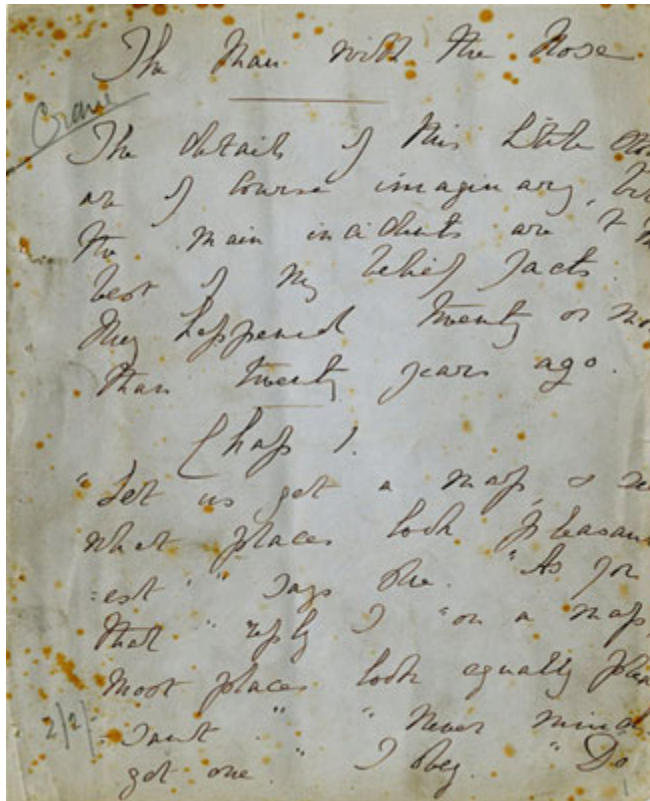


“Rhoda Broughton’s Ghost Stories and the Jack Mooney Collection” by Melissa Edmundson

The Jack Mooney Collection of Rhoda Broughton is an invaluable resource for scholars of Broughton’s literary career and contains excellent primary sources, as well as Mooney’s own carefully collected research materials on the author. While the collection is perhaps most valuable for those interested in her longer fiction, there are several highlights for people studying Broughton’s ghost stories. Possibly of greatest interest in this area is the handwritten manuscript of “The Man with the Nose” (1872). The pages are in very good condition, and Broughton’s notoriously difficult handwriting is clear and legible, presumably because this copy is the one she sent to *Temple Bar*. Mooney’s own note about the manuscript’s provenance appears on one of his transcribed Broughton letters to her publisher, George Bentley (1828-1895), son of Richard Bentley (1794-1871).



Mooney Collection of Rhoda Broughton, University of South Carolina Libraries

Also of importance to scholars are Mooney’s transcriptions of Broughton’s letters to Bentley, which span her literary career. As previously mentioned, Broughton’s handwriting is difficult to read (she herself even comments on it in a few of the letters), and these transcriptions, representing numerous hours of work on Mooney’s part, make it easier for researchers to more quickly find details regarding Broughton’s publishing career, as well as correspondences with friends and family, before trying to decipher the originals at the British Library and various other archives in Britain and America.

In this group, scholars of Broughton’s ghost stories will find particularly interesting a series of letters from August – October 1872 in which she discusses the creation of her most famous collection of ghost stories, *Tales for Christmas Eve*, originally published in 1873 and republished under the more well-known title, *Twilight Stories*, in 1879. This collection includes perhaps the most frequently

anthologized Broughton ghost story, “The Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing but the Truth,” “The Man with the Nose,” “Behold it was a Dream,” “Poor Pretty Bobby,” and “Under the Cloak,” with the latter story being more of a mystery than a supernatural tale. Mooney has also included a detailed bibliography of stories that appeared in *Temple Bar*, with the following information on the above tales:

Tales for Christmas Eve (1873) or Twilight Tales (1879).

All these stories – ghost, mystery, terror, supernatural, etc. – appeared originally in Temple Bar Magazine both signed and unsigned.

