until the school closed in 1884. She contributed to the teaching of reading and Scripture, and she published several educational and other texts, including one to assist scriptural study, titled *Communings with the Heart. Suggested by Passages in the Four Gospels. With aids to Self-Examination, and Prayers Compiled from Scripture* (1855). In addition, she was involved in the development of other schools, including one in Cullercoats.

When Henry Highland Garnet visited Newcastle in 1850 he spoke at two of the schools with which the Richardsons were involved, noting of the students that he “was struck with their strict attention, and their deep sympathy—but it was all accounted for, when I learned that their kind teachers, and their patrons make it a point to tell of the sorrows and the wrongs of my poor brethren.”⁵⁵ Unlike the girls at Ackworth earlier in the century, the children attending these schools did not have to resort to a petition to be informed about slavery but were given firsthand testimony from a self-emancipated Black man whose abolitionism was reinforced by the curriculum of the New York African Free School, which he and James McCune Smith had both attended.⁵⁶ This must have been an extremely memorable experience for them and doubtless profoundly impacted their lives.

Following her marriage and relocation to the North East, Anna was involved in benevolent activities, something suggested by the following brief chronology. From 1834 onward, at the prompting of Elizabeth Fry, Anna undertook prison visiting. In 1839 she fundraised for Lutheran refugees from Prussia who were stopping off in Newcastle on their way to the United States. Six years later she went to see a group of Iowan and Ojibwe performers in Newcastle, part of the spectacle staged by George Catlin to encourage interest in his collection of portraits, known as the Indian Gallery. She organized the burial of one of their children in Newcastle, erecting a west-facing headstone that she subsequently tended.

She also was one of the key figures in collecting articles to be sent to the United States and sold at the Anti-Slavery Bazaar in Philadelphia in 1846, with contributors being advised that appropriate items included “Engravings of distinguished, religious,

philanthropic or literary characters, drawings or models of their residences: simple implements, such as rulers or paper-folders, manufactured from articles belonging to them; autographs, new devices in worsted work, net worsted shawls, neck ties, papier maché articles, purses, needle-books, &c., &c.”⁵⁷ Frederick Douglass noted, “Every stitch, every painting, embodied and shadowed forth a spirit of freedom and spoke of the power of English sympathy.”⁵⁸

Anna and Henry, who were devout in their religious beliefs, visited Paris in 1850 with two thousand presentation copies of the New Testament. Five years later they sent additional funding via Anna Deborah, and religious texts with other family members.⁵⁹ A few years later they distributed Chinese translations of biblical texts to Chinese sailors who had docked on the Tyne. Anna became a teetotaler around this time, and she and Henry went on to form temperance refreshment rooms in the autumn of 1853.

Her commitment extended beyond these kinds of reform activities, taking her into a transnational sphere within which her energy, intelligence, and generosity combined with her deeply felt religious beliefs made her into a formidable campaigner. She and Henry were becoming increasingly involved in the campaign for free produce, which was international by its very nature. Julie Holcomb argues that this was “the first consumer movement to transcend the boundaries of nation, gender, and race in an effort by reformers to change the conditions of production. Even when they acted locally, supporters embraced a global vision, mobilizing the boycott as a powerful material force that could transform the transatlantic marketplace.”⁶⁰

Though some scholars have questioned the long-term impact of free produce, the energy of its chief participants is widely acknowledged. Holcomb’s description points toward the way the boycott harnessed economic and political understandings. Free produce campaigning showed the relationship between private and public acts. It enabled women to make purchasing decisions that revealed their understanding of the impact of choices made by households on the lives of individuals thousands of miles away. The interconnectedness made explicit by free produce campaigners showed the way in which multiple social causes were being mobilized by campaigners. Tracts circulated in Philadelphia urging Quakers to abstain from slave-produced goods, including one published in 1838 titled *An Address to the Members of the Religious Society of Friends, on the Propriety of Abstaining from the Use of the Produce of Slave Labour*. It used the examples of two leading Quaker American abolitionists, John Woolman, who also espoused tax resistance and other causes, and Elias Hicks. It urged Friends to “refrain from any participation in the crime of enslaving our fellow men.”⁶¹ The movement gained additional momentum in England due to the participation of the American reformer Elihu Burritt, known as the Learned Blacksmith. He capitalized on this moniker in his 1846 publication, wittily titled *Sparks from the Anvil*. It was published in Worcester, Massachusetts, by Henry J. Howland, who in 1857 would publish an edition of Thomas Jones’s *Narrative*.

Burritt's interests in peace, temperance, and abolition had been honed in New England, where he was a lecturer and writer, and for a brief period, the editor of the American Peace Society's journal *The Advocate of Peace*, which he renamed *The Advocate of Peace and Universal Brotherhood*. After infighting within the Society, he left for England in 1846, initially staying with Joseph Sturge, the founder of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and the major organizer of the 1843 London Peace Congress.⁶² Burritt in turn went on to organize the first International Peace Congress, which took place five years later in Brussels. Further congresses followed in Paris (1849), Frankfurt (1850), London (1851), Manchester (1852), and Edinburgh (1853). The novelist and peace campaigner Victor Hugo was so inspired by him that he made sure Burritt's work was circulated in France despite a repressive tax imposed by the French authorities to stop the circulation of radical texts.⁶³ Burritt also traveled widely within England, lecturing on peace and founding the League of Universal Brotherhood to promote the use of free produce. He energetically gathered information and pursued connections. Writing from Exeter on September 29, 1849, to an unnamed recipient (the context suggest that this is a Philadelphia Friend), he asks for details of "all the facts necessary for a free exposition" of free produce.⁶⁴ He remained in Europe until 1853, galvanizing an existing set of groups and individuals with long-standing connections to social reform and social justice issues. Returning to England the following decade, he walked from London to Scotland, publishing *A Walk from London to John O'Groats* (1864), a book full of observations about the landscape and the communities with which he engaged.

Burritt was a prolific writer, and in addition to editing and publishing *The Advocate of Peace*, he produced a series of juvenile pamphlets called *Olive Leaflets*. He appears to have been a model of sorts for Anna and Henry, who became staunch supporters and in turn influenced his work. His twenty-nine-stanza poem "The Wall of Fire" depicts the experience of a German grandmother and her grandson under siege by the Cossacks. Though all their neighbors have taken up weapons, the grandmother, like her dead son, is an uncompromising pacifist. The first stanza states their pacifism:

To drive Napoleon from the throne,
Were battles fought and won,
Alas! How many lives were lost,
And how much evil done!⁶⁵

The frightened grandson then expresses his wish that his father was there to fight and protect them, but the grandmother insists that he would not have taken up arms, telling him, "[t]hy father's heart was full of peace, / And love to every one." The dead father's beliefs correspond to those of Samuel Atkins and other pacifist Quakers who refused to take up arms even when their own lives were at risk.

The poem appeared after Burritt and Anna first met, and it is worth speculating about whether Anna told him about her father's lasting influence. Burritt uncompromisingly defined laurel leaves as "wreaths of weeds or green leaves wound around the brows of a murderer who has girdled a vast country with a river of blood."⁶⁶ This would have resonated with Samuel Atkins, who refused to give laurel leaves to passengers in passing stagecoaches celebrating victory over the French.

