Collection Summary
Title: Charlotte Cushman Papers
Span Dates: 1823-1941
Bulk Dates: (bulk 1861-1875)
ID No.: MSS17525
Creator: Cushman, Charlotte, 1816-1876
Extent: 10,000 items ; 21 containers plus 1 oversize ; 5.5 linear feet ; 1 microfilm reel
Language: Collection material in English
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
Summary: Actress. Correspondence; biographical and genealogical material; annotated scripts and texts of plays, poetry, and readings; newspaper clippings; reviews; and souvenir programs relating chiefly to Cushman's career in the theater.

Selected Search Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

People
Bellows, Henry W. (Henry Whitney), 1814-1882--Correspondence.
Bigelow, John, 1817-1911--Correspondence.
Booth, Edwin, 1833-1893--Correspondence.
Browning, Elizabeth Barrett, 1806-1861--Correspondence.
Carlyle, Jane Welsh, 1801-1866--Correspondence.
Chorley, Henry Fothergill, 1808-1872--Correspondence.
Crow, Wayman, 1808-1885--Correspondence.
Cushman, Charles Augustus, 1818-1896--Correspondence.
Cushman, Charlotte, 1816-1876.
Cushman, Edwin Charles, 1838- --Correspondence.
Cushman, Emma Crow, 1840?- --Correspondence.
Cushman, Mary Eliza, 1793-1866--Correspondence.
Fields, James Thomas, 1817-1881--Correspondence.
Higginson, Thomas Wentworth, 1823-1911--Correspondence.
Howe, Julia Ward, 1819-1910--Correspondence.
Jackson, Helen Hunt, 1830-1885--Correspondence.
Jewsbury, Geraldine Endor, 1812-1880--Correspondence.
Kemble, Fanny, 1809-1893--Correspondence.
King, Rufus, 1814-1876--Correspondence.
Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865--Assassination.
Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth, 1807-1882--Correspondence.
Macready, William Charles, 1793-1873--Correspondence.
Nilsson, Christine, 1843-1921--Correspondence.
Payne, John Howard, 1791-1852--Correspondence.
Seward, Anna Wharton--Correspondence.
Seward, William Henry, 1801-1872--Correspondence.
Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616--Dramatic production.
Sherman, William T. (William Tecumseh), 1820-1891--Correspondence.
Stebbins, Emma, 1815-1882--Correspondence.
Trollope, Thomas Adolphus, 1810-1892--Correspondence.
Van Buren, Martin, 1782-1862--Correspondence.
Wallack, Lester, 1820-1888--Correspondence.
Whittier, John Greenleaf, 1807-1892--Correspondence.

Organizations
United States Sanitary Commission.
Subjects
Acting.
Americans--Italy--Rome--History--19th century.
Benefit performances--United States--19th century.
Drama.
Theater--United States--History--19th century.

Places
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Foreign public opinion.

Occupations
Actresses.

Administrative Information

Provenance
The papers of Charlotte Cushman, actress, were given to the Library of Congress by Victor N. and Louise Cushman in 1925 and 1927. Additional material was given by Charles V. B. Cushman and others via Lyman Beecher Stowe from 1949 to 1955 and by Ethel B. Clark in 1947. Other items were purchased by the Library from 1957 to 1990.

Processing History
The papers of Charlotte Cushman were arranged and described in 1978. The collection was expanded and revised in 1997, and additions and revisions to the finding aid were made in 2008.

Transfers
Some photographs have been transferred to the Prints and Photographs Division where they are identified as part of the Charlotte Cushman Papers.

Related Material
The papers of Jennie Lorenz in the Manuscript Division contain correspondence, notes, copies of correspondence and portraits, a thesis, and printed matter from her research on Cushman's life and career. Additional material pertaining to Cushman, including portraits, photographs, drawings of her in costume, and copies of her most important acting scripts, are located in the Folger Shakespeare Library. Many of her letters were included in the biography, Charlotte Cushman: Her letters and Memoirs of Her Life (1878), written by her friend, the sculptor, Emma Stebbins. A later biography by Joseph Leach, Bright Particular Star: The Life and Times of Charlotte Cushman (1971), was based in part on Cushman's papers at the Library.

