

**Gardening in Print: Profession, Instruction and Reform**

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“the young men for whom this book is intended are chiefly said to have received but a very imperfect rudimentary education, or to have forgotten, in great measures, what they have been taught”. (Loudon *Self-Instruction* 1)

<1>To describe the frustration of the generation of women who lived before 1850, Martha Vicinus uses the metaphor of pacing a narrow garden. (Vicinus 2) Education, as John Loudon observes above, was vital for men wishing to enter early nineteenth-century professional occupations. Its lack acted as an effective and gendered exclusionary practice depriving middle-class women of the opportunity to work and secure independence. In this instance, earning a living by writing appears to be an occupation entirely suitable for middle-class women, where they could compete on relatively equal terms with men. However, the new arenas for commercial publication, drawing on scientific and utilitarian knowledge rather than a classically based education, retained insurmountable professional and fraternal boundaries. Jane Loudon (1807-1858), the subject of this discussion, wrote professionally at three key stages in her life: to support herself as an orphan from the age of seventeen until her marriage, during her marriage when the family were faced with bankruptcy, and as a widow. Despite the immense popularity and integrity of her work, she was unable to earn a living, support her dependents or to develop a professional career. Nevertheless she contributed to the development of a genre of self-instruction that did more than just encourage women to take charge of the domestic sphere but to engage with political and rational thought. The garden became a site of social reform for Loudon who believed it offered a liberating, intellectual and physical space for women.

<2>Jane Loudon’s style of writing differs from the attitude and use of feminine conventions which other women employed in print culture of the 1840s. The epistolary form which gained popularity in seventeenth century publications such as the *Athenian Mercury* (1691-7) was still prevalent in the nineteenth-century. Women’s use of letters to participate in the popular press established the authority of the autobiography as appropriate for women’s contribution to the public sphere as the female subject was anchored by the domestic and the private. (Shevelov 59-60) Loudon did not challenge the prevailing ideology of separate gendered spheres of influence, but she did gradually eschew its established formulae. Across her career Loudon was fascinated with the technological applications of science. Imaginative and thoughtful in the way that she communicated ideas, her books and articles demanded that readers should be rational

and willing to put theory into practice. She believed that science could improve everyday experience and to realise this objective education needed to be accessible to all regardless of class and gender. However, Loudon was a journalist who reported and speculated upon science rather than practising it. She is best known for her publications on horticulture and gardening. She was able to publish in this sphere, rather than literary or women's magazines, because she married the foremost horticultural journalist of the 1820s and 30s, John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843). This discussion will examine how early nineteenth-century and Victorian professional networks impacted on the Loudons' careers, determined their ability to practise journalism and to disseminate their opinions about reform, especially equality of opportunity for education.

<3>Although Jane Loudon was ignorant of the subject when she married, she did not learn all she knew about horticulture from her husband. She attended John Lindley's lectures on the relationship of botany to horticulture given in 1832 and reported on them in one of her early contributions to her husband's main periodical the *Gardeners' Magazine* (1826-1843). John Lindley (1765-1865) had become the first Professor of Botany at London University in 1829. Shteir characterises his tenure as a period of modernisation. Botany under Lindley became a science by displacing popular practice in favour of professional knowledge. (Shteir 155) He deposed the Linnean system which had supported much amateur interest in botany between 1760 and the 1820s. Shteir states that Lindley's "chosen mandate, in teaching and other botanical work, was to rescue botany for science, separating it from the realm of politeness and accomplishments that for decades had linked botany to women", the result of which established professionalism in natural history as male expertise. (157) Shteir's examination of women's involvement in botany demonstrates how it could be considered appropriate for women and therefore suitable for feminine contribution to public writing and debate. (35) Towards the conclusion of her study of the gendered professional interests of botanists, she mentions Loudon as an example of a writer contributing to print culture and making science accessible to women. However, it is clear that women involved in scientific writing during the early Victorian period were unable to acquire the education and practical experience which would grant them full access to the learned societies of that period and thus the opportunity to contribute to the development of the scientific professions.

<4>By the 1820s, horticultural writing had been established as a print genre. Periodical publishing had begun to address a distinctly middle-class readership, for whom gardening had become part of identity formation. Editors of and contributors to publications in this field were largely drawn from the emerging professions and commercial occupations associated with botany, agriculture, landscape gardening, plant cultivation and the management of landed estates. The early growth of garden writing in the nineteenth-century was predicated upon the desire to promote scientific knowledge through publications connected with scholarly interests such as *Transactions of the Horticultural Society of London* (1807-1848). However, there was always room for popular books such as Thomas Mawe's *Every Man His Own Gardener* (1767). (1) The more fashionable interest in gardening was acknowledged by the first commercially successful periodical, William Curtis' *Botanical Magazine*, founded in 1787. (Desmond "Gardening" 47) As the manager of the London Botanic Garden at Lambeth Marsh, Curtis was well placed to recognise that the current audience for such a magazine was "ladies, gentlemen and gardeners as wish to become scientifically acquainted with the plants they

cultivate.” (Desmond “Gardening” 47) Each edition of Curtis’ magazine was distinguished by three coloured engravings of newly introduced foreign plants, and the quality of illustrations within gardening magazines became a means of differentiation across the genre as well as demanding significant capital investment for the proprietor and indeed reader of these publications. (Desmond “Loudon” 83)

