

Stethoscopes and Petticoats

The Changing Roles of Non-Conformist Women

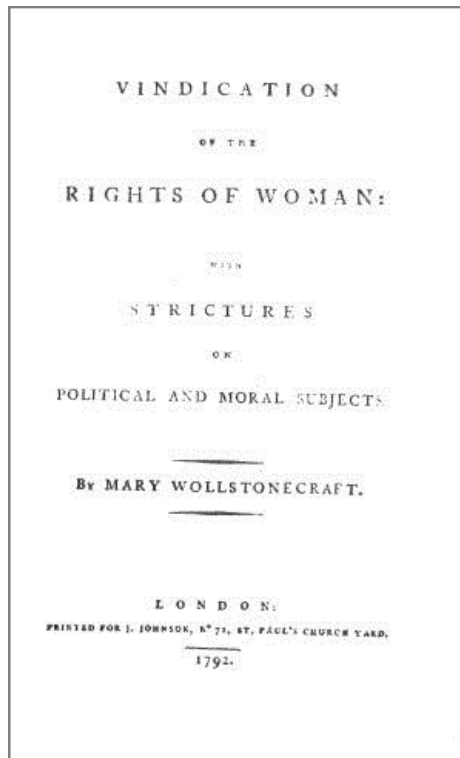


The Angus Library and Archive

Regent's Park College, Pusey St, Oxford, OX1 2LB



The role of women within the history of the British non-conformist movement has traditionally been subsumed under the history of men. *Stethoscopes and Petticoats*, presented by The Angus Library and Archive, addresses this imbalance, and highlights the significant contribution of non-conformist women to the changing landscape of social inequality both at home and abroad. A strong desire to live out their religious beliefs connected to freedom and equality stirred these women to action, despite continuous opposition to women's involvement outside of the expectations of their gender. Non-conformist women achieved success in the male-dominated fields of literature, social and political activism, mission work, and medicine, paving the way for future generations of pioneer women.



1. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects*

Mary Wollstonecraft

1st Edition, 1792: London

A Vindication... is considered to be one of the foundation texts of feminist thought. Wollstonecraft insisted that intellect will always govern, encouraging women:

to endeavour to acquire strength, both of mind and body, and to convince them that the soft phrases, susceptibility of heart, delicacy of sentiment, and refinement of taste, are almost synonymous with epithets of weakness.

2. *Sermons to Young Women*, in two volumes

James Fordyce

12th Edition, 1800: London

First published in 1765, *Sermons to Young Women*, written and compiled the Scottish clergyman James Fordyce, belonged to a genre of etiquette manual for young women, which was popular among the middle- and upper-classes of the Regency Period. Such manuals held that woman was made for man's service. The following excerpt from Fordyce's *Sermons* reveals the double standard promulgated by these prescriptive texts:

In your sex manly exercises are never graceful a tone and figure of the masculine kind are always forbidding men of sensibility desire in every woman soft features a form not robust and demeanor delicate and gentle. Nature appears to have formed the faculties of your sex, for the most part, with less vigour than those of ours, observing the same distinction here as in the more delicate frames of your bodies

3. *An Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World. By one of the laity.*

Hannah More (1745-1833)

2nd edition, 1791: London

Hannah More was an English educationalist, political propagandist, and Evangelical activist. More's *An Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World*, addressed particularly to the women of the upper classes, criticised aristocratic manners and called for the rescue of religion and morality. Although religiously and politically conservative, More shunned the notion that women were weak beings, as expressed in Fordyce's *Sermons*. Instead she argued for a female world view in which women could exercise extraordinary social and moral influence, as well as an independence of men, through reliance on God.