Anna did not use such blunt language, though she noted that he did not want "to assist in giving any approval to slaughter and bloodshed." However, her ongoing support for Burritt and the causes they both believed in would be a significant element of her life. Following Burritt's arrival, she founded the Newcastle Ladies' Free Produce Association and actively argued for a boycott of slave-produced goods. By 1848 the association circulated "a forcible appeal" to encourage support for free produce, noting that though it is addressed to British readers, it is "equally applicable to the people of the free States of this Union; and we would earnestly commend it to their serious consideration."⁶⁷ The Richardsons encouraged the fugitive Henry Highland Garnet to cross the Atlantic and campaign for free produce. Then, from 1851 to 1854, Anna edited its periodical, *The Slave*.⁶⁸ Its circulation rose to between twenty-five hundred and three thousand copies per month. *The Slave* carried advertisements for free produce, including for products from the short-lived Cumberland Free Labour Gingham Company. In addition to selling goods to the Street Free Produce Store in Somerset, the company liaised with the Philadelphia Free Produce Association for cotton and a market for its goods.

Around twenty-six free produce associations were established during this period, and the couple were extremely active in creating organizational structures and fundraising to develop campaigning and to make free produce more widely available, including in the family's shop. Garnet attended the Paris Peace Congress along with Anna and Henry and several other activists from England, and the following year he attended the Frankfurt Peace Congress and participated in two antislavery meetings in the city. Returning to England, he stayed in 5 Summerhill Grove before lecturing throughout Britain. He gives a flavor of his experience in Newcastle in a letter published in the *Non-Slaveholder* in October 1850:

This night at half past nine, I arrived in New Castle on the Tyne, [*sic*] and soon had the joy of entering the mansion of those laborious and untiring friends of the down-trodden bondsman, Henry and Anna H. Richardson. At once they made me feel at home, and immediately set themselves about making arrangements for our Free Labour campaign. You know the energy of these dear friends. Leaf after leaf, covered with arguments and appeals in the behalf of the children of Africa, are scattered by their hands upon the winds of heaven. Not only does the anti-slavery cause receive their sympathy, but also the Bible, the missionary, and temperance

causes, all are promoted by them.—Likewise the little children share their benevolence. Mrs. Richardson is at this moment busy in sending out letters for the appointment of meetings.⁶⁹

Garnet's letter encompasses the hospitality and "energy" of a household whose inhabitants were active in an array of interlinked causes.

In June 1850 Anna published a circular encouraging women Friends who planned to attend the Yearly Meeting in London to participate in a free produce meeting.⁷⁰ The Richardsons continued to promote free produce, and Anna became increasingly involved with the Olive Leaf Circles, organized by women who sold items made of free produce and donated the proceeds to the League of Universal Brotherhood. Anna's involvement extended to editing a juvenile peace journal titled the *Olive Leaf* from 1844 to 1857. Meanwhile, Henry published a poem advocating peace, titled "The Church and the Camp," and edited the *Peace Advocate* from 1843 to 1851.⁷¹

Amid all this activity, in 1854 Henry suffered a stroke. Though this was a terrible blow, even this did not stop Anna's labor. In addition to caring for him, she wrote letters to her international network, clipped and circulated newspaper articles, edited periodicals, campaigned, and maintained her ties to her large local community and family. She wrote texts for juvenile audiences, to educate them about the ways they could contribute to antislavery and free produce. In October 1865 she was a signatory to an address sent from the Ladies' Anti-Slavery Society of Newcastle to its counterpart in Madrid. This was part of a wider campaign in which women antislavery activists in Birmingham, Edinburgh, Liverpool, London, Newcastle, and Paris all wrote in solidarity to the group in Spain to encourage them in their continuing work. Some of these letters were subsequently printed in the *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter*.⁷² All of this suggests a life that was full of varying obligations and commitments to family, local community, and transatlantic campaigns. By the 1850s, this included tract-writing, which will be the focus of the rest of this chapter.

Who Are the Slaveholders? A Moral Drawn from *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

Anna Richardson does not seem to have thought of herself as having literary abilities. In a letter to the educational and social reformer Mary Carpenter, who had asked her to contribute a piece for an edited collection for an antislavery bazaar, she writes, "I should have been glad my dear friend to have sent thee a better contribution but writing for pretty books has always been out of my line."⁷³ Many Friends shared her reservations about "pretty books." However, her letter suggests that her scruples were aesthetic rather than moral, for she certainly knew some literary texts by heart and toward the end of her life she often repeated them aloud, suggesting an enjoyment of poetry and recitation. Some doubtless reinforced her religious beliefs as she moved toward her death. A favorite was the lines written by the seventeenth-century hymnist and theologian Richard Baxter:

Our knowledge of that life is small;
The eye of faith is dim;
But 'tis enough that Christ knows all,
And we shall be with Him.

The four lines compare a myopic human existence with the vision and knowledge of a Christ whose presence comforts even those who experience fear or doubt.

Just as devotional pieces were acceptable to many Quakers, since they had an appropriate purpose, so were nonfiction forms such as tracts. The Richardsons' didactic tracts were part of the emerging genre of juvenile abolitionist writing that has been discussed extensively by Deborah De Rosa and Michaël Roy.⁷⁴ I turn first to *Who Are the Slaveholders? A Moral Drawn from "Uncle Tom's Cabin."* This tract draws on the popularity of Stowe's best-selling 1852 novel in order to make the case for free produce, just under twenty years after the British Slavery Abolition Act.⁷⁵

The text opens with a depiction of an idyllic and tranquil scene. The narrator asks readers to imagine "a pleasant country place, named Fernbrake, situated in one of England's midland counties." The setting elliptically acknowledges the influence of Elizabeth Heyrick, who hailed from Leicestershire, though it also resembles Anna's memories of her childhood in nearby Chipping Norton. Additional details extend and deepen the depiction of a rural site that has little overt relation to global politics, or indeed to any geographic location beyond itself. Yet this sense of separation from wider concerns is immediately destabilized by a reference to Washington Irving's satirical *A History of New York* (1809). Since Irving expects his readers to understand that this description of New York is the unrealistic fantasy of an unreliable narrator, astute readers might rightly infer that Fernbrake also warrants closer inspection. The pastoral idyll of English village life might be more complex than the scene that initially meets the eye. The tract reveals the way in which slavery enters the rural English home, a pattern familiar to Anna from her parents' lessons during her childhood.

Bringing the reader into to the heart of the home and domestic life, the narrator describes the family circle of the Stanfields: "The time of our visit is the evening, soon after the tea-things have been dismissed." The family is quite prosperous, and their sitting room is comfortable; a "moderate fire" has been lit in the grate for additional comfort. Mr. Stanfield is in his armchair while Mrs. Stanfield and their "half a dozen happy-faced children, between the ages of four and fourteen" sit around a table, "occupied with various light handicrafts and amusement" as befits the bourgeois family at rest. For "several successive evenings" the older children had read aloud Stowe's "beautiful and affecting tale" to their siblings and parents. Her novel was the most successful example of the kind of Christian literature that would gradually make novel reading more acceptable to Friends. A lengthy passage describes their responses to hearing the novel being read aloud.⁷⁶ "American slavery" is firmly relegated to a realm far from Fernbrake and is only (it seems) brought into the family through engagement

with a literary text; slavery is quite literally brought home to them at the very moment of reading.