<5>Therefore horticultural magazines addressed themselves to professional and amateur audiences who came from different generations and had their educational experience determined by either gender or class. The particular character of horticultural journalism was consolidated by John Loudon’s *Gardener’s Magazine* which was launched in 1826 with the expressed purpose to circulate developments connected to horticulture and “to raise the intellect and character of those engaged in this art.” (Loudon *Gardener’s* 1) Loudon’s publication addressed the practical gardener, but the publication was steeped in the debates of the scientific fraternity. Loudon was quite eclectic in what was included in his periodicals and published work by women writers. For the *Magazine of Natural History* (1828) he commissioned a series of nine articles by Elizabeth Kent (1790-1861) which promoted the study of botany for girls. Kent had a particular style which engaged the reader narratively and then moved to cultural associations before employing botanical concepts or language. (Shteir 138) Yet Loudon considered the approach to be in keeping with the professional aims of his periodical which were to promote the utility of knowledge. (Shteir 140)

<6>John Loudon, whose career as a landscape gardener had started in 1803, had connections with the professional associations which had emerged in the early nineteenth-century, but he maintained his independence from them. His fields of interest were very broad and he published on landscape design and management, technological innovations related to plant cultivation, farming, architecture and horticulture, drawing on his practical experience of all these occupations. His first article, published in the *Literary Journal* in 1803, “Hints respecting the manner of laying out the grounds of the public squares in London”, advocated “breathing zones” in the city to promote public health and indicates the motivations behind his writing. (Loudon “Hints” 478) Elected to the Society of Arts in 1805 and made a fellow of the Linnean Society in 1806, he joined the Horticultural Society in 1818 just before establishing his reputation with the publication of *An Encyclopaedia of Gardening*. (1822)

<7>As an editor Loudon saw social reform as relevant to readers interested in science and horticulture. The *Gardener’s Magazine* was typical but distinctive in the breadth of material it covered for a popular readership. He surveyed the gardens of landed estates, reported on local horticultural societies and the proliferation of new imported plants which were being offered for cultivation by commercial nurseries. The magazine reviewed widely. Loudon had an international interest in garden design and reported on both foreign and domestic affairs as they related to agriculture. The magazine’s coverage of scientific papers was also broad, demonstrating an enthusiasm for research and innovation. More significantly, as sole editor independent from a publishing house, Loudon was extremely critical of professional institutions and rival publications. His decision to concentrate on a writing career from the 1820s was a result of increasingly poor health, but it is also indicative of the new professionalism of the period.

<8>Loudon promoted the suburban villa, as part of his discourse on social improvement, and produced publications which explained how this ideal could be attained. Davidoff and Hall see Loudon as part of an influential group of writers on middle-class taste, cultural values, attitude and behaviour. Alongside Sarah Strickney Ellis and Harriet Martineau, John Loudon propounded a practical and ideological account of how to achieve domesticity as a lived reality. (Davidoff and Hall 180) From 1833 with the publication of the *Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture and Furniture* Loudon catalogued the suburban villa and its associated lifestyle.(2) Davidoff and Hall note that Loudon provided advice and instruction concerning the acquisition of the ideal home, and the pleasures of family life were presented against a background of political and social unrest of which he was very much aware. (181) Middle-class appreciation of the garden was originally aligned with religious approbation, particularly the poetry of William Cowper, but took on more secular appeal in the 1820s. (156) Gardening became a passion because it had been configured as part of ideal domesticity catering to emotional needs which demarcated the distinction between work and leisure. (Tosh 23)

<9>Schenker argues that writing by the Loudons, both husband and wife, was received by an enthusiastic middle-class audience because both writers were responsive to the social, economic and cultural forces that made suburban gardening and design congruent with middle-class professional identity. (Schenker 338) To challenge picturesque landscape gardening, suitable for the country estate, John Loudon created the term gardenesque, a new aesthetic suited to the scale, taste and domestic sensibility of the suburban home.(3) Rather than scaling down principles of landscape design to incorporate them into the suburb, the gardenesque required the householder to determine what was suitable for their home and then exhibit their choice of horticultural specimens. Schenker defines the style as one that combined aesthetics and utility, relying upon the “botanical knowledge and horticultural expertise of gardening rather than the material wealth and status of property ownership.” (343) The garden can be seen as a cultural expectation of middle-class identity which could display accordingly wealth, individuality and knowledge. Therefore, gardening became, Schenker argues, a cultural practice through which “members of the emerging middle-class strove to maximise their interests and reproduce themselves as a group” using the principles of professionalism (339). Loudon expected his readers to become active in the process of designing their lifestyle. He offered his readers a copious choice which Davidoff and Hall refer to as “a flexible template for domestic life”, one which required the active contribution of both husband and wife. (190)

