

Threads of Life: Matilda Marian Pullan (1821-1862), Needlework Instruction and the Periodical Press

Recent scholarship on Victorian needlework often reads needlework patterns as samples of middle-class discourse on femininity and domesticity, arguing that Mlle Riego, Mrs Pullan, Mrs Mee and their colleagues not merely supplied women with instructions for crocheting their own scarves or knitting rugs for the parlour, but also offered them standards of taste and propriety.¹ At the same time, these needlework designers themselves remain shadowy figures, their reputations as respectable “Mrs” and “Mlles” tacitly legitimizing their authority on middle-class domestic culture, now as much as during their lifetime. Taking the example of Mrs Pullan as a case in point, this article argues the importance of considering these women’s writings in the larger context of their lives and careers. Pullan and her colleagues often seem to be speaking in unison on the periodical or book page, voicing similar ideas about women’s proper sphere of activities and domestic roles through endless variations on the same patterns. Yet their personal and professional lives moved along widely divergent paths, raising fundamental questions about the intersections of class, gender, employment and the periodical press. Why did Victorian women take up needlework instruction in a career context? What motivated their decision between collecting their designs in manuals and sending them piecemeal to the magazines? How can a more thorough insight into their private lives help us gain a better understanding of the views and principles that they advocated in public? In this essay, I explore some possible answers to these questions by tracing Pullan’s prolific career as a needlework author against the background of her life story, from her Yorkshire boarding-school childhood through her busy professional years in

the fashionable whirl of mid-nineteenth-century London to her final decline into poverty in the theatrical circles of New York.

When Matilda Marian Pullan ventured into needlework instruction at the age of 29, she entered a young and rapidly expanding market.² In the previous decade, women like Frances Lambert, Eleonore Riego de la Branchardière, Eliza Warren (later Warren Francis) and Cornelia Mee had made names for themselves by issuing instruction manuals or series in all branches of decorative needlework. By 1847, Mee's *Companion to the Work-Table*, first published in 1842, was boasting a total sale of 8,000 copies. Lambert's *Knitting Book* went through 44 editions between 1843 and 1848, and Riego's *Crochet Book* reached its seventh of 18 series in 1849.³ Pullan's anonymous *Lady's Library* (1850), too, proved a success. Selling cheaply at 1 s., the small oblong books were illustrated with wood engravings by Edwin Jewitt and published by Darton. Written in the form of letters addressed to a niece, each focused on different types of fancywork and other decorative crafts, including braiding, embroidery, crochet, knitting and netting, papier-mâché and japanning. After six parts, however, the series was discontinued for no apparent reason other than, as advertisements in the *Morning Chronicle* revealed, the "constant complaints" received by the author "of the difficulty of procuring" the books.⁴ Using what seems to be a standard marketing trick to tempt readers into securing their own copies, Pullan may in fact have been quite honest about her realization that a book series was not the best way to build a faithful readership. She was not to publish another fancywork manual in the next four, formative years of her career. Still, *The Lady's Library* must have given her valuable practical experience with issuing fancywork instructions on a regular basis, while its epistolary form testifies to her interest in a more direct kind of instruction than the sparsely available books allowed her to provide. The step to magazine writing was easily made as "offers of engagements [...] of the

various periodicals poured in”⁵ and Pullan became the first woman of her generation to explore the full potential of the new regular feature that was steadily making its way into the London periodical press: the monthly or weekly fancywork section.

Both Mee and Warren had made earlier attempts to establish their own needlework magazines. Mee’s *Work-Table Magazine* (1847), co-edited with her sister, was made up entirely of instructions in church and decorative needlework; Warren’s *Drawing Room Magazine* (1847-48) offered fancywork patterns in addition to literary contributions. Riego had her own periodical, the *Needle, a Magazine of Ornamental Work*, in 1852-54. None of these publications lived long, apparently unable to compete with their book counterparts and with other women’s magazines providing a greater variety of entertainment and instruction. In 1847, the *Lady’s Newspaper* was the first to devote space to fancy needlework on a regular basis, soon followed by the *Family Friend*, the *Home Circle* and the *Ladies’ Companion*. In the next decade, Pullan would make substantial contributions to all these and at least three other British magazines. Her earliest periodical work, introducing her fashionable *nom de plume* “Aiguillette,” appeared from July 1850 onwards in the “Accomplishments for Young Ladies” section of the penny weekly the *Home Circle*. In August, she took charge of the fancywork department of the *Ladies’ Companion*, and in January 1851 she started a new monthly section in the *New Monthly Belle Assemblée* headed “Work. By the Editress of ‘The Lady’s Library’.” When the two magazines merged with the *Ladies’ Cabinet* in July 1852, the three periodicals becoming identical in content while keeping their respective titles, “Aiguillette” assumed editorship of the fancywork department of the amalgamated publication. If, as Jeffrey Auerbach has argued, the merger “reveals what sold and what did not,”⁶ Pullan’s designs certainly “sold,” and continued to sell. In March 1852, she succeeded Warren Francis as editor of “The Work-Table Friend” of

the *Family Friend*, to which she also contributed a “Work-Table for Juveniles,” and in June 1854 she prefaced her first contribution to the fancywork section of the *Lady’s Newspaper*, which until then had been in Riego’s hands, with a “frank exposition” signed “Matilda M. Pullan” “of [her] power and will to conduct the department.”⁷ Under the new editor, the fancywork department evolved from a section included in the newspaper to a genuine periodical supplement comprising three or four separately numbered pages of fancywork patterns, occasional recipes and general news items grouped under the heading “Table Talk.”⁸ In February 1855, Pullan introduced “Fancy Needlework” into the *Governess* at the special request of its readers. The last magazine to appoint her director of the fancywork department was the popular *Englishwoman’s Domestic Magazine* in January 1856. In addition, Pullan assumed the editorship of the more expensive *London and Paris Ladies’ Magazine of Fashion*, which offered fashion advice and did not contain fancywork instructions.

