



FRANCES B. SINGH

**SCANDAL
AND
SURVIVAL
IN
NINETEENTH-CENTURY
SCOTLAND**

THE LIFE OF
JANE CUMMING

Scandal and Survival in Nineteenth-Century Scotland

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Frances B. Singh

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My tongue will tell the anger of my heart, or else my heart
concealing it will break.

—Kate, in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*
(act 4, scene 3, ll. 82–83)

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Caveat lector: This section gives an idea of the personalities and histories of many of the figures in *Scandal and Survival*, but it also reveals much of Jane's story.

Well over a hundred characters make appearances in this biography. What follows is a partial list of these figures arrived at through much pencil-gnawing. They were chosen for at least one of three reasons. First, they had a stronger effect than other people on Jane Cumming's life, or, conversely, she on theirs. Second, their lives, attitudes, or behavior, and/or their writing, offer a significant perspective on her life. Third, they reflect not just the borders Jane crossed (some more indeterminate and permeable than others) and the overlapping and intersecting social and political circles of the world in which her years ran their course, but the wide sweep of her life in space, in time, in ideology.

BRUCE, JOHN (1748–1826). Professor of logic and metaphysic at the University of Edinburgh and historiographer to the East India Company, John Bruce was at first unwilling to bring his brother's first-born biracial daughter from India to Scotland. However, he not only brought up his brother's second biracial daughter, Margaret Stuart, in the Bruce family's Princes Street home but bequeathed her his estate.

BRUCE, MARGARET STUART (later Tyndall Bruce) (1781–1869). Born in India to Colonel Robert Bruce and an unnamed Indian woman, Margaret was brought to Britain in early childhood and carefully introduced into the Bruce family home. Much loved by her father's family, she inherited substantial monies from her father and her uncle, made a love marriage with Onesiphorus Tyndall, and endowed scholarships at the University of Edinburgh and at St. Andrews. Her complexion was probably somewhat darker than her portraits make it out to be.

CHARLES, CHRISTIAN (1750?–1826). A lifelong resident of Elgin, Miss Christian Charles was the well-respected governess to all of Helen Cumming's children. By the time Jane arrived from India, Miss Charles

had set up her own school in her home in Elgin. Jane spent six years under her tutelage there. After Jane gave testimony, she was again boarded with Miss Charles. The teacher left nothing to Jane in her will.

CLERK, JOHN (1752–1832). Fiery John Clerk was the lead advocate in court for Marianne Woods and Jane Pirie. In his summation speech, he used Jonathan Swift’s poem “Corinna” to suggest that Jane might have been the victim of childhood, perhaps even infant, neglect and sexual abuse in Calcutta and to foresee a future for her that would include further sexual scandal. Clerk’s set of case proceedings was purchased by William Roughead, and is now at the Signet Library in Edinburgh.

CLIVE, ROBERT (1725–74). A bully and an extortionist in his youth, Clive was shipped out to India at the age of eighteen. His victory over Indian forces at the Battle of Plassey (1757) ensured British control of India and garnered him the titles of 1st Baron Clive and Major-General the Right Honourable Lord Clive. Clive became a multimillionaire in India and was commended by Parliament for his great service to his country. He died the day Jane’s father George was born.

COONGEE (?–?). When Jane boarded the *Bengal* bound for Britain in 1802, she was accompanied by a personal servant identified in the passenger list as Coongee. Coongee had been her ayah (Anglo-Indian, from the Portuguese: nursemaid) in Calcutta, one of her three local guardians. After the ship docked in London, Coongee accompanied Jane and Jane’s brother Yorrick to Scotland; she was sent away about six months after they arrived. I have not been able to find out more about her.

CRANSTOUN, GEORGE (?–1850). Tall, elegant, and mellifluous George Cranstoun was, along with Henry Erskine and James Mackenzie, a member of Helen’s defense team. Together with Erskine, he presented Jane’s education in India as respectable and argued for the existence of same-sex passion between women.

CUMINE, ADAM (1767–1841). In 1791 Adam Cumine was an officer on the *Fort William*, among whose passengers was Jane’s father, George Cumming. In 1802 Cumine would be captain of the *Bengal*, among whose passengers were Jane and Yorrick.

CUMMING, ALEXANDER PENROSE (called Penrose) (after 1804, Sir Alexander Penrose Cumming Gordon, 1st Baronet of Altyre and Gordounstoun) (1749–1806). Penrose, Jane's grandfather, was ambitious, aggressive, stubborn, ill-tempered, and greatly devoted to his wife, Helen. In farming his estate, he employed progressive methods. The death of his son George in 1800, his forced vacating of his seat in Parliament in 1803, and his daughter Charlotte's ultimately fatal illness probably played their part in the strokes that killed him.

CUMMING, CHARLES LENNOX (later Cumming-Bruce) (1790–1875). Charles Lennox, Jane's uncle, was the youngest of the three sons of Penrose and Helen Cumming Gordon who lived to adulthood. He and his brother William split the costs of the case, the settlement the teachers received, and Jane's marriage settlement. Jane appointed him a co-executor of her estate, but he refused to serve in that capacity.

CUMMING, CHARLOTTE (1792?–1806). The youngest child of Penrose and Helen Cumming Gordon, Charlotte was placed in a Doncaster seminary around 1805. She fell sick there and died in early 1806, shortly after her father's demise.

CUMMING, GEORGE (1752–1834). Jane's great-uncle George Cumming was one of Penrose Cumming Gordon's younger brothers. He went into service with the East India Company, amassing a fortune. On returning to Britain, he settled in London. He helped get many young men from the Moray area of northeast Scotland, including his nephew George, positions in the East India Company. Jane stayed at his house for some two weeks after arriving from India.

CUMMING, GEORGE (1774–1800). George Cumming, Jane's father, was Penrose and Helen Cumming Gordon's firstborn child. He received a gentleman's education in Scotland and London. By his late teens, he had a reputation as a dandy; his uncle also considered him fiscally irresponsible. He was dispatched in 1793 to India, where he ran up huge debts and fathered two children before dying at the age of twenty-six.