Copyright Status
The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Charlotte Cushman is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions
The papers of Charlotte Cushman are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Microfilm
A microfilm edition of a Hamlet prompt book is available on one reel from the Library's Photoduplication Service for purchase subject to the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.). The microfilm consists of a negative copy and is housed in the Photoduplication Service.
**Preferred Citation**
Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Charlotte Cushman Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

**Biographical Note**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1816, July 23</td>
<td>Born, Boston, Mass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>Operatic debut as Countess Almaviva in <em>The Marriage of Figaro</em>, Tremont Theatre, Boston, Mass. Strained voice during performance at the St. Charles Theatre, New Orleans, La.; turned to acting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1836</td>
<td>First performance as Lady Macbeth in a benefit production of <em>Macbeth</em>, New Orleans, La. Debut, Bowery Theatre, New York, N.Y., as Lady Macbeth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1837</td>
<td>First appeared as Meg Merrilies in <em>Guy Mannering</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842-1844</td>
<td>Stage manager, Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, Pa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1844</td>
<td>Toured with William Charles Macready Went to England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>Debut in London, England, as Bianca in <em>Fazio</em> at the Princess Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1849-1852</td>
<td>Toured in America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>Announced retirement and moved to England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>Returned to America to appear as Cardinal Wolsey in <em>Henry VIII</em>, Burton's Theatre, New York, N.Y.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1858-1870</td>
<td>Lived in semi-retirement, Rome, Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>Performed in New Haven, Conn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>Gave series of performances on behalf of the United States Sanitary Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>Farewell performance at Booth's Theater, New York, N.Y.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>Farewell performance in Boston, Mass. Last appearance on stage, Easton, Pa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876, Feb. 18</td>
<td>Died, Boston, Mass.</td>
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</table>

**Scope and Content Note**

The papers of Charlotte Saunders Cushman (1816-1876) span the years 1823-1941, with the bulk of material dating from 1861 to 1875, the period of her greatest acclaim. The papers document her acting career through correspondence; biographical notes, including recollections dictated by Cushman in 1875; annotated scripts of plays, poetry, and other texts used for performances; a comprehensive collection of newspaper clippings; and programs from her theatrical performances.
and readings. They are arranged into seven series: Bound Correspondence, Unbound Correspondence, Playscripts, Readings, Newspaper Clippings, Miscellany, and Oversize. A letter and fragment of a letter added to the collection in 1997 are contained in an Addition.

The correspondence, bound and unbound, includes a large number of letters which reveal the close relationships among various members of Cushman's family. The letters touch on all facets of their lives and reflect Cushman's role as "head" of the family. Most of the correspondence is between Cushman and her older brother, Charles Augustus; her mother, Mary Eliza; and Edwin C., a nephew whom she adopted. A letter from Charles, written after Cushman's death, contains a biographical sketch of her career based on his memory and diaries. A few letters to and from Cushman's sister, Susan, and aunt, Charlotte Saunders, are also found in the papers.

Charlotte Cushman surrounded herself with people who shared her artistic interests. Although much of her correspondence with friends and acquaintances is filled with news of events and personalities in the theatrical and literary world, it also provides a record of the difficulties which Cushman encountered in establishing and maintaining a career as an actress. A number of letters concern financial investments; others are from admirers and people seeking financial assistance or advice on pursuing careers on the stage.

Cushman returned to Rome following a tour for the benefit of the United States Sanitary Commission at the end of the 1863. She was deeply interested in the Civil War, and her papers contain a letter from Rufus King, United States minister in Rome, written on 27 April 1865 sending her a copy of a dispatch containing news of Lincoln's assassination; the attempted assassination of her friend and confidant, William H. Seward; the death of Seward's son, Frederick; and the general sense of horror which prevailed in the United States in the aftermath of these events. Upon receiving the news of the assassination, Americans living in Rome met to decide on a course of action. The record of their meeting and the resolutions which they adopted are included in the collection under the title "The Americans in Rome" signed by Edward S. Lacy. Sallie Mercer's telegram of 29 June 1863 to William Henry Seward inquiring "The Rebels are expected here, What shall Sallie do?" is also found in the papers. The telegram had amused Seward so much that he showed it to Lincoln.

The playscripts in the collection contain Cushman's best-known roles, including Lady Macbeth, Hamlet, Cardinal Wolsey, and Queen Katherine, and her most popular role, Meg Merrilies, from Walter Scott's Guy Mannering. In addition there are holograph copies of The Actress of Padua, Hope of the Family, and a Lesson of the Heart. Some of the plays are annotated to show stage directions, and prompt books are included for The Actress of Padua.

Newspaper clippings in the collection provide a record of the public's reaction to her performances. There are numerous articles tracing her life and genealogical background. Reviews chronicle her career almost performance by performance. In a letter of 2 March 1845 to her mother, she mentions she had collected a "lot of newspapers which could tell you in much better language . . . of my brilliant and triumphant success in London."


Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in eight series:

- Bound Correspondence, 1824-1876
- Unbound Correspondence, 1828-1941
- Playscripts, 1823-1871
- Readings, 1874-1890
- Newspaper Clippings, 1846-1939
- Miscellany, 1848-1905
- Addition, 1852
- Oversize, 1823-1871
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Series</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1-15</td>
<td><strong>Bound Correspondence, 1824-1876</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Letters to and from Cushman, biographical data,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>readings, and theater programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Letters from Cushman are arranged chronologically in volumes 1-8. Letters to her are arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent in volumes 9-14. Biographical data, readings, and theater programs are mounted in volume 15.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 16</td>
<td><strong>Unbound Correspondence, 1828-1941</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Letters to and from Cushman and members of her family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arranged chronologically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 17</td>
<td><strong>Playscripts, 1823-1871</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Playscripts and prompt books.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arranged alphabetically by title.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 18</td>
<td><strong>Readings, 1874-1890</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poetry and other texts used for performances. Arranged alphabetically by title.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A list of titles is appended to the register.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 19-20</td>
<td><strong>Newspaper Clippings, 1846-1939</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clippings, some annotated, covering most of Cushman's career.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arranged alphabetically by subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 20-21</td>
<td><strong>Miscellany, 1848-1905</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poems, notebooks, theater programs, sheet music, writings, and memorabilia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arranged alphabetically by type of material.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 21</td>
<td><strong>Addition, 1852</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Letter and fragment of a letter from Cushman, added to the papers in 1997.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arranged chronologically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX OV 1</td>
<td><strong>Oversize, 1823-1871</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oversize material consisting of a theater playbill, playscript, and prompt book.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Described according to the series, containers, and folders from which the items were removed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Container List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1-15</td>
<td><strong>Bound Correspondence, 1824-1876</strong>  &lt;br&gt;Letters to and from Cushman, biographical data, readings, and theater programs.  &lt;br&gt;Letters from Cushman are arranged chronologically in volumes 1-8. Letters to her are arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent in volumes 9-14. Biographical data, readings, and theater programs are mounted in volume 15.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1</td>
<td>Letters from Cushman  &lt;br&gt;<code>1832, Oct. 2-1861, 24 Dec., preceded by genealogical material</code></td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 2</td>
<td><code>1862, Jan. 3-1864, Dec. 30</code></td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 3</td>
<td><code>1865, Jan.5-1868, Oct. 4</code></td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 4</td>
<td><code>1868, Oct. 9-1870, Nov. 28</code></td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 5</td>
<td><code>1870, Nov. 29-1872, June 7</code></td>
</tr>
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<td>BOX 6</td>
<td><code>1872, June 28-1874, Dec. 29</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 7</td>
<td><code>1875, Jan.4-1876, Feb. 13</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 8</td>
<td>Undated letters and writings by Cushman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 9</td>
<td>Letters to Cushman  &lt;br&gt;BOX 9:  &lt;br&gt;<code>A-Cha</code>  &lt;br&gt;BOX 10:  &lt;br&gt;<code>Che-Cushman</code>  &lt;br&gt;BOX 11:  &lt;br&gt;<code>D-J</code>  &lt;br&gt;BOX 12:  &lt;br&gt;<code>K-R</code>  &lt;br&gt;BOX 13:  &lt;br&gt;<code>S</code>  &lt;br&gt;BOX 14:  &lt;br&gt;<code>T-V</code>  &lt;br&gt;BOX 15:  &lt;br&gt;Biographical data, readings, and theater programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 16</td>
<td><strong>Unbound Correspondence, 1828-1941</strong>  &lt;br&gt;Letters to and from Cushman and members of her family.  &lt;br&gt;Arranged chronologically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 16</td>
<td>1828-1941, undated  &lt;br&gt;(21 folders)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 17</td>
<td><strong>Playscripts, 1823-1871</strong>  &lt;br&gt;Playscripts and prompt books.  &lt;br&gt;Arranged alphabetically by title.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 17</td>
<td><em>The Actress of Padua</em>  &lt;br&gt;(4 folders)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 17</td>
<td><em>Guy Mannering</em> <a href="#">See Oversize</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 17</td>
<td><em>Hamlet</em>  &lt;br&gt;Available on microfilm (negative copy only). Shelf no. 16,717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 17</td>
<td><em>Henry VIII</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 17</td>
<td><em>Hope of the Family and Julius Caesar</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 17</td>
<td><em>A Lesson of the Heart, or Aged Forty</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Macbeth

Mary Queen of Scots

A Midsummer Night’s Dream and Much Ado About Nothing

Readings, 1874-1890

Poetry and other texts used for performances. Arranged alphabetically by title.
A list of titles is appended to the register.

A-Y See appendix for list of readings

(9 folders)

Newspaper Clippings, 1846-1939

Clippings, some annotated, covering most of Cushman's career.
Arranged alphabetically by subject.