Beyond the vivid textual encounter (however moving—and indeed dramatic), slavery does not appear to have a literal or economic connection to their household. However, the family remains troubled by what they have heard and are left with the question of how they should react to slavery's continued existence. What are they to do? Their responses are vividly described. They had “laughed and wept, despaired and exulted, melted into tenderness, and burned with indignation.” They had “trembled,” “laughed,” “sympathised [and] cried ‘shame!’” Cataloging responses in detail, readers are told that members of the family had been “delighted” and “enraptured” and had “admired,” “scouted,” “marvelled,” “rejoiced,” “smiled,” but also “shuddered,” “wept,” “melted,” “mourned,” “deprecated.” This exhaustive (and exhausting) list starts with a rhetorical question: “Where is the Christian family that could stand the brunt of such an onset?” Such a family, it appears, cannot be imagined.

The list of their responses closes with the listeners riled up, their opposition to slavery made explicit. They “execrated,” “thrilled,” “agonised,” and “boiled with indignation.” Most particularly, the children express their pleasure that they are not slaveholders, something which lifts from them any sense of direct involvement in, or responsibility for, a system they believe to be located on the other side of the Atlantic. Their mother reassures them that though England had a long connection with slaveholding in the past, this is over. In fact, sailors now “bravely risk their lives in its suppression” while “Canada stands open to receive the hunted fugitives of American slavery, and secures them an asylum beyond the reaches of the Fugitive Slave-law [...] Thus, not only are we no slaveholders, but our influence is altogether on the side of the slave. We have renounced all connection with the accursed system; and surely this is a cause for thankfulness.”⁷⁷ Mrs. Stanfield's comments show that she is like the “abolitionist mother-historian” figure of the period's US juvenile texts.⁷⁸ She absolves the family from complicity in a system they feel they can safely abhor from a distance.

Yet Mr. Stanfield, while agreeing with his wife and children, offers an important corrective. He asks, “What if I could prove to you that we are all slaveholders?”⁷⁹ The children's expressions of innocent incredulity and fun at what they regard as a light-hearted comment contrasts with the growing sense of disquiet from Mrs. Stanfield. Meanwhile, Mr. Stanfield moves into an empirically based mode of argument, marshaling facts and details reminiscent of Henry's *A Revolution of the Spindles*.

He first asks whether it makes any difference whether the enslaved “work for us on our own premises or 4,000 miles away.” Assured by his wife that it does not, he asks his son how many people live in the village. George's response shows a slightly improbable grasp of specific detail, telling his father that “at the last census we had a population exceeding a thousand, and if we reckon five people for each house, it will make rather more than 200 families.” Deducing from this that such a population might have thirty “men, women and children” laboring in enslavement on behalf of the village, Mr. Stanfield launches into a detailed account of the kinds of violence meted

out to the enslaved in South America and the United States. Enslaved workers on plantations produce the cotton, rice, and sugar that are being used within their own household. The family therefore unknowingly supports slavery, since consumers are implicated by their purchases. This observation challenges the comfortable generic expectations established in the earlier part of the narrative, moving away from its air of cozy domesticity and directly linking their comfort to the violence of enslavement. He discusses the economics of enslavement and the global system of finance, telling them, “So intimately are we connected with the cruel system, that the money value of a slave, in New Orleans, is said to be regulated on the Exchange of Liverpool: that is, when cotton rises rapidly in Liverpool, the price of slaves rises in America: [W]hen cotton falls, slaves fall [...] American slavery could not possibly exist without the support it derives from Britain.” In other words, capitalism is foundationally reliant on slavery. This radical message moves the family away from their distanced benevolence, in which sympathy alone was sufficient, to one underwritten by a demand to take further action.

Moving on, Mr. Stanfield tells them there is unconscious and conscious support for slavery: “alas! there are Englishmen to be found, men, too, of high respectability and standing, who support the *slave-trade with their eyes open!*” He specifically notes the “chains manufactured for the purpose in Birmingham, or Wolverhampton,” and a footnote indicates that items produced “expressly for the slave trade” in Birmingham had been shown to the author.⁸⁰ As further evidence of culpability, Mr. Stanfield cites cloth woven in Manchester and Glasgow and subsequently used for the clothing of the enslaved.⁸¹ Most vividly, he describes the enslaved “writhing and gasping in the hold of a slave ship, fitted out by the aid of British capital, and landed, in the form of living skeletons, in Cuba or Brazil, to raise an article for the British market.”⁸² It is worth noting that he does not just focus on US slavery but also draws attention to the inter-Atlantic realm of enslavement, and multiple footnotes citing abolitionist texts and authors and other sources back up his claims.⁸³

He is then faced with his wife’s mild, yet just, rebuke: “I wonder, my dear [...] that when you feel these things so deeply, you have never spoken of them before. You know I am always ready to carry out your wishes; and besides, I shall now consider it a matter of duty to do what I can to patronise free-labour.” He replies that it is the power of reading and writing that has changed him: “The affecting exposure of slavery in Mrs. Stowe’s book [...] has driven the subject home and compelled me to look at it seriously,” suggesting an experience akin to that of the real John Sharp when he read William Cowper.⁸⁴

Depicting a family’s habits being changed by the experience of reading indicates a belief that reading can literally change lives. From now on, the entire family, from youngest to oldest, will do what she or he can to avoid slave-produced goods, becoming consumer activists, perhaps like readers of the tract. As the narrator notes, “From that day forward, there were stationed to keep watch over Mrs. Stanfield’s table and wardrobe, six of those little cruisers, which, according to Elihu Burritt, if

established in every family, would be more effectual for the suppression of slavery and the slave-trade than the largest squadron in the world.”⁸⁵

This tract draws from contemporary free produce arguments and wider abolitionist texts, but it is also indebted to the earlier phase of campaigning for sugar abstention and to juvenile tracts such as those written by Priscilla Wakefield and Amelia Opie. In particular, Wakefield’s *Mental Improvement* (1794–1797), published on both sides of the Atlantic, depicted a series of conversations between Mr. and Mrs. Harcourt and their children. Number 10 focuses on sugar cultivation, before moving into a discussion of slavery and culminating, like *Who Are the Slaveholders?*, with the children pledging to abstain from sugar.⁸⁶

To reinforce the relations between private behavior and public consequences, *Who Are the Slaveholders?* tried to make it easier for others to recognize (and avoid) slave-produced goods. It concludes with a full-page chart divided into three columns listing free produce, slave produce, and items of uncertain origin. Careful readers and consumers can change their activities and the lives not just of themselves but of others too. It concludes with a formal notice recommending that readers who want “a fuller exposition of anti-slavery and free-labour principles” can find them in *The Slave* (which Anna edited) and the Newcastle Anti-slavery Tracts. The tract directly addresses a juvenile audience, especially readers who have already encountered Stowe’s novel. It suggests, albeit indirectly, that they will recognize and share the responses felt by the Stanfields as they heard *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* being read aloud to them. In this way it also implies that they are ready for the lesson taught by Mr. Stanfield; in other words, such an experience will have prepared them for the consumer boycott it goes on to advocate. This lesson was further amplified in the next text I will discuss, which is simple, didactic, and to the point.