<10>Schenker constructs an argument that sees Jane Loudon’s contribution to horticulture as important as her husband’s work. Jane Loudon’s popular publications in the early 1840s, *Gardening for Ladies* (1840), *The Ladies’ Flower-Garden* (1840), *The First Book of Botany* (1841), *The Ladies Companion to the Flower-Garden* (1841) *Botany for Ladies* (1842) and *The Ladies’ Country Companion or How to Enjoy Country Life Rationally* (1845), reveal, Schenker argues, “an empowering subtext for middle-class women”, one which represents the garden as a space for creative outlet, rational occupation and requiring the application of knowledge. (Schenker 349) This contrasts with existing models for women writing on botany which were well established, but Jane Loudon declined to take up the conventions which legitimated women’s scientific writing. Mrs Loudon starts *Gardening for Ladies* not with flowers, the introduction of protagonists, gardening history or folklore but with a chapter entitled ‘Stirring the soil – digging’. She explains the relationship between the soil, seed and root and very carefully

outlines the applicability of digging for ladies. By positioning the body effectively, acquiring the right tools and understanding the theory “a lady, with a small light spade, may, by repeatedly digging over the same line, and taking out only a little earth at a time, succeed in doing with her own hands, all the digging that can be required in a small garden [...] she will find her health and spirits wonderfully improved by the exercise.” (Loudon *Gardening* 16)

<11>Jane Loudon had an accessible written style which could negotiate scientific knowledge for an amateur audience, but she was only able to participate in professional journalism because of the cultural capital accrued by her husband and which he was willing to share with her. Jane Loudon was incorporated as a wife into her husband’s work and that is how she gained specific professional knowledge. (Finch 3) Her publications, particularly those written during her widowhood, appreciate that ‘a man’s work imposes a set of structures upon his wife’s life, which consequently constrain her choices about living her own life, and set limits upon what is possible for her’ and that insight allowed her to make a particular address to women (Finch 2). For example, *The Lady’s Country Companion, or How to Enjoy a Country Life Rationally* (1845), written at the beginning of her widowhood, used a more conventional epistolary style but resembles the manner and concerns of Isabella Beeton (1836-1865). Both women found a commercial market in an audience who needed advice about the practical difficulties, imposed on them by their husbands’ professional lives, which left them responsible for the management of the suburban villa. However, it is significant that despite her involvement with her husband’s work Jane Loudon could not prepare the manuscript of his final book for its posthumous publication and had to rely on the network of his professional colleagues. (Loudon “Short Account”)

<12>To understand the extent to which Jane Loudon was excluded from her husband’s professional accomplishment we need to examine the title of this book and the expertise that was needed to complete it. As she notes in the preface, the idea for the book originated with Mr Osborn of the Fulham nursery, who was experienced in the education of young gardeners. The full title and description of John Loudon’s book given on its title page is *Self-Instruction for Young Gardeners, Foresters, Bailiffs, Land-Stewards and Farmers; in Arithmetic and Book-keeping, Geometry, Mensuration and Practical Trigonometry, Mechanics, Hydrostatics and Hydraulics, Land-Surveying, Levelling, Planning, and Mapping, Architectural Drawing, and Isometrical Projection and Perspective: with examples showing their Application to Horticultural and Agricultural Purposes*. The title demonstrates the grounds on which Jane Loudon had to compete within the professional field in which she worked. Her preface explains how Sir Joseph Paxton (1801-65) urged her to publish the book as her husband’s legacy. To do so she turned to Mr Wooster, who was designated as her husband’s last amanuensis. (Loudon “Short Account”) After Mr Wooster the book was submitted to Dr Jamieson, the man that John Loudon had nominated to complete the work. Jamieson wrote the chapters on mechanics, hydrostatics and hydraulics. Other specialists had to be consulted: Mr Jay who wrote the chapter on farm book-keeping and Mr Robertson who provided the chapters on architectural drawing, isometric projection and perspective. Contributions were made by Samuel Taylor, Richard Varden, Professor Donaldson, Mr James Munroe and other un-named friends in the professional fraternity who guaranteed the good standing of the work.

<13>Income from this book was needed to repay Loudon's debts, which also required Jane Loudon to continue to publish. The topics covered in her later work become more commercial and less scientific, in contrast to the style and gravity of John Loudon's writing and range of interests. Moreover, she was unable to contribute, as a professional writer, to the wide range of gardening publications which existed in the 1840s and 50s. Her work for the *Gardener's Magazine* (which closed after John Loudon's death) was enabled by the infrastructure that he had built up in order to acquire the regular quality and quantity of copy necessary for each issue. His outlook and sense of responsibility to professional interests and the future of gardening was taken over by *The Gardener's Chronicle and Agricultural Gazette* (1841-). This was a publication founded and edited by Joseph Paxton and John Lindley, which maintained the close association with learned societies and the research community that had sustained Loudon's work. Jane Loudon could not compensate for her lack of education, practical experience and access to fraternal professional circles in order to continue with the work that she had been incorporated into on her marriage. More importantly, access to this professional sphere was essential if she was to initiate and innovate as required by the new market place for horticultural writing.

<14>In order to produce the biography included in *Self-Instruction for Young Gardeners*, Jane Loudon used her husband's detailed journals to understand his professional career, which was so far outside her own experience. John Loudon's early writing and contributions to public discourse demonstrated a desire for improvement in the technology and social structure of professional horticulture. In 1820, for example, Loddiges and Sons, a nursery, which was pre-eminent in cultivating and supplying exotic plants, built a huge steam heated hothouse to Loudon's design (Colquhoun 20). In the outline of his achievements and experiences Jane Loudon notes several inventions that he did not patent but from which others profited. Gloag observes that Loudon's professional integrity and desire to improve horticulture, rather than seek reward, contributed to the financial difficulties that blighted his later life. (Gloag 18) Ruth defines nineteenth-century professionalism as adhering to a principle of disinterestedness, something Jane Loudon acknowledges in her account of her husband's life and work. (Ruth 22)

