

# TEMPLEMAN LIBRARY

## UNIVERSITY OF KENT, CANTERBURY

### SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

## THE CATHERINE CROWE/LARKEN COLLECTION

### INTRODUCTION

Catherine Ann Stevens Crowe (1790-1872) was born in London but spent most of her childhood at Borough Green in Kent. Little is known of her early life until she married Lt Col John Crowe. She was an early advocate of women's educational rights including ladies such as Harriet Martineau among her correspondents. Her other associates reflect Edinburgh and London society in the mid nineteenth century and include Hans Christian Anderson, the artist Jane Loudon, the publisher T. Fields and his wife Annie Adams and many more authors, artists and photographers. She was also deeply interested in the supernatural, in particular spiritualism and the occult. She is mentioned as a prominent spiritualist in the 1871 Yearbook of Spiritualism.

Mrs Crowe wrote a series of novels and articles relating to the supernatural and in 1848 published 'The night side of nature'. This book includes topics such as mesmerism, parapsychology, poltergeists and phrenology. Mrs Crowe described herself as the 'disciple' of George Combe, a prominent phrenologist. The popularity of the book is attested by the fact that it went through three editions in five years. In 1859 Mrs Crowe suffered some form of mental breakdown. This event was well documented by, among others, Charles Dickens. After her illness she wrote very little.

Geoffrey Larken became interested in Mrs Crowe after seeing her name included in Thackeray's party given for Charlotte Bronte. Mrs Crowe was described as a 'ghost fancier'. Although he collected a great deal of material relating to Catherine Crowe, Larken was unable to find a publisher. The material consists of a large number of manuscript notes by Larken as well as photocopies of relevant articles. There are a number of scrapbooks which hold images that were, in some way, connected with Mrs Crowe. Larken also provides copies of letters written by, to or about her. The collection also includes a number of copies of Mrs Crowe's published books which are catalogued onto the opac at the University of Kent ([www.opac.kent.ac.uk](http://www.opac.kent.ac.uk)). The collection was given to the University of Kent in two parts, the first after Geoffrey Larken died and the second after the death of his fellow researcher Mrs Wyn Bergess.

The collection was initially sorted by Charlotte Hodgson and Andrea Booty and catalogued by Sarah Griffin.

## **UKC/CROWEBIO : F191891**

**1970**

2 files containing copies of articles written by Geoffrey Larken relating to Catherine Crowe. Includes several copies of 'Mrs Crowe and the **Loudens**', several copies of 'Rara Avis, the strange story of Mrs Catherine Crowe', 'Rara Avis, an appreciation of Mrs Catherine Crowe, 1790-1872'. 'Second dream of Mrs Catherine Crowe' and 'Mrs Crowe and Corfu'

## **UKC/CROWE/BOOK :F191860**

**1976**

Typescript of the articles 'Mrs Crowe and the **Loudons**' and 'Early Crime Fiction, a claim for Mrs Catherine Crowe' by Geoffrey Larken 1976.

## **UKC/CROWE/PIC : F191856**

**1970**

Album with postcards and cuttings inserted. Each item is numbered and indexed. Includes copy of a postcard of Ramsgate; 21 photographs of Borough Green; postcard of Windermere; photograph of the Albanian mountains seen from Corfu; postcard of Penshurst Place; postcard of Pegwell Bay, Ramsgate; 2 copies of a picture of nos 3 and 5 Porchester Terrace, home of the **Loudons**; copy of a picture of Agnes Loudon; 2 pictures of Albert Smith; painting by Geoffrey Larken of Jane **Loudon**; photograph of a portrait of an unknown gentleman attributed to James Sharples; picture of Mr and Mrs Charles Cowden-Clarke; detail from the painting 'Piccadilly looking towards the City' by Thomas Shotter Boys; copy of a photograph of Mrs Gaskell; postcard of Bristol; picture of Adelaide Ristori, the Italian actress; picture of a 'Literary Lady'; picture of the steam train 'Columbine'; prospectus for a new illustrated edition of 'Traditions of Edinburgh' by Robert Chambers; copy of the dustjacket from 'Charles Dickens' by Una Pope-Hennessy; picture of the Earl of Zetland from the Illustrated London News 1857; picture of Charlotte Bronte; 2 postcards of Germany; postcard of Namur; postcard of Maidstone; picture of Elizabeth Barrett Browning; reproduction of the front cover of 'Lizzy Lockwood'. circa 1970.

## **UKC/CROWEBIO :F191883**

**1970**

1 file containing details of Mrs Crowe's association with the **Loudon** family. Includes a xerox copies from Elizabeth Burton's book 'Early Victorians at home', from 'The Life of Jane **Loudon**'. from a biography of the painter John Martin by Mary Pendered. Also includes some copies of specimens of Mrs **oudons** handwriting and some information on the Trevelyan family.

## **UKC/CROWEBIO : 191889**

**1970**

1 file containing letters written by Catherine Crowe, to her and relating to her. The recipients of letters from Mrs Crowe include Robert and William Chambers, George Combe, Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, William Blackwood, Thomas de Quincey, Lady Holland (Sydney Smith's daughter), John Timbs, Leitch Ritchie, Hans Christian Anderson, James T. Fields, Mr Crosland, Mrs **Loudon**, Mrs Annie Adams Fields, George Routledge, Mr and Mrs Richard Monckton Milnes, Mrs Milner Gibson, Mrs Newton Crosland, Westland Marston and Mrs Helen Brown (wife of Samuel). The writers of letters to Mrs Crowe include George Combe, Richard Bentley and T.C. Newby. The authors and recipients of letters written relating to Mrs Crowe include Sydney Smith, Lieutenant-Colonel John Crowe, Cecilia Combe (wife of George), Mary Mann, Elizabeth Peabody, Geraldine Jewsbury, Jane Carlyle, Thomas Carlyle, Joseph Repes, Sydney Dobell, Kate Barland, Lucy Storrar, Marian Evans, Sara Sophia Hennell, Dr John Conolly, J. R. Russell, John Sanderson. Includes file of photocopies of original letters (F191889 (2)) and file with photocopies and transcripts (F191889 (3))

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