

# Ellen Fenton Diaries of Travels to Boulogne-sur-Mer

MSS 28



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compiled by Julia Lum; edited by Francis Lapka

2013

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## Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	3
Requesting Instructions .....	3
Administrative Information .....	3
Conditions Governing Access .....	3
Conditions Governing Use .....	3
Biographical / Historical .....	4
Scope and Contents .....	5
Bibliography .....	6
Arrangement .....	7
Collection Contents .....	8
<b>Diaries</b> .....	8
Selected Search Terms .....	26

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## Collection Overview

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**CALL NUMBER:** MSS 28

**CREATOR:** Fenton, Ellen, b. ca. 1813

**TITLE:** Ellen Fenton Diaries of Travels to Boulogne-sur-Mer

**DATES:** 1854-1862

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 1.5 linear feet (10 volumes)

**LANGUAGE:** The diaries are in English, with some French.

**SUMMARY:** The collection comprises illustrated manuscript diaries of Ellen Fenton of Haven Green House, Ealing, which chronicle her summer family vacations to Boulogne-sur-Mer, 1854-1862, in nine volumes.

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## Requesting Instructions

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Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.      box

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## Administrative Information

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### Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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### Conditions Governing Use

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## Biographical / Historical

Ellen Fenton was born Ellen Emmett in the Parish of Hillingdon, County of Middlesex, circa 1813. She was baptized July 22, 1813, the youngest daughter of Reverend W.J. (Wiltshire John) Emmett, M.A., fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, and Rector of Latimer, Buckinghamshire and Elizabeth Emmett (née Smith). Reverend W.J. Emmett, only son of John Emmett of St. Albans, was born at Redbourne, Hertfordshire in 1770 and was married to Elizabeth Smith (born 1776) of Watford on January 5, 1800. The Emmetts had four children in addition to Ellen: Caroline (born ca. 1804), John (born ca. 1805), Elizabeth (born 1810), Maurice (born ca. 1816). The family moved from Latimer to Hillingdon some time between 1805 and 1810, and later resided at Cran Hill House, near Bath. Caroline married E.H. Green, Esq. and Elizabeth (nicknamed "Lizzie" in Fenton's journal) married Lieutenant Colonel Russel of the Royal Artillery. John F. Emmett attended Trinity College, Cambridge and authored several publications. One such publication, *One Hundred Chess Games Played at Boulogne-sur-mer*, may have been co-authored with Fenton's son, Francis "Vivian" Fenton. John Emmett survived his wife, Caroline, who died at Boulogne-sur-Mer in 1857 at the age of 43. Maurice Emmett became Captain of the Buck Militia and the Northamptonshire Regiment (48th Foot). A large watercolour dating to c. 1841-44 and formerly in the Regimental collection of the Northamptonshire Museum depicts Captain Emmett riding his horse "fireworks", possibly in Gibraltar, where the company was stationed from 1838-1844. In 1856, he married Jemima Horstman, widow of John Horstman, esq. of Thames Ditton house. Maurice and Jemima Emmett, who was fifteen years his senior, lived at Thames Ditton House until their deaths in 1868, leaving no successors. They were interred in Petersham, Surrey with Reverend W.J. Emmett, who died in 1860, and Elizabeth Emmett, who died in 1865.

The Emmett family may have been related to the Irish rebel Robert Emmet, leader of the United Irishmen who initiated an unsuccessful uprising against the English in 1802. Ellen Fenton herself insinuates the connection in 1860, when she describes meeting a group of Irish steamship passengers: "I said I was an Emmett, when one answered, 'God bless your holy name, Miss,' which speech so affected me, I kept it a secret. They both said if Emmett had lived, Ireland would not be what it was" (92). The diarist and friend of the Fentons, John Allen Giles, suggested the same: "She was previously Miss Emmett, of the same Irish family as the young man of that name who was hanged for high treason early in the reign of George III" (565). W.J. Emmett cannot be located within this line of descent, as it was recorded by Dr. Thomas Addis Emmet in The Emmet family, however the name Maurice (or Morrice) Emmet, "His Majesty's Bricklayer" and wealthy landowner in Middlesex County, dates back to 1687 (152), and the Emmett's second son was perhaps named after this distant relation.

On May 2, 1839, Ellen Emmett married John Fenton, Esq. at St Swithin's Parish Church in Walcot, Bath, in the presence of their families (see marriage certificate, vol. 10). They were married by J.L. Wolley, Lieutenant of the 74th regiment, who was likely the father of Ellen Fenton's childhood friend, "Fanny" Crawford. The Fentons gave birth to their first child, Clara Leycetter ("Cara," "Care" or "Nell") ca. 1841 in London. From 1841 to 1854, the Fentons had eight more children: John Adolphus ("Dick"), Francis M. P. ("Vivian" or "Viv"), Evelyn M. ("Dall"), Florence May Revell ("May" or "Mama"), Horace W. R., Anna H. ("Deeny"), Frederick A. R. ("Fred" or "Tinny"), and Henry John Horstman ("Baby," "Hal" or "Titchet"). The Fenton's youngest, Henry, became a Cambridge-trained chemist and is remembered as the inventor of "Fenton's reagent," used to oxidize and destroy contaminants in waste water.

At some point between 1844 and 1846 the family moved to Kingsteignton, Kent region. By 1851, the family was living in Kensington Town district, registered in the Ecclesiastical parish of St. James (1851 census). This seems to have only been temporary, as the family settled in Ealing, Middlesex (Christchurch Parish) the following year, where they resided for the duration of the journal's recorded period. Their home, Haven House, was located at Haven Green, at the north end of Ealing village and within close proximity to the developing high street between Ealing Green and Uxbridge Road, opposite Ashton House. When the Fentons settled in Ealing, it was increasingly seen as a place where affluent Londoners could take up suburban residence, although Fenton more than once refers to her "country" lifestyle in England. The house was also close to the Great Western Railway station (opened in 1838), later called Ealing Broadway, which served much of the northern part of the parish and encouraged settlement in the north end of the village. The Fentons led a lifestyle typical of the Victorian middle class. They had two to three servants in their employ in the 1850s and 1860s, usually consisting of a nurse to assist with childrearing and at least one

domestic servant to do other household chores. John Fenton is listed as gentry in both *Mason's Court Guide and General Directory* of 1853 and *Kelly's Post Office Directory* of 1855.

At the time of his marriage, John Fenton ("Appa") was listed as Gentleman, residing at Hart Street in Bloomsbury Square (parish of St. George). He was a wine merchant based at 35 Crutched Friars from 1836-40. In 1841, he relocated his business, "John Fenton & Co.", to 79 Mark Lane, where it remained until 1868. On August 27, 1869, John Fenton declared bankruptcy and Ellen Fenton is listed as a Trustee in a deed that arranges to surrender the business to James Wilson Sharp and Robert Henderson. Ellen Fenton was to pay £1,500 to Sharp and Henderson, who maintained the name "John Fenton & Co." The company name may well have continued into the twentieth century, as two letters from "John Fenton & Co., Wine Merchants, (Fenchurch St, London)" are in the papers of the late Sir Winston Churchill (Churchill College, Cambridge).