<15>The poignancy of the biography is realised by the intimacy with which she narrates how her husband dictated his last book to her as he was dying, in a desperate attempt to resolve a £10,000 debt accrued in the costs for the illustration of *Arboretum et fruticetum Britannicum*. (1838) The scale and quality of the work was produced to exacting professional standards rather than commercial ones. To show his concern with social and civic reform, Loudon had published non-commercial pamphlets, which provoked controversy. *Parochial Institutions; or an outline of a plan for a National Educational Establishment, suitable to the children of all Ranks, from Infancy to the Age of Puberty* in 1829, consolidated debates from the *Gardener's Magazine* and inflamed other social commentators. In this pamphlet he proposed compulsory education for all, financed in part by the public purse. He also argued for adult education and the importance of green space for urban well being. These ideas and professional concerns reappeared in Jane Loudon's later writing, but are evident in her work prior to her marriage.

<16>John Loudon's career is outstanding amongst a significant number of early nineteenth-century horticulturalists including the gardener Joseph Paxton and the academic John Lindley.

He represented the new professionalism of the 1820s which was associated with the late eighteenth-century influence of Bentham. (Schenker 342) Through his publications Loudon sought to codify knowledge, across a range of different practical sciences, and make it available to the middle-class reader in the hope that this rationality would benefit the whole of society. His writing took its authority from professional knowledge and the secular morality of the middle class, refuting the concept and practice of aristocratic order. Loudon established the conjunction of professional and amateur interest through his editorship of the *Gardener's Magazine* and his most influential book *The Suburban Gardener and Villa Companion* (1838). Davidoff and Hall identify in these works how the practice of horticulture became a location for the assertion of middle-class values of privacy, order and taste (370). Whilst remaining sensitive to social interest in reform, Loudon emphasised the practical realisation of the ideals of literature and art. His writing exhibited an extraordinary reconciliation between his “unwavering belief in scientific and social progress with his affection for the past” that broadened his appeal and locates access to scientific ideas as significant to the formation of radical thought. (Gloag 142)(4) Loudon was able to wield great influence on middle-class taste and gardening journalism because of the status he achieved in the profession. However, it is his wife's writing career which reveals even more about the nascent profession of journalism, women's access to science and the Loudons' shared interest in educational reform.

<17>Jane Loudon appeared in William Jerdan's autobiography as an example of a young writer that he supported while she was starting out

Miss Webb, thrown upon her own resources for several years after the death of her father and natural protector, fought a stirring fight with literary exertion, as her “Hungarian Tales,” “Conversations on History and Chronology,” “Stories of a Bride,” and other clever works amply testify; but she fell into severe sickness, and if it was under the concomitant circumstances that I had it in my power to perform the essential duties of a friend. Indeed if I had failed the consequences would have been dreadful; but I lived to see my esteemed client united to my also much-esteemed friend and coadjutor Mr. Loudon, with whom she led a comfortable and happy life to the end of his days. (Jerdan 320-323)

<18>Jerdan described Jane Loudon as possessing “imaginative power” and literary merit, the ability to apply “common-sense criticism”, and the capacity for editorial work, but lacking the ability to negotiate with publishers (320 -323). He appears to be part of the circle who introduced Jane to Loudon in 1830.(5) In the biography of her husband she makes little mention of her own writing career, but she does include that they met because of his interest in her first novel. She explains that she wrote *The Mummy! a Tale of the Twenty-Second Century* (1827) in order to support herself after her father's death and described it as “a strange wild novel”, summarising the book as an attempt “to predict the state of improvement to which this country might possibly arrive.” (Loudon “Short Account” xxxiv)

<19>Reviews for *The Mummy* emphasised the talent and imagination of the writer and its account of social change “When butlers are philosophers, the footmen linguists, the cooks accomplished as our present boarding school damsels; when the parts of barrister and surgeon are performed by clock-work automats: - the romance is a very Germanic resuscitation, and very

properly terrific.” (Literary Gazette 660) *The Literary Gazette and Journal of the Belle Lettres* reproduced two extracts from the novel contrasting the horror of the eponymous mummy with fashions of the twenty-second century which included turbans of woven glass. John Loudon read this review which encouraged him to evaluate the novel for the *Gardener’s Magazine*. (Loudon “Short Account” xxxiv) Loudon’s review is more interested in the novelist’s imaginative application of steam for powering agricultural and industrial machinery. (Loudon “Hints” 478-479) He comments “The most extravagant and impracticable ideas will sometimes aid in forming new and useful combinations; and it is good to see the subject of scientific invention, and intellectual improvement, pushed to the extreme point, in order to show the absurdities to which every human is liable to give rise.” (Loudon “Hints” 479) Loudon was interested to meet the author and discuss the technological advancements that had been included in the novel, such as, air conditioning, sprung mattresses, a coffee machine, milking machines for dairies, balloon travel and near instantaneous communications. These were original and extrapolative predictions drawing on an interest and knowledge of science.(6) When Jane Loudon starts to write for the *Gardener’s Magazine* this combination of social and scientific observation is evident in her reviews and articles.