4. *Sins of government, Sins of the Nation; or, a discourse for the fast, appointed on April 19, 1793*
Published by Anna Lactitia Barbauld (1743-1825)
as 'a volunteer'
1793, 4th Edition: London

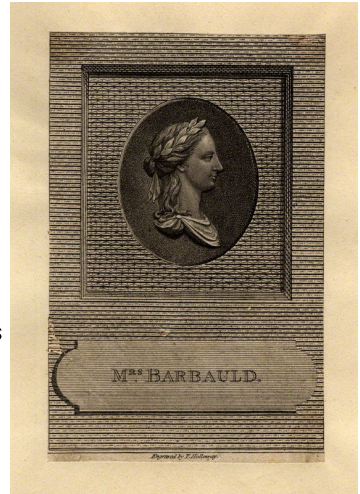
Sins of Government, Sins of the Nation is considered to be a classic consideration of the idea of an 'unjust war'. Barbauld argues against the British government's entry into war with the French Republic. When the government called on the nation to fast in honour of the war, Barbauld and other anti-war Dissenters were left with a moral quandary:

obey the order and violate their consciences by praying for success in a war they disapproved? observe the Fast, but preach against the war? defy the Proclamation and refuse to take any part in the Fast?

Barbauld determines that each individual is responsible for the actions of the nation because he or she constitutes part of the nation.

5. *Poems on Subjects Chiefly Devotional*, in two volumes, to which is added, a third volume, compiling of miscellaneous pieces
Published by Anne Steele under the pseudonym 'Theodosia'
1780, New revised edition: Bristol

Anne Steele, an English hymn-writer and poetess, published her first collection of works in 1760 under the pseudonym 'Theodosia'; presented here is a revised edition of that work published posthumously twenty years later. The flyleaf of this book is inscribed 'Martha Steele,' having belonged to Anne's niece. Anne belonged to the 'Golden Age of Hymnody' in the early 18th century, a period coinciding with the rise of evangelicalism, during which there was a flourish of hymn-writing efforts among the non-conformist community in England. Many of the hymns written at this time influenced a later generation of hymn-writers, yet the hymns of few women of this period have survived the test of time like those of Anne Steele.



6. Letters from Anne Steele to her sister-in-law, Mary Steele, and her half-sister, Mary Wakeford, which contain unpublished poems.

7. Letter of proposal from Rev. Benjamin Beddome (1717-1795) to Anne Steele, 23 December 1742

In 1742, Anne Steele received a proposal from admirer and fellow hymn-writer, Rev. Benjamin Beddome. In a trembling script, Beddome wrote:

Madame, give me leave to tell you that these Words speak the very Experience of my Soul, nor do I find it possible to forbear loving you [...] Would you but permit me to cast myself at your Feet & tell you how much I love, Oh What an easement might you thereby afford to a burdend Spirit.

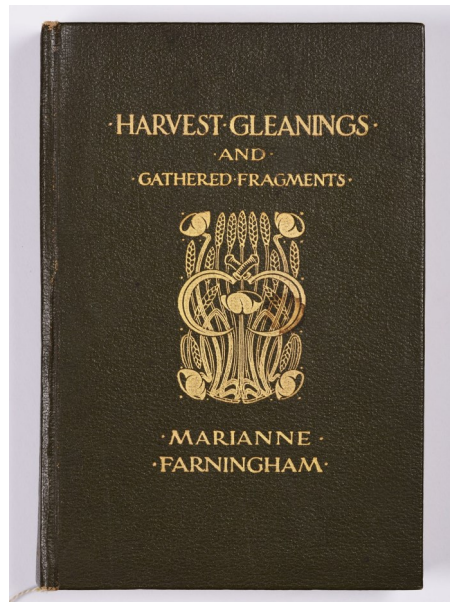
8. *Harvest Gleanings and Gathered Fragments*

Mary Anne Hearn (Marianne Farningham)

1903: London

Mary Anne Hearn, a prominent female member of the Baptist community, was a poet, evangelical journalist, speaker and author. She was particularly active in advocating reforms for improvement in female education. *Harvest Gleanings and Gathered Fragments* is a collection of Hearn's poems, including 'A Modern Bride', which begins with the bold statement:

*I chose him for myself; he is my choice,
Not yours, and not my father's — mine the voice
That uttered the decision, mine alone
My will has taken this man for my own...*





**9. Letter from Hannah Marshman to her husband, Joshua Marshman
21 February 1821**

Hannah Marshman is considered to be the first female Baptist missionary. In 1799, Hannah and her family set sail for India landing at the Dutch colony of Serampore. Within a year, she had opened two boarding schools. This letter discusses her plans to start a Sunday School for adults in Serampore and one for girls.