Little Laura, The Kentucky Abolitionist

The twelve pages of *Little Laura, the Kentucky Abolitionist* (1859) center on the short life of a real child named Laura Bailey, the daughter of William Shreve Bailey and Caroline Ann Withnall. Though we know little of Withnall, newspaper articles and correspondence allow us to know more about William Bailey’s experiences as an abolitionist printer and editor. He was a working-class man whose abolitionist beliefs were the product of a fierce and unsentimental attachment to the rights of workers. In a piece titled “A Short Sketch of our Troubles in the Anti-Slavery Cause,” he describes himself as originally working as “a cotton machinist and steam engine builder.”⁸⁷ In 1839, he purchased a homestead in Newport, Kentucky, establishing a machine shop there.

In 1850, he published several articles in the newly established *Newport News*, arguing for immediate abolition. Its editor complained that the articles “were too radically liberal for a slave state” and persuaded Bailey to purchase the paper because it had been “injured” by Bailey’s articles. Bailey writes that the “thought of an iron worker laying down the hammer and cold-chisel and forsaking the anvil and vice to

take up the pen, was a wide reach from my former occupation; but I saw an independent press was needed to oust the overbearing tyranny of the few and show fair play to the many, and the mechanics and working-men of my acquaintance favoured the undertaking.” Knowingly or not, his comments invoke Frances Vaughan’s dedicatory poem prefacing Anna Weamys’s *Continuation of Sir Philip Sidney’s Arcadia* (1651), encouraging women to stop sewing and start writing, proclaiming, “Lay by your Needles Ladies, Take the Pen, / The onely difference “twixt you and Men.””⁸⁸

Turning his back on his previous work by laying down his tools and metaphorically taking up the pen, Bailey bought the type and press and moved them to his machine shop, where he started a daily paper. This newspaper “gave the general news of the day, exposed the existing evils in the community and went on to encourage public improvements, industry, education &c. with now and then a good article, showing slavery to be the great curse of our general prosperity.” It employed compositors, proofreaders and reporters, but opponents paid them to sabotage their own work, leaving it undone or badly performed. Withnall and her daughters learned how to set type to make sure the paper met its deadlines, just as Frederick Douglass’s children worked on *The North Star*. But protests from male printers about girls and women doing this work led to the closure of the paper.

In August 1851, Bailey established the *Kentucky Weekly News*, which had a circulation of three hundred copies within just three months. Its success angered his opponents, who burned down the press and started an opposing paper. Borrowing money to purchase new equipment, and training a further two daughters in type-setting, Bailey continued printing the paper until 1858, after which he started a new publication, *The Free South*.

Bailey was a shrewd networker and money raiser, and Anna probably encountered his name and reputation through her American contacts. She was certainly corresponding with him and fundraising on his behalf by 1859, when she wrote *Little Laura*, and the decision to write the tract was made rapidly, in consequence of their correspondence.⁸⁹ In a series of letters written by Bailey to supporters on both sides of the Atlantic, he told them that attacks on his printing press were prompted by the paper’s success.

His experience resembles the violence unleashed on Elijah Parish Lovejoy in 1837, who died when his printing press was attacked, an event which galvanized John Brown to spend the rest of his life fighting slavery. Lovejoy’s murder also roused others, including juvenile antislavers. The Junior Anti-Slavery Society of Philadelphia condemned the murder in May 1838. In addition to collecting funds to support his widow, the society issued a statement pledging to “plead the cause of the suffering slave, and assert the duty of immediate emancipation undeterred by any threat or conduct of our opposers.”⁹⁰ In a comparable manner, on October 1, 1859, the *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter* issued an appeal sent by the Newcastle and Gateshead Anti-Slavery Society on Bailey’s behalf, listing the Richardson grocery shop as one of the collecting points for contributions.⁹¹ Also petitioning for funds, Bailey notes that after

Harpers Ferry, “the most extravagant lies were told about me, as trying to excite slavers to rebellion; intending to seize the United States’ barracks at this place, arm the Negroes, and commence war upon slaveholders. All these lies were told as profound secrets to the people by the tools of the slave-power. But these lies have already exploded, and the people are resuming their common sense again.”⁹² An article in the *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter* on March 1, 1860, updated readers about the current experiences of Bailey, “the editor and proprietor of *The Free South*—an antislavery newspaper published at Newport, in Kentucky, and on whose behalf we have inserted in our columns an appeal from anti-slavery friends in Newcastle.” The appeal tells its readers that “he has lost upwards of three thousand dollars by damage done to his house and printing-stock by the mob which last attacked his premises.”⁹³

This UK-based money-raising drive continued when Bailey came to England and visited several leading abolitionists, including the Richardsons. In May 1861, shortly after he had visited Newcastle to deliver a public address (possibly staying in Summerhill Grove), a long piece titled “William Shreve Bailey” was published in the *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter*. It substantially reproduces his Newcastle address and solicits money on his behalf. It ends with a list of those who have agreed to collect donations, including Anna Richardson and Wilson Armistead. Asking rhetorically who he is, the article is expansive:

He is one of those champions of freedom who has earned a name and a place in the annals of the struggle for Abolition in the United States, second to none, although his work has been prosecuted in a quiet way. He is one of those self-denying, self-helping men of action, as well as of thought, who, finding himself in the midst of a community, depraved and demoralized by Slavery, felt it to be his duty to combat the evil at its source, with such means he had at his disposal.⁹⁴

On December 2, 1861, the *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter* published a letter Bailey had written to Louis Chamerovzow, the secretary of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. He tells Chamerovzow that he has just read two copies of the *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter* and has been “much obliged” to see a letter he wrote to Anna Richardson reproduced there.⁹⁵ As all of this suggests, there is a rich scribal, spoken, and textual backdrop to the tract that Anna added to the campaign of support she was engaged with from her Newcastle base.

Early in *Little Laura*, Richardson quotes from two letters from Bailey, the first telling her of Laura’s death and the second following up with “a few more particulars respecting his precious child.” After reading the second letter, “our thoughts turned to you, beloved young friends, and in a few hours’ time we determined not only to tell you about Laura, but also to ask if you cannot assist her worthy family in their efforts to set the Negro free, in at least one of the Slave States.”⁹⁶ This intimate direct address

is emphasized by the repetition and capitalization of the word *you*. This form of direct address is echoed in the first-person commentary bookending the text. It opens with a short and accessible address noting that “Time was when the late Editors of the ‘Olive Leaf’ had the pleasure of talking from month to month to many of their dear young friends.” Lamenting that “circumstances beyond their reach” (probably Henry’s illness) had ended the possibility of engaging with those readers, she now aims for a new (and potentially greatly extended) audience. Indeed, she writes, her work is intended for “every little boy and girl whom we can reach throughout the British Islands who feels for the down-trodden American Slave, and wishes for him to be free.”⁹⁷ Explicitly identifying her audience as juvenile readers already possessed of antislavery instincts (she addresses it “To the Young Friends of the Slave”), she intimates that they might develop a new purpose by reading her work and learning from the example of a juvenile activist she simply calls Laura B.