Pullan’s originality did not lie in the objects for which she designed patterns – an exemplary mixture of clothing articles, accessories and decorative household items – nor in the vocabulary of beauty, practicality and domesticity that she used to describe them. Her antimacassars, dinner mats and sofa blankets were “elegant” and “useful,” her handkerchief borders and doilies “extremely pretty,” sleeves in broderie anglaise “light and showy, yet strong and easily worked,” a braided child’s pelisse “very handsome” and a silk-lined work basket “one of the prettiest and most appropriate gifts to a bride.”⁹ Purses, bookmarks and other “little article[s] of feminine fabrication” could be “affectionately introduced” into the luggage of a husband, son or brother, and bring back “a sudden flood of tenderness” upon discovery, “the silken threads thus woven and intertwined form[ing] themselves into links which tie him more firmly than chains of iron to the dear but distant home.”¹⁰ What made

Pullan stand out was her consistent reliance on periodical publication to build and maintain a competitive multi-branch business and cement a close relationship with her public. Launched on the eve of the Great Exhibition of 1851, her career made a propitious start as she seized this unique opportunity to promote her professional activities. She was given “12 feet of counter” in the South Gallery of the Crystal Palace to exhibit articles in point lace, including a child’s dress, collars, sleeves and a court cravat.¹¹ Adjacent cases – among which those belonging to Mee and Riego – had similar items on display, but, as the *Illustrated Exhibitor* noted, only Pullan’s contained specimens of the threads used, in “elegant boxes” labeled “Evans’s Point Lace Cottons.”¹² The association with the Derby firm of Messrs. Walter Evans and Co. inaugurated a partnership that was to become a trademark of her career, transforming her name into a recognizable brand. In her magazine instructions alike, Pullan almost invariably recommended Evans’s Boar’s Head cottons, warning her readers that inferior materials could not only “seriously injure the first appearance and ultimate wear” of fancy items, but also mistakenly lead women to question their own skills.¹³ Women interested in trying their hands at the designs on display at the Crystal Palace only had to refer to her magazine contributions. Instructions for working the child’s dress with a full-page engraving by Jewitt appeared in the *Ladies’ Companion* and a pattern for a point-lace collar was published in the *Home Circle*, both listing Evans’s cottons as the materials to be used.¹⁴

Tying her name to the Evans firm not only helped Pullan to establish a distinct voice in the periodical press, it also created the need for a place where these particular cottons could be bought. Many fancywork authors owned fancy repositories in London. Cornelia Mee ran a Berlin wool shop with her husband and daughters for years, first in Bath and later in one of the fashionable streets near Grosvenor Square. Frances Lambert sold materials for

fancywork at 7 Conduit Street and 3 Burlington Street in the late 1830s and 1840s. Warren had showrooms in Fleet Street, and Riego's repository was located in New Bond Street. None, however, advertised their businesses as vigorously and through so many channels as Pullan did. Rather than directing all correspondence through the publisher's office, Pullan received letters at her home address. Already in 1850, readers of *The Lady's Library* were encouraged to send inquiries for materials to her residence at 29 Charlotte Street, Portland Place.¹⁵ By the time of the Exhibition she was running a full-fledged fancywork business at 126 Albany Street, Regent's Park, where, according to advertisements in the *Morning Post* and the *Lady's Newspaper*, "exact copies" and patterns of her Exhibition designs could be had, as well as "a large stock of Cottons for Sewing, Knitting, Crochet, Tatting, and Embroidery," "guarantee[d] [...] to be the sole manufacture of Mssrs. W. Evans and Co., of Derby."¹⁶ Later advertisements routinely identified Pullan as "editress of the Needlework department of the 'Family Friend,' 'Ladies' Companion,' &c.," shrewdly praising the Evans cottons as "the only make recommended in the principal Periodicals."¹⁷ Business went well, for by March 1854, Pullan was able to open a branch establishment at 322 Regent Street where, in addition to "all the Choicest Materials for the Work-table," "an infinite variety of new and elegant Foreign and English Designs [was] on show."¹⁸

If her periodical work helped Pullan to ensure a continuing need for the cottons available at her shop, the variety of skills and techniques needed to execute the patterns also allowed her to appoint herself as the primary instructor of her readers and customers, not only on paper but also in person. She reserved Wednesdays afternoons for "*viva voce* explanations" at her house in Albany Street, and advised women "to avail themselves of these lessons when they wish[ed] to elucidate difficulty" since, as she put it in the *Ladies' Cabinet*, despite "the very best endeavours" it was impossible "always [to] make a stitch on

a pattern clear by a written description.”¹⁹ With the exception of point lace, which was taught as a means of livelihood rather than for recreational purposes, the lessons – “under the superintendence of skilful assistants” – were offered free of charge, as a service to which the subscribers “entitle[d] themselves by their *abonnement*.”²⁰

As Pullan must have realized early on, a significant part of her target public consisted of middle-class women living outside London, who had less opportunity to buy materials from her shop and attend her lessons. To accommodate their wishes, she set up a mail order business, offering “the most moderate prices” for country orders and even making arrangements with Evans to have the cottons “made into skeins, to save the heavy postage of the reels.”²¹ For that same purpose, she also launched a new illustrated book series, *The Ladies’ Book of Fancy Work* (1854-55). Selling even more cheaply than *The Lady’s Library* at 6d., the eight little books were advertised in the *Governess* as a replacement for her live instructions, each “containing more than a dozen designs and full directions” for fancywork from potichomanie and bead work to French embroidery and point lace, so that that “a better manual for ladies in the country could hardly be procured.”²²

By the late 1850s, Pullan could boast: “It is but justice to myself [...] to say that there is not one Magazine, in which Fancy-work is a feature, that does not, with or without acknowledgement, avail itself of my labors, nor an editor to whom my name is not familiar as a ‘household word.’”²³ Her tone exudes confidence bordering on arrogance, but her estimate of the scope and impact of her work is not unrealistic. In just over five years, she had carved a niche for herself in the British periodical press, publishing hundreds of fancywork patterns in the most popular women’s and family magazines of the day. Still more readers had access to her work through the numerous unauthorized reprints circulating

across the Atlantic, and Pullan was about to plunge into the American market herself. Yet while the growing number of magazines in which her patterns appeared suggests a smooth rise to fame and fortune, Pullan's was not a story of unmitigated success. Biographical research opens up a more nuanced reality, shedding light on the driving forces behind her career and revealing a woman struggling to deal with the subtle, intricate workings of gender and class.

Pullan was born Matilda Mary Anne Chesney into a respected Irish military family in 1821, the eldest daughter of the six children of Lieut. Charles Cornwallis Chesney of the Bengal Artillery and his wife Sophia Augusta, *née* Cauty.²⁴ Her grandfather Alexander Chesney fought in the American Revolutionary War, her uncle Francis Rawdon Chesney was an army general and explorer of the Euphrates, and her brothers Charles Cornwallis and George Tomkyns Chesney both acquired fame as military writers. Although the pen name "Aiguillette" that she later adopted was a clever allusion to her military parentage, Pullan's relationship with her family started to erode early on, never to be fully restored. Losing her father at the age of nine, she spent a significant portion of her childhood at a boarding school in Knaresborough, a period that she referred to as her "only happy days" in her 1855 advice manual *Maternal Counsels to a Daughter*.²⁵ Dedicated to its proprietors the Misses Thackray, "the maternal guardians of [her] infancy, the wise and faithful counsellors of ripener years,"²⁶ the book also offers a possible reason for her prolonged stay. "In very many cases," Pullan explains, "parents will stint themselves and limit in every way their own comfort, to educate their daughters at an expensive boarding school, with the view of their afterwards becoming governesses, in the hope of their improving their social position by mingling in society superior to that of their father's house."²⁷ Pullan herself reports "years [of] unremitting toil as a governess," a snapshot of which is offered by the 1841 census. While

her widowed mother ran a small ladies' school in Tiverton to compensate the family's diminished income, Matilda Chesney, aged 20, was working as a governess for a bank clerk's family some 250 miles north, in the Yorkshire town of Huddersfield.²⁸