In the Hall of Regent's Park College hangs a portrait of Hannah Marshman painted by an unknown artist.

**10. Report Addressed to the Marquess Wellesley, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland
Elizabeth Fry and Joseph John Gurney
1828, 2nd Edition: Norwich**

Elizabeth Fry along with her brother Joseph John Gurney visited Ireland to visit the Society of Friends. As part of their 3 month visit they also visited 'upward of forty prisons ... the principal lunatic asylums and other establishments for the relief of the most distressed and afflicted part of the population'. In this report they provide the result of their visit, in which they report favourably on the improvements that have been made.

**11. *Memoirs of Elizabeth Fry*
Rev. Thomas Timpson
1847: London**

This memoir of Elizabeth Fry was undertaken as an 'Offering of Friendship, a Tribute of Respect and Admiration of that distinguished Lady, by one who had the inexpressible happiness of being a fellow-labourer with her...' As part of the process of writing the memoir he collected various material, documents and papers, as well as various communications from valued friends, one of which declared Mrs Fry as 'a rare specimen of renovated and sanctified humanity'.





12. 'Reasons for Substituting East India, for West India Sugar' (1826)

Elizabeth Heyrick (1769–1831)

Pamphlet from the *Commonplace Book on Slavery*, a scrapbook of antislavery literature compiled from various sources.

At its foundation in 1823, the Anti-Slavery Society in Britain called for the amelioration and gradual emancipation of slavery and the slave trade. Dissatisfied with this position, and adamant that immediate abolition of slavery was the only correct abolitionist policy in Britain and the British colonies, Elizabeth Heyrick mounted an outspoken attack via a number of anti-slavery pamphlets. Heyrick, who was raised in a family of rational non-conformists, and later became a Quaker by conviction, was perhaps the first activist to call for the immediate abolition of slavery.

In order to raise public awareness about the horrors of slavery in the British colonies, Heyrick vociferously led a boycott of the import and sale of West Indies sugar. Alongside fellow-activists, she went door-to-door in her hometown of Leicester, urging individuals and grocers not to buy slave-grown produce (such as coffee, rice, and sugar), but she also published several widely-distributed pamphlets. In 'Reasons for Substituting East India, for West India Sugar' (1826), a copy of which is seen here, she warns,

*The perpetuation of Slavery in our West India colonies, is a question in which we are **all** implicated; we are all guilty (with shame and compunction let us admit the opprobrious truth) of supporting and perpetuating Slavery... Why? Because **we** furnish the stimulant to all this injustice, rapacity, and cruelty, by purchasing its produce!*



13. Selection of Baptist Zenana Mission (BZM) Minute Books, 1869 – 1896

The ‘Zenana’ refers to the part of a home solely occupied by the women of the household. The Minute Books document the activities of Baptist women missionaries, who visited Zenanas in South Asia with the aim of converting the women to Christianity.

In the 1860s, the BMS led the first Zenana Missions to India. By the 1880s, the missions included medical work. Women doctors from Europe were sent to work in India, and Indian women were encouraged to study medicine. Zenana Missions also provided schooling for girls using Christian principles.


The Zenana Missions expanded their area of work to China, Congo and Sri Lanka. The Angus holds 52 volumes of BZM and Women’s Missionary Association (WMA) minute books, agenda books, reports, and papers dating from 1852-1961.

Certificate of Dr. Ellen Farrer
Medical Council Office, 299,
Oxford Street, London, W.
17 December 1890

MEDICAL REGISTRATION-CERTIFICATE.			
[Certificate-Number 31439.]		MEDICAL COUNCIL OFFICE, 799, OXFORD STREET, LONDON, W.	
NAME.	ADDRESS.	Date of Plural or Registration.	QUALIFICATIONS.
Larner, Ellen Margaret	Barkly Road, Cockington Road, Hampstead, London, N.W.	Dec. 17 th 1896 E.	M.B., B.A.C., Lond. 1879 Univ. Lond.

It is hereby Certified that this is a true Copy of the Entry of the above-specified Name in the MEDICAL REGISTER; and that the prescribed Fee of FIVE POUNDS has been duly received for such Registration.