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## Scope and Contents

Illustrated manuscript diaries of Ellen Fenton of Haven Green House, Ealing, which chronicle her summer family vacations to Boulogne-sur-Mer. The volumes consist of a combination of modern laid and wove papers (the 1854 – 1856 volumes bound in marbled wrappers; 1857-1862 in plain beige wrappers). They are written in English, with portions in French, in sepia or black ink, recto and verso. The diaries are interspersed with approximately 173 pages of watercolor drawings. A small number of play bills, receipts, programs, clippings, letters and other ephemera are affixed to select pages.

Fenton's journal, a record of her time at Boulogne, was intended for the eyes of her friend, Mrs. Ibotson, her daughter Geraldine Ibotson, who accompanies the family in 1860, and her own children: "As this journal is written for my dear children to read, in mature years, I must not forget to tell them, how unfailingly I found a long quiet period, to pray for the blessing we can dare ask, upon our poor paltry lives, for the sake of our Saviour." (1860, pages 2-3). Fenton and her children typically arrived in Boulogne-sur-Mer in August, and stayed for a fortnight to one month. Annual seaside holidays were typical amongst the Victorian middle classes, and the Fentons socialized with several other English families sojourning at Boulogne-sur-Mer, including members of the Emmett family. John Emmett resided at the Chateau du Preville, in the Vallée du Nacre, while Elizabeth Russel (née Emmett) vacationed in Boulogne with her daughters, 'Minnie,' 'Janie,' and 'Ada' in 1857. The annual family holiday allowed unprecedented freedom for Fenton and her children, whose independence might have been perceived as improper in an English environment. She laments on her departure from Boulogne in 1857: "My heart sinks... as I make this passage back to England. I feel I must again tutor myself, for the sobrieties of life... but I have a prevailing sentiment of coming to a land of severe surveillance over cheerful feeling" (Volume 6, 217). Fenton prides herself and her children for being "unconventional," a quality she more than once expresses as lacking in her husband's character. Aided by her fluency in French, Fenton blends with all levels of French society; she makes daily trips to the market, weaves in and out of Catholic processions, attends Church services and local award ceremonies, and takes her children on excursions to dungeons, ruins, and monuments.

Fenton's accounts are most vivid in their account of dress and comportment, which she describes in painstaking detail, sparing no rank of Boulogne society. Actors, dancers, society women, Parisian dandies, military men, the clergy, market women, fish mongers, peasants, and fellow English travelers are characterized with minute scrutiny. Although she ventures outside the milieu of English company, her journals are also a valuable record of the venues of English sociability: the Hotel Folkstone, Hotel du Rhin, Hotel Meurice, Hotel du Nord, The Etablissement, The Tintilleries, and the Protestant church. With the debut of her eldest daughters, Fenton's descriptions of the Etablissement and Tintilleries Balls grows more attentive, as do her humorous lampooning of potential suitors – both English and French. Despite her willingness to mock all levels of society, Fenton reserved her most caustic critiques for the clergy, and the views of her journal repeatedly express an intolerance of Catholic beliefs and activities, all the while exhibiting a prurient curiosity. As her father was likely the Rev. W.J. Emmett that published *Scriptural Doctrines Called Calvinistic* in 1835, it is possible that Ellen Fenton was a Calvinistic Methodist. She takes opportunities to preach to the local Boulogne population, denouncing Catholic ritual and extolling the virtues of Protestant belief. She is especially perturbed by groups of English Catholic converts, whom she labels "perverts." Despite this discriminatory lens, Fenton's journals nevertheless preserve lively accounts

and illustrations of the religious processions, including the annual procession of the Virgin's statue on the first Monday in August, a tradition which began the year of their visit in 1854.

As her daughters come of age, Fenton becomes increasingly preoccupied with their courtship of potential suitors. She often acts as their proxy, especially in circumstances where language is a barrier (none of her children speak French) or if she takes particular liking to a young man (see "Julian" of 1857). According to Fenton, her eldest daughters were the belles of Boulogne. This claim may not be over-exaggerated, as Rafe Neville Leycester, a young man whose diaries chronicle the trials and tribulations of the London marriage market, seems to be smitten with "Dally Fenton" of Ealing. He also describes a party at which Clara is "one of the swells of the room" (Leycester 19). Fenton is less concerned with the affairs of her eldest boys, 'Dick' (Adolphous) and 'Vivian' (Francis), who are absent from Boulogne in later volumes. Leycester's journal provides a glimpse of Fenton's thoughts on her eldest son, Dick: "Mrs Fenton talked to me a long time about Dick & his affairs, saying that he was naturally of a most sweet & angelic disposition, but that his "father's persecution" had ruined him... From what I have seen of Dick he does not appear a bad sort of fellow, but considering the position of his affairs lives most extravagantly, travelling always first class, running up bills at Hotels etc." (Leycester 17).

In addition to their minute description of courtship and custom, Fenton's journals also capture the changing social and physical geographies of Boulogne-sur-Mer. Fenton's journals begin as a new spirit of cooperation emerges between the French and British at the outbreak of the Crimean War (1853-1856). During the war, Boulogne-sur-Mer was a strategic military post because of its position on the northern coast of France. Fenton's 1854 journal is preoccupied with descriptions of the soldiers who assemble at all hours outside their rented house, and she makes note of 'ambulances' that carry wounded and dying soldiers to nursing stations. This volume provides an eyewitness account of the official visit of Prince Albert and Emperor Louis Napoleon III to Boulogne, who arrive to inspect the Baltic expeditionary corps before it embarks. While her subsequent journals are written during periods of peace, they sometimes register tension between the English and French vacationers at Boulogne, which is perhaps the result of strained diplomatic relations between the two nations (see Volume 8, 1860). Fenton also witnesses architectural developments such as the construction of the Notre Dame Basilica (built between 1827 and 1875, see Lottin, 307-309), and the addition of a bell to the cathedral.

In 1860 or 1861, the Fentons lost their child, Horace W.R. Fenton, whose memory is invoked in the 1862 journal. It is not certain whether Ellen Fenton returned to Boulogne after 1862, but there is a certain tone of finality in this last journal volume. Florence M.R. Fenton ("May") passed away in 1866 (England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index); her illness could account for Fenton's melancholic disposition in the final volume. By 1879, John Fenton had remarried, as indicated by John Allen Giles, friend of the Fentons: "Ellen and I spent the evening at the house of Mr and Mrs Fenton 55 Grande Rue. We had known him 20 years, and like his former wife, when they were living at Ealing, very much. She was a most clever and agreeable woman..." (565). Based on Giles's account and the bankruptcy notice, Ellen Fenton either died or divorced John in the period between 1870 and 1878.

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## Arrangement

The nine volumes of diaries are in chronological order, followed by two loose diary fragments.