If the position was meant to secure her future, it did not have the anticipated effect. When, during her final illness in New York some twenty years later, Pullan turned to the Rev. G. H. Houghton of the Church of the Transfiguration for support, she reportedly explained that she had been brought up by her father in India, where "she met and fell in love with a young man sent from England, [...] ran away and married him."²⁹ Charles Cornwallis Chesney's early resignation from military service in 1826, when his daughter was barely five years old, undermines the credibility of the account, but there is evidence that Pullan did spend a few years in India as an adolescent and that she was at least telling the truth about the problematic nature of the relationship.³⁰ To Houghton she confessed to being "haunted" by "the thought of her mother, from whom she had not heard for fifteen years," a period of time that roughly stretches back to her marriage to Samuel Pullan on 13 May 1845 at St Mary, Lambeth, in London.³¹ A coach maker and a cloth manufacturer's son, her new husband represented a significant step down the social ladder from the Chesneys, who despite living "in reduced circumstances" were still solidly upper middle class.³² Their disapproval would certainly explain why the ceremony took place without any family members present and without subsequent notice in the newspapers.³³ A son, Samuel Charles Chesney Pullan, was born at 4 Whitefriars Street on 7 March of the following year, but the child was weakly and died six days later.³⁴ No other children appear to have been born, and Pullan was widowed soon afterwards.³⁵

Estranged from her family and without a wage-earning husband by her side, Pullan found herself left to her own resources before the age of 30. Adjusting her life to this new

situation, she took up residence in Albany Street, where she let rooms to lodgers, opened a fancywork business and prepared monthly and weekly contributions to the magazines. When the census enumerator visited her there in 1851, she confidently gave her profession as “Authoress + Needlework Designer.”³⁶ (Just a few miles south, according to that same census, Christina Rossetti was assisting her mother in running a small day-school to supplement the family’s reduced income, while her sister worked as a governess.)³⁷ Contributing fancywork patterns to the magazines must have seemed an appropriate way to generate an income for a distressed gentlewoman like Pullan, since it allowed her to capitalize on accomplishments that were considered essential to any genteel girl’s education. As the *Art-Union* put it in a review of Frances Lambert’s *Hand-Book of Needlework* (1842), “needlework is a graceful and feminine employment, pleasant, and it may be profitable.”³⁸

By the same token, however, it also constituted an ambivalent discursive space in which public identities had to be carefully constructed and reputations negotiated. Lambert, who in 1837 received a royal warrant as “embroiderer in general”³⁹ to the Queen, began her career in needlework instruction as a single woman. She continued to publish under that name after her marriage, signing prefaces “F. S.” and thanking her husband “for his assistance in some of the historical notices” as well as “his permission in allowing [her] maiden name to appear on the title-page, as being that by which [she was] more generally recognised in [her] avocation.”⁴⁰ Lambert’s newly married status did not go unnoticed by the reviewers. The *Art-Union* found “evidences of industry, patience, and cheerfulness” in her work “which lead to the belief that in every respect the author will be ‘an honour to the sacred name of wife’.”⁴¹ Cornelia Mee, too, enjoyed the luxury of married respectability and shared professional pursuits as the wife of Berlin wool dealer Charles Mee and sister of Mary

Austin, who co-authored a significant part of her publications. Eleonore Riego de la Branchardière, by contrast, remained a spinster throughout her life. Probably more affluent than most of her colleagues, she could claim descent from French nobility as well as the support of royal patrons. Riego taught Queen Victoria's daughters and later designed "by special appointment" for the Princess of Wales, the Crown Princess of Prussia and other European royalty.⁴²

Pullan's situation perhaps most resembled that of Eliza Warren Francis, who after being widowed twice eked out a living by contributing needlework patterns to the *Family Friend* before going on to edit her own journal, running a fancy repository, selling the copyrights to her household manuals and taking in boarders.⁴³ Warren Francis, however, had been brought up in a lower-middle-class family of traders. For her, the decision to turn her needlework skills to commercial advantage was both a practical and a logical one. In her later contributions on household management to the *Ladies' Treasury*, she provided domestic guidance to middle-class wives and mothers with limited means using a no-nonsense vocabulary of industry and thrift. If only these women practiced a rigorous economy in which nothing went to waste, their homes would lack none of the comforts of the wealthier classes. Pullan's London writings, by contrast, were not so much about what women could aspire socially as about dealing in a dignified way with the potential loss or erosion of what they already had. Her work appeared in a wide range of periodicals, from cheap weeklies to high-quality monthly journals, giving her plenty of space to explore the possibilities and limitations of social class. Depending on her readership, Pullan spoke differently about the roles and functions of needlework in women's lives and about her own commercial activities in particular. Subscribers to the popular two-penny *Family Friend*, for example, were usually offered crochet or knitting patterns for items that Pullan thought

“likely to be of *general utility*”; crests and coats of arms, which she included almost every week in the more expensive *Lady’s Newspaper*, were considered “inadmissible.”⁴⁴ Similarly, while half-page advertisements in the *Family Treasury* announced in bold capitals that “every material for the WORK-TABLE [could] be obtained at her BERLIN REPOSITORY,” Pullan vigorously denied in the up-market *Ladies’ Companion* that her house was a shop.⁴⁵

What made Pullan’s position particularly difficult was that she belonged neither to the social class of women taking her lessons in point lace to become wage-workers nor to the privileged group of leisured ladies whom she provided with patterns for purely decorative *frivolités*. Her professional success, as she must have known very well, depended on creating a public persona that filled a clear, respectable place in society, allowing her to mask the ambiguity of her private situation. Hence, although the main reason for her busy and diverse professional life was no doubt financial necessity, Pullan invariably invoked arguments of moral duty and ambition in the press. As she explained in the *Lady’s Newspaper*, she was aiming at “the edification of [her] friends”; her expertise would help them “distinguish between the brilliant and the gaudy, the chastely elegant and the dowdy.”⁴⁶ To legitimize her authority, she lent her work an air of French refinement and fashionability through the *nom de plume* “Aiguillette,” the advertising moniker “Madame Pullan” and the occasional French of her “matinées industrielles” and “Salon de Travail.”⁴⁷ Pullan also responded to the proliferation of philanthropic activities for upper-class women by reminding “those ladies who interest themselves in the various charities for which bazaars are held” that she could supply them with all the materials needed for the purpose.⁴⁸