The tract describes the life of Laura Bailey, along with the description of an attack on the printing press and its financial and other consequences, as William Bailey describes them himself. Encouraging autonomy and reflection in her readers, Richardson makes a point of noting that Laura’s antislavery sentiments were founded not just in what her parents espoused but also in her firsthand observation of enslaved people: “She had seen them in chains, and her heart ached very much over their wrongs and sorrows.”⁹⁸ This is the rhetoric of white sympathy rather than Black emancipatory activism, and pushes for a sympathetic response from its juvenile readers by describing the enslaved as “poor blacks” and “poor creatures,” but she also urges her readers to move beyond feeling for the enslaved by doing something about that feeling. She suggests that her young readers should follow Laura’s example, and she draws on Stowe’s depiction of the death of Little Eva to make this point. The day before her death, Laura sings the final verse of a well-known song whose lyrics of home and absence ideally suited the period’s sentimental culture. Based on a poem Caroline Atherton Mason wrote while she was a young girl away at school and longing for her family, it was first published in the *Salem Register* in 1844. It became even more popular after it was set to music by S. M. Grannis in 1852. The lyrics of the final stanza ask,

Do they miss me at home? Do they miss me
At morning, at noon, or at night?
And lingers one gloomy shade round them
That only my presence can light?
Are joys less inviting and welcome,
And pleasures less hale than before,
Because one is missed from the circle,
Because I am with them no more?

Richardson signs off with a direct address, urging readers to “talk over this matter with your parents and teachers, and if they *quite* approve of your collecting small sums on

the slaves' behalf, it would give us very great pleasure to forward those to Mr. B. as 'collected by the children of England, Scotland, and Ireland, in remembrance of his departed daughter.'" Each of the tracts was accompanied by a subscription form which could be returned "when more or less filled up." The following year she reported that £222 had been sent to Bailey, £62 of which was "chiefly collected by our dear young friends in England and Ireland, after reading the account of his little daughter 'Laura.'"⁹⁹ This campaigning was clearly effective.

Deborah De Rosa briefly discusses *Little Laura* as part of her larger analysis of antislavery juvenile texts produced in the period. A series of important juvenile texts were published in the United States, including Eliza Follen's collection *The Liberty Cap* (1846), Hannah Townsend's *The Anti-Slavery Alphabet* (1846 and 1847), and Jane Elizabeth Jones's *The Young Abolitionist* (1848). By the late 1840s to 1850s the focus shifted to representations of what De Rosa calls "exemplary fictional, abolitionist children on which their young readers could model themselves and facilitate their quest 'to do something.'" These include *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Aunt Mary's *The Edinburgh Doll* (1854), M. A. F.'s *Gertrude Lee; or, the Northern Cousin* (1856), and Maria Goodell Frost's *Gospel Fruits* (1856).¹⁰⁰ British juvenile antislavery tracts such as *Who Are the Slaveholders?* and *Little Laura* contributed to this shared culture. In addition, juvenile peace tracts such as Elihu Burritt's *Olive Leaflets*, collected from tracts published by Olive Leaf Circles in New York and Philadelphia, followed similar generic patterns.¹⁰¹

The importance of developing the sympathies and labor of juveniles was recognized on both sides of the Atlantic, though some figures (such as Lydia Maria Child) thought their activities should be subject to curbs. She particularly worried about the actions extending their involvement into areas she thought of as inappropriate. Writing in 1837 to express her reservations about children being encouraged to petition Congress, she argued that "it seems to be improper, because children are of necessity guided by others, and because this step is involved with questions evidently above juvenile capacities. Abolitionist parents ought thoroughly to prepare the hearts and minds of their children for the conscientious discharge of duties that will come with their riper years."¹⁰²

Despite her reservations, many organizations, such as the Junior Anti-Slavery Society of Philadelphia, were set up specifically to engage and to educate the young. Many figures on both sides of the Atlantic worked hard to develop and expand the audience for short juvenile antislavery tracts. These were cheap to manufacture and easy to distribute, due to their length and portability. This was certainly the case for *Little Laura*, which was being circulated within Kentucky within a short period of its first appearance in Newcastle. Anna Richardson sent copies directly to Bailey, who may have subsequently reprinted it on his own printing press and then organized further distribution. In a letter dated January 6, 1860, he thanks her for a donation of fifty pounds and "another of the Little Laura books which, thank God, is doing some good in Newport and Covington, in the hands of two christian friends."¹⁰³

The transatlantic journey of this short text is yet another example of the complex connectedness of activists who had developed sophisticated and rapid strategies for distributing and reproducing their work, building audiences and collecting funds. The story of Laura Bailey's short life shows the remarkable shift that had taken place within a few decades. While earlier antislavery girls sewed samplers, Laura's "nimble" fingers, along with those of her mother and sisters, set type.¹⁰⁴ The move into mechanical reproduction provided opportunities that activists were quick to take up and exploit. Anna Richardson moved with ease between handwritten letters to printed tracts, and William Shreve Bailey, like Elihu Burritt before him, laid down his anvil and took up the pen (and typeface).¹⁰⁵

Meanwhile in West Yorkshire, antislavery activists were also working assiduously. The Leeds Anti-Slavery Association noted that its series of illustrated juvenile antislavery tracts "consists of 13 separate Tracts of 12, 24, and 36 pages each, at 9d., 1s. 2d., and 1s 6d. per dozen; or neatly bound in One Volume, with portrait of Ellen Craft, 1s. each," adding that Wilson Armistead will be happy to be sent "Orders for the above, or Donations toward their gratuitous circulation, or printing additional numbers."¹⁰⁶ The fact that the portrait was cited as a specific attraction speaks to the way the series sought to capitalize on Ellen Craft's celebrity status. Her remarkable escape from slavery, along with that of her husband, William, was well known in Britain. The drama of their escape made it appealing to a young audience, and the image of Ellen Craft in her celebrated disguise as "Mr. Johnson," a young white invalid, emphasized her courage and daring, characteristics being encouraged in young activists. Chapter 3 turns to one of the most significant members of the Leeds Anti-Slavery Association, who had a particular connection to Ellen and William Craft.

Notes

The Journal of Transnational American Studies would like to thank Bridget Bennett and Louisiana State University Press for permission to reprint this excerpt from [Antislavery in the Dissenting Atlantic: Archives and Unquiet Libraries, 1776–1865](#).

- ¹ Bronwen Everill, *Not Made by Slaves: Ethical Capitalism in the Age of Abolition* (Harvard University Press, 2020), 173.
- ² "A Revolution of the Spindles, for the Overthrow of American Slavery," Macliver and Bradley, [1848], *Gale Slavery and Anti-slavery: A Transnational Archive*.
- ³ Elizabeth A. O'Donnell, "There's Death in the Pot!" *Quaker Studies* 13, no. 2 (2009): 184–204; and Julie L. Holcomb, *Moral Commerce: Quakers and the Transatlantic Boycott of the Slave Labor Economy* (Cornell University Press, 2016), 188–189.
- ⁴ Matthew Scott and Nick Megoran, "Newcastle Upon Tyne Peace Society (1817–50)," *Northern History* 54, no. 2 (2017): 1–17. See also Sandra Stanley Holton, *Quaker Women*:

Personal Life, Memory and Radicalism in the Lives of Women Friends, 1800–1920 (Routledge, 2007), 50. More on these families of Newcastle Friends can be found in Anne Ogden Boyce, *Records of a Quaker Family: The Richardsons of Cleveland* (London: Samuel Harris, 1889); John W. Richardson, ed., *Memoir of Anna Deborah Richardson with Extracts from Her Letters* (Newcastle: J. M. Carr, 1877); and Jonathan Mood, “Women in the Quaker Community: The Richardson Family of Newcastle, c. 1815–1860,” *Quaker Studies* 9, no. 2 (2005): 204–219. See also John William Steel, ed., *A Historical Sketch of the Society of Friends “In Scorn Called Quakers” in Newcastle and Gateshead, 1653–1898* (London: Headley Brothers, 1899).