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## Collection Contents

### Diaries

b. Vol. 1

**Diary**

*1 volume (128 pages); 19 pages of watercolor drawings; 1 funeral notice; 1 playbill; 32.5 x 20.5 cm.*

Fenton, Ellen, b. circa 1813

Holograph diary describing Ellen Fenton's family vacation at Boulogne-sur-Mer, 1857. Includes nineteen pages of watercolor drawings of local people, scenery and landscapes, all of which illustrate journal descriptions. Inscribed on the verso of the front cover: "Mrs. Fenton / Haven Green House / Ealing / London". Also includes playbill for the 'opera comique' *Les Diamans de la Couronne*, and a funeral announcement. A watercolor of "Kitty Kirby" in miniature style, as well as sketches of peasant women, represent Fenton's best abilities as a watercolorist.

Fenton begins this volume with a description of the family's steamship journey to Boulogne-sur-Mer, with their servants Alicia and Margaret. Her husband John and son "Viv" stay behind to rejoin the family in France in a couple of days. From the outset, Fenton exhibits an obstinate self-sufficiency, particularly apparent during an altercation with a porter who attempts to carry off a hamper of provisions that Fenton intended for her cabin. "Women should never interfere with men who knew their work" she reports the porter saying, so "giving up my last straw of courtesy, I assumed the 'spoke up' tone, and said, he should not touch another trunk till he gave it up." (p. 3). Aboard the steamship, Fenton and her young son Dick spend the night admiring the view along the Thames.

As the steamer approaches Boulogne, Fenton notices the soldier's camp – a "new feature since I was there" and the result of the Crimean War. Fenton leaves her party amidst the bustling custom house shed, including her awestruck maids "who seemed turned to stone... watching groups of knitting fisherwomen," while she and Dick search for lodgings. She meets a Mrs. Eliza Jeremie who assists in finding lodging at the house of a Monsieur Lapet, near the Church of St. Nicolas. Fenton takes care to describe the house and all of its rooms: the living room with a large balcony, two back bedrooms used as nurseries, a dressing room in the front for Fenton and "Baby" (Henry), and rooms for each of Clara, "Appa", and "the boys". The attic room with single skylight, occupied by maid Alicia, is colorfully nicknamed "Blue Beard's closet." Dick delights in watching the soldiers at their guard house at the back of St. Nicolas Church. Eliza Jeremie takes Fenton to see Mons. Perrin's Dancing Academy, and Fenton delights in the ballroom and variety of costumes, seeing fit that her eldest daughter Clara take lessons. Fenton also goes to see a performance by Auguste Desailly, a blind pianist whom Fenton learns about from a local newspaper. Fenton strikes up a friendship with Desailly, who provides piano lessons to Dick. In addition to dancing and music performances, Fenton includes numerous descriptions of the Theatre, producing not only plot synopses but also describing costume, set, and social atmosphere. In this volume, she reports attending performances of the *Barber of Seville* and *Les Diamants de La Couronne*. On September 24, 1854 (two days after the Fentons departed France), Boulogne's new theatre, which had been erected by the architect of the Colonne de la Grande Armée, caught fire and was destroyed. Napoleon III was purportedly present in Boulogne in late September and watched as firemen attempted to quell the flames. Four years later, he was present to inaugurate the laying of the first brick for the new building (Splingard 22-23).

Numerous descriptions of soldiers through this volume provide a glimpse into civilian impressions of military life and activities at Boulogne during the outset of the Crimean conflict. There are several descriptions of the dress, and comportment of the cent gardes, who arrive in Boulogne, with "helmets and breastplates and polished steel" in anticipation of the Emperor's official visit

1854 August 23-  
September 14



that summer. While impressed by the spectacle, Fenton much prefers "the old Imperial guard." Fenton brings her family to the soldier's camps, particularly the Honvault Camp, which provide ample opportunities for sketching. Seeking out "cartridge paper, little nails, that they call 'punesse'... and drawing paper," and obtaining permission from the Police, Fenton sets out to sketch the soldiers at their camp – eating, conducting drills, at mass – and notes their equal fascination with her work: "What was our amazement, when they... themselves in two long rows, several deep, shoulder to shoulder, to overlook my painting!" (30).

Fenton is witness to the historic visit of Prince Albert and Emperor Louis Napoleon to Boulogne in early September, 1854, reported in contemporary British periodicals (see *Illustrated London News*). Meeting at Paris, Albert and Louis Napoleon III made an official visit to inspect the Northern French camps. The British had recently allied with France against Prussia, and the official meeting marked a turning point in diplomatic relations between the once-hostile powers. On the 5th of September, the family boards the Albion steamship to watch the Prince and Emperor's arrival. Fenton, placed up on a high point, thinks she sees the Prince look in her direction as the local crowd cheers. Fenton judges the Emperor as "dreadfully, painfully cunning" in contrast to the Prince's demure "flush, that made him look just like [Franz Xaver] Wintershalter's picture, taken before his marriage" (47). In addition to military processions and official ceremony in connection with the war, Fenton also witnesses invalid soldiers carried in "Ambulances" (see drawing), "said to have cholera" (13). Infectious diseases, cholera principle among them, claimed more British, French, and Russian soldiers' lives than fatal wounds during the 1854-1856 period of the Crimean war (Gill and Gill 1801).

Fear of the recent cholera outbreak seems to preoccupy Fenton's discussions of her family's illnesses. Her servant, Margaret, falls ill frequently, and among her children, Dick falls especially ill. "Everyone says the Cholera is raging, and I have a sense of constant responsibility, when I notice that the lower part of our house seems very badly drained" (84). Fenton treats her children and servants with homeopathic remedies in the form of "globules." Despite her fears of cholera, Fenton doesn't seem to fear venturing out of doors. With her familiarity of French idiom, Fenton is quite at ease making the acquaintance of Boulogne locals. She particularly admires independent spirit in certain Boulogne women, especially the spirited Marie Fournier. Market women and "porteuses" girls also seem to serve Fenton's penchant for portrait sketches. She forms an attachment with a young porteuse, Josephine, as well as staff at a hotel she discovers during one of her daily wanderings. During Prince Albert's visit, she also finds herself amongst a crowd of sailors: "matelots and matelottes... in full costume," who crowd around her with questions.

Fenton and her family take frequent trips to the "sands" and to the "bains." Boulogne was popular for its baths since the late eighteenth-century, when M. Clery de Becourt, following a voyage to Italy where he had visited many 'établissements de bains de mer,' resolved to create a similar warm-water bathing établissement (Spingard 10). On occasion, the Fentons hire a carriage to take them on country drives, which causes Fenton to reminisce about her childhood days in Boulogne. One long excursion to the Vallée du Nacre for the day results in a lengthy description of the outing, the farms they visit, the rustic scenery and picnic lunch. This outing also provides many sketching opportunities for Fenton, who draws not only the local peasant women but also the visiting bourgeois strollers (see drawings, this volume). Fenton demonstrates remarkable calm when the family is stranded for a few hours while waiting for a coach to bring them to Boulogne at day's end.