By *H. E. Allen*, REGISTRAR.
CHIEF CLERK.





15. Various photographs
from the personal collection
of Dr. Ellen Farrer

These photographs illustrate vignettes from the life and medical practice of Dr. Ellen Farrer in Bhwani, where she spent forty years, from 1891-1933, as the first medical missionary engaged by the

Baptist Missionary Society. Until 1923, when a new hospital was built, she had to make do with little more than a hut lacking doors or windows, with operations being performed in the open air.

16. Selection of Personal Diaries of Dr. Ellen Farrer (Years 1913, 1914, and 1945)

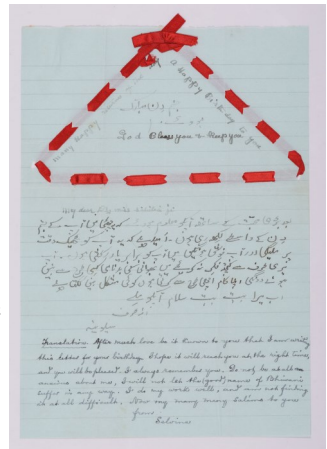


These personal diaries provide glimpses into the daily life and missionary work of Dr. Ellen Farrer. Tiny writing crowds each page, revealing a remarkable strength of character and unflagging commitment to medical missionary work. From her diaries, Ellen emerges as undeterred by the obstacles she faced as a female doctor on the outskirts of British India.

17. Various invitations and pieces of ‘fan mail’ (3) from the personal collection of Dr. Ellen Farrer



It is clear from her ‘fan mail’ that Ellen’s medical work was greatly appreciated, especially by her patients. Medical aid among Bhiwani women was essential, as contemporary rules of propriety meant that Indian women would not attend the Government



Dispensary and Hospital, which was staffed by male doctors.

Moreover, Ellen was a veritable celebrity among the medical and missionary communities of India. The Farrer Hospital in Bhiwani set an important standard for other medical missions to follow.



18. Kaisar-i-Hind Gold and Silver Medals, awarded to Dr. Ellen Farrer

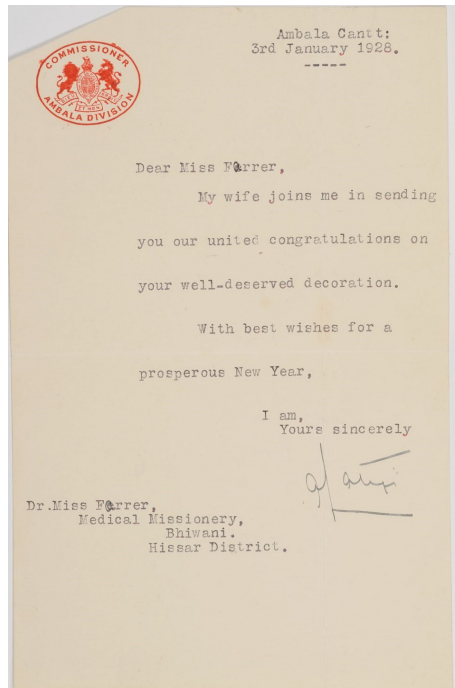
Oval shaped badge in solid gold surmounted by an imperial crown with ribbon loop and bar decorated with spreading floral pattern

Letters of congratulations to Ellen Farrer on receipt of Kaiser-i-Hind Gold Medal, from Governor of Punjab and Commissioner of District Ambala

The Kaiser-i-Hind Medal was established by Queen Victoria (1819-1901) in 1900 to provide official recognition of civilians of any nationality who had performed distinguished public service in India, and continued to be bestowed up until 1947. The front of

the medal bears the Royal Cipher within a border of laurel leaves, while the obverse is decorated with ribbon inscribed: 'Kaisar-i-Hind' imposed on a bouquet of exotic flowers and encircled by the words 'For Public Service in India.' Such gold medals of the first grade were presented directly by the monarch, while the silver Kaisar-i-Hind Medal was awarded by the Viceroy.

Two of the women represented in this exhibition, Dr. Ellen Farrer and Florence Cann, were recipients of the Kaiser-i-Hind Medal for their medical work in India.