CUMMING, HELEN (née Grant) (after 1804, Lady Helen Cumming Gordon, called "Dame" in the lawsuit) (1754–1832). Jane's grandmother Helen was child-centered, anxious, impulsive, manipulative, and imperious. Mother to sixteen children, of whom ten were girls, Helen was

a believer in female education. She seems to have pressured her husband into sending for Jane from India. Soon after the girl arrived at the Cumming estate of Altyre, near Forres, Helen boarded her with Miss Charles, who was running a school in nearby Elgin. Helen's original intention was for Jane to become a milliner or dressmaker, but six years later, Helen transferred Jane to an Edinburgh boarding school and gave her to understand that if she did well she would be introduced to society as a member of the family. Within a year, when Jane informed her that two teachers at the school were engaged in a sexual relationship, Helen found herself the defendant in an 1811 defamation of character lawsuit, *Miss Marianne Woods and Miss Jane Pirie Against Dame Helen Cumming Gordon*. Helen arranged for Jane's marriage in 1818 to the schoolmaster William Tulloch.

CUMMING, MARY (?–1835). Yet another of Jane's aunts, Mary was living at Charlotte Square while Jane was a student at the Woods-Pirie School. When Woods and Pirie did not receive an explanation from Helen as to why she had turned against them, they wrote to Mary, begging her to tell them what Jane had accused them of. Mary did not respond to the teachers' note.

CUMMING, YORRICK (later George) (?–1812). Jane's father, George Cumming, mentioned in his will that she had a sibling but did not identify the child by name. On the passenger list of the ship that brought them to Scotland, Jane's sibling is identified as Yorrick Cumming, age seven. Soon after arrival, his name was changed to George. He was receiving a gentleman's education when his untimely death occurred.

CUNYNGHAME, MARY (1758–1846). Called Dame Mary Cunynghame in the case proceedings, she was the mother of Mary Cunynghame, a pupil at the Woods-Pirie School. Helen Cumming Gordon recommended the school to her, but Cunynghame did not enroll her daughter until she had done her own investigation into the teachers' moral character and professional competence. When Helen told her, without giving a reason, that she must withdraw her daughter from the school, Cunynghame told Helen to her face that she would not take her daughter out. She then visited the school and offered to try to extricate Woods and Pirie from the situation they found themselves in. However, when she subsequently heard the story that the teachers had

been sexually intimate, she withdrew her daughter from the school and had no more to do with Woods and Pirie.

CUNYNGHAME, MARY (1796–1867). Daughter of Dame Mary Cunynghame, Mary attended the Woods-Pirie School and was the other girl left with the teachers over the summer of 1810. She was not called as a witness in the lawsuit, however. Cunynghame settled in London and never married. At her death her estate was valued at £30,000.

DARWIN, ERASMUS (1731–1802). Erasmus Darwin, grandfather of Charles Darwin, was a physician, botanist, natural philosopher, and proponent of abolition of the slave trade. He had a number of illegitimate children, two of whom established a boarding school for young women at the end of the eighteenth century. Darwin outlined his theory of female education in the 1798 pamphlet *A Plan for the Conduct of Female Education in Boarding Schools, Private Families, and Public Seminaries*.

DE LA TORRE, LILLIAN (1902–93). Lillian de la Torre was an American writer of historical mysteries, many of which were set in the eighteenth century. While doing research in Edinburgh, she met William Roughead, who told her about Jane Cumming. After Roughead's death, de la Torre wrote a letter to the editor of *The New Republic* in which she interpreted Jane's story as the consequence of the race hatred to which she had been subjected.

EDMONSTONE, NEIL BENJAMIN (1765–1841). Neil Benjamin Edmonstone distinguished himself in his thirty-four years of service with the East India Company. He started as a writer, became a Persian translator, and was made secretary in the foreign, political, and secret department. His treatment of the children he fathered during his many years in India was far less distinguished.

ERSKINE, HENRY (1746–1817). In addition to supporting the points made by his legal colleague George Cranstoun in court, Henry Erskine argued that moral character and sexual preference were independent of each other. He presented Jane as a whistleblower who alerted her grandmother to the teachers' inappropriate behavior.

EWING, W. W. (1857–1932). W. W. Ewing was a Free Church minister and a historian. Some seventy years after the Disruption, he published

an account of how the event played out in every parish in Scotland. In his book, Ewing celebrates all the women who joined the Free Church, with the exception of Jane.

FLETCHER, ELIZABETH (née Dawson) (1770–1858). One of Edinburgh's elite, Elizabeth attended the Manor House Boarding School in York in the 1780s. Decades later, Anne Lister and Eliza Raine attended the same school. In later life, Fletcher rued employing a governess recommended to her by Elizabeth Hamilton.

FORBES, LOUISA (née Cumming) (1778–1845). A daughter of Penrose and Helen Cumming Gordon, Louisa was educated at boarding schools in London and Edinburgh. She proved to be an unpretentious, level-headed woman who raised a large family and remained devoted to her mother. Helen asked Louisa to look after Jane after she herself left Edinburgh for Altyre in May 1810.

FORSYTH, AMY SURWEN (née Fraser, aka Young) (1818–1901). Amy was the daughter of William Fraser and his *bibi* (Urdu, from the Persian, a respectful term for a woman; in Anglo-Indian usage, it connoted a native mistress) Amiban. Under the surname Young, she was sent to Scotland in 1828. In 1835 she married a merchant, who divorced her many years later. Amy lived very comfortably and had many children. Though Amy was proud of her Fraser blood, her paternal grandmother never accepted her.

FORSYTH, ISAAC (1768–1859). Isaac Forsyth was the Elgin-based bookseller who kept northeastern Scotland supplied with books, magazines, and writing materials. Between 1806 and 1809 Helen Cumming Gordon and her son Sir William bought sermons, magazines, and novels from him, as well as copy books for Helen's granddaughter Jane. His corner shop on Elgin's High Street was very near Miss Charles's residence.

FRASER, WILLIAM (1784–1835). One of five brothers sent out to India by their cash-strapped father, William Fraser had a distinguished career with the East India Company. Something of a white mogul, he became a patron of the arts and established a conjugal relationship with a native woman. He fathered at least two children, one of whom, Amy, was sent to Scotland. He commissioned an album now known as

the *Fraser Album*; one of the paintings depicts Amy and her mother, Amiban, in a village setting.

GILLIES, ADAM (Lord Gillies) (1760–1842). Lord Gillies presented Jane Cumming as an intellectually weak young woman filled with a degree of malice approaching the pathological. It was his opinion that she used excessive means to achieve a paltry end—namely, being taken out of school.

GORDON CUMMING, CONSTANCE FREDERICA (“Eka”) (1837–1924). One of the youngest children of Sir William G. Gordon Cumming, Constance traveled the world and published many books about her experiences in foreign parts. Jane was her first cousin but is not mentioned in her autobiography. In later years, Constance befriended her niece Eleanora, an illegitimate daughter of one of her brothers, but got involved in a lawsuit with her in the early twentieth century.