In *Maternal Counsels*, she attributed the decision to start a business to “Destiny rather than choice,” explaining that it had been prompted by the many inquiries following

the publication of *The Lady's Library* "where this and that material could be had; and suggestions from all quarters that [she] would keep the materials for [her] designs."⁴⁹ Pullan made no secret of the "surprise and regret" of some of her friends at her becoming "– tell it not in Gath! – a shopkeeper," but was quick to add that the plan was conceived in the firm belief that "there was some higher and better object to be achieved, [...] than the accumulation of pounds, shillings, and pence."⁵⁰ As she went on to explain, that ulterior goal was the training institute for young women that she founded in her residence in Albany Street in 1854. For 30 guineas a year, she offered two years of intensive training in needlework, supplemented with regular hours reserved for reading, accomplishments, exercise and domestic employments, to young ladies whose circumstances required or might require them to earn their own living.⁵¹

Pullan was treading on slippery ground for more than one reason. On the one hand, she was actively participating – unlike her immediate colleagues – in a relatively young emancipatory discourse on women's employment and education that sought to reconcile the tension between female respectability and waged work. In her effort to promote needlework among middle-class women, she echoed concerns already raised by Harriet Martineau from the 1830s onwards, and anticipated the better-known experiments in social reform conducted by the Society for the Promoting the Employment of Women, such as Emily Faithfull's Victoria Press and Maria Rye's law-copying office. As a contributor to *Once A Week* put it in an article on professional opportunities for women in pattern designing:

The great want, of which in the present day we behold so many instances, is of something for women to do that will not expose them to hardship – something which they may render remunerative without losing caste – something, in short, that will not

vulgarise them. We have at present no recognized step between the governess and the shopwoman.⁵²

Much of Pullan's work was precisely about creating that step. When she advertised her training school in *Maternal Counsels*, she took great care to emphasize that she had no intention of interfering with young girls' "more certain destiny as wives and mothers." Her aim was to turn them into successful businesswomen rather than "ill-paid third-rate governesses," not to "unfit them to be ornaments to their own homes."⁵³

On the other hand, in supporting charitable needlework and teaching young women to put their accomplishments to commercial use, Pullan was as much trying to alleviate her own precarious financial situation as she was offering other women help with theirs. As Alison Kay has rightly remarked, she was "making a business of preparing young women for business."⁵⁴ The 1851 census and Kelly's Post Office Directory for 1853 show that she had previously used the premises as a lodging house. Offering schooling to young women, however, gave her the double advantage of a steady income and extra hands to process fancywork orders. Indeed, the training school was probably Pullan's clever way of dealing with the fact that she could not afford to continue living behind the elegant stucco façade of 126 Albany Street unless she shared the house with others.

In her press contributions and other writings alike, Pullan hid behind a well-crafted alter ego that, while disarmingly candid about certain aspects of her private life, kept scrupulously silent about others. Her image of upper-middle-class respectability was a fragile one, and not only because she was pursuing a career in commerce. Pullan readily confessed that, as the "daughter of an officer whose life fell a sacrifice to his zeal in the service of his country – the granddaughter, niece, sister of men following the same honourable profession," she had betrayed her class by entering trade, but chose not to reveal that she

had already distanced herself by marrying the son of cloth manufacturer.⁵⁵ The disadvantageous match, moreover, was a mere *faux pas* compared with another, more serious social offense that needed concealment. In early January 1852, the advertisements for her fancywork business in the *Morning Post* were suddenly discontinued, without any explanation, only to reappear seven months later. Historical records reveal the reason of her temporary absence: Pullan was pregnant with an illegitimate child. Like so many women in her situation, she suspended her public life when heavy skirts and corsets could no longer hide her enlarged figure and left the city for the quiet anonymity of the countryside. On 24 February, she gave birth to a son at 5 Trafalgar Square in Twickenham, ten miles outside of London. The child was registered three weeks later as Henry Hall Rawdon Chesney, the empty box for the father's name on the birth certificate suggesting the wave of speculation that would have followed the discovery of the pregnancy.⁵⁶ Gossip would have travelled fast indeed. Not only did Pullan become pregnant during the time of the Great Exhibition, the census taken only a few weeks earlier shows that the lodgers staying with her were two young men in their twenties, the painters Harry John Johnson and John Lamont Brodie.⁵⁷ The boy's late baptism on 17 October 1853 at Christ Church on Albany Street could indicate that he remained in the country when his mother returned to her business in late July 1852, where he was taken care of by a foster family or wet nurse until he could be safely introduced into London society as the child of a deceased relative.⁵⁸

That Pullan had an illegitimate child whose schooling, clothes and other basic needs had to be paid for sheds a surprising light on her prolific periodical output and increasingly diverse professional activities towards the mid-1850s. The need for financial security may also help to explain her decision to enter her second, more advantageous marriage on 16 July 1855, at St Matthew, Marylebone.⁵⁹ This time the groom was a thirty-year-old

gentleman by the name of Thomas Smith Metcalfe, the eldest son of a deceased London tax collector and a retired governess.⁶⁰ A few months later, advertisements in the *Ladies' Newspaper* announced that Pullan's business had moved to 36 Bruton Street, competitively located in the heart of London's fashion district, within easy walking distance of, for example, Mlle Riego in New Bond Street.⁶¹ Although she was now officially Mrs Metcalfe, Pullan retained the name under which she had won her reputation. As "Mrs Pullan" and "Aiguillette" she continued to contribute patterns to the pages of the Victorian periodical press, reserving Tuesday mornings for additional instructions to work the designs, inviting readers to visit her new showrooms and recommending Evans's cottons with unflagging energy.

Some five years after her career was launched following the death of her first husband, Pullan was a married woman again, leading a busy and varied life as an author and editor, a designer and instructor, and a business proprietor. But then, at the height of her success, she suddenly cut down on her professional activities. In May 1856, the weekly advertisements in the *Lady's Newspaper* stopped, the editorship of the "Work Table" was transferred to Mademoiselle Roche, and Pullan also disappeared from the pages of the *Family Friend* and the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*.⁶² As "Aiguillette," she still contributed to the *Ladies' Companion* and its amalgamated titles, including the newly merged *Illustrated Magazine* and *Sharpe's London Magazine*, but the number of patterns per issue was significantly lower, one or two rather than the usual three or four, and the instructions became less detailed, sometimes consisting of no more than a brief paragraph. Correspondents were no longer invited to send enquiries directly to Pullan's London address or apply in person for help. No explanation was given until Pullan announced in January 1860 that she was "retiring from the business part of her engagements," but would continue

directing the fancywork department of the *Ladies' Companion*. Her final contribution, containing instructions for a sofa cushion and a collar and cuff, was published in September 1861. When two years later, the magazine printed her directions for crocheting a "pine pattern anti-massacar" in its newly styled "Ladies' Page," she was referred to as "the late 'Aiguillette'."⁶³