<20>Jane Loudon appears to have moved to London and the centre of literary production, soon after her father’s death and although she lacked social standing, not all of her professional associations were gained through her husband.(7) Alan Rauch analyses Loudon’s novel in the context of the “knowledge industry” represented in part by the periodical press, popular learned societies and the encyclopaedia. (Rauch 22) Rauch is interested in speculative fiction and its treatment of a relationship between knowledge and responsibility which could provide a critique of the social and intellectual climate of the early Victorian period. (16) He finds that Jane Loudon explored, in fiction, a world that is blighted by moral decline but that can be restored through rational attitudes to governance and leadership. As part of this she considered the potential role of women as leaders and the advancements they might expect in the future. Science underpinned a utopia which improved the lot of the population across social hierarchies without actually destabilising the social order. (60-95) Rauch sees the novel as an allegory of Regency England, representing the twenty second-century in considerable political turmoil, with the threat of a popular uprising against the crown. (18) *The Mummy* then envisaged order restored through the attainment of morality and integrity in leadership, which was the pivot for middle-class ideology regarding how stable urban society could be assured. The attraction of the novel to John Loudon would have been the narrative’s inherent belief that all social classes will benefit from advancements in science and technology.

<21>During her widowhood, when Loudon was in desperate financial circumstances she did not return to fiction. She capitalised on her opportunity to disseminate horticultural knowledge, but was unable to withstand the vituperative nature of professional journalism. Mumm’s survey of applications made by women to the Royal Literary Fund between 1840 and 1880, including that of Jane Loudon in 1844, challenges the assumption that writing was a professional activity within which men and women could compete on equal terms. Mumm’s analysis identifies lack of formal education as an issue as this would hamper a writer’s opportunity to develop a speciality, produce factual work and have the flexibility to move into either salaried positions that required breadth of knowledge and expertise. Similarly it also appeared very difficult for women to move into editing. The majority of Royal Literary Fund applications were submitted

because of illness, or the need to support other dependents. Moreover these authors were vulnerable to the instability of the financial system and frequently subject to the embezzlement of their funds. (Mumm 37) Other narratives on the application forms detailed the women's inability to continuously produce copy or adapt a previously successful commercial style to new trends in fiction. (40)

<22>As Loudon had stated to Jerdan early in her career, she did not feel competent at bargaining with publishers or dealing with their criticism, stating that "I have no self-esteem when dealing with these circumstances." (Jerdan 332-333) Other women writers reported in their applications that they had made bad bargains as far as selling their copyright was concerned and had become the loser in joint-share publications. (Mumm 42) The day before John Loudon died his wife had been to see his creditors and expressed in his biography her sense of failure in these negotiations. (Loudon "Short Account" xlv) Mumm concluded that despite writing being "precarious and impecunious", women were willing to choose the occupation because with a lack of training or capital, few other middle-class livelihoods were open to them. (Mumm 44)

<23>Horticultural journalism did not differ from any other form of periodical publishing when it came to displays of rivalry between writers and editors. John Loudon's *Gardener's Magazine* came to prominence rapidly and he used it as an editorial mouth piece to criticise the profession, other periodicals and personalities. Loudon was consistently critical of the management of the Horticultural Society and outspoken in his reviews of scholarly publications and other periodicals.(8) His editorials clearly demonstrate that one of the roles of his magazine was to be controversial, stir up debate and draw upon the experience of all practitioners in the field. He certainly came in for his own share of criticism in other publications: for example, Christopher North attacked his ideas on gardener's education in *Blackwood's Magazine* (1834) and this was then reprinted by James Rennie (1787-1867) in the *Magazine of Botany and Gardening, British and Foreign*. (Desmond "Loudon" 88)(9) Rennie's editorial accused Loudon of "shameless, wholesale plagiarisms", "filthy and vulgar language" and "utter ignorance and presumption." (Desmond "Loudon" 89)

<24>The market for gardening publications was extremely volatile. In 1831 Joseph Paxton launched the *Horticultural Register and General Magazine*, edited by himself and another head gardener Joseph Harrison. It used the miscellany model appropriate to horticultural interest that the *Gardener's Magazine* had established, but it was cheaper and impacted on Loudon's sales and income. Loudon responded to the new publication by criticising Chatsworth, where Paxton was the head gardener. (Desmond "Loudon" 85) The two editors battled it out over their personal opinions, particularly on greenhouse design, and accusations of plagiarism. However, the two made up their differences because of respect and interest in one another's professional activities such as Paxton's design and construction of an arboretum at Chatsworth in 1835. Loudon invited him to write an article about his work for the *Gardener's Magazine*. (Colquhoun 60) Loudon needed Paxton's professional support to review the *Arboretum et fruticetum Britannicum*. Moreover, by this time, George Glenny (1793-1874) had become the most contentious and argumentative editor and writer in the horticultural world.