GORDON CUMMING, WILLIAM GORDON (formerly Cumming and Cumming Gordon) (1787–1854). William, Jane’s paternal uncle, became the 2nd Baronet of Altyre and Gordonstoun after the death of his father, Penrose. He ensured that Jane’s husband, William Tulloch, became the minister at Dallas, historically part of the Gordonstoun estate. Jane referred to him as her “worthy uncle” in her will, but there was no love lost between the two. By refusing to increase her marriage settlement, he forced Jane to stay with Tulloch, whose behavior seems to have precipitated her nervous breakdown. At the time of Jane’s death, Sir William refused to serve as an executor of her estate. He reversed the order of the family surnames from “Cumming Gordon” to “Gordon Cumming,” so that his full name became William Gordon Gordon Cumming. His descendants kept that order.

GRANT, ANNE (of Laggan) (1755–1838). Though born in Scotland, Anne Grant spent a substantial portion of her childhood in upstate New York, where she got to know Dutch settlers, English soldiers, and even some Mohawks. A poet and memoirist, Grant was part of Edinburgh’s lively social and literary network, along with Elizabeth Fletcher and Elizabeth Hamilton. When her son Duncan was in East India Company service, Grant let him know that if he formed a connection with an Indian lady, she would welcome her as his wife.

GRANT, ANNIE (later Need) (1781–1869). Annie Grant, an illegitimate daughter of one of Elizabeth Grant’s relations, received an education from a Gordon Cumming relative. She became Elizabeth Grant’s governess; in her memoirs, Elizabeth described Annie as caring, understanding, and sensitive, unlike all the other “wanting in wisdom” teachers she knew, who punished and tortured their students in the name of education. Annie went to India, where she married Major-General Samuel Need in 1815. Need’s *bibi* had recently died, leaving him with four young children. The antithesis of the wicked stepmother stereotype, Annie was deeply involved with these children throughout her life. When Annie and Need returned to England, the four came with them. She raised them on an equal footing with the children she had with Need.

GRANT, ELIZABETH (of Rothiemurchus) (1797–1885). Elizabeth Grant knew quite a few of the Gordon Cummings and thought every member of the family odd. In her *Memoirs*, Grant not only strongly criticized teachers who hurt children’s feelings but praised women who acted the mother’s part toward illegitimate children, pointing out that such children did very well in life. She chose not to mention, however, that her beloved governess Annie Grant raised Annie’s husband’s biracial children alongside their own children.

GRANT, JAMES (Sir James Grant of Grant, 8th Baronet) (1738–1811). Sir James Grant, MP, was Helen Cumming Gordon’s brother. He exerted pressure to get his son James Thomas into East India Company service. After James Thomas’s death in India, he attempted to get his son’s two biracial children sent to Scotland, but the effort was unsuccessful.

GRANT, JAMES THOMAS (1776–1804). James Thomas Grant and George Cumming, Jane’s father, were first cousins. James Thomas preceded George in joining the East India Company, as a writer in the geographically huge and profitable administrative area known as the Bengal Establishment. He rose to the level of magistrate, and by the time of his death had set himself up as a laird (Scots: owner of an estate) on the banks of the Ganges. While on a visit to James Thomas, George seems to have met the woman who became the mother of his two children. James Thomas maintained a respectful and strait-laced manner in letters to his parents, but he, like his cousin, was the father of two illegiti-

mate, biracial children, and he did not comply with his father's wish that he return to Scotland. George appointed his cousin one of Jane's guardians, but as James Thomas was stationed hundreds of miles from Calcutta, it is unlikely he had any close contact with her.

HAMILTON, ELIZABETH (1756?–1816). Novelist, philosopher, and pedagogue, Elizabeth Hamilton lost her parents early in life and was raised lovingly by an aunt. She was very close to her brother, a highly regarded Orientalist in the employ of the East India Company. While her *Translation of the Letters of a Hindoo Rajah* offers a generally positive view of Indian men, she suggests in the same work that Indian mothers make poor nurturers. In her educational treatises, she implies that children who were poorly nurtured in infancy have little chance of overcoming their deficits. Hamilton chose Jane Pirie to work under her when she was engaged to supervise the education of the Earl of Lucan's daughter. Called as a witness during *Miss Marianne Woods and Miss Jane Pirie Against Dame Helen Cumming Gordon*, Hamilton, uncomfortable under questioning, acknowledged her protégé's temper but claimed that it did no damage to children and Pirie was always able to regain their affection.

HELLMAN, LILLIAN (1905–84). Lillian Hellman was an American dramatist and memoirist whose first play, *The Children's Hour* (1934), was inspired by William Roughead's account in *Bad Companions* (1930). Hellman did not acknowledge Roughead as her source, and he nearly sued her for literary theft. In 1979, the American novelist and critic Mary McCarthy accused Hellman of lying and fabricating. Hellman responded with a libel suit.

HOPE, CHARLES (Lord Hope) (1763–1851). Charles Hope became lord justice-clerk of the Court of Session in Edinburgh in 1804 and Lord President of the court in 1811. The first time the case *Miss Marianne Woods and Miss Jane Pirie Against Dame Helen Cumming Gordon* came up for a verdict, he voted in favor of Helen, but the second time he determined in favor of the teachers. After a brutal interrogation of Jane, he concluded that she had acquired much sexual information, that she was still a virgin, and that she was intensely bitter.

INNES, WILLIAM (1775–1841). William Innes and James Mackenzie were the founders of the law firm Mackenzie & Innes, which handled all the legal business of the Gordon Cumming family. It was Innes who

informed Sir William Gordon Cumming that the firm had settled with the teachers after the House of Parliament's law lords determined against his mother, Helen.

KETT, HENRY (1761–1825). Henry Kett was an English clergyman, academic, and writer. Helen Cumming Gordon bought his *Emily: A Moral Tale* (1809), which deals with the successful raising of a daughter by her father after the mother dies.

THE LADIES OF LLANGOLLEN, Eleanor Butler (1739–1829) and Sarah Pononby (1755–1831). Butler and Pononby ran away together from their families in Ireland and lived as a couple for over fifty years in Llangollen, Wales. Elizabeth Hamilton, Anne Lister, and William Wordsworth all visited them. Their living arrangement raised eyebrows; to this day, scholars are divided as to how to describe their relationship. Where were they on the spectrum, anchored on the one side by deeply devoted, affectionate, but platonic same sex romantic friends and on the other by a lesbian couple in a conjugal relationship?