- ⁵ Ann Rhoads, *Record of a Trip to England 1847*, Rhoads Family Papers, HC.MC-1033, box 3, pp. 40–41, Haverford College. Ann Rhoads described staying with “our dear friends” Jonathan and Rachel Priestman (connected to the Richardsons through marriage) in Newcastle. For details of the tricky relationships between the Richardson and Priestman families, see Holton, *Quaker Women*, 106–107.
- ⁶ William Still, *The Underground Rail Road* (Philadelphia: People’s Publishing Company, 1871), 720.
- ⁷ W. Minto, ed., *Autobiographical Notes of the Life of William Bell Scott* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1892), 355.
- ⁸ Janet Douglas, “A Cherished Friendship: Julia Griffiths Crofts and Frederick Douglass,” *Slavery and Abolition* 33, no. 2 (2012): 266.
- ⁹ Still, *Underground Rail Road*, 592.
- ¹⁰ *Annual Monitor for 1893*, 104.
- ¹¹ I am especially thinking of Clare Midgley, *Women against Slavery: The British Campaign, 1780–1870* (Routledge, 1992); Holcomb, *Moral Commerce*; Mood, “Women in the Quaker Community”; and Holton, *Quaker Women*. In addition, feminist scholars have discussed the intersectionality of campaigning. See, for instance, Vron Ware, *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism, and History* (Verso, 1992).
- ¹² *Annual Monitor for 1893*, 104.
- ¹³ Minto, *Autobiographical Notes*, 352.
- ¹⁴ Quoted in *Annual Monitor for 1893*, 104–105 (emphasis in the original).
- ¹⁵ Boyce, *Records of a Quaker Family*, 181.
- ¹⁶ Quoted in *Annual Monitor for 1893*, 105 (emphasis in the original).
- ¹⁷ Anna admired Anna Deborah, describing her in a letter to Ann Rhoads, after Deborah’s premature death, as “a highly cultivated and very fine young woman” (Letter from Anna Richardson to Ann Rhoads, October 25, 1872, Anna H. Richardson, 1872–1873,

HC.MC-1033, box 2, Rhoads Family Papers).

- ¹⁸ J. Richardson, *Memoir*, 97–100, 20. The diary entry was written on August 24, 1852. The month before her description of the carriage journey she wrote to a friend, recommending *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Letter to H. M. Peile, April 7, 1852, 16). For details of Stowe's visit, see J. Richardson, *Memoir*, 95–101.
- ¹⁹ See, for instance, Fionnghuala Sweeney, *Frederick Douglass and the Atlantic World* (Liverpool University Press, 2007); Fionnghuala Sweeney and Alan J. Rice, "Liberating Sojourns? African Americans and Transatlantic Abolition, 1845–1865," *Slavery and Abolition* 33, no. 2 (2021): 181–189; Hannah-Rose Murray, *Advocates of Freedom: African American Transatlantic Abolitionism in the British Isles* (Cambridge University Press, 2020); and R. J. M. Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall: Black Americans in the Atlantic Abolitionist Movement, 1830–1860* (Louisiana State University Press, 1983).
- ²⁰ See, for instance, Gretchen Gerzina, *Black England: Life Before Emancipation* (John Murray, 1995); Miranda Kaufman, *Black Tudors: The Untold Story* (Oneworld, 2017); and Simon Newman, *Freedom Seekers: Escaping from Slavery in Restoration London* (University of London Press, 2022).
- ²¹ Holcomb, *Moral Commerce*, 38–40.
- ²² Nigel Pocock, "From Enslavement to Freedom: Five Young Girls from Antigua," Equiano Centre, October 2013, <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/equiano-centre/black-presence-blog/previous-posts/october-2013>
- ²³ Thomas Pumphrey and Emma R. Pumphrey, *Henry and Anna Richardson: In Memoriam* (Newcastle, 1892), 11.
- ²⁴ Bridget Bennett, "England/New England: A Quaker and a Fugitive from Slavery Encounter Each Other on a Train, 1850," in *Crossings in Nineteenth-Century American Culture: Junctures of Times, Space, Self and Politics*, ed. Edward Sugden (Edinburgh University Press, 2022).
- ²⁵ Still, *Underground Rail Road*, 592.
- ²⁶ Anna Mae Duane, *Educated for Freedom: The Incredible Story of Two Fugitive Schoolboys Who Grew Up to Change a Nation* (New York University Press, 2020), 148–155.
- ²⁷ Ezra Greenspan, *William Wells Brown: An African American Life* (W. W. Norton, 2014), 309–310. Greenspan's account is the most detailed to date.
- ²⁸ Anna H. Richardson, "Anti-slavery Memoranda," [J. G. Forster, 1860?], *Gale Slavery and Anti-slavery: A Transnational Archive*.
- ²⁹ James E. Crawford, "A Card," *Liberator*, April 23, 1858, 67, *Gale Slavery and Anti-slavery*:

A *Transnational Archive*. William Bell Scott wrote, “It was within her power to collect any amount of money within a few weeks—I mean such as five hundred pounds or more, to be sent away at any crisis in American slavery affairs or temperance” (Minto, *Autobiographical Notes*, 353).

- ³⁰ See indexed references in William B. Gould, *Diary of a Contraband: The Civil War Passage of a Black Sailor*, ed. William B. Gould, IV (Stanford University Press, 2002).
- ³¹ “To Our British Subscribers,” *North Star*, 2 October 1851, *Gale Slavery and Anti-slavery: A Transnational Archive*; Anna H. Richardson, *Anti-slavery Memoranda* ([J. G. Forster, 1860?]); Midgley writes that “she provided up-to-date information to nearly a hundred newspaper editors” (Midgley, *Women against Slavery*, 138).
- ³² “Monthly Summary,” *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter*, 9, no. 5 (May 1, 1861): 97, *Gale Nineteenth-Century UK Periodicals*.
- ³³ Holcomb, *Moral Commerce*, 42–44, 63.
- ³⁴ See Kathryn Gleadle and Ryan Hanley, “Children against Slavery: Juvenile Agency and the Sugar Boycotts in Britain,” *Transactions of the RHS* 30 (2020): 98; Mimi Sheller, “Bleeding Humanity and Gendered Embodiments: From Anti-slavery Sugar Boycotts to Ethical Consumers,” *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights Humanitarianism and Development* 2, no. 2 (2011): 171–192; and Holcomb, *Moral Commerce*, 89–106.
- ³⁵ Clare Midgley, “The Dissenting Voice of Elizabeth Heyrick: An Exploration of the Links between Gender, Religious Dissent, and Anti-slavery Radicalism,” in *Women, Dissent, and Anti-slavery in Britain and America, 1790–1865*, ed. Elizabeth J. Clapp and Julie Roy Jeffrey (Oxford University Press, 2011), 95, 100. The Rhoadses stayed with the Tukes in York when they visited England in 1847. They visited (and greatly admired) the York Retreat.
- ³⁶ For details of how one boy scholar experienced his time at the school, see William Howitt, ed., *The Boy’s Country-Book: Being the Real Life of a Country Boy, Written by Himself* (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1839), chapters 15–17.
- ³⁷ For a description of his feelings about the appointment and its circumstances, see John Ford, ed., *Memoir of Thomas Pumphrey, for Twenty-Seven Years Superintendent of Ackworth School* (London: A. W. Bennett, 1864), 51–56.
- ³⁸ “Ellen Richardson,” *Annual Monitor for 1897*, 127–128. The word “Spartan” is also used by Anne Ogden Boyce in a description of the cold outdoor baths the scholars took three mornings a week, a mile from the school, without towels or any mode of drying themselves other than running outside (Boyce, *Records of a Quaker Family*, 184).