<25>George Glenny had been involved in editing and writing for several other horticultural publications before he published *The Gardeners Gazette and weekly journal of science, literature and general news* in 1837. He did not have a horticultural career outside of journalism, but he was extremely interested and knowledgeable about certain types of floral cultivation and felt it important that those involved in actual gardening work should be served by and have voice in the horticultural press. One of Glenny's main interests was competitive flower shows and he founded The Metropolitan Society of Florists and Amateurs (1832) which became a model for local enthusiasts who began to hold seasonal and genus specific competitions. (Wright 1148) Desmond characterises Glenny's style of writing as employing sarcasm and parody to ridicule competing publications and their editors. (Desmond "Loudon" 81) Glenny often complained about and made fun of Loudon's style of writing but the instance of his irascible and aggressive style which is often cited is his attack on Jane Loudon. In its review of the first issue of the *Horticultural Journal* in 1833 the *Gardener's Magazine* accused Glenny of reproducing plates that had previously been published in the *Lady's Magazine*. Glenny replied to Loudon but criticised his wife in the following fashion:

his old woman is a mischievous beldam, and that the plates in question never appeared anywhere till they were published in the *Horticultural Journal*. We hate old women at the best of times, but a lying old woman is abominable, and the sooner Loudon shakes the hag off the better. (Desmond "Loudon" 90)

<26>Like Loudon, Glenny was able to voice his opinion in such a manner because he was an owner and editor, but he was not so fortunate with his next periodical, which was the weekly publication, the *Gardeners Gazette* (1837-47). Within two years Glenny's battles with Paxton and Lindley meant that he was forced to sell the paper, eventually being replaced as editor by John Loudon in 1840. Glenny's attacks on the Horticultural Society and his invective directed towards its secretary John Lindley had so outraged Paxton that the two of them devised another weekly publication the *Gardener's Chronicle and Agricultural Gazette* (1841) which through its quality and respectability was intended to put Glenny out of business. (Tjaden 75) Glenny fought back through other publications and eventually regained control of the *Gardener's Gazette* through which he continued to criticise Lindley's theoretical rather than practical knowledge of floriculture. Glenny was forced to give up his position as editor and publisher of the *Gardener's Gazette*, once again, in 1847 and from that time on he wrote a gardening column but without the power to voice personal views exactly as he wished. Tjaden describes his essays in the *Gardener's Gazette* as "cogent and imaginative" with "a vividness inevitably lacking in most horticultural journalism." (Tjaden 77) Despite his bankruptcy, experience of law suits and the controversy that surrounded him, Glenny was able to earn his living and support his dependents by his writing.

<27>To alleviate her husband's financial difficulties Jane Loudon edited the *Lady's Magazine of Gardening* (1840), published by William Smith and printed by Bradbury and Evans. This publication did not engage in the style or pursuit of journalism outlined above. Instead it used the approach Loudon would take for her other popular publications. *The Lady's Magazine of Gardening* was a short lived periodical which predated that year's later and more popular and successful book *Gardening for Ladies* (1840). Its most notable features were the range of

material that it presented as relevant to female readers, including international reports; reports on Horticultural Society meetings; contributions by nurserymen on new plants; its adherence to the gardenesque style, including well written articles on realising garden design; the use of female contributors; and its notes and queries column. "Visits to nurseries" became an important feature associating gardening with consumption and fashion.

<28>The character of Loudon's magazine is evident not just in its content but the way letter writers and contributors conceived of its place in the market. In the first volume, for example, a correspondent wrote to say how pleased they were that Jane Loudon was editing the magazine. The writer then set out the qualities that Loudon brought to the new venture. As an editor she was perceived to be in the right vicinity to learn of horticultural news. However, unlike her readers, the correspondent argued, who have "bound themselves, either by accident or choice, to some particular section, order or genus of the science" Jane Loudon had not been "*trained up* in any narrow exclusive path or the science" and therefore could present variety as it is of interest to her and her readers. (Letter "Ladies' Magazine" 103)(10) The correspondent then moved to the point of the letter which was to report on a specimen plant seen in a public office and to suggest that it could have been better and more imaginatively displayed. The magazine offered its female readers the opportunity to contribute to the publication and demonstrate the shared value of appreciating beauty in particular species and instances of plants that they encountered.

<29>Loudon's tone and approach to gardening however, is really only evident in her choice to dispel folklore and "popular errors". In the first issue she responded to a correspondent who inquired about the cultivation of primroses on behalf of "an invalid lady." (Loudon "Ladies' Magazine" 29) The correspondent asked specifically whether it was true that the colour of a primrose could be changed by planting it upside down. The editor replied that there was no accuracy to this popular saying but in the case of roses, gardeners may keep them in pots with their heads down to prevent growth after they have flowered. Rather than dismiss or ridicule the letter writer, Loudon displayed her own knowledge before moving on to instruct regarding the cultivation of wild flowers in the garden. Therefore she constructed a safe environment for amateur gardeners to express their appreciation of flowers, share their innovations, and make particular enquiries about the hundreds of new species being offered by nurseries during this period.

<30>Bradbury and Evans also appeared to find Jane Loudon's name and reputation important for the launching of *The Ladies' Companion: At Home and Abroad* in 1849. By then Loudon had established herself as a successful horticultural writer. Apart from the publication itself, the main source of evidence for Jane Loudon's connection with the magazine comes from Bea Howe's popular biography *The Lady with Green Fingers* (1961) which was written with access to the journals kept by Loudon's daughter Agnes. Mr Evans, according to this source, wrote directly to Loudon asking her to be editor of *The Ladies' Companion* which she started writing in November 1849. Howe is very emphatic about the type of publication that Evans was proposing, referring to it as "a journal for thinking women" which would "act as a medium principally for dealing with contemporary problems written from an enlightened female angle." (Howe 109) From the first issue, 29th December 1849, Jane Loudon's editorial concentrated on education and the cause of working women. The magazine included fiction, Tom Taylor's articles on

governesses, reviews (especially of the theatre), fashion illustrations and illustrated needlework patterns as well as Loudon's tempered but polemic editorials.<sup>(11)</sup> The content of the first issue was reviewed favourably by *The Spectator*. (Howe 113) In Margaret Beetham's assessment the publication was ahead of its time with early contributions from Mary Howitt, Mary Mitford, Geraldine Jewsbury and Eliza Acton's column on household hints and recipes. (Beetham "Ladies' Companion") Sarah Davis also feels that in comparison with the other periodicals available for middle-class women at the time, *The Ladies' Companion* offered readers an alternative due to its use of illustration and the range of different departments which included scientific topics. However, Bradbury and Evans quickly lost confidence in Loudon's ability to edit and attract an audience for the paper.