"LADY IN THE NORTH" (?–?). While visiting his cousin stationed in northern India, George Cumming met a young Indian woman with whom he soon established a conjugal relationship and then had two children, Jane and Yorrick. In 1796 he referred to her as his "wife," and in 1799 as "the Lady in the North"; in his 1800 will, however, he called her "the most evil-intentioned of all women." In keeping with East India Company practice, the two children were taken from their mother at an early age. I have not been able to find out anything about her background, or about what happened to her after she was separated from Jane and Yorrick.

LISTER, ANNE (1791–1840). Anne Lister was born into a Yorkshire landowning family. She knew from an early age that she was attracted to women only. She was sent to the Manor House Boarding School in York, where the biracial Eliza Raine was also a pupil. The two became friends, then lovers. Lister's leaving of Raine contributed to Raine's mental breakdown. Lister was a prolific diarist who recorded her sexual life in graphic detail, in code.

MACKENZIE, COLIN (1770–1830). Principal clerk to the Court of Session during the time the case was being heard, Colin MacKenzie subse-

quently, albeit privately, criticized Lord Woodhouselee for persuading the other judges that “poor black Jeannie had a polluted imagination.”

MACKENZIE, HENRY (1745–1831). Also known as The Man of Feeling after his sentimental novel of the same name, Henry Mackenzie was a tax lawyer and Penrose Cumming Gordon’s brother-in-law. Mackenzie’s second son, Lewis, was a writer in East India Company service at the same time as George Cumming, while his thirdborn son, James, was a lawyer and co-founder and owner of a law firm.

MACKENZIE, JAMES (1780–1870). James Mackenzie’s law firm handled the legal affairs of the Gordon Cummings. After Helen was served with a summons in the lawsuit, Mackenzie & Innes hired the advocates who would defend her, conducted interviews, took care of all the paperwork, and sent the statements to Sir William.

MACKENZIE, LEWIS (1779–1800). The second son of Henry Mackenzie, Lewis joined the East India Company as a writer. He arrived in Calcutta in 1798, showed great promise, but died two years later. He is memorialized on a wall plaque in Edinburgh’s Greyfriar’s Cemetery.

MACONOCHIE, ALLAN (Lord Meadowbank) (1748–1816). In his university days, Allan Maconochie was a friend of Henry Mackenzie. He assumed the title of Lord Meadowbank on his appointment to the Court of Session in 1796. Of all the judges involved in *Miss Marianne Woods and Miss Jane Pirie Against Dame Helen Cumming Gordon*, he was the most familiar with the case. Though he was deeply affected by the personal element in it, he determined in favor of the teachers. His personal copy of the case proceedings is now at the National Library of Medicine in Bethesda, Maryland.

MILLER, HUGH (1802–56). Hugh Miller was a self-taught geologist. One of his early schoolmasters exhibited the kind of inappropriate behavior William Tulloch, Jane’s husband, was later accused of. Miller worked for some years as a stonemason, and in this capacity met the illegitimate son of the Earl of Crawford. In *My Schools and Schoolmasters*, Miller trained a sympathetic lens on this young man, whose father had cast him out.

MONCREIFF, JAMES (1776–1851). Together with John Clerk, James Moncreiff represented Woods and Pirie in their lawsuit. Moncreiff’s

set of case proceedings has been at the Law Library of the Faculty of Advocates in Edinburgh since the latter part of the nineteenth century. Roughead consulted this volume when writing up the case.

MOORHOUSE, SUSAN (née Cochrane) (1808–67). The illegitimate, biracial daughter of Peter Cochrane, an East India Company surgeon, Susan was educated at a fashionable boarding school in London. Sent to India to “catch” a husband, she met Henry Moorhouse. They married there on the strength of her presumed inheritance and returned to England, but the inheritance eluded her.

MORE, HANNAH (1745–1833). An English writer on moral and religious subjects and friend to leading abolitionists, Hannah More as a young woman taught at her father’s boarding school for females in Bristol. She is the author of two books relating to female education and character formation.

MUNRO, JANET (b. 1795, m. 1816–?). As an adolescent, Janet Munro was considered pretty and gullible. The most junior girl at the Woods-Pirie School, she swore that she too was aware that Woods and Pirie had been sexually intimate. When Jane attempted to get Janet to sleep with her, Janet told Miss Pirie about Jane’s harassment. Munro married in 1816, but I have not been able to find out anything more about her post-case life.

MUNRO, MARY (178?–?, m. 1804?). No relation to Janet Munro, Mary Munro was the illegitimate, biracial daughter of Alexander Munro, an indigo planter in India. Mary was ensconced in her grandfather’s Glasgow residence by 1796. She met with race prejudice initially, but over time the family took to her. Her relatives pressured her absent father into sending money so she could make a “respectable” marriage.

NAKESKA, ELEANORA (née Gordon Cumming) (18??–1929). Eleanora was an illegitimate daughter of the big game hunter Roualyen Gordon Cumming, son of Sir William G. Gordon Cumming and brother of Constance Frederica Gordon Cumming. The Gordon Cummings paid for Eleanora’s art education but then forgot about her. Many years later Eleanora got in touch with Constance, who helped her financially. Eleanora, however, subsequently alleged that the Gordon Cummings had not given her a fair share of the proceeds from her father’s

estate. She started a lawsuit and claimed that she would leak a dark secret about the Gordon Cummings to the press. Was she bluffing, or had she stumbled across the story of Jane Cumming? The damaging material was never disclosed, and the case was resolved in favor of the Gordon Cummings.

ONERON, MERLE (1911–79). Born Estelle Merle O’Brien Thompson to an Indian mother and an Irish father in India, Merle Oberon became a movie star in England and Hollywood. She masked her biracial identity, claiming that she was born in Tasmania and that the dark-skinned woman who lived with her was her maid rather than the woman who had brought her up, either her mother or her grandmother. Samuel Goldwyn Meyer cast her for the role of the teacher Karen Wright in *These Three*, the first film adaptation of *The Children’s Hour*.

OPIE, AMELIA (1769–1853). Amelia Opie was a successful English writer who was for a time a neighbor of Jane’s great-uncle George Cumming on Berners Street in London. She wrote “The Poor Hindoo,” a song about the anguish an Indian woman feels when her white partner abandons her, as well as *The Father and Daughter*. That novella deals with the need for parents to love and accept their children, even if they have formed an attachment outside of marriage, and to provide for the children born of those unions. Helen Cumming Gordon bought the book in 1809.

PALMER, JOHN (1767–1836). At one time, Calcutta-based John Palmer was the richest merchant in India. His father’s second marriage was to an Indian, and Palmer was close to his biracial half-brother. He was also very aware of the politics of racism, and told his brother not to send his biracial children to England unless they could “pass” as white. Palmer was kind and helpful to East India Company men who found themselves in dire straits, including Jane’s father, George Cumming. Palmer served as one of Jane’s local guardians in Calcutta before she was sent to Scotland in 1802.

PHILLIPS, KATHERINE (“Kitty”) (née Kirkpatrick) (1802–89). Born Sahib Begum to Colonel Achilles Kirkpatrick and Begum Khair-un-Nissa in India, Kitty was raised from an early age in her grandfather’s London home, where one of her tutors was Thomas Carlyle. She made a happy marriage to Captain James Phillips. Late in life, she established

a connection with her mother's mother, still living in India, and wrote poignantly and in detail about being virtually torn from her mother's arms and forcibly separated from the Indian milieu.

PIRIE, JANE (1779–1835). A protégé of the pedagogue Elizabeth Hamilton, Jane Pirie was employed as a governess by a number of well-connected families. She was highly qualified and zealous in the discharge of her duties, but had an irritable disposition and a violent temper. She and Marianne Woods were partners in a short-lived female boarding school in Edinburgh when they brought their lawsuit for defamation of character against Helen Cumming Gordon. The two acknowledged that they were romantic friends, but Pirie's attachment was so strong that it suggested to some sexual desire rather than friendship. During the case, Jane Cumming presented Pirie as the sexually needy one. When Woods and Pirie separated, Pirie was devastated. She died a broken woman, emotionally, physically, and financially.

PIRIE, MARGARET (1780–?). Margaret was Jane Pirie's sister and, like her, a governess. After marrying Thomas Ferguson, a Glasgow lawyer, Margaret gave up that work. The sisters had a falling-out in the second decade of the nineteenth century over a property in Edinburgh's Old Town.

RAINE, ELIZA (1788?–1860). Along with her sister Elizabeth Jane, Eliza Raine was sent to York from India in the last years of the eighteenth century. She attended the Manor House Boarding School, where she became friends with, and later the beloved of, Anne Lister, whose diaries, written in code, document their lesbian relationships, often graphically. By the time Lister left her, Eliza had already lost mother, father, and native country. Psychiatrists believe the breakdown she suffered was the result of these cumulative losses. Eliza never recovered, and spent the rest of her life in various mental institutions.

RAINE, JANE ELIZABETH (1790–?). Not yet of age, Elizabeth Jane married a cadet about to be sent out to India. The marriage did not last; she returned to England pregnant with another man's child. She and the child died young.

ROSE, RICHARD (1769–1853). Richard Rose was a highly respected clergyman who got along well with the Gordon Cummings and was also William Tulloch's mentor. Though he officiated at Jane Cumming's

marriage to Tulloch, Rose came to regard him as a vicious bully and the marriage itself as a mistake.

ROUGHEAD, WILLIAM (1870–1952). William Roughead was a lawyer who devoted himself to writing about “matters criminous.” He owned John Clerk’s set of proceedings from *Miss Marianne Woods and Miss Jane Pirie Against Dame Helen Cumming Gordon*. Based on Clerk’s and James Moncreiff’s sets, he wrote up the case in his book *Bad Companions* (1930). He recognized but refused to touch on the psychosexual element in the teachers’ relationship, and he regarded Jane Cumming as an embodiment of evil because her mother was Indian and Jane was dark-skinned and had spent her younger years in India. When he learned Lillian Hellman hadn’t acknowledged his essay as the source of *The Children’s Hour*, he considered suing her for literary theft.

SANDFORD, DANIEL (1766–1830). An Anglican clergyman who served in the Scottish Episcopal Church, Daniel Sandford was bishop of Edinburgh from 1806 to 1830. He placed his daughter as a day-scholar at the Woods-Pirie School, and was very pleased with her “improvement” under the tutelage of Miss Woods. Once he was told that Helen Cumming Gordon was absolutely certain the teachers had committed sexual improprieties, he withdrew his daughter from the school.

SHERWOOD, MARY MARTHA (née Butts) (1775–1851). In her youth, Mary attended a boarding school whose principal styled herself Mrs. La Tournelle though she couldn’t speak French. Later, Sherwood spent eleven years in India, where she founded schools and orphanages for Indian children. While she adopted two special-needs Indian girls, she also had the race prejudices common in her age.

SOLLEY, JOHN B. (1872–1947). John Solley was a medical doctor practicing in Manhattan who read about Jane Cumming in Roughead’s *Bad Companions*. He subsequently sent Roughead a letter in which he offered a reading of Jane and her allegations based on the writings of Sigmund Freud, Havelock Ellis, and Margaret Mead.

TULLOCH, WILLIAM (1777–1845). William Tulloch, who worked for a long time as a schoolteacher, held an MA. from Marischal College, Aberdeen, and was licensed to preach the Gospel. He may have been the “Mr. Tulloch” who shepherded Jane Cumming, her brother, and Coon-

gee from London to Altyre. Some years before his marriage, his ecclesiastical brethren cautioned Tulloch to be circumspect in every aspect of his conduct. In 1818 he and Jane were married. He was appointed parish minister at Dallas in 1822. Tulloch turned out to be a womanizer. At the time of the Disruption, he stayed with the Established Church, while Jane and their three children joined the Free Church.

TYTLER, ALEXANDER FRASER (Lord Woodhouselee) (1747–1813). Lord Woodhouselee, a Court of Session judge, was not involved with the case when it first came before the body, but he went through the proceedings minutely when it came up on appeal. He thought Jane a rebellious adolescent, but also felt her story derived from the “Eastern climate” in which she was raised. In his private life, Woodhouselee helped raise William Fraser, who later went to India in the employ of the East India Company. A sociable man, Woodhouselee often hosted gatherings at which Elizabeth Hamilton, Henry Mackenzie, and Lord Meadowbank were guests.

WHIFFIN, CHARLOTTE (1792–18??). For as long as the school was in existence, Woods and Pirie employed Charlotte Whiffin as a servant. She came from Kent, and was just a few years older than Jane. Charlotte talked to the girls, and Jane claimed she told them that the teachers were having sexual relations and she had seen them “at it.” Charlotte denied this. I have not been able to trace her after she gave testimony in 1811.

WILLIAMSON, THOMAS (?–1817). Captain Thomas Williamson served with a British regiment in Bengal for over twenty years. The result of his acquired knowledge was published in 1810 as the two-volume *The East-West Vade Mecum*.

WOLLSTONECRAFT, MARY (1759–97). Writer, philosopher, and spokesperson for women’s rights, Mary Wollstonecraft had a deep romantic friendship with Frances (“Fanny”) Blood. The two, together with Mary’s sisters, started a female boarding school in London. In her 1792 *Vindication of the Rights of Women*, Wollstonecraft decried the practice of bedsharing.

WOODS, ANN (?–after 1820). Ann Woods was the aunt of Marianne Woods, one of the accused teachers. In 1809 Jane Pirie was still under

contract as a governess, so the aunt and niece opened the boarding school for girls in Edinburgh that Marianne and Pirie had dreamed about. Ann Woods had no formal position at the school, but in its initial days she handled the business accounts. When Pirie joined the school and reviewed Ann's account book, it looked to her as though Ann was presenting herself as Pirie's superior and Pirie as the subordinate. Pirie's obsession with that drove a wedge between her and Marianne.

WOODS, MARIANNE (1781–1870). Marianne Woods was a cofounder of what was formally called the Mrs. Woods and Miss Woods Boarding School for females but is generally known as the Woods-Pirie or Drumsheugh School. Marianne was English, but was raised in Scotland by her thespian uncle William Woods and his wife Ann. The pleasant-mannered Marianne and her high-strung romantic friend Jane Pirie dreamed of running a boarding school for girls in Edinburgh. The dream became a reality in 1809, when the school opened in a house within walking distance of Helen Cumming Gordon's residence on Charlotte Square. Jane Cumming arrived as a pupil, and though initially prejudiced against her on account of her race and illegitimacy, Marianne came to treat her no differently from the other students. Cumming developed a crush on Marianne, who did not take it seriously. That rejection, combined with other factors, led Cumming to tell her grandmother that Woods and Pirie were in a sexual relationship. The teachers then initiated the lawsuit *Miss Marianne Woods and Miss Jane Pirie Against Dame Helen Cumming Gordon*. The school, however, soon went out of business, its students having been withdrawn by parents and guardians. After a decade in the courts, the case was decided in favor of the teachers, but they received very little by way of compensation from the Gordon Cummings. Marianne left Edinburgh for London and then Brighton, where she died.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I came to Jane Cumming when I decided to teach Lillian Hellman's play *The Children's Hour* (1934) in an advanced expository writing class. I found Mary Tilford, the character based on Jane Cumming, enigmatic, and thought that if I learned more about Jane I would understand Mary better. Secondary literature gave me to understand that Jane had disappeared from history after the sensational case turning on her allegations of a lesbian relationship between teachers at her Edinburgh boarding school in the early nineteenth century. Irritated, surprised, and also a tad delighted to discover, in the age of online catalogues, genealogical databases, and easy access to research specialists, nobody had already decided to search for her, I decided that finding Jane would be my next project. Internet browsing confirmed that the National Records of Scotland held letters written by Jane's father, grandfather, and grandmother, and that the National Library of Scotland housed the Gordon Cumming Depository. Might Jane be lurking in some file in one of those libraries?

I spent parts of three summers poring over this material in Edinburgh. I also became a willing prisoner of the British Library. Back in New York, glued to a chair in my study, I examined digitized census returns and wills on Findmypast.com, Ancestry.co.uk, and other databases. I found the site of the Woods-Pirie School on a map digitized by the National Library. From this physical and virtual research Jane began to emerge—as did her short-lived brother, her husband, her husband's mentor, her children, and her descendants.

I shared my growing knowledge of Jane at conferences. Kindred souls came up to me, encouraging me to write this book. Set the record straight, they said. Put the case in context. Tell the early history of this transplanted individual whose "punishment" for alleging that her schoolmistresses Miss Marianne Woods and Miss Jane Pirie were sexually intimate was to be confined within the racially and sexually inflected construct of the wily Indian seductress. Could you give the reader an idea of what she looked like? Tell her later history as the wife of a flirtatious minister? Is there any way we could hear her voice as well as hear how she got talked about? They were happy when I told them I was going to be taking into account the losses and separations Jane experienced, the psychological consequences of having a rash and imperious grandmother, a grandfather who referred

to her as an “encumbrance,” an insensitive uncle, and a bullying, womanizing husband. Others wondered how I would handle those special friends Woods and Pirie whose friendship did not survive. Would I be able to tell what happened to them? And would I tackle the “were they or weren’t they, did they or didn’t they” questions?

However, because the life of Jane Cumming raises issues not limited to parent-child relationships, domestic abuse, international adoption and the integration of ethnically different children into the population, education, friendship, sex within and outside marriage, sexual orientation, and resilience, I have always thought her story would resonate with many today. Since this second audience would not necessarily be familiar with information the scholarly audience knew, I added explanations for them. That material may slow down the reading for the scholars, but I felt, in this case, more was better.

The making of this book has been a bumpy journey. The four cats who started it with me are all in that snug corner of heaven where cats who sit on your desk, offering uncritical companionship, go. My computer (but not the external hard drive) was stolen, a basement flood derailed me for an entire semester. I would imagine that all academics have faced such challenges and then gritted their teeth and gone back to their self-appointed task.

Of all the sections of this book, the introduction was the most difficult to write. Even before the narrative gets under way, the reader learns something of the pre-case plot and the case itself, and about Jane’s life after the case concluded. To avoid repetition, and to whet readers’ interest in Jane’s complex life, I have tried to give just enough information as I go along—but bearing in mind the knowledge level of my two audiences, maintaining the delicate balance between exposing and keeping in reserve has been challenging.

The second problem also has to do with balance, in this case between the Jane material and the Woods-Pirie relationship. Scholars have been more interested in romantic friendship and how the two teachers fit into that category than in the historical Jane Cumming.¹ I was more interested in Jane Cumming than in the teachers, and in Jane’s forty-seven-year life Woods and Pirie’s romantic friendship occupied less than two years. The Jane I was writing about had a long, fraught relationship with her uncle William Gordon Cumming. There is evidence that her grandmother continued to play a role in her life through about 1822. Jane’s twenty-six-year marriage was marked by difficulties and declined into mutual hostility. Her life was impacted by the death of a brother, the disastrous Moray floods of

1829, and the 1843 Disruption that split the Scottish Presbyterian Church. So, yes, I had to talk about the teachers, but as Jane's biographer, I see them as just one of a number of shaping influences. At the same time, I wanted to satisfy readers coming to *Scandal and Survival* because of an interest in romantic friendship and the Misses Woods and Pirie. My solution was to dedicate two appendixes to the teachers: one looking at them in the context of romantic female friendship (the "did they or didn't they, were they or weren't they" questions) and one providing as much closure as I could find to their lives after the case.