Arcadian Club, New York, N.Y., 1874
Background and genealogy, 1859-1922, undated
Charity, 1874, undated
Charlotte Cushman clubs, Boston, Mass., and Philadelphia, Pa., undated
Charlotte Cushman School, Boston, Mass., undated
Colleagues, 1872-1875, undated
Crow, Wayman, 1878-1885, undated
Family members, undated
Final appearance tour, 1874-1875, undated
Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C., Cushman holdings, 1936
Jackson, Helen Hunt (Saxe Holm), 1874, undated
Kindergarten Association, Boston, Mass., undated
Miscellaneous articles regarding Cushman, 1858-1937, undated
Miscellaneous topics, 1875-1923, undated
Notices, 1871-1872, undated
Obituaries, 1876
(2 folders)
Poetry, 1872-1939, undated
Published photographs, drawings, and caricatures of Cushman, 1915, undated
Reviews
Duchess Eleanour, undated
General, 1849-1874, undated
Guy Mannering, 1849-1873
Henry VIII
As Cardinal Wolsey, undated
As Queen Katherine, 1871-1872, undated
Macbeth, 1872-1873, undated
Miscellaneous roles from other Shakespearean plays, 1861, undated
Readings, 1872-1874, undated
Scrapbook, 1846-1885, undated
## Theosophy, undated

### Miscellany, 1848-1905
Poems, notebooks, theater programs, sheet music, writings, and memorabilia. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.

### Memorabilia, 1874, undated

### Mounted playbill, Washington Theater, Washington, D.C., 1861 *See Oversize*

### Notebooks containing notes, addresses, lists, and poetry, 1855-1905

### Printed matter, 1848-1893, undated

### Programs, 1872-1881, undated

### Sheet music for *Henry VIII*, undated

### Writings

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### Addition, 1852
Letter and fragment of a letter from Cushman, added to the papers in 1997. Arranged chronologically.

### Oversize, 1823-1871
Oversize material consisting of a theater playbill, playscript, and prompt book. Described according to the series, containers, and folders from which the items were removed.

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### Playscripts

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### Miscellany

### Mounted playbill, Washington Theater, Washington, D.C., 1861 (Container 21)

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### Appendix: List of Readings in Container 18

- "Address to the Deity"
- "After Blenheim"
- "The Annuity"
- "At the Grindstone"
- "Auld Robin Gray"
- "Avenging Childe"
- "The Battle of Ivory"
- "The Battle of Naseby"
- "The Bells of Shandon"
- "Betsy and I Are Out"
- "Betsy Destroys the Paper"
- "Births, Mrs. Meek, of a Son"
• "The Black Regiment"
• "The Baptesement O' the Bairm"
• "Barrioboola Ghu"
• "Brothers, and a Sermon"
• "The Burial of Sir John Moore"
• "The Charge of the Light Brigade"
• "Claribel's Prayer"
• "Count Gismond"
• "The Cry of the Children"
• "Dara"
• "Deacon Jones's Experience"
• "The Death of th' Owd Squire"
• "De Profundis"
• "Desire"
• "Epistle to a Young Friend"
• "The Execution of Montrose"
• "Father Malloy"
• "The Flight of the Goddess"
• "The Forging of the Anchor"
• "Fridolin"
• "From the Dodge Club"
• "A Funeral March"
• "A Glance Behind the Curtain"
• "God"
• "The Grandmother"
• "The Gridiron"
• "Halbert of Lyne"
• "He Giveth His Beloved Sleep"
• "Herve Riel"
• "Horatius"
• "How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix"
• "Ipse Dixit"
• "James Melville's Child"
• "John and Tribbie's Dispute"
• "John Gilpin"
• "Kentucky Belle"
• "Lady Clara Vere de Vere"
• "Lady Clare"
• "Lady of Shalott"
• "Last Prayer of Mary Queen of Scots"
• "Lochinvar"
• "Locksley Hall"
• "The Lost, Found"
• "Love"
• "The Man Who Hath Not Music in Himself"
• "Mansie Wauch's First and Last Play"
• "Mary Maloney's Philosophy"
• "Massachusetts to Virginia"
• "Molly Carew"
• "The New Church Organ"
• "Nicodemus at Night"
• "The Northern Farmer"
• "Old and Blind"
• "Old Daniel Gray"
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;The Old Man's Dreams&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;The Parable of the Lost Sheep&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Poor Little Jim&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;The Pretty Girl of Loch Dan&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>&quot;Ring Out, Wild Bells&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>&quot;Roman Pilgrims&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>&quot;Romance of the Swan's Nest&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;The Sailor's Wife&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;The Secret of a Happy Day&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>&quot;Sir Galahad&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Sister Helen&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;The Sister of Charity&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>&quot;A Song for the Ragged Schools of London&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Virginia&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;The Warden of the Cinque-Ports&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;The Whitby Fishing Smak&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Will the New Year Come Tonight?&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Willy Gilliland&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;The Witch's Daughter&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;The Woman of Three Cows&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>&quot;The Young Gray Head&quot;</td>
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