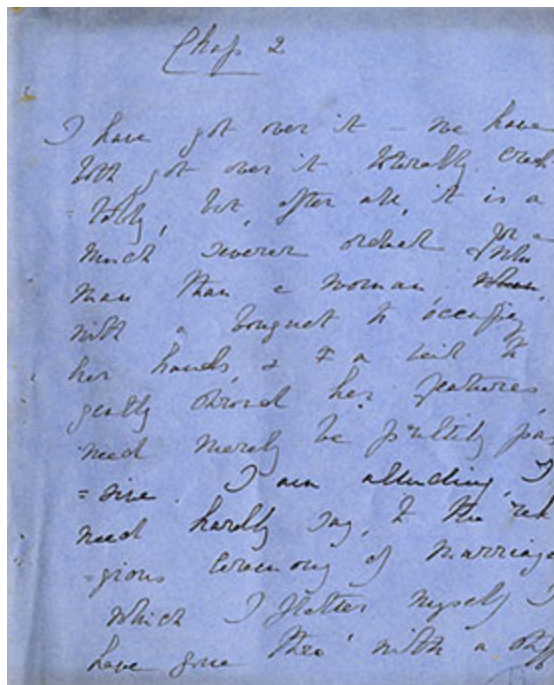
“The Truth, the whole Truth, and Nothing but the Truth.” By the Author of Cometh Up as a Flower. T.B. Feb. 1868. pp. 340-348.

“The Man with the Nose.” By Rhoda Broughton, Author of “Cometh up as a Flower.” T.B. Oct. 1872, pp. 328-342.

“Behold, It Was a Dream!” [published anonymously!] T.B. Nov. 1872. pp. 503-516.

“Poor Pretty Bobby.” By Rhoda Broughton. T.B. Dec. 1872. pp. 61-78.

“Under the Cloak.” By Rhoda Broughton. T.B. Jan. 1873. pp. 205-212.



Mooney Collection of Rhoda Broughton, University of South Carolina Libraries

Fans of Broughton’s ghost stories might be surprised to find that she, for the most part, did not enjoy writing these stories as much as her novels, and apparently had periods of genuine frustration and supernatural writer’s block, so to speak, in trying to find ideas for stories to fill out the collection. For instance, in the 9 October 1872 letter, she vows to not “fritter myself away in any more short tales.” And even more vehemently declares in an 18 October letter, “I loathe these little nasty short tales & will never be guilty of another.” The following transcripts from the Mooney Collection offer a fuller picture of Broughton’s creative struggles – her decreasing interest in the ghost stories, coupled with an increasing frustration in writing them:

Aug 9, 1872
Upper Eyarth
Ruthin

Dear Sir:

Do you remember the short ghost story I once wrote, & which was rather successful? Suppose I write a little tale about the same length for the magazine how much would you be inclined to give me for it. You gave me 6. for the ghost story; but I was not nearly so well known a story writer then, & I certainly do not think it would be worth while making the effort, for which I am very much disinclined for that sum.

Send me a line by return.

Yours truly
R. Broughton

Aug 13, 1872
Upper Eyarth

Dear Sir

I accept your terms, and will send the story the end of this week by post. When can it appear? The sooner the better, as far as I am concerned. It were really told me as facts.

Have you got an old Temple Bar I think Febry 1868 to send me as I want a copy of my ghost story, "The Truth, the Whole Truth & Nothing but the Truth." If I write one or two more short ones, would it be worthwhile reprinting them in a little vol.

Yours truly
R Broughton

Aug 18, 1872
Upper Eyarth
Ruthin

Dear Sir

I am rather surprised at not having a word from you in answer to my last. Do you wish to have my little story or not? Because if not, I shall of course send it to some other Magazine.

Please send a line in answer.

Yours truly
R.B.

Aug 72
Upper Eyarth
Ruthin

Dear Sir

It must be October or not at all. Do not take it unless you really wish for it, as no doubt I could get it easily inserted elsewhere. I will not send it until I hear again from you.

I am afraid the two tales together would not nearly make a vol. However, no doubt I could easily write a third to fill up, if you think it worth while....

[Goes on to mention a story a friend sent her.]

Aug. 24, 1872
Upper Eyarth
Ruthin

Dear Sir

I am sending "The Man with the Nose" to the printers today.* I should be very glad to know how much more matter will be needed to make the vol? I wish you would tell me as soon as you can.

I have told my friend to send her little tale to your address at Tenby?

I still keep to my original intention of bringing out my new novel at once without passing thro' Temple Bar.

Yours truly,
R. Broughton

**Note alongside first paragraph in Mooney's handwriting says, "Fair copy (undoubtedly referred to here) in my collection."*

Sept 1, 1872
Upper Eyarth
Ruthin

Dear Sir

My idea of the little vol. is a Xmas book of ghost & dream stories etc. I think about 4 ought to fill it. My old first story & the "Man With The Nose" will do for two. I have not heard of the arrival of the latter at the printer, but I hope it is all right....