19. Kaiser-I Hind Silver Medal presented to Florence G. Cann in 1947
Oval shaped badge in solid silver surmounted by an imperial crown with ribbon loop and bar decorated with spreading floral pattern

Letter notifying Florence Cann of her receipt of the Kaiser-i-Hind Silver Medal, from His Excellency the Viceroy of India, 6th May 1947

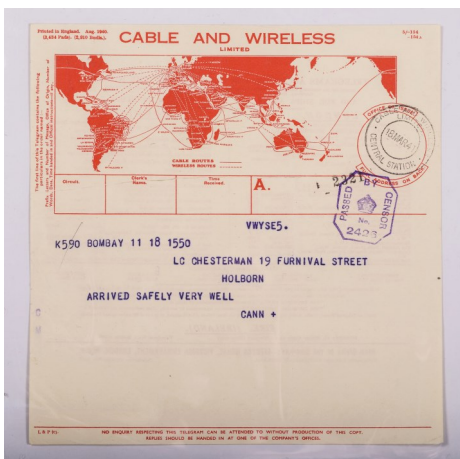


20. Various correspondence of Florence G. Cann to Dr. Clement C. Chesterman, Medical Secretary of the British Baptist Missionary Society, including two handwritten letters and one telegram

Throughout her career as a nurse engaged with the Baptist Missionary Society, both in England and in India during the period of the Second World War, Florence Cann maintained a lively correspondence with Dr. Chesterman, the Medical Secretary of the BMS. In her letters, she discusses her medical work at length, providing examples of the various illnesses encountered in the field and the types of treatments provided in the hospitals where she worked.

21. Obituary of Florence Gladys Cann
Baptist Times 1993, February 25

On the occasion of her death in 1993, Florence Cann was paid a much-deserved tribute in the pages of the Baptist Times, which praised her dedication to the remote hospital in Chandraghona, where she worked as nurse. Indeed, when numerous areas of India were evacuated during World War II, Cann was one of the few foreign missionaries to remain at her post.





22. Photograph album put together by Miss Francis Major, Salonika, Greece 1916-1917

Frances Major was a nurse prior to the outbreak of the First World War. By 1916, she was living and working in Salonika. Her photographs show images of military hospitals in which we assume she must have worked as a nurse. Other images include friends and colleagues, and people she met in Greece. The album provides an insight into her personal and professional life as well as historical documentation of life. Frances Major went on to become a Baptist Missionary stationed in China from 1920-1946.





23. Photo taken January 1925, Taiyuanfu (Miss Chapple: third from left).

Photo of Miss E. Lois Chapple, starting on a journey, Sinchow, China, Shansi.

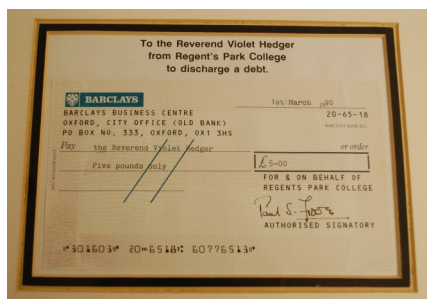
E. Lois Chapple served for several years as a China Missionary, first at a Women's Institute in Taiyuanfu, and later at a Women's School in the country town of Sinchow, where taught reading,

writing, and hygiene to illiterate young women and girls. Upon returning to England, her particular commitment to women's education continued. As Secretary and then National President of the Baptist Women's League (1960-1961), Chapple established links with women's meetings beyond the formal BWL branches to increase the training of women for leadership roles.



24. Cheque to Rev. Violet Hedger, 1st March 1990

Rev. Violet Hedger was the first trained female Baptist minister in the UK, and was a ministerial student at Regent's Park College. After having been accepted by a former principal of the college, the new principal was unhappy with having a female ministerial student. As he was unable to expel her from the college altogether, the new principal demanded that Violet pay fees for her ministerial training. In 1990, Regent's Park College rectified the injustice by reimbursing Violet her original fee of five pounds. The Angus now houses the framed cheque, along with Violet's admission certificate (1923) and final enrolment certificate from the Baptist Union (1928).