By 1863, after gradually withdrawing from the London periodical world for no obvious reason, Pullan was deceased without any press notice of her death. Her own writings, historical records as well as a rare interview with the Rev. Houghton that appeared in the Chicago newspaper the *Inter Ocean* in August 1879 provide some clues as to what had happened. According to the interview, Pullan's marital happiness was "short lived and soon serious troubles rose" between her and her husband. Whether or not her busy career, which had enabled her to support herself and her son decently, was at the root of the discord, she reached an impasse within three years of marriage. "At last, finding she could rid of him in no other way" – a divorce was likely to be both costly and futile and would have tarnished her reputation forever – "she, with her child, a fine boy, came to this country."⁶⁴ Making a radical but clean break with the past, Pullan boarded the American steamship the *North Star* in Southampton and arrived in New York on 19 December 1857.⁶⁵ Although she legally remained Mrs Metcalfe and continued to use the name in official documents, she effectively edited her second husband out of her daily life by assuming her first married name again, and managed to take a new start with her son by her side by introducing him as a Pullan as well. When she wrote to her publisher and friend John Maw Darton three years later, she had all but forgotten her "many troubles," but, she added, the "great and undeserved blessing of a loving good child makes me almost forget them."⁶⁶ Meanwhile, in London,

Pullan's husband was less successful at shaking off the past. Banns were published in August 1860 announcing his marriage to a young woman named Sophia Childs at Christ Church, Marylebone, but the wedding never took place. Someone had apparently raised a legal impediment to the proposed union, revealing that Thomas Smith Metcalfe, "bachelor," already had a wife by a former marriage.⁶⁷

Already well known to American readers through the numerous unauthorized reprints of her designs in *Graham's Illustrated Magazine*, *Arthur's*, *Peterson's* and *Godey's*, Pullan immediately secured a position as editor of the fancywork department of *Frank Leslie's New Family Magazine*. In March 1858, she addressed her new audience with the same vigour and determination with which she had spoken in the *Lady's Newspaper* some four years earlier. Again singing "Matilda M. Pullan," she declared herself prepared

to elucidate any difficulty [...] in the work-table directions, by personal instructions; and to facilitate the execution of every pattern by sending to any part of the States the necessary materials, carefully selected, and when desired with the work begun.⁶⁸

Pullan soon rose in the ranks of *Frank Leslie's* editorial staff from director of the work-table department to editor of its entire *Gazette of Fashion*. In addition to the familiar patterns for collars and cuffs, she offered descriptions of larger clothing items such as the latest Parisian promenade dresses, corsages, shawls and mantillas. Two years later, she added her first children's periodical, the *Boys' and Girls' Own Magazine*, to her long list of publication venues, followed by a brief stint in the *American Agriculturist* under the heading "Elementary Instructions in Plain and Fancy Work." For the *New York Leader* she started writing a weekly column entitled "The Ladies' Department. Dress, Art and Fashion" in which she instructed women on how to dress tastefully on a limited budget. Informative, entertaining and engaging without being polemical, her contributions alternated paragraphs

brimming with addresses of local milliners, mercers and haberdashers with amusing reports of the latest “Ribbon epidemic” sweeping the city or a dazzling “kaleidoscopic bonnet” spotted in church, often wandering into more critical observations about the dangers of extravagance, the plight of underpaid silk weavers, suitable pastimes for gentlewomen, marriage, household management and motherhood.⁶⁹ Pullan clearly found a renewed pleasure in writing, for she also started submitting fiction to the magazines. Two stories, “The Regent’s Son” and “The King’s Daughter,” appeared in the *Home Journal* and *Household Journal* respectively.

Moving to New York not only revitalized Pullan’s press career, it also gave her the time and energy needed to realize the long-cherished plan of writing a comprehensive lexicon of fancywork.⁷⁰ No longer “wearied [...] by the eternal turmoil of London life” with its “constant interruptions of ladies for consultations, and printers’ boys for copy” and freed from “other hindrances of a more entirely personal nature,”⁷¹ she compiled *The Lady’s Manual of Fancy-Work*, a bulky volume with over 300 engravings and eight coloured fold-out patterns that was published by Dick & Fitzgerald in 1859. While the book targeted all women in need of a “*catalogue raisonné*”⁷² of materials and techniques, it was marketed as a supplement to Pullan’s periodical output, written expressly for the subscribers of *Frank Leslie’s New Family Magazine*. Making up for the ephemerality and space constraints of periodical publication, the manual provided readers of her magazine instructions with a comprehensive reference work that, as she put it in the preface, effectively substituted “the vast space taken up in the magazines every month, by reiterations of instructions (always necessary for new subscribers), and references to former volumes, which perhaps the reader did not possess.”⁷³ “The work-table of Frank Leslie’s Magazine,” as a result, “[would] be

copious, clear, and concise, benefiting the reader by its simplicity, and also by its abridging the space for each description, giving scope for a greater variety of interesting matter.”⁷⁴

Meanwhile, with the help of a Miss Hatton, Pullan set up a new fancywork business located at 290 Fourth Street, opposite Washington Square.⁷⁵ Unlike her London establishment, it did not include a shop. Determined to teach American ladies the difference between “the beautiful Boar’s Head Cotton of Messrs. Walter Evans & Co., and the miserable yarn sold here commonly for Tidies,”⁷⁶ she instead offered her services in selecting fancywork materials and fabrics for them from the best New York establishments. One of her most illustrious patrons was the actress Laura Keene. Together with Ann S. Stephens – magazine editor, dime novelist and the author of *The Ladies’ Complete Guide to Crochet, Fancy Knitting and Needlework* (1854) – and the actress Mariana Foster, Pullan reportedly designed costumes for Keene, who after the opening of her own theatre in 1856 had rapidly become one of the most powerful and successful women on the New York stage and was widely known for her lavish style of dressing.⁷⁷

Pullan’s business received a whole new impetus from a recent invention that was taking the country by storm, the sewing machine. Just as she had singled out the Evans firm, she tirelessly praised the lock-stick sewing machine of Wheeler & Wilson of New York for its superior quality and durability of the stitching. Her name appeared on a list of endorsers “writing for” the company, including Ann S. Stephens, Mary Howitt, Sarah Jane Hale [sic] and Elizabeth Oakes Smith, a politician, a judge, a doctor and a long list of clergymen lending the advertising campaign an almost religious zeal. “And, if current reports be true,” the *Democrat* joked, “21,806 others ‘wrote for it’ the past year, and we doubt not [Wheeler & Wilson] would pay well for 50,000 more to ‘write for it’ the present year.”⁷⁸ Playfully alluding to the company’s use of celebrity branding to sell its products, the remark also suggests that

promoting particular brands was another way for needlework authors like Pullan to increase their incomes. Earlier, *Chamber's Edinburgh Journal* had aimed its satire directly at her in an article on the London "science of puffing" when it mocked "the immortal professoress of crochet and cross-stitch, who contracts L.150 a year to puff in 'The Family Fudge' the superexcellent knitting and boar's-head cotton of Messrs Steel and Goldseye."⁷⁹

If private circumstances shaped the contours of Pullan's professional life in London, they equally defined the course of her American career. About three years after her arrival, her health started to deteriorate. Pullan was suffering from cancer of the uterus, a disease commonly described in contemporary medical literature as "one of the most fatal and distressing maladies to which the female is liable," "irresistible in its progress" and "the least amenable to treatment" when not detected in its early stages.⁸⁰ A "Situation Wanted" advertisement by her servant in the *New York Herald* for 25 April 1861 explaining that Pullan was "breaking up house" is probably the earliest public sign of her progressing illness.⁸¹ Before the end of the year, she was too ill to continue working. If her professional activities generated sufficient income to meet her and her son's needs after their move to the US, they did not allow her to accumulate any substantial savings and she soon ran into financial difficulties. At this point, press colleagues came to her help. Miriam Squier, then married to a member of Frank Leslie's editorial staff, volunteered to do Pullan's work and give her the salary, "thus assuring her of the rest she needed, without the sacrifice of the income which supported her."⁸² For Squier, who in 1873 divorced her husband to become Mrs Frank Leslie, it was the beginning of a long and successful career. After Leslie's death in 1880, she became a magazine mogul in her own right, reorganizing his well-known but debt-ridden publishing house completely and turning it into a prospering business.