- ³⁹ Stanley Holton argues that in this way an individual could “strengthen their own family by extending the resources available to it” (Holton, *Quaker Women*, 19).
- ⁴⁰ Letter from Anna Richardson to Ann Rhoads, October 25, 1872. Henry’s brother Isaac was a long-term invalid who died prematurely in 1840 on the Isle of Wight, where he had moved to recover his health. Jane was the mother of Anna Deborah, who had died by this time.
- ⁴¹ *Annual Monitor for 1893*, 106.
- ⁴² Holton, *Quaker Women*, 6.
- ⁴³ J. Richardson, *Memoir*, 2, 3, and 4.
- ⁴⁴ Letter to Kate O’Brien, January 17, 1860, in J. Richardson, *Memoir*, 172.
- ⁴⁵ J. Richardson, *Memoir*, 213. For details of their correspondence, see 213–226.
- ⁴⁶ Alfred Homes, “The Friends’ Book Society,” in Steel, *Historical Sketch*, 95–99.
- ⁴⁷ J. Richardson, *Memoir*, 5–6.
- ⁴⁸ Letter from Wilson Armistead, 1854, Letters to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, box 3 (194), Houghton Library, Harvard University.
- ⁴⁹ Steel, *Historical Sketch*, 129. For more on Bragg, see indexed references in Holton, *Quaker Women*.
- ⁵⁰ William Harris Robinson, “Recollections of Newcastle Meeting Sixty Years Ago,” in Steel, *Historical Sketch*, 59–73, at 63, 66. Several secretaries to the Newcastle Literary and Scientific Society were Quakers. For more details of the Book Society, see Alfred Homes, “Friends’ Book Society,” in Steel, *Historical Sketch*, 95–99.
- ⁵¹ Confirmation of this can be found in the Sharp Family Papers in the West Yorkshire Archives.
- ⁵² Henry Richardson, “To a Boy, on Hearing Him Whistling in the Streets ‘The Bonnets of Blue,’ during the Prevalence of the Cholera,” in *The Aurora Borealis, a Literary Annual*, ed. Members of the Society of Friends (Newcastle: Charles Empson, 1833), 43.
- ⁵³ Mood, “Women in the Quaker Community,” 212–213.
- ⁵⁴ For more on Newcastle’s ragged school, see Wendy Prahms, *Newcastle Ragged and Industrial School* (Tempus, 2006). Throughout the 1840s a number of such schools were opened, including a celebrated ragged school in Bristol founded by Mary Carpenter.
- ⁵⁵ “Letter from Henry H. H. Garnet,” *Non-Slaveholder*, October 1, 1850, 226, *Gale Slavery*

and Anti-slavery: A Transnational Archive.

- ⁵⁶ Michaël Roy, *Young Abolitionists: Children of the Antislavery Movement* (New York University Press, 2024), 16.
- ⁵⁷ “Anti-slavery Bazaar, Philadelphia,” *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter*, September 1, 1846, 143, *Gale Nineteenth-Century UK Periodicals*.
- ⁵⁸ Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall*, 9.
- ⁵⁹ J. Richardson, *Memoir*, 64; Pumphrey, Henry and Anna Richardson, 23–33.
- ⁶⁰ Julie Holcomb has challenged earlier understandings of free produce, arguing that it had a range of participants and advocates, encompassing “women and black abolitionists as well as Quakers” (Holcomb, *Moral Commerce*, 3–4).
- ⁶¹ *Address to the Members of the Religious Society of Friends*, 10.
- ⁶² For Sturge’s involvement with free produce, see Louis Billington, “British Humanitarians and American Cotton, 1840–1860,” *Journal of American Studies* 11, no. 3 (1977): 316–320.
- ⁶³ See “Ackworth General Meeting and Other Anniversaries Held There, on the 2nd and 3d Ultimo,” *British Friend*, August 1851, 195.
- ⁶⁴ Letter from Elihu Burritt, September 29, 1849, George W., Correspondence, 1846–1890, 1233 Taylor, Taylor Family Papers, Haverford College.
- ⁶⁵ Burritt, “Wall of Fire.”
- ⁶⁶ Elihu Burritt, *The Advocate of Peace and Universal Brotherhood* 1, no. 1 (January 1, 1846), American Historical Periodicals from the American Antiquarian Society.
- ⁶⁷ “Circular of the Newcastle Ladies’ Free Produce Association,” *Non-Slaveholder*, June 1, 1848, 123; and Anna H. Richardson, “On the Disuse of Slave Labour Produce,” *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter*, May 1, 1848, 74, both in *Gale Slavery and Anti-slavery: A Transnational Archive*.
- ⁶⁸ The Richardsons had initially wanted Henry Bibb to come to England and lecture about free produce, but they were unsuccessful (see Billington, “British Humanitarians,” 321).
- ⁶⁹ “Letter from Henry H. H. Garnet,” October 1, 1850, 226.
- ⁷⁰ “Circular from Anna H. Richardson,” *Non-Slaveholder*, June 1, 1850, 128, *Gale Slavery and Anti-slavery: A Transnational Archive*.
- ⁷¹ *Annual Monitor for 1893*, 64, 114. Ellen’s obituary notes that “One of her last public efforts was the reprinting and wide circulation of a ‘National Peace Anthem’ for the

use of schools” (“Ellen Richardson,” *Annual Monitor for 1897*, 137–138).

⁷² Mentia Taylor, “Friendly Addresses to Spanish Ladies,” *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter*, January 15, 1866, 20, *Gale Nineteenth-Century UK Periodicals*.

⁷³ Letter from Anna H. Richardson, Newcastle upon Tyne, England, to Mary Carpenter [1852], September 5, Anti-slavery Collection, Boston Public Library.

⁷⁴ See Deborah De Rosa, *Domestic Abolitionism and Juvenile Literature, 1830–1865* (State University of New York Press, 2003); and Roy, *Young Abolitionists*.

⁷⁵ A footnote uses a male pronoun on a single occasion, but beyond that it is difficult to ascribe the tract’s authorship with certainty. The note reads, “About three years ago, the writer, having been informed that chains and fetters were made in Birmingham expressly for the slave-trade, gave a commission to a friend to procure him samples of the varieties on sale. These were shortly afterwards received, and the construction of some of them sufficiently bespeaks their purpose—as iron collars for the neck, to one of which a long chain is attached; fetters for the ankles, to admit of walking but not of running; &c., &c.” (Anna H. Richardson, *Who Are the Slaveholders?* [Newcastle: Selkirk and Rhago, 1852(?)], 7).