<31>The initial promising circulation dropped significantly. Bradbury and Evans responded by replacing Horace Mayhew (1816-1872)<sup>(12)</sup> with Tom Taylor as her sub-editor. Taylor had become one of her major contributors, although many of the articles and reviews were being written by Loudon herself. Howe reports that soon after informing Loudon about this change of staff, Evans called on her and proposed that Taylor should be the actual editor although her name would continue on the title page. (Howe 118) Loudon initially agreed but she then made a professional decision swayed by her literary friends. Persuading her to his point of view on the grounds of honour, Professor David Ansted stated that "neither he nor any other of her scientific contributors doing commissioned work for the paper would conclude their articles unless she had full editorial power" and he helped her to compose a letter of resignation. (Howe 118)<sup>(13)</sup> In response, Bradbury and Evans sent a letter threatening to start legal proceedings if she withdrew her name as editor. (Howe 118) She continued for another month until she was officially asked to resign in June and was replaced by Henry F. Chorley of *The Athenaeum*. *The Lady's Companion* then returned to the content and style of older ladies' magazines which Howe proposes it was originally intended to replace.

<32>At the third stage of Loudon's writing career, women were identified as a distinct audience who were being offered the means of constructing a nineteenth-century middle-class identity. (Beetham *Magazine* 12) Women readers were encouraged to participate in a movement away from aristocratic models of aspiration towards the construction of middle-class values and professional ideals. Vicinus sees this belief system valuing work and the participation in public space as "morally redeeming" and necessitating a restructuring of women's lives so that they could attain it. (6) Regarding this audience, Beetham argues that for a magazine to secure and sustain its market "The economic imperative is to be consistent enough to maintain a readership [...] If the reader accepts the position of 'woman' offered by the magazine, she takes on both the role and the character which it defines as womanly." (*Magazine* 12) Jane Loudon had built up a editorial persona through her garden writing in the 1840s one that had been formed in partial contrast with another popular writer, Louisa Johnson the author of *Every Lady Her Own Flower Gardener* (1840). Johnson declared that gardening was suitable for the spinster because it was a distraction to life's disappointments. Loudon on the other hand was the optimistic, knowledgeable and definitely married woman writing from the aspirational suburban home but she could not configure this image so that it would attract readers for *The Ladies' Companion*.

<33>Loudon was very careful in *The Ladies' Companion* to state her adherence to the ideology of separate spheres, affirming that religion and politics were unsuitable subjects for a ladies' magazine. (Loudon *Ladies' Companion* 8) Nevertheless, she regularly raised the plight of working women in her subsequent editorials and articles. The predominant characteristic of commercial magazines for women, during this period, was fashion which was being complemented by an expansion of topics that could be considered relevant to women. To survive the economic conditions of the 1840s, women's magazines reconfigured strategies to serve and construct middle-class mid-century womanhood. These included the advice column, serialised fiction, contributions from readers, biographies of eminent women, and the gradual introduction of practical advice and responses to popular debate all of which appear in *The Ladies' Companion*, but this commercial style culminated in Samuel Beeton's *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* in 1852. In her evaluation of the success of *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, Katherine Hughes concludes that its distinction lies in the way it "puts the reader's experience of herself at its heart" and the definition of womanhood is something that can be improved through rational instruction. (Hughes 162) Samuel Beeton (1831-1877) and his business partner Frederick Greenwood (1830-1909) had a much greater professional understanding of the women's interest market than Jane Loudon. She did not have the professional resources to identify this trend and its commercial potential in order to persuade Bradbury and Evans to allow her to continue and meet the interests of the significantly changed market for middle-class readers in the 1850s. However, in ascertaining Beeton's innovations, Hughes finds that the format and the content he used were pre-existing and she includes *The Ladies' Companion* as part of the group of magazines which influenced him.

<34>Loudon's opportunity to connect with her readers was through the exploration of their common experience in the turbulent intellectual mid-century environment. This gendered audience had not yet grown to warrant a weekly Saturday paper. Moreover, the manner in which women had been able to contribute to public debate on science for a gendered or heterogeneous audience was being dismantled. In order to publish their opinions on natural history, in the late eighteenth-century, women had adopted the familiar format where letters, domestic settings and conversations served as the means by which women could communicate their opinions about scientific subjects without censure. Further conventions such as the maternal teacher, didactic moral tales and botany represented as an improving hobby also emerged from the imperative to protect the respectability of female writing. (Shteir 81) This is the format Jane Loudon employed for *Conversations on Chronology and General History, from the Creation of the World to the Birth of Christ* (1830). It was most definitely rejected by *Gardening for Ladies* (1840) but she returned to the epistolary form to write *The Lady's Country Companion* (1845). Botanical science now moved away from the possibility of discursive female authority, by imposing a standardised text reliant on formal scholastic education, to which most women did not have access. (Shteir 166)