As “the career of the future empress of journalism”⁸³ started, another ended. In financial trouble and worried about the future of her ten-year-old son, Pullan knocked at the door of G. H. Houghton’s Church of the Transfiguration on East 29th Street, which later became popularly known as “The Little Church Around the Corner.” The visit must have left a deep impression on Houghton, for in 1893, when he celebrated forty-five years of rectorship with an anniversary sermon addressed to his congregation, his memory of her was still strong:

There was drawn to this CHURCH of the TRANSFIGURATION an English woman of rare intelligence and cleverness, whose life had been a life of sorrow and disappointment. [...] During a long illness, which poverty was making the more grievous, she was tenderly and abundantly cared for, and when she died she was buried by those with whom her lot in this country had largely been cast members of the Dramatic Profession and Writers for the press.⁸⁴

Pullan’s close connection with the New York theatrical scene is also evident from the will that she drew up on 11 December 1861, appointing Laura Keene and Mariana Foster joint executrices and listing her physician A. K. Gardner and the actor D. Wilmarth Waller as witnesses.⁸⁵ Her son was entrusted to the care of Keene and Foster. She also left them \$500 from a life insurance policy, a relatively modest sum probably accumulated through her magazine and other earnings, and all profits arising from her share in the copyright of *The Lady’s Manual of Fancy-Work* and exclusive copyrights of “The Regent’s Son” and “The King’s Daughter” “to be expended in what manner & at what time may seem best to them for the benefit of [her] son.”⁸⁶ On 19 February 1862, Pullan died in relative poverty aged 42 at 29 Bleecker Street, still married, but without a husband by her side.⁸⁷ She was buried after a funeral service led by Houghton at Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn.

Two weeks later, an obituary in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* listed her many achievements in “those arts which promote the comfort and luxuries of the home,” singling out as “her more profitable labors [...] the articles on ornamental needlework, which she contributed constantly for many years to the Journals and Magazines in London.”⁸⁸ Calling her an “amiable and accomplished lady,” it eulogized her “fine intellect” and “extensive knowledge of the world [...] – abandoned to her own guidance in early girlhood, dependent on her own resources ere that girlhood was passed, she evinced an amount of energy and perseverance rarely met in woman.” Pullan planned to continue writing and particularly hoped to develop further her recent interest in fiction, the obituary concluded, “but death has stilled the active brain, arrested the busy hand, and she who had bravely borne the labors and vicissitudes of life has met her early doom with the fortitude and resignation of a Christian.”

In London, meanwhile, the Mees had moved from Regent Street to even more fashionable premises in Brook Street. Living comfortably off their business, they could now afford not only to employ an assistant, a cook and two housemaids, but also to publish Cornelia Mee's fancywork manuals at their own expense.⁸⁹ When Mee died in 1875, her daughter Agnes carried on the business for another fifteen years. From 1857 onwards for almost forty years, Eliza Warren Francis earned a regular, if modest, income as editor of the *Ladies' Treasury*. Unlike Mee's, her financial situation remained precarious, forcing her to sell the copyrights to her domestic manuals to her publishers Houlston and Bemrose, who, as she remarked somewhat bitterly in her 1898 application to the Royal Literary Fund, “purchased” the books of her “as ordinary trademen [sic] would any peculiar goods.”⁹⁰ Frances Lambert's career ended abruptly even before Pullan's had started with an announcement in *Practical Hints on*

Decorative Needlework (1847) that the author had “entirely withdrawn from the active duties of the profession.”⁹¹ Shortly afterwards the *Era* speculated that Lambert had died.⁹² Riego continued to publish until her death in 1887, leaving the bulk of her personal estate of over £6,500 to the poor female workers in Ireland.⁹³ The Branchardière Fund would support women in the Irish lace and crochet industry for years to come. Pullan herself had arrived in the United States eager to explore the country with whose struggle for freedom and independence she so closely identified. The change in her voice was instant and dramatic. If a significant part of her London career had been about negotiating such subtle semantics as the difference between owning a fancy repository and running a shop, immigrating to the US enabled her to reinscribe her work in a confident, ambitious discourse of entrepreneurship and female self-empowerment that she would no doubt have cultivated further if not for her early death. “Nothing seemed more improbably,” she wrote of her “ardent wish to see America,” “but there is a popular French proverb, in the truth of which I have unbounded confidence: [...] ‘*Ce que femme veut, Dieu veut*’.”⁹⁴ To Pullan, the US embodied “the Paradise of women, respected.” Among its most revolutionary innovations she singled out the sewing machine as the “Liberator of our sex.” Its social significance, she predicted, would surpass that of the Atlantic Telegraph, “affecting the comfort of women in every class of society” and changing “beyond recognition” the lives of those wearied by “the drudgery [...] of plain needle-work.”⁹⁵

That the lives and careers of Pullan and her colleagues developed in such widely different directions serves as a poignant reminder that, in studying their professional histories and authorial identities, we are only halfway towards understanding not only the material forms in which their patterns survive today – bound in manuals, tucked in the columns of magazines – but also the dominant narrative of female gentility and

respectability in which they participated. Pullan, for one, had deeply personal reasons to capitalize on the market imperatives of the periodical press. To earn an income, she provided women on a regular basis with instructions for trimming their sleeves and daughters' frocks with fine embroidery, turning three skeins of black silk into a smoking cap for their husbands and adorning their living rooms with delicately netted curtains and antimacassars in Flanders lace. Yet while her patterns assumed the conventionally structured middle-class nuclear family as a norm, the fabric of her own life was dotted with the rips and darned patches of unconventional choices, circumstances and events. Out of this private dichotomy, Pullan forged a respectable public persona that allowed her, for her own as much as for her readers' sake, to explore the increasingly permeable boundaries between women's leisure and women's work. It is only when we look beyond the printed patterns, to the historical records and newspapers documenting the wider context of her life and career, that the challenges and complexities of such an undertaking become fully apparent.