⁷⁶ “Where is the Christian family that could stand the brunt of such an onset? Mrs. Stowe had swayed their minds as though she played upon a musical instrument. They had laughed and wept, despaired and exulted, melted into tenderness, and burned with indignation, as the narrative proceeded. They had trembled with Eliza in her elopement with her doomed child; laughed at Sam’s devices for retarding the pursuit of the fugitives; sympathised with Aunt Chloe when her ‘old man’ was torn from her, and cried ‘shame!’ at the brutal Haley as he put the fetters upon Uncle Tom. They had been delighted with Tom’s good fortune at New Orleans, and enraptured with Little Eva his guardian angel. They had admired the dashing amiability of St. Clare, while they scouted the heartless selfishness of his wife. They had marvelled at the military tactics of ‘friend Phineas,’ and rejoiced at the downfall of Tom Loker. They had smiled at the hobgoblinry of Topsy, and shuddered at poor Prue’s horrid death. They had wept by the death-bed of the infant evangelist; melted under the heartfelt prayers of Uncle Tom; mourned the cruel fate of St. Clare, and deprecated the avaricious policy of his widow. They had traced poor Tom from the palace to the auction-block; accompanied him to Legree’s plantation; execrated the proceedings of that fiend incarnate; thrilled with horror over Cassie’s story; agonised with Uncle Tom in his sufferings, and boiled with indignation at his cruel martyrdom. The whole party, from the eldest to the youngest, had hung upon the narrative with intense interest; and it had left upon their hearts a deep and vivid impression of the heinous character of American slavery, suggesting the inquiry so natural to all well-regulated minds, ‘Can we do anything for its mitigation?’” (Anna H. Richardson, *Who Are the Slaveholders?*, 2–3).

When Stowe and her entourage subsequently toured Britain in 1856, they stayed

with members of the extended Richardson family in Edinburgh and then Newcastle. For details, see J. Richardson, *Memoir*, 97–101. Anna D. Richardson recommends the novel in a letter to a friend dated July 28, 1852.

⁷⁷ Anna H. Richardson, *Who Are the Slaveholders?*, 3.

⁷⁸ See De Rosa, *Domestic Abolitionism*, 79–106.

⁷⁹ Anna H. Richardson, *Who Are the Slaveholders?*, 3.

⁸⁰ Anna H. Richardson, *Who Are the Slaveholders?*, 7 (emphasis in original). See also Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall*, 16, for details on the way Moses Roper, Henry Garnet, and James Pennington all displayed instruments of torture for sensational effect.

⁸¹ The Guardian newspaper's six-part Cotton Capital series (March 28–May 8, 2023), available in print and as a podcast, explores this further.

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/series/cotton-capital-podcast>

⁸² Anna H. Richardson, *Who Are the Slaveholders?*, 8.

⁸³ For more on the importance of the inter-American realm, see Lloyd Belton, "'A Deep Interest in Your Cause': The Inter-American Sphere of Black Abolitionism and Civil Rights," *Slavery and Abolition* 42, no. 3 (2021): 589–609.

⁸⁴ Anna H. Richardson, *Who Are the Slaveholders?*, 10.

⁸⁵ Anna H. Richardson, *Who Are the Slaveholders?*, 11.

⁸⁶ See Holcomb, *Moral Commerce*, 116–117.

⁸⁷ The article is reproduced in Margaret Strebel Hartman, "Northern Kentucky Views Presents: Tid-Bits of Northern Kentucky History: Wm. S. Bailey of Newport, and His Anti-Slavery Newspapers," July 1987, *Notable Kentucky African Americans Database*, https://www.nkyviews.com/campbell/pdf/Bailey_Anti-Slavery_Newspaper.pdf. All subsequent quotations from "A Short Sketch" (with original emphasis) are also from this source. The article originally appeared in a Kentucky paper, *The Daily and Weekly News*, in 1858. Many of the details about Bailey come from this source. For additional details about him, see William Shreve Bailey, "To the Friends of Emancipation! The Re-establishment of 'The Free South' Newspaper in Kentucky" (Newport, KY, 1858).

⁸⁸ Quoted in Susanne trill, Kate Chedgzoy, and Melanie Osborne, eds., *Lay By Your Needles Ladies, Take the Pen: Writing Women in England, 1500–1700* (Arnold, 1997), 1.

⁸⁹ See indexed references in Stanley Harrold, *The Abolitionists and the South, 1831–1861* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1995).

- ⁹⁰ Quoted in De Rosa, *Domestic Abolitionism*, 112–113.
- ⁹¹ “William S. Bailey,” *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter*, October 1, 1859, 238, *Gale Slavery and Anti-slavery: A Transnational Archive*.
- ⁹² William Shreve Bailey to Anna H. Richardson, November 19, 1859, in Anna H. Richardson, *Anti-slavery Memoranda*.
- ⁹³ “Monthly Summary,” *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter*, March 1, 1861, 49, *Gale Nineteenth-Century UK Periodicals*.
- ⁹⁴ “William Shreve Bailey,” *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter*, May 1, 1861, 112, *Gale Nineteenth-Century UK Periodicals*.
- ⁹⁵ William Shreve Bailey and L. A. Chamerovzow, “Letter from W. S. Bailey of Kentucky,” *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter; Under the Sanction of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society*, December 2, 1861, 227.
- ⁹⁶ Anna H. Richardson, *Little Laura, the Kentucky Abolitionist* (Newcastle: T. Pigg, 1859), 4–5.
- ⁹⁷ Anna H. Richardson, *Little Laura*, 1. Clare Midgley notes that Henry Richardson’s poor health meant that Anna had to reduce her work on free produce, and Elihu Burritt became editor of *The Slave* in place of Henry (Midgley, *Women against Slavery*, 139).
- ⁹⁸ Anna H. Richardson, *Little Laura*, 2–3.
- ⁹⁹ Anna H. Richardson, *Little Laura*, 2, 9–10, 12.
- ¹⁰⁰ De Rosa, *Domestic Abolitionism*, 114, 134. She notes that the girl protagonists of these texts developed the model offered by the fictional Little Eva, calling them “heroic, nonconformists who use their voices for political activism that liberates the slaves and themselves.”
- ¹⁰¹ Elihu Burritt, ed., *Olive Leaflets* (New York: S. S. & W. Wood, 1852–1855[?]).
- ¹⁰² Quoted in De Rosa, *Domestic Abolitionism*, 109–110.
- ¹⁰³ Anna H. Richardson, *Anti-slavery Memoranda*, 2.
- ¹⁰⁴ Anna H. Richardson, *Little Laura*, 4.
- ¹⁰⁵ Burritt capitalized on this move, publishing in 1846 a collection of short reflections, tales, and other prose pieces; see Elihu Burritt, *Sparks from the Anvil* (Worcester: Henry J. Howland, 1846).
- ¹⁰⁶ Advertisement, *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter*, April 1, 1857, 96, *Gale Nineteenth-Century UK Periodicals*. Wilson Armistead invited “Orders for the above, or Donations

towards their gratuitous circulation.”

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