[Praises the latest edition of *Temple Bar*, and thanks Bentley for publishing her friend's story.]

Sept 18, 1872
Upper Eyarth
Ruthin

Dear Sir

Could not the little Vol be quite a little one – less than one of the Goodbye ones? I will think of a title. I have got a really horrible dream and murder story, of which I heard the facts in my childhood ready to send you when written out fair. It is called "Behold it was a Dream." Have you got a copy of my old story "The Truth, The Whole Truth & Nothing but the Truth?" If you have, could you, when you get "Behold it was a Dream" make the printers reckon how much copy it with the two others will make. I am really at my wits end for a 4th. I have got not a bad one of burglary in my head but I could not swear that it had not already been in print, tho' I heard it from a person & did not read it in a book. I think I must risk it. I am dying to have done with these short tales, to return to "Nancy" who is my new heroine....

[Goes on to mention various other things not related to above.]

Sept. 22 (ca.) 1872
Doddington Hall

Dear Sir:

Do you like "Poor Pretty Bobby, & other Tales" or "Behold it was a Dream, & other Tales." I have given up the idea of the burglar story as it was universally known.

Do let it be quite a little volume. It cant make much odds to you, & I certainly cant dig out more than one other tale. I am going to call it "Poor Pretty Bobby." It is about another curious dream.

Oct 3, 1872
Upper Eyarth
Ruthin

Dear Sir:

“Behold it was a Dream” goes to you today; send me a line, to say whether it arrives safely....

Oct. 5, 1872
Upper Eyarth

Dear Sir:

Oddly enough, I was told last night a most curious incident that happened in a railway carriage. It will be but short, but still will make a fifth story, if you persist in wishing for one; which I think rather greedy of you! In this case it could come out in Jan ry Temple Bar & the book appear before Xmas. What do you say. Send me a line by return & I will scribble it off to you.

Yours truly
R Broughton

Oct 9, 1872
Upper Eyarth
Ruthin

Dear Sir:

I hope “Behold it was a Dream” will come out next month. Have you yet read it? I hope in another 10 days, to send you “Poor Pretty Bobby” which will be rather nice, I think, &, like the others, founded on fact. You will then have your stories in all. I hope they will make the little volume, as I had much rather get back to “Nancy” than fritter myself away in any more short tales.

Yours truly
R Broughton

Oct 13, 1872
Upper Eyarth
Ruthin

Dear Sir:

Since you leave the decision to me, I must decide – at the risk of seeming disobliging or not writing a fifth tale. I cant see why the 4 should not form a nice little vol. They would

make 15 chapters – little ones certainly, but still 15. Moreover I have no materials & less inclination (if possible) for a 5th, and 50 guineas is not worth making any very violent effort for. I do so wish to get back to “Nancy” & I wonder you do not see that it is your own interest too that I should.

You never say a word good or bad of “Behold it was a Dream.” I was rather pleased with my last effort “Poor Pretty Bobby” which is the best of the lot.

When will the vol appear?

Yours truly
R Broughton

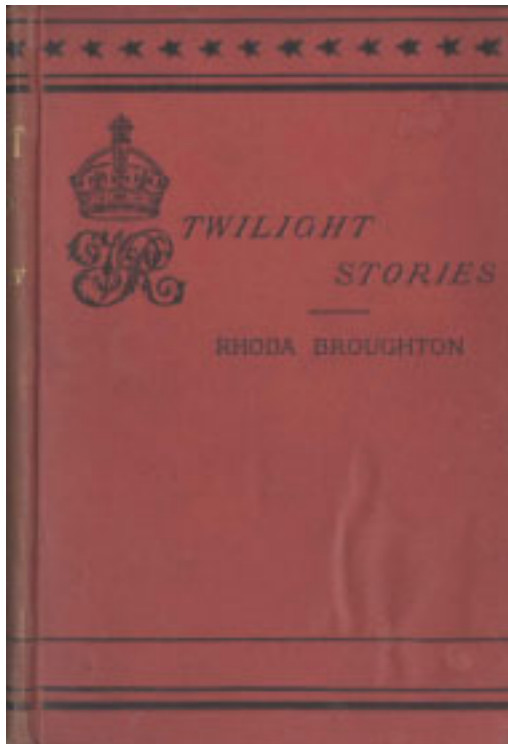
Oct 18, 1872
Upper Eyarth
Ruthin

Dear Sir:

Thank you for the cheque for £14.14., which arrived this morning. I see by your resolute silence that you dislike “Behold it was a Dream.” How soon can the little vol. appear. “Poor Pretty Bobby” shall go to you on Sunday or Monday, & I will follow it up with the 5th which will be very short in a few days. As far as I am concerned, it might come out as you originally proposed the middle of November. I shall not I feel sure finish Nancy for two years; I am only in the 3rd chapter, but I think if I can work it out, I have got hold of a more lovable character than poor Lenore.