The third challenge was more prosaic: it had to do with the dating. Lord Meadowbank determined against Helen in 1811 and 1812 but the formal 1811 determination no longer exists. What exists are undated notes, notes from 1811 and 1812, and the 1812 formal determination, which is a revision of the 1811 determination. So exactly what Lord Meadowbank added, subtracted, or modified from 1811 is unknowable. Since the decision itself was unchanged, I granted myself license to date the undated notes to 1811 and to discuss the written determination in the part of chapter 5 where I deal with the 1812 appeal.

In order to contextualize and make sense of Jane's life, I found myself traveling paths not taken by other scholars. A long-standing interest in medicine and the medical humanities made me wonder if research in those areas could shed light on Jane's behavior. It was obvious that there was no dearth of stress in her life, but was stress, built up to toxic levels, in some way connected to her extreme responses? The book's conclusion, subtitled "Assessing Jane," presents the results of that foray. The attempt to unpack Jane's story led me into fictional, psychological, and legal studies of what might be called keyhole witnessing.

Indeed, at one point the subtitle of this book was *A Keyhole History of Jane Cumming*. Though that was discarded, this biography explores the various keyholes through which those around Jane viewed the workings of her mind and attempted to prognosticate her future. The lawyers and judges alluded to the Bible, nodded to John Locke's 1693 *Some Thoughts Concerning Education and of the Conduct of the Understanding*, referenced Shakespeare's Iago and Swift's "Corinna, A Ballad." Lord Woodhouselee constructed Jane using a well-known keyhole: adolescent rebelliousness against school and authority figures. Lord Gillies peered at her through what I call the "disreputable servant" keyhole. In the end, the racist Orientalist keyhole of the "lewd and contriving Indian woman" prevailed.

I too looked to Shakespeare, particularly *The Taming of the Shrew*. I regard William Tulloch, Jane's husband, as a Petrucchio figure, to some

extent chosen to reform her. To me, Kate's declaration "My tongue will tell the anger of my heart, or else my heart concealing it will break," offers such insight into Jane's emotional state when in crisis that I chose it for the epigraph.² I also see my subject through apertures such as "female passenger on board a cramped ship," "dependent of an emotional, headstrong, impetuous, easily-stressed, and imperious grandmother," "maltreated child," "the testifying female," "the minister's wife," and the "later-adopted international child" and "hypervigilant individual." I also borrowed terms from Elizabeth Hamilton. Her explication of the "ardent temperament" in young persons and adults elucidated the behavior of the two Janes, as did her "contact zone" allegory telling how two individuals occupying the same social space, both ego-threatened but one more socially empowered than the other, and both desiring the same object, would strike at each other.

While the subtitle went, the dependence on keyholes stayed. In using controlling frameworks, so necessary and sometimes so unreliable, I acknowledge my kinship with those lords of the law who read Jane "orientally," seeing in her a personification of "the Eastern woman." As a popular song of the late twentieth century puts it, "we are all just prisoners here of our own device." That said, I do believe that when the sightings of Jane I obtained through the apertures I used are strung together, they add up to something greater than themselves: the life of a complex and sometimes unstable woman.

As I wrote this biography, long-buried memories surfaced. I remembered my contact with the Presbyterian Church in the 1970s when my husband and I moved to Shillong, a city in northeastern India, many of whose residents had been converted to that faith in the previous century. In my first year there, I fell sick with jaundice and spent a week at the local Presbyterian hospital. A minister making his pastoral rounds came to see me and inquired about my spiritual health. I think I told him something to the effect that I was focused on regaining my physical health. In response, I received a hellfire and brimstone sermon. I was amazed rather than intimidated by this performance, but in general the local people, regular attendees of Bible study classes and church services, feared the local church governance. I heard of cases where neighbors informed the minister and the elders who advised him that their neighbors were acting improperly, and soon the accused neighbors found their names cut from the church rolls, themselves pilloried by the community.

The autobiographical substratum runs deeper. Readers will sense that my presentation of Jane is sympathetic though not uncritical. That's

because she got under my skin. The more immersed I became in her, the more I started to see bits and pieces of her narrative in people dear to me. The personal became yet another keyhole through which I came to read Jane.

Both of my parents came to the United States as adults, with strong memories of lives lived elsewhere and the knowledge that they could never go back again. My father lost his mother at age ten. His father remarried when he was fourteen, and he had a lifelong testy relationship with his stepmother, each regarding the other as an encumbrance. When Hitler came to power, my father fled his natal country, Austria. He boarded a New York bound ship in Cherbourg, but his father stayed behind in Europe. He never saw him again. My father had a business relationship with his brother-in-law, and this strained his ties with his sister. Though he became an American citizen and could deploy English with the accuracy of a smart bomb, he always felt he never really belonged. I think what he longed for his whole life was an attachment bond—a desire for physical closeness with a person he could trust, who he felt understood him and to whom he could turn for emotional support.

In later life my father suffered from depression and paranoia. There was a period when he stayed up all night keeping tabs on the neighbors' nocturnal habits. He would on occasion talk back to his superiors and not follow orders; his rebellious streak cost him his chevrons a couple of times when he was in the army. He was quick to act, which sometimes led to wrong decisions, and he always stood up for the underdog. There was, he once told me, only one four-letter word in the English language: hate. He wasn't able to overcome his negativity toward his family, but he made sure it wasn't passed on. In 1969, he had me spend an entire summer with his stepmother, who had arrived in Ecuador in 1943 and was then living in Chile. During this time, I also began to bond with his sister and brother, who had survived the war and were also living in Chile.

There are parallels as well between my mother's story and Jane's. My mother's mother married young in Russia, for the wrong reasons, and when she realized her mistake she divorced her husband. By then she was living in China and had a small daughter. This was at a time when divorce was still considered a shameful act. Her well-to-do elder sister took her and her daughter in but made my grandmother feel she had disgraced the family's reputation. However, the rich relative allowed my mother to get a decent education. From the time she was eight until she was about eighteen, the woman who became my mother felt herself to be an unwanted resident in a close relation's house. She never forgot, never forgave: *she* could hate.

The experience left her with a permanent distrust of the motives and values of family members with money and status, and the conviction that a woman's salvation lay through education.

My mother told me that when she turned eighteen, she climbed the tallest hill in town. She had recently read Margaret Mitchell's novel *Gone with the Wind*, she said, and Scarlett O'Hara's words "I will never be hungry again" had impressed her hugely. Shaking her fist at the town below, my mother uttered the same vow. However, since the book wasn't published until three years after her fist-shaking, it's obvious that my mother so identified with Scarlett's will to survive and triumph—her determination, resilience, and defiance—that she read her into her own story and came to believe in a statement that was factually impossible but emotionally true. Shortly after that, she and her mother moved to a big city in China, where my mother learned English, found employment, and did well.

Years later, my mother came to the United States, where she gave talks on China to people who considered themselves educated; tired of audience members asking her how a person from China came to have blue eyes and dirty-blond hair, she told them, "I am a freak." There was always a note of boastful pride in her voice when she recounted the effect her words had on her interlocutors: *I shocked them into silence*. Decades later, during a transit strike in New York City, she told another outrageous lie. Unable to get to work, she asked a neighbor who always drove into Manhattan if he would give her a lift. He refused, and she found somebody else. After the strike was over, the neighbor asked if she had been able to get to work. Of course, she said, looking him straight in the eye, the company sent a helicopter. She got her revenge in the form of his popped-out eyes and dropped jaw. Like the opera singers she adored, she enjoyed being the center of attention.

After World War II, these two survivors of stressful, unhappy childhoods found each other and married. They were helpmeets and complemented each other; he was hot-tempered and sometimes impulsive, while she was a planner who kept her emotions under control and would always, as she said, "sit on" her decisions for at least twenty-four hours. For many years they worked together, and my father depended on her to execute the hard decisions. Later on, she rose through the ranks of nonprofit organizations to become a personnel director. She had managerial talent, absolutely, but there was a ceiling for women in those days, and it wasn't made of glass.

Their child-rearing styles were quite different. My father was the softy, wanting me to experience the happy life he had led before his mother

died. My mother was the tough one, afraid that if I didn't do well in school I wouldn't be able to survive. For her, it was more important for a girl to be able to put the letters "PhD" after her name than a "Mrs." before it, and she pushed me to do well in school. As a reader, I was always delighted by the books she introduced me to, but if she had also picked up a lipstick and taken me shopping for some stylish shoes, my adolescent years would have been happier. Her intentions were honorable, but her obsession with high academic success drove a wedge between us. My anger has subsided, replaced by the sad understanding that there was no outlet at the time for her executive capability other than me.

My parents were savers rather than splurgers, but there were at least two notable exceptions to this pattern. My mother had minor musical talent and was convinced I was musical too. The result was that a quality piano ended up in our living room and I had weekly lessons for five years. It turned out that I was not musical at all. The piano teacher was nice, but because of my lack of talent the lessons were a torture. In my fifth year, my father heard me praying for a robber to break into the house and steal the piano, and the next day the lessons stopped. The piano remains with me as a symbol of high hopes not realized, a reminder of the misery one person can inflict on another, with the best of intentions.

The other exception involved a special holiday. The eldest of my Chilean cousins had been sent to New York to get to know us, and to celebrate the occasion we took a trip to Washington D.C. I was seven or eight and thrilled, he was sixteen and miserable, because he was pining for his girlfriend back in Chile as only an adolescent whose father wanted him to break up with a girl can pine. I remember the Chesapeake Bay Bridge and the wide sweep of water below; the basket of fruit on my bed at the Statler Hilton; the coolness of the Jefferson Memorial inside. It was a very special trip for me, but for my besotted cousin, it was a trying one. Unable to be rude in speech, he expressed his unhappiness in body language, sleeping the whole way there in the car, occasionally moaning, "Liliana!" At the time, I regarded him as a spoilsport who put a damper on the vacation. I suspect my parents, my mother especially, thought him an ingrate. Now that both the cousin and I are much older, and he, after several other relationships, is finally together with Liliana, I have another view of his behavior. Together with my parents' history, I suspect my sympathy for the plight of the adolescent Jane Cumming, separated from the person she loved, has its roots in a mid-1950s road trip.

This book acknowledges that Jane was, at times, motivated by a slew of malignant passions—anger, malice, bitterness, jealousy, a desire to take

revenge and inflict hurt and even to go in for the kill. While I saw that destructive energy, I kept thinking about Linda Loman's speech in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*. "He's not the finest character that ever lived," she says of her husband Willy. "But he's a human being, and a terrible thing is happening to him. So attention must be paid."³ I acknowledge that my heart went out to this woman who was maltreated as a child in Calcutta, kept at arm's length as a girl in Scotland, and married to a man who turned out to be a sycophant, a bully, and a womanizer—even as I recognize that she too had serious flaws.

Scandal and Survival recovers Jane and offers a recuperative reading of a woman who had very few options at her disposal for making people pay attention to her. Many critics, knowing her only from her testimony during the case, have loved to hate her, as the sly, spiteful, contriving adolescent who destroyed the lives of two tender friends. My hope is that with more information, their response to her will become more nuanced.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Orthography

The documents from which I quote are orthographically diverse. To make the quotations more accessible, I have, in general, used modern spelling and followed present-day conventions regarding punctuation and capitalization.

Language

Latin phrases, words from Hindi/Urdu, and Scots expressions and legal language are sprinkled through *Scandal and Survival*. I have translated the Latin phrases and put definitions in parentheses following Scots words and legal terminology and words from Hindi/Urdu.

The term “writer” appears frequently in this book, and it refers to two distinct careers. A man who applied for a position with the East India Company submitted a Writer’s Petition, asking to be appointed to a post that would require him to record all aspects of the company’s operations, such as decisions taken, accounting details, and minutes. In Scots usage, on the other hand, a writer was a lawyer; today he would be called a solicitor. These writers did not have the privilege of pleading or arguing in either civil or criminal court, but rather did chamber work, giving legal advice and providing legal services, such as drawing up wills and preparing contracts or claims.

“Illegitimate” also appears frequently in this book, because in the long eighteenth century in Jane’s part of Scotland, irregular unions were common and the number of children born out of wedlock high. Words such as “bastard,” “illegitimate,” “acknowledged,” “accidental,” and “natural” were used at the time to describe them. Contemporary scholars who study sexual behavior frequently refer to these children as “illegitimate.” I have followed suit.