<35>Shteir is more interested in Loudon's work on botany and a book written in 1842, *Botany for Ladies*. Loudon sets out what she describes as a popular introduction (using Lindley's preferred system) to aid plant identification. It completely eschews the familiar format and in particular its maternal narrator. (Shteir 223) The significance of this book for Shteir is that the second edition in 1851 changed the title to *Modern Botany*. The new title dispenses with the address to a gendered audience and the protection that the familiar format had offered female

science writers. Shteir finds Loudon's attitude to education explicit in *The Ladies' Companion*, where science is a regular feature and its editor declared that trained professionals should assume maternal responsibility for female education. (Shteir 223)(14) Moreover, in an essay on women's reading Loudon, perhaps reflecting on her own education, argues that women and men should read the same books.(15) *The Ladies' Companion* began to challenge the precise areas of knowledge that the women's magazine delineated should constitute female education. Shteir interprets this as Loudon's response to mid-century debates on female education advocating the opening up of intellectual space to middle-class women which would prepare them for work should their life experience demand it. (227)

<36>As a working professional writer, Jane Loudon contributed to the mid-century movement towards providing women with marketable skills. She began to contend the ideological struggle for women's rights by raising questions about the existing conditions of work. She considered it her professional responsibility to do so. The inclusion of the debate on the education of young women in *The Ladies' Companion* did not make Loudon an exceptional editor: most popular periodicals covered it in some form or another, but her articles build upon the conception of education that stretched beyond quasi-scientific instruction on domestic management, manners and morals which she had considered in different literary forms. (Hughes 164). Her role as a writer and journalist meant that she was required as a professional to examine how her readers' lives could be improved and enriched, an ethos she promoted at every stage of her career. The context of professionalism makes it possible to understand Jane Loudon's writing as determined by gender and to see the logic of its consistent relationship to debates about education, science and the intellectual life of middle-class women across a range of different forms of commercial writing.

#### Endnotes

(1)This bestselling book was actually written by John Abercrombie, a nurseryman, who borrowed the name of Thomas Mawe, head gardener to the 4th Duke of Leeds. Abercrombie went on to publish a range of popularly received books on different horticultural techniques and specialism.(^)

(2)Significantly, this is the first book for which Jane Loudon, his wife, acted as his amanuensis. (^)

(3)Loudon starts to use this term in the *Gardener's Magazine* from 1832.(^)

(4)This is clearly evident in his architectural design where he was influenced by Sir Uvedale Price (1747-1825). Price also gave great consideration to improvement, taste and beauty in landscape design.(^)

(5)Between her father's death in 1824 and her marriage in 1830 Jane Loudon supported herself through her writing. Publishing a book of poetry, *The Mummy*, and a second novel *Stories of a Bride* as well as being a salaried contributor to the *Literary Gazette* edited by William Jerdan. It

is in this circle that the Loudons could have had mutual friends and have been introduced. Jerdan was the same age as John Loudon, a Scot who had also moved to London to start his professional career. After working on a range of different professional and news orientated publications Jerdan assumed editorship of the *Literary Gazette* in 1817 and remained there until 1850. As a weekly publication the *Literary Gazette* was aimed at a general readership and Jerdan assembled a number of well known contributors including William Blackwood, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Thomas Hood, Walter Scott and the poet Laetitia Landon. Jerdan and Landon were going to act as advisers to Jane Loudon's editorship of *Tabby's Magazine* which they were planning to set up just prior to Jane's marriage and assumption of a different kind of writing career.(^)

(6)I am grateful for discussion with Andy Sawyer, Librarian of the Science Fiction Foundation at the University of Liverpool.(^)

(7)Rauch connects JW Loudon to John Martin and his social set which included Thomas Hood, William Godwin, George Cruikshank and Harrison Ainsworth (Rauch 63). There is also evidence for this in her later connections with the Martin family detailed by Howe's biography. (^)

(8)Desmond notes that in 1828 the Horticultural Society resolved to return an issue of the *Gardener's Magazine* rather than hold it in the library because of the disrespect it had shown to the President. (Desmond "Loudon" 80).( ^)

(9)Christopher North was the pseudonym used by John Wilson (1785-1854) for contributions to *Blackwood's Magazine*.(^)

(10)N.B. within this volume the title changes from singular *Lady* to plural *Ladies*.(^)

(11)Taylor (1817-1880) is best known for his editorship of *Punch* 1874-1880 and his work as a playwright. At this time he was a significant contributor to *Punch* and had taught at the University of London.(^)

(12)Mayhew also contributed to *Punch* and was an early choice for this position (Bradbury and Evans Archive).( ^)

(13)David Thomas Ansted (1814-1880) was appointed Professor of Geology at Kings College London 1840-1853. He was a fellow of the Geological Society from 1838, appointed vice secretary in 1844 and responsible for the *Quarterly Journal of the Geological Society*. He is better known for his popular science articles written for the *Cornhill Magazine*.(^)

(14)Loudon makes this comment specifically in the article 'How Should Girls Be Educated' *The Ladies Companion* 1849 1: 184.(^)

(15)Loudon makes this comment specifically in the article ‘Women’s Books and Men’s Books.’  
*The Ladies’ Companion* 1849 1: 76.(^)

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