¹ See for example Megan Ward, "'A Charm in Those Fingers': Patterns, Taste, and the Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine," *VPR* 41.3 (2008): 248-69 and Thad Logan, *The Victorian Parlour* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001), p. 166. At the 2010 RSVP conference at Yale University, Kathryn Ledbetter made a similar argument in her paper "Patterns and Propriety: Needlework in Victorian Women's Periodicals."

² *The Lady's Library* was not Pullan's first foray into authorship. A novel, *The Court Partial of 18—: A Tale of Military Life*, was published in two anonymous volumes in 1844. For other publications outside the field of fancywork instruction, see S. Austin Allibone, *A Critical Dictionary of English Literature and British and American Authors*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1882), p. 1703.

³ For a comprehensive discussion and bibliography of fancywork manuals see Esther Potter, "English Knitting and Crochet Books of the Nineteenth Century," *Library* 10.1 (1955): 25-40 and 10.2 (1955): 103-119.

⁴ *Morning Chronicle*, 10 September 1850.

⁵ Matilda Marian Pullan, *Maternal Counsels to a Daughter* (London: Darton, 1855), p. 306.

⁶ Jeffrey A. Auerbach, "What They Read: Mid-Nineteenth Century English Women's Magazines and the Emergence of a Consumer Culture," *VPR* 30.2 (1997): 121.

⁷ *Lady's Newspaper*, 10 June 1854, p. 361.

⁸ *The Work Table. A Supplement to The Lady's Newspaper and Pictorial Times* first appeared in December 1855.

⁹ *Lady's Newspaper*, 15 July 1854, p. 24; 12 August 1854, p. 88; 7 July 1855, p. 8.

¹⁰ *Lady's Newspaper*, 13 September 1855, p. 168.

¹¹ "List of Exhibitors in the Crystal Palace," *Daily News*, 21 April 1851; *Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue of the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, 1851*, vol. 2 (London: Spicer Brothers, 1851), p. 560.

¹² "Needlework in the Great Exhibition," *Illustrated Exhibitor* 15 (13 September 1851): p. 275.

¹³ *New Monthly Belle Assemblée*, January 1851, p. 58.

¹⁴ *Ladies' Companion*, May 1851, p. 168-69; *Home Circle*, 19 July 1851, p. 44.

¹⁵ *Morning Chronicle*, 10 September 1850.

¹⁶ *Morning Post*, 27 October 1851; *Lady's Newspaper*, 10 May 1851, p. 266.

¹⁷ *Lady's Newspaper*, 4 February 1854, p. 79.

¹⁸ *Lady's Newspaper*, 11 March 1854, p. 174.

¹⁹ *Lady's Newspaper*, 10 June 1854, p. 360; *Ladies' Cabinet*, January 1853, p. 39.

²⁰ *Ladies' Cabinet*, 1 January 1853, p. 39.

²¹ *Lady's Newspaper*, 1 December 1855, p. 338; *Family Friend* 8.94 [1853]: p. 318.

²² *Governess*, [1855], p. 172.

²³ Matilda Marian Pullan, *The Lady's Manual of Fancy-Work* (New York: Dick & Fitzgerald, 1859), p. xvi.

²⁴ Pullan was born at Prospect House, the residence of her grandfather Alexander Chesney, in the seaside village of Annalong, Ireland. See Allibone, p. 1703.

²⁵ Pullan, *Maternal Counsels*, p. 291.

²⁶ *ODNB* entries for Charles Cornwallis Chesney and Sir George Tomkyns Chesney; Pullan, *Maternal Counsels*, n. p.

²⁷ Pullan, *Maternal Counsels*, p. 226.

²⁸ *ODNB* entry for Sir George Tomkyns Chesney; 1841 census records for Sophia Chesney (HO107/255/15 f. 8 p. 11) and Matilda Chesney (HO107/1275/4 f. 38 p. 19), *Census Returns of England and Wales* (Kew, Surrey, England: The National Archives of the UK (TNA), Public Record Office).

²⁹ Cress. [Alice Hobbins], "That 'Little Church', Which is Familiarly Known All over the Country as 'The Little Church Round the Corner'," *Inter Ocean*, 30 August 1879, p. 5.

³⁰ The *Asiatic Journal* lists a Miss Chesney departing for Madras in its October 1834 issue (p. 134) and returning to England in May 1838 (p. 57). A contribution by Pullan to the *New York Leader* for 16 June 1860 contains an amusing anecdote about her attendance, at the age of sixteen, of a military parade near Madras, during which her horse joined a troop of horse artillery, "going through the manœuvres with the precision of a soldier" with her, "a little Amazonian figure in blue habit and gold-laced cap" (p. 3), on its back.

³¹ Cress., p. 5. Following Houghton's advice, she wrote a letter to her mother "asking for a reconciliation, and a few days before she died she received a kind answer, which seemed greatly to comfort her."

³² *ODNB* entry for Sir George Tomkyns Chesney; marriage of Matilda Mary Anne Chesney and Samuel Pullan, *Saint Mary At Lambeth, Register of Marriages, London Metropolitan Archives*, P85/MRY1, item 419.

³³ The marriage certificate lists two local witnesses.

³⁴ Certificate of Registration of Birth for Samuel Charles Chesney Pullan, General Register Office, BXCE 673924; Certificate of Registration of Death for Samuel Charles Chesney Pullan, General Register Office, DYC 824652.

³⁵ Matilda M. Pullan is listed as a widow in the 1851 census. I have not been able to determine Samuel Pullan's date of death.

³⁶ 1851 census record for Matilda M. Pullan (HO107/1493 f. 40 p. 42).

³⁷ 1851 census records for Frances, Maria and Christina Rossetti (HO107/1493 f. 130 p. 13).

³⁸ Review of *The Hand-Book of Needlework*. By Miss Lambert, *Art-Union*, June 1842, p. 143.

³⁹ Jane Sowerby, *Victorian Lace Today* (Sioux Falls: XRX Books, 2006), p. 40.

⁴⁰ Miss Lambert, *The Hand-Book of Needlework* (London: John Murray, 1846), p. vii. Who "F. S." was has never been established, but the England and Wales Marriage Index offers a good candidate. The marriage between Frances Lambert and David Dewing Stribling (a tailor living off Guilford Street) on 30 July 1843 is the only one in

London for the period 1840-45 between a woman by the name of Frances Lambert and a man whose surname starts with the letter S.

⁴¹ *Art-Union*, June 1842, p. 143.

⁴² Mrs Rivers Turnbull, "Introduction," *The Selected Works of Mdlle. Riego* (London: Horace Cox, 1904), p. 2, 5-6.

⁴³ See Jolein De Ridder and Marianne Van Remoortel, "Not 'Simply Mrs Warren': Eliza Warren Francis (1810-1900) and the *Ladies' Treasury*," *VPR* 44.4 (2011): 307-26.

⁴⁴ *Family Friend* 9.105 (n.d.), p. 196.