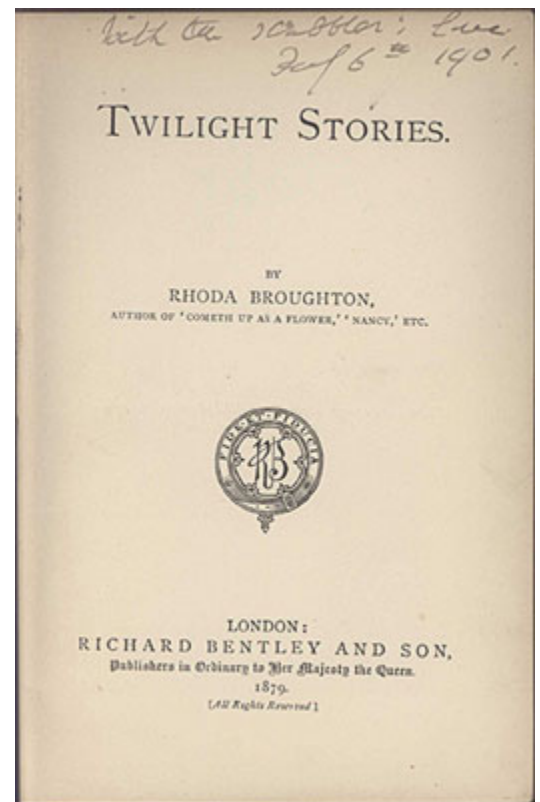
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Yours truly
R Broughton

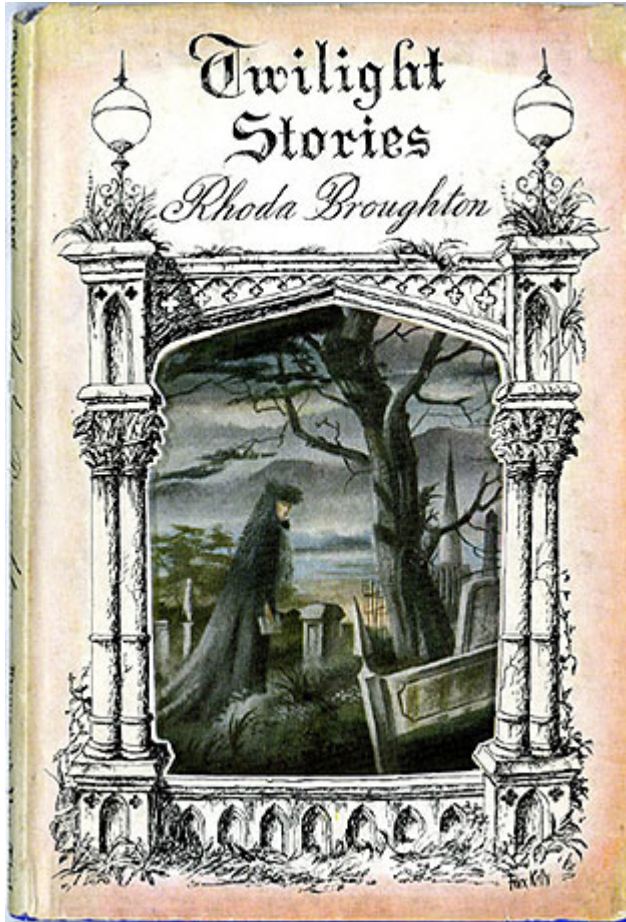


Mooney Collection of Rhoda Broughton,
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The Mooney Collection also contains the very rare first edition of *Twilight Stories* (1879), made even more unique by the fact that Mooney's copy is inscribed on the title page by Rhoda Broughton, "With the scribbler's love. Feb 6th 1901."



There is also the 1947 edition, complete with pictorial dust jacket, published in London by Home and Van Thal.



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