25. Baptist Deaconesses' Home and Mission Annual Reports and Photos and Photograph Album

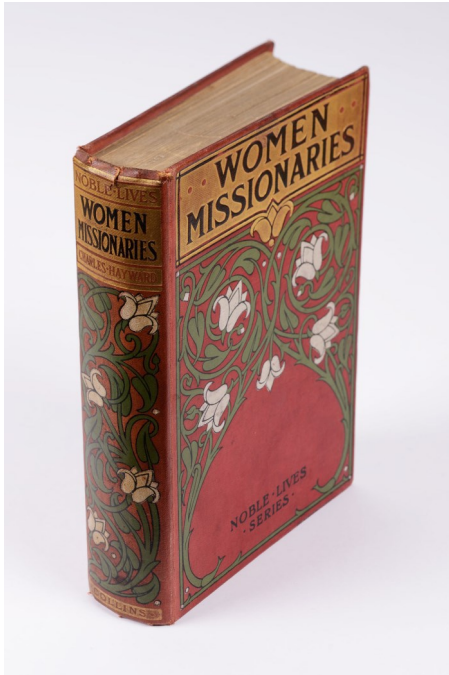
During their eighty-five years of service from 1890-1975, the Order of Baptist Deaconesses were referred to as 'the Florence Nightingales of the slums.' The Order began with only a handful of Sisters, who sought to mitigate the social problems among London's sick and poor, especially a lack of adequate medical care - it grew, however, into a national association of church leaders. Indeed the Order



of Baptists Deaconesses represented home medical and social missionary work at its best. The Angus holds the majority of the information regarding the Order, including pamphlets, newspaper cuttings, annual reports, taped interviews, minutes of meetings, and photographs.

The Baptist Deaconesses' Home and Mission Annual Reports were written to promote the organization's medical and social work, not only to gain financial support from the wider Baptist community, but to encourage more women to join. These pamphlets describe for us the type of work undertaken by the deaconesses, as well as more personal glimpses into their daily lives.





26. *Women Missionaries* [*Noble Lives Series*]

Charles F. Hayward

Published 1906-1916: London and Glasgow

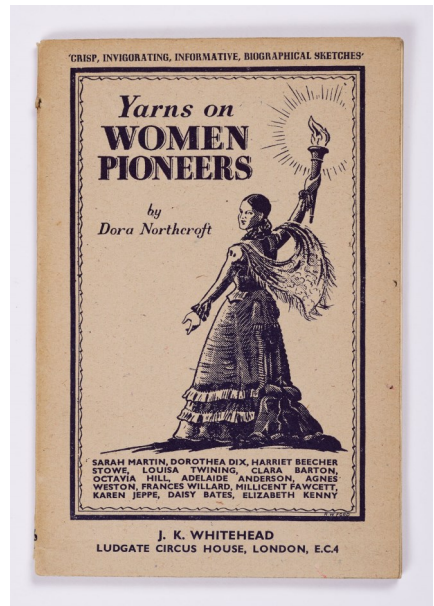
According to the bookplate inside the front cover, *Women Missionaries* was presented to a Mrs Davies on March 7th 1916 by the Hope English Baptist Sunday School, Bridgend. The work contains biographical information as well as original photographs and engravings of 12 prominent female missionaries working as far afield as Fiji, Central Africa, India, The West Indies, and the Middle East.

27. *Yarns on Women Pioneers*

Dora Northcroft

1944: London

This book was printed with the hope that 'the yarns may appeal not only to girls, but to wives and mothers ... and are especially suitable for speakers at Women's Meetings and Sisterhoods, and for discussion in Women's Groups, etc.' The women whose lives are briefly sketched in this book were all born in the nineteenth century and were 'pioneers of important social reforms which still go forward'.



Online exhibitions, details of upcoming exhibitions held by The Angus and any accompanying talks can be found on our website:

theangus.rpc.ox.ac.uk



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With funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and The Baptist Union Newington Court Fund, we would like to see more people from a wider cross section of society using The Angus. We aim to help people engage with the heritage of the nation and the Baptist denomination, taking advantage of the true value of this wonderful collection.

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