⁴⁵ *Family Treasury*, December 1853, wrapper; "To Correspondents," *Lady's Companion*, June 1852, p. 336.

⁴⁶ *Lady's Newspaper*, 10 June 1854, p. 360.

⁴⁷ *Ladies' Cabinet*, January 1853, p. 39; *Lady's Newspaper*, 22 January 1853, p. 59.

⁴⁸ *Lady's Newspaper*, 10 June 1854, p. 361.

⁴⁹ Pullan, *Maternal Counsels*, p. 306.

⁵⁰ Pullan, *Maternal Counsels*, pp. 305, 306.

⁵¹ "Institution and Training-School," *Lady's Newspaper*, 23 September 1854, p. 188.

⁵² S. S., "Women's Work. Designing Patterns," *Once A Week*, 26 January 1861, p. 124.

⁵³ Pullan, *Maternal Counsels*, p. 310.

⁵⁴ Alison Kay, *The Foundations of Female Entrepreneurship. Enterprise, Home and Household in London, c.1800-1870* (London: Routledge, 2009), p. 16.

⁵⁵ Pullan, *Maternal Counsels*, pp. 304-05.

⁵⁶ Certificate of Registration of Birth for Henry Hall Rawdon Chesney, General Register Office, BXCE 689939.

⁵⁷ 1851 census record for Matilda M. Pullan.

⁵⁸ *Morning Post*, 27 July 1852; record of baptism for Henry Hall Rawdon Chesney, *Christ Church, Albany Street, Register of Baptisms*, London Metropolitan Archives, P90/CTC2, item 002. Again, the name of the father is not provided.

⁵⁹ Marriage of Matilda Marian Pullan and Thomas Smith Metcalfe, Saint Matthew, Saint Marylebone, Register of Marriages, London Metropolitan Archives, P89/MTW, item 007.

⁶⁰ Marriage certificate; 1851 census record for Thomas S. Metcalfe (H107/1490 f. 67 p. 42).

⁶¹ *Lady's Newspaper*, 29 December 1855, p. 402.

⁶² The *Home Circle* ceased publication in 1854, the *Governess* in 1856. By 1858, the *London and Paris Ladies' Magazine of Fashion* no longer identified Pullan as the editor.

⁶³ *Ladies' Companion*, October 1863, p. 223.

⁶⁴ *Cress.*, p. 5.

⁶⁵ Passenger list for the *North Star*, arrival 19 December 1857, New York, *Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New York, 1820-1897*, Records of the U.S. Customs Service, Record Group 36; National Archives, Washington, D.C., microfilm roll M237_181, line 55, list number 1427. Pullan appears on the passenger list as "Matilda Metcalf," travelling in second cabin. Her son must have travelled on another ship, since the list makes no mention of him.

⁶⁶ Letter signed M. M. Pullan to Mr [John Maw] Darton, New York, 11 December [1860] (property of the author).

⁶⁷ Banns of marriage for Thomas Smith Metcalfe and Sophia Childs, 26 August 1860, Christ Church, Saint Marylebone, London Metropolitan Archives, Register of Banns of Marriage, P89/CTC, item 094. No corresponding marriage certificate exists.

⁶⁸ *Frank Leslie's New Family Magazine*, March 1858, p. 281.

⁶⁹ See for example *New York Leader*, 16 July 1859, p. 1; 27 August 1859, p. 3; 21 January 1860, p. 3; 4 February 1860, p. 3.

⁷⁰ An earlier attempt had foundered in a dispute with the publisher Ward and Lock. *The Lady's Dictionary of Needlework*, only 64 pages long, was published without Pullan's approval in 1856.

⁷¹ Pullan, *Manual of Fancy-Work*, p. xi-xii.

⁷² Pullan, *Manual of Fancy-Work*, p. x.

⁷³ Pullan, *Manual of Fancy-Work*, p. xi.

⁷⁴ Pullan, *Manual of Fancy-Work*, p. xvi.

⁷⁵ *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, 13 February 1858, p. 175. Hatton, whose initials are given elsewhere as "C. H.," was probably Caroline Hatton, a single woman in her early thirties who travelled to the US on the same ship as Pullan and whose name appears on the passenger list immediately following hers.

⁷⁶ Pullan, *Lady's Manual of Fancy-Work*, p. xv.

⁷⁷ "Stage Dressing," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, 16 October 1872.

⁷⁸ Qtd. in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, 21 April 1860, p. 332.

⁷⁹ "Puff and Push," *Chamber's Edinburgh Journal*, 24 April 1852, p. 259.

⁸⁰ Death record for Maria [sic] Pullan, NYC Municipal Archives, Department of Records. "Cancer of the uterus" is given as the cause of death. John M. Scudder, *A Practical Treatise on the Diseases of Women* (Cincinnati: Moore, Wiltach, Keys & Co., 1857), p. 249.

⁸¹ *New York Herald*, 25 April 1861, p. 6.

⁸² Lew Wallace et al., *Living Leaders of the World* (Atlanta: Hudgins, 1889), pp. 200-201. Wallace does not identify the woman whose job Squier took over, but all evidence points to Pullan.

⁸³ "Frank Leslie," *Living Leaders of the World*, ed. Lew Wallace et al. (Chicago: Hubbard Bros., 1889), pp. 200-01.

⁸⁴ Rpt. in George MacAdam, *The Little Church Around the Corner* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1925), p. 114.

⁸⁵ A copy labeled "Mrs Pullan's will" and signed Matilda Metcalfe is kept in the Laura Keene papers at the Library of Congress, MMC-0870.

⁸⁶ Bills and receipts in the Laura Keene papers suggest that the money was used to pay for the boy's schooling. Kept with the copy of the will is a list of possessions held in trust by Keene until they were collected by him in 1876. The acknowledgement of receipt is signed "Henry Rawdon Pullan." The items on the list include a pair of sleeve buttons, a watch and two medals, a wedding ring and marriage certificate, a workbox, letters, photographs, and some fifty books, most of them religious and educational works for children.

⁸⁷ Death record for Maria [sic] Pullan.

⁸⁸ *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, 8 March 1862, p. 247.

⁸⁹ 1861 census record for Charles Mee and family (RG9/40 f. 42 p. 14).

⁹⁰ Eliza Warren Francis to the Secretary of the Literary Fund, Oct. 1898, British Library, Loan 96 RLF 1/2525/3.

⁹¹ Miss Lambert, *Practical Hints on Decorative Needlework* (London: John Murray, 1848), p. iv.

⁹² *Era* (23 September 1849), n. p. Frances Stribling died aged 40 on 8 January 1849 (Certificate of Registration of Death for Frances Stribling, General Register Office, DYD 204088).

⁹³ Will of Eleonore Riego de la Branchardière, proved on 31 January 1888, Principle Registry, London.

⁹⁴ Pullan, *Manual of Fancy-Work*, pp. ix.

⁹⁵ Pullan, *Manual of Fancy-Work*, pp. ix, xiv, xv.