A community of English sojourners in Boulogne are frequently mentioned as part of the family's daily social calls: Mr. and Mrs. Newte, John and Caroline Emmett, Caroline and Charles Venables, and Mr. and Mrs. Burton. Particularly humorous

incidences involve Mrs. Burton, who lands on the Fentons' doorstep expecting lodging, and who can't seem to escape Fenton's sardonic characterizations.

Subjects:

Cholera  
Crimean War, 1853-1856

Genres / Formats:

Diaries  
Travel sketches -- France  
Watercolors (paintings)

Geographic Names:

Boulogne-sur-Mer (France) -- Description and travel  
Boulogne-sur-Mer (France) -- Views

Names:

Albert, Prince Consort, consort of Victoria, Queen of Great Britain,  
1819-1861  
Fenton, Ellen, b. circa 1813 -- Diaries  
Napoleon, Emperor of the French, III, 1808-1873

b. Vol. 2

**Diary**

*1 volume (102 pages); 14 pages of watercolor drawings; 1 receipt; c. 32.5 x 20.5 cm.*  
Fenton, Ellen, b. circa 1813

1854 September  
14-22

Continuation of Ellen Fenton's holograph diary detailing her family vacation at Boulogne-sur-Mer, 1854. Includes fourteen pages of watercolor drawings of local people, scenery and landscapes, all of which illustrate journal descriptions. Also includes one receipt for "Lemoisson-Desille, Porcelaine, Cristaux, et Verrerie." Inscribed on back cover: "Written by Ellen Fenton, Haven Green House, Ealing, London, 1854."

Volume 2 picks up Fenton's journal in mid-September of 1854, with a discussion of the cholera outbreak. She has "heard the four people died last night, of cholera, in one house, a few doors off" (p. 1). Fenton and her family witness several funeral processions, and there is steady activity at the nearby St. Nicolas church. Fenton takes her children on several visits to the church, where she is struck by the number of coffins. She remarks, "The whole was terrifying, and... when it burst over me, that as no one was there, no doubt they went on to the side altar, because it would be dangerous to stay so near the coffins" (4). Fenton takes great care in describing the priests, their dress, the altar decoration, and choir boys. The scene seems to capture Fenton's active imagination, for soon after, she spends a sleepless night convinced that the sound of heavy knocking coming from the direction of the church is a cholera victim trapped alive in one of the coffins. "I resolved to take a blanket - but then - what should I do? If he had died of Cholera, who would open their Doors to him? Of course, I ought to bring him here, out on the drawing room sofa, until day, I ought to give him hot drinks" (6). She learns the next day that a soldier had been arrested and locked up in the vaults beneath the church because it was too late to bring him to the citadel to be imprisoned.

Despite the frequent funeral services opposite their house, Fenton does not dwell on gloomy subjects. She turns to more lighthearted matters, such as the purchase of music scores for Clara ("Les Noces de Jeannette" and "Cours mon Aiguille") as well as light-hearted descriptions of her son, Dick, in his various sentinel costumes of ribband, giving salutations to passing officers (see accompanying drawing). She brings her family to hear the Guide band perform at the colonnade, including a colorful account and a sketch of the scene. Her reports of dress and costume range from rote description to witty derision. Upon her note of some "extravagantly fashionable dress, upon very ugly women," she singles out one

particular woman, "wonderfully ugly, and yet [who] dared to wear her hair à l'Imperatrice, with favorites" (12).

Fenton plays frequent host to Mrs. Newte and Mrs. Burton, both of whom, fallen on hard times, Fenton feels obliged to feed and entertain. The servant Mrs. Newte, called "Griffin," particularly amuses Fenton, as he is dressed "as a nobleman," (12) despite not having any income from his impoverished employers. A visit to Notre Dame basilica with Mrs. Burton and Mrs. Newte provides another opportunity for lighthearted observation and an accompanying sketch. When they are asked to pay one franc each to climb the narrow network of lathes and scaffolding to the dome, Fenton and the others are incredulous: "Poor blind Mr. [Frederick] Newte, his delicate wife, fat Mrs. Burton and Mrs Newte and her bellyache. Gradually they all saw how absurd it was." Mrs. Newte's young charge and servant, Kitty Kirby, captivates Fenton's attention, and she 'borrows' her for a portrait (see Volume 1). Fenton waxes lyrical: "I felt just as if some being from a fairer world had come to me, when the influence of Kitty Kirby, beauty & sweet innocence came over me, as I painted her. The delicacy of her face, manner & whole look... I was affected to tears, & laid my head on my hands, crying, for also her tale is so sad" (23).

Fenton's forwardness and fluency in French result in frequent, colourful encounters with local shopkeepers and venders. She remarks, "I have had many such chats, across counters, here, and have been astonished at the high moral tone these people seem to have generally" (31). After talking with one shopwoman, Fenton is invited to return to the shop after hours to dine. She and Dall head to the scullery, where she is greeted by a hearty Boulonnais meal: "the most tender of Jelly – like of Bouville, with a wonderful gravy, served in a cup, of all oddities. Potatoes, browned, and Harricots in a exquisite white sauce, which seemed to me made of Fowl bones & Ham, and sprinkled with parsley" (33). When at another shop, the woman behind the counter speaks of her admiration of English puddings, so Fenton feels compelled to provide a lengthy description of how to make boiled suet and boiled head pudding.

Fenton makes note that her eldest daughter, Clara, is beginning to attract attention. On a trip to the esplanade, the crowd of people turn to stare: "I found this was regarded as a debut of Care's [Clara's]... Her bloom was beautiful." (39). During this time amongst the crowd, Clara accidentally drops a bag of thirty francs, which Fenton laments is "no trifle these few days, I meant to wind up with such economy & caution" (41). Relying on her circle of English friends for loans, particularly Charles Venebles, Fenton is able to scrape by during the last few days of the family's stay at Boulogne, until the bag is safely retrieved with the help of a town crier.

The Fenton family's final Boulogne excursion of 1854 is to the Fort on Mont Lambert. Reading Monteith's *Guide to Boulogne*, Fenton and her children are enticed by the romance of the fort, purported built by Henry VIII and restored by Napoleon Bonaparte but "now, a ruin" (46). With a large party of servants and children in tow, Fenton sets out on foot with her large cartridge paper and drawing materials, "finding excuses for climbing the steep almost perpendicular sides of the mont" and engaging in make-believe gun-fire like soldiers (50). Fenton insists that they spend overnight in the fort, but the darkening clouds and lightning prevents her from realizing her plan. Fenton takes the opportunity to observe the sublimity of the scene, descending into the dark moat alone where she finds a "change from the gay laughter of our little party, to the silence – the change from rich sunset to lowering dusk. How solemn the spot had become." (53, see accompanying drawing).

Fenton talks very little about her husband. Though she never describes any wayward feelings for other men, she does delight in the occasional flirtatious encounter, and seems to note awkward run-ins with a "Mr. Mayhew." On the steamship journey homeward, Fenton and her family spend the day with "Frank

Stone, the artist" (62), who asks to see one of her views. Frank Stone may be the same English painter who led the attack against the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood. The final pages of the volume are devoted to Fenton's remembrances of Boulogne upon her return to Ealing. It also describes her gratitude to her brother, Maurice Emmett, whom she notes "forced upon me – as also last year – the extra money which enabled me to have indulgences and luxuries" (64). About one week after the family returns to England, Maurice takes Dick with him to Paris, stopping in Boulogne along the way.

## Subjects:

Cholera  
Crimean War, 1853-1856

## Genres / Formats:

Diaries  
Travel sketches -- France  
Watercolors (paintings)

## Geographic Names:

Boulogne-sur-Mer (France) -- Description and travel  
Boulogne-sur-Mer (France) -- Views

## Names:

Fenton, Ellen, b. circa 1813 -- Diaries  
Stone, Frank, 1800-1859

b. Vol. 3

**Diary**

1856 August 2-

*1 volume (122 pages); 25 pages of watercolor drawings; 1 program; c. 32.5 x 20.5 cm.* August 20  
Fenton, Ellen, b. circa 1813

Holograph diary describing Ellen Fenton's family vacation at Boulogne-sur-Mer, 1857. Includes twenty-five pages of watercolor drawings of local people, scenery and landscapes to accompany journal descriptions. This volume includes a program for the "Procession Générale de l'Assomption et de la Station en l'honneur de N. – D. de Boulogne," which Fenton also translates into English (with her own annotations), bound with the journal.

In her entry for Saturday August 2nd, 1856, Fenton reports the family's bustling preparations for their upcoming trip to Boulogne. She has been working with a "Mme Leslie" and "Mrs. Macleod" on finishing her batch of needlework and reports the preparation of a vast provisions basket. She reports that "Lattoo Macleod" was to go with them on this trip. The voyage is very difficult; Fenton describes the bad smell, the stifling heat, the fidgety and sick children (particularly Dall), and her baby's cries, which prevent her from enjoying the vessel's approach at Boulogne. Fenton finds clean, airy lodgings over a bootmaker who used to work for her father thirty years prior.

Fenton hires a French 'matelotte' attendant, Louise, during the family's stay at Boulogne. Louise is the subject of Fenton's consternation and amusement. Fenton marvels at Louise's strange cleaning habits. When Fenton requests that the carpets be lifted, she is awed by Louise's odd way of washing the dust without sweeping first. Likewise, she remarks "Louise does her work so strangely – to avoid coming at night on Sunday, when she goes to dance." Fenton is very pleased with a large-scale painting she completes of Louise, which she frames for her house (see vol. 2). The other servant Charlotte, whom Fenton brings to Boulogne for the first time, is also the subject of occasional ridicule. Fenton delights in her culture shock, noting her 'ecstasies' over the sandhills, and her 'shock' at seeing white flannelled nuns. In preparation to watch one of the processions, Fenton reports that "Good Charlotte was in terrible trouble & engrossment because her dress was not clean & her bonnet not an holiday one" (p. 57). To Clara's "indignation", Fenton bids her

go home to put on one of her daughter's cotton skirts, leaving Fenton alone to manage the children.

After a few days alone with the children, "Appa" joins them, looking pale from the sea voyage. Fenton complains that "as usual - the wet blanket" found fault with the house she had chosen. When they dine at the Hotel du Rhin, Fenton enjoys proving to the proprietress, Mme Florent, that she has a "live husband" but as an aside, prides herself on her un-chaperoned independence: "Appa always says, my travelling without a gentleman is wrong. However I prefer it" (31). She later reveals her thoughts on the sobering effect of her husband's presence: "It is surprising how tame and conventional Appa makes us all, directly he comes. I own I lose interest in my travels... One feature is the orderly absence of the children and their dear uproar, which gives such spirit to all, through their being so full of interest & wonder in all about them" (35). When the family takes "Appa" to see Mont Lambert, Fenton regrets his reluctance to climb the plateau, for fear of becoming "giddy" (68). He misses the grand view from the top, which Fenton records in a sketch. She is self-conscious of her own capacity to record the surrounding landscape, remarking: "What a beautiful view we had of the Fôret de Boulogne! It was too extensive for my paper - too full of dreams, imagination and poetry for my pencil. The light and shade (so gently varied), so rich and mysterious, of deep dark woods, was not to be attempted by my sacrilegious hand" (69).

With "Dick," Fenton sees the well-known actress Madame Ristori perform in *Francesca da Rimini*, producing a sketch of Ristori "before the curtain" receiving bouquets (33). At the theatre, she awkwardly runs into "Mayhew" whom she reveals as Rev'd Mr Hunt, a gentleman she traveled with in 1853 (other awkward encounters occur in the 1854 volumes). She also bumps into a woman she can't recognize and, revealing her intended readership, announces: "She was a lady we knew through you, dear Mrs Ibotson, just before we left Notting Hill" (34).

The Venebles warn Fenton of an epidemic spreading around Boulogne. When "Tinny" (Frederick) comes down with throat and chest pain, Fenton worries it is the "scourge" (75). She seeks out a homeopathic chemist, administers her own "globules" and consults the Venebles' homeopathic reference book. These bouts of illness do not prevent Fenton from venturing out, however, when she is compelled to witness prizes handed out at the College Communale, which she describes with great relish. She is drawn to other award ceremonies, such as the Abbé Haffringue's, which feeds her desire for spectacle. Fred's illness makes the Fentons discuss leaving Boulogne, but the little boy soon rallies.

The family watches the many processions and festivals of the season, including the celebration of Napoleon's birthday, coinciding with the festival of the Virgin, which Fenton speculates is "perhaps to satisfy those who would not assist to keep Napoleon's fête" (56). Fenton includes the order of procession, translated and hand-written from the French program with annotations. (The original French program is also included at the end of the volume). Fenton stands on a balcony watching the great "uproar" amidst a group of artillery men. She contrasts the loud assembly to the "calm dignity in our churches" (59). Fenton goes to great lengths to describe the costumes of the crowd, the groups of young ladies whom she calls "Houris", the rows of nuns, and the "English converts," or "perverts."

#### Genres / Formats:

Diaries  
Travel sketches -- France  
Watercolors (paintings)

#### Geographic Names:

Boulogne-sur-Mer (France) -- Description and travel  
Boulogne-sur-Mer (France) -- Views

Names:

Fenton, Ellen, b. circa 1813 -- Diaries

b. Vol. 4

**Diary***1 volume (100 pages), 20 pages of watercolor drawings; 4 receipts; 3 playbills; 1 letter; 1 musical score; c. 32.5 x 20.5 cm.*

Fenton, Ellen, b. circa 1813

1856 August 20-  
September 2

A continuation of Ellen Fenton's holograph journal describing a family vacation at Boulogne-sur-Mer, 1857. Includes twenty pages of watercolor drawings of local people, scenery and landscapes to accompany journal descriptions. This volume contains three playbills, for: *Une femme qui se jette par la fenetre*, *La Dame de St-Tropez*, and *Le Bonhomme Jadis*. Also containing: a letter from Mr. Atkinson; a hand-drawn music score "From Memory" for "The Tantillerie [sic] Polka – 3rd September, 1856," a tune Fenton recalls hearing at a ball described in this volume; a funeral announcement for Jean-Philippe Rigaut; four miscellaneous receipts.

Fenton receives a letter from her husband giving account of the unpleasant steamship voyage back to England, recounting that "nearly every lady was sick" and that one of the seats came away from its fastening in the middle of the voyage, tossing invalids about. Hearing that a new cathedral bell has just arrived at Boulogne, Fenton hurries to the train station hoping to catch a glimpse of a gigantic bell, but finds "amid a confusion of straw, hay and rubbish, stood a modest little brass bell, of about – at most, two feet high!" (81). Nevertheless, Fenton later enjoys watching the procession of the bell to the cathedral, conducted by four hundred "pelerins" (pilgrims) walking barefoot (104). She sketches many of the pilgrims who crowd the streets, including one "whom we supposed a great sinner." The procession ends at the Cathedral, where all gather to hear a sermon and afterwards dine at the Table d'Hôtes, much to the proprietor's chagrin. With her three eldest children on donkeys, Fenton visits Ostrobove to see Fanny Crawford. She describes Fanny's house as "very unenglish" (82), and marvels at the arrangement of furniture, the French and German lithographs, and the "foreign way of dining" (83). In the company of her childhood friend, Fenton is reminded of "dear Mrs. Wolley in her way and manner," perhaps a reference to Fanny's mother (85). The next day Fenton visits an engraving shop on the Grande Rue, where she is surprised to find the shop woman remembers her. Notably, she omits the detail (included in the draft copy) in this journal version that "she knew me as John [Emmett's] sister, and that "vous n'êtes plus amies!!! [you are no longer friends!!]" She retains details about their discussion about the artist Millais.

Fenton takes any opportunity to discuss religion with the local population. She engages her hairdresser in a long conversation about Catholicism, reporting that "the Priests had disgusted him, altogether, with religion that a passion for rule and money, governed them" (86). She says he felt that the general population was deprived of education by the clergy. Likewise, Mme Florent of the Hotel du Rhin criticizes the priests for making people "so superstitious, that they would become nothing but fools" (87). Fenton takes this opportunity to preach the Bible: "I believed it my duty... to take my own interpretation of it – to stand or fall by it" (87). Suspicious of anyone remotely associated with the Catholic church, Fenton believes that an overly friendly mason working at the cathedral "was appointed by the Priests, to charm us 'heretics'" (132).

With "Dick" and his friend Amor, Fenton embarks on an excursion to the Chateau d'Hardelot near Condette "because Charles Edward the Pretender was once secreted near there" (92). She is perturbed to find her donkey has an open wound and scolds the men who rented it to her for their cruelty. Hiring another donkey, they reach St. Etienne church, which, along with the panoramic views, make good sketching subjects. When it begins to rain, Fenton and the boys seek shelter

at an auberge, thinking they might have to sleep there. Fenton derives great amusement from her jokes that Amor would have to sleep upstairs with the peasant household "numbered twelve" (93). The rain abates, and they continue on to the "garennnes" ( sand hills), where the donkeys can go no farther. Fenton admires the "stretching-out hills, undulating gracefully, of sand, with the rushes, for verdure, and on one side the sea" (94). Fenton includes herself in a painted scene, along with her peasant guide and a child who took her parasol: "For a moment, I felt frightened, standing here alone in the wet, and under the darkening sky, when the thought arose these people might be a lawless set" (95). Taking a growing interest in Clara's beauty, Fenton tends to embellish her entries about Clara in this fair copy. At the pier, she writes that three Englishmen are overheard exclaiming "Ah! Here's the prettiest girl in Boulogne" and following her, joke "Let's see if she twigs!" (99-100). One man "most perservering" has a room in the attic at the Hotel, overlooking Clara's room so she has to keep her curtains drawn at all times. Fenton claims she overhears two maids in the hotel yard talking of Dall and Dada at the breakfast window, saying "Oui – elle est belle... mais ce n'est pas d'elle qu'on parle. C'est une plus grande" (Yes, she is beautiful... but it's not her that is spoken of. It's an older one). (103) A bit of a voyeur herself, Fenton is intent on spying on a gentleman through the window of a "luxurious room" (116). She only ever sees the back of his head, reading "continually until daybreak" and sketches him this way (see drawing, this volume). At the Tintilleries Ball on September 3rd, Fenton watches on as Clara and "Mr. Hamilton" dance the schottische, polka, quadrille, and varsovienne. She praises Clara's dignified manner, noting she is "without a shadow of affectation of pretension. She wore her hat and veil down, and looked beautiful, through it." (142). When Clara tears her dress while dancing, Fenton is delighted to see Mr. Hamilton offer little "housewife pins, to arrange the torn flounces." (143) She revels in what she perceives as "jealous looks" of all the English gentlemen watching Mr. Hamilton save the day.

A number of English visitors enliven the Fentons's stay in Boulogne. Mr. Sharpe spends an evening at Boulogne, and Fenton is happy to see him dancing with Clara at the Tintilleries ball. She is equally happy to report that Mr. and Mrs. Tarleton (nicknamed 'Roly Poly' by Fred) will arrive at Boulogne, and Mrs. Tarleton's letter is pasted into this volume. Fenton resolves to stay an additional week in Boulogne to prolong their time with the Tarletons, at young Fred's urges. Amor is also a delight to Fenton. When Dick goes to see a lecture by Mr. Lewis about "mesmerism and biology," Amor refuses to accompany him, because the last time he and others were "paraded, as susceptibles on Mr. Lewis' platform, and did all manner of nonsense" (120). "Mr. Lewis told him he was Prince Albert, and his troops waited to be surveyed, and Amor walked forward, as if with a telescope and strutted about, and after a long pause, muttered A fine body of men!" (127). Fenton is amused that Amor is frequently in petty fights with boys his own age around town. One particular boy is hated by Amor for being Clara's admirer and follower, and Fenton's footnote reveals that he was "Douglas Willans, the "Julian of my Boulogne 1857 journal" (See Volume 6) (139). He and Dick spend their time roaming around, looking for crabs, which get loose and "make the cook scream" (141).

Setting out solo towards the Notre Dame basilica, Fenton expresses her annoyance at being chaperoned by two strangers: "I own I felt rather staggered to be thus in their charge, and had much rather have gone alone" (125). At the side of the old church, Fenton describes the remnants of war with English – ruins of broken pillars, square cells, and cannon balls from English ships. She makes another trip with Dick to visit the cathedral, and they climb the rickety scaffolding towards the dome. Both frightened by the height, they are only able to take in the view of the sea from the arched windows before turning back, trembling.

On outdoor excursions, Fenton has a heightened awareness of the limitations of art in capturing fleeting nature, as evidenced in her comments about sketching excursions. When she seats herself near the Napoleon monument to execute a

"large sketch," she muses: "then I had one of those few but most happy episodes in my life, when I forget all but the joyful present.... Wonderful it was to watch the play of shadows, from the clouds, on the wide waters. Ever changing, and each change seeming more lovely than the other. What hues of violet and green there were, and the gold lights from the sun! and yet my picture is tame and cold, and grieves me, as a painting. I closed my eyes to say 'all is now gone – a dream'" (134).

Fenton is intent on going home to England via an alternate route – first stopping at Rouen to see a play, and then by steamship from Le Havre – but her husband writes, "begging me to give up this journey" (145). Abandoning the idea, the family board the usual steamer back to London, and Fenton is thrilled by the chance to spend two hours on deck, "in shawl, and blankets... I laid upon a Bench near the steersman. It was such perfect luxury to see thus, the starlit heavens and lie in sweet repose. I rejoiced in all – the rushing air – the very bounding of the steamer – the sound of the paddle wheels" (151). In a watercolor drawing, she depicts the unusual scene. She finishes her journal by enumerating the paintings that she has framed "lightly, in that new way, with paper" for her home as a remembrance of the trip (not included in these journals). She also ends with an apology of sorts, to her reader: "and now I must beg indulgence, if my journal has failed to amuse. What subject could be more commonplace – what journey so poor a bit of travelling, as a mere excursion to Boulogne! (154)"

Genres / Formats:

- Diaries
- Sketchbooks
- Travel sketches -- France
- Watercolors (paintings)

Geographic Names:

- Boulogne-sur-Mer (France) -- Description and travel
- Boulogne-sur-Mer (France) -- Views

Names:

- Fenton, Ellen, b. circa 1813 -- Diaries

Corporate Body:

- Basilica of Notre Dame (Boulogne-sur-mer, France)



b. Vol. 5

**Diary***1 volume (84 pages); c. 32 x 20 cm.*

Fenton, Ellen, b. circa 1813

1856 August  
2-26

Holograph diary describing Ellen Fenton's family vacation at Boulogne-sur-mer, 1857. This first volume would be later worked up into Fenton's fair copies of her 1856 diaries (Volumes 3 and 4). The existence of this draft version suggests that Fenton created preliminary drafts for all of her journals, though this is the only one present. The handwriting, as well as prose style, is less legible in this draft volume than in subsequent volumes. She also sometimes uses different names for her children – particularly for her youngest child, "Titchey" or "Titchet" who is referred to in the fair copies as "Hal".

Some of the details are later embellished, and Fenton uses the names of family and friends in the draft volume whereas she uses pseudonyms or crosses out names in later drafts. Small adjustments aside, much of the information is repeated verbatim in the fair copy volumes.

## Geographic Names:

Boulogne-sur-Mer (France) -- Description and travel

## Genres / Formats:

Diaries

## Names:

Fenton, Ellen, b. circa 1813 -- Diaries

b. Vol. 6

**Diary***1 volume (112 pages); 17 pages of watercolor and pen & ink drawings; 2 receipts; 1 funeral notice; 1 playbill; c. 32.5 x 20.5 cm.*

Fenton, Ellen, b. circa 1813

1857 August 22-  
September 14

Holograph diary describing Ellen Fenton's family vacation at Boulogne-sur-Mer, 1857. Includes seventeen pages of watercolor drawings and pen & ink sketches of local people, scenery and landscapes to accompany journal descriptions. This volume contains one drawing by Fenton's daughter 'Deeny' of a "Boulogne Procession," and the unfinished and varying quality of this volume's sketches suggests that some of the other Fenton children may have made contributions. A funeral notice for "Mme Boisselot" is included, as well as a playbill for the theatrical performances *Manche à Manche*, *Marivaudage*, and *Le Bénéficiaire*.

On Saturday the 22nd of August, Ellen Fenton reports that she and her family made arrangements to depart once more for Boulogne. Fenton laments the absence of Viv and Dick, the latter studying at a "Mr Scheibs School" in Frankfurt. As in 1854, Fenton quarrels with the steamship porters over the placement of her hamper of provisions, insisting it remain with the family in their cabin.

With Dick away, Fenton's motherly affections are very much directed towards her youngest, Hal (Henry), who supplies her with endless amusement with his observations and his ability to attract attention from strangers. Fenton is also increasingly preoccupied with Clara, and attends numerous balls and entertainments with her daughter, whom she guards very closely. She takes frequent jabs at Clara's potential suitors, giving them all nicknames such as "Fergus" and "Firebrand." Though Clara seems indifferent, Fenton seems to take a particular liking to one young "elegant" man, whom she fondly calls "Julian." Fenton calls Julian's chaperones and companions (possibly elder brothers) "the Romans" for their Roman noses, and her footnote indicates these young men are "the Mr. Douglas-Willans of Twyford Abbey" (which had just a few months prior been leased through an Act of Parliament by the widow Isabella Maria Douglas Willan upon--see the *London Gazette*, July 3, 1857, page 2353) (77). As Fenton

increasingly takes interest in Julian, 'Appa,' who joins the family at Boulogne, "pretends to be quite angry because we talk of [him]" (80). While her husband rebuffs the young men who talk to Clara, Fenton acts as Clara's proxy by engaging with young men on her behalf.

This year, the Fentons take up temporary lodging on the Rue Percée, across from the Communale College gates, which gives them ample opportunity to observe the Catholic worshippers, priests, and nuns enter and exit the grounds opposite. Fenton makes no attempts to disguise her anti-Catholic fear and prejudice: "I have so imbued my children with the idea the Catholics watch the Protestants, that Dada came from a window at breakfast time, sideline, with a look of terror, and whispered, 'The Priest peepit again!!'"

The position of their lodgings also gives the Fentons full view of the processions of pilgrims passing through Boulogne, some with offerings for the Cathedral and the "Fete" that unfolds over the course of several days (the Fete Napoleon and the Virgin's birthday occur during their stay). Fenton reports that the landlord's servant, Mary, is fearful that the Catholics mean to convert her daughter, who attends a school run by the local nuns. Fenton uses Mary as a means of explicating the merits of Protestantism in contrast to Catholic practices, plying the servant with arguments "that it had internal evidence that became more and more convincing... Christ was the 'only Mediator' but as God only is omnipresent... how could these Saints hear our prayers, from people at all quarters of the world, at the same period?" (33). Though Fenton remonstrates Catholic ritual, she takes pleasure in describing the customs and dress of the procession participants, down to the smallest detail. The image of a friar in bare feet, shaven head, bearing a "painful sight of willing misery and want," causes Fenton to reflect on the supposed paradox that "he and the richly dressed luxurious Cardinal were representing the same religion" (32). Emotionally conflicted about her own participation in the throng, Fenton nevertheless persists in watching the spectacle. When the Archbishop of Dublin comes to bless members of the crowd, Clara refuses to kneel: "His grand face looked at her, with such a tremendously commanding air, many would have quailed. I almost shook for her. I think we erred in taking such prominent places. The Protestants should, in better taste, be at the windows" (44).

This volume is punctuated by frequent social calls with Fenton's sister, Elizabeth "Lizzie" Russel and family. The Fentons and the Russel girls--Minnie, Ada, and Janie--attend Balls together. General Russel, Lizzie's husband, particularly gets along with "Appa" (John Fenton), as they are united by their dislike of Boulogne: "Both my tiresome 'Appa' and the General rail against Boulogne, and wonder what we find to like here! I tell them I am thankful for every hour" (99).

Some of the volume's most amusing incidents involve Fenton's descriptions of French visitors and locals. Fenton describes two funny young Parisians riding the omnibus, one of whom she calls "fat Albert" and two "rotten handsome moustached beaux" (55). She draws an amusing portrait of the latter pair: "one perched on the shoulders of the other, who was smoking, while he, aloft, was eating tarts!" (55). Another incident described at length is the loss of Clara's hairpin. Fenton hires a town crier to announce the lost pin, and within an hour it is brought back, "smashed to pieces" by a group of "fishpeople" (78). When they demand 3 francs for the pin, Fenton cannot tolerate such a request: "Vous pensez me tromper, vous! Vous me pensez une pauvre anglaise, qui ne connaît rien? N'essayez pas ça, car je vous dit, que je suis Boulonnaise!! Si vous ne voulez pas ces dix sous, prenez l'épingle, et jetez le dans la mer, et notre affaire est finie. Allez!" ["You think to wrong me! You think me a poor Englishwoman who knows nothing? You [would] not try that were I Boulonnaise!! If you do not want the ten sous, take the pin and throw it into the sea, and our business is finished. Go!"]. The expressions of astonishment on their faces after this outburst prompts Fenton to recall this as "one of the best scenes I have had here" (78).

## Genres / Formats:

Diaries  
Travel sketches -- France  
Watercolors (paintings)

## Geographic Names:

Boulogne-sur-Mer (France) -- Description and travel  
Boulogne-sur-Mer (France) -- Views

## Names:

Fenton, Ellen, b. circa 1813 -- Diaries  
Fenton, Henry John Horstman, 1854-1929

b. Vol. 7

**Diary**

*1 volume (118 pages), 28 pages of watercolor drawings; 1 list ; c. 32.5 x 20.5 cm.*  
Fenton, Ellen, b. circa 1813

1857 September  
14-September 29

Continuation of Ellen Fenton's holograph journal, describing a family vacation at Boulogne-sur-Mer, 1857. Includes twenty-eight pages of watercolor drawings featuring local people, scenery and landscapes to accompany journal descriptions. This volume also contains a hand-written list of "Objects [sic] Cassée" [broken objects], most likely charged to Fenton by her landlord at the conclusion of the family's stay.

Although she extols the simplicity and 'picturesque' nature of the Boulogne fish quarter, Fenton nevertheless reveals her prejudice against its inhabitants' hygiene. She describes one fisherwoman who stood watching her and the children, with hair "which I am sure had not been combed for years. It was red, and tossed up all round her -- indeed thrown matted and tangled anywhere" (109; she includes a drawing of the woman on a subsequent page). When Hal goes missing for a few hours, she finds him sitting on the knee of her French landlord, M. Andrieux. She "rebels against the idea of his dirty red bristles of moustaches on Hal's face," hastily whisking him away to procure a comb from the hairdresser next-door (111). During an excursion, Fenton seeks permission to sketch the Chateau of the Comte de Bethune at an attached house on the grounds, and is "amazed... to see the exceeding poverty of the house. Good rooms but oh the dirt, dust and spiders!" (122).

Fenton hires a "cariole"--an older type of carriage--for a picnic, which they dub the "funny carriage" (see 191). Though Fenton prefers that Clara not be seen in "such a strange carriage," it is a topic of great amusement, and the youngest children "had not a thought about the disgrace or honor" of it (115). They stop at a farm, where she takes a moment to sketch the Chateau of the Comte de Bethune, adjacent. Fenton helps the farmhouse landlady make bread, and the two speak about the recent events of the Indian mutiny (123). The coachman teaches Fenton's servant how to play skittles. Fenton runs into the woods and finds the "most wild, quiet bowery spot I ever remember" (124). The ride back in the fog reminds Fenton of a childhood carriage ride on her nurse's knee, traveling all over France, when the carriage wheel came off as they approached Versailles.

Missy Macleod, a friend of Dall's, arrives from England to stay with the Fenton's during their holiday and the two girls are inseparable. They like to imitate the landlord, whom they nickname "Grubbins" (see 167), and a beggar named Pierre Olivier with an affected tremble, whom they call "trembler" (see portrait, page 165). Meanwhile, Fenton takes Clara and the eldest Russel girls to several balls, where they attract the attention and jealousies of French and English alike. Fenton takes several opportunities to converse with Julian (see portrait, page 134), while guarding him against his chaperones, the "Romans." Fenton is thrilled when

Julian offers to walk Clara home: "he is so gentlemanly and graceful" (138). Fenton includes a particularly finished watercolor of Julian doffing his hat to Clara (189).

Despite the rigid formal interactions at the ball, Fenton's journal provides glimpses into her more spontaneous activities at Boulogne. There are several instances of Fenton's good humour and her ability to spontaneously adapt to circumstances. On a picnic excursion, they hire the same "funny carriage" and a large horse, however the old horse struggles going up a hill and Fenton breaks a parasol in town by pushing the carriage from behind. The horse falls on some stones and breaks its ankle, and the family is stranded under a tree while the coachman brings replacement horses (143). Not deterred from travel, Fenton and Clara hire donkeys on another day to take them to the "Colonne" overlooking the Vallée du Nacre, topped with a "colossal figure in bronze on top" (150). Always adventuresome, Fenton inquires whether it would be possible to sleep a night in one of the sea forts. For fun, she tries to convince the confectioner Mademoiselle Desir to sleep in the fort with her, conjuring "the animals, the wind, the noise," and sketches the confectioner's reactions to entertaining such an idea (153). Resolved to go alone, she enquires at the police station, where they say it has been closed for the winter. She and her daughters, with the nurses, walk out to sea one evening, and swim in the phosphorescent sea: "We soon undressed, and put on our night gowns, and ran in.... Wherever the water rippled only, or was touched, it sparkled with stars" (186). Fenton sketches the scene on page 155.

Genres / Formats:

Diaries

Travel sketches -- France

Watercolors (paintings)

Geographic Names:

Boulogne-sur-Mer (France) -- Description and travel

Boulogne-sur-Mer (France) -- Views

Names:

Fenton, Ellen, b. circa 1813 -- Diaries

b. Vol. 8

**Diary**

*1 volume (134 pages); 11 pages of watercolor drawings; 3 letters; 1 playbill; 1 programme; 2 clippings; c. 32.5 x 20.5 cm.*

Fenton, Ellen, b. circa 1813

Holograph journal describing Ellen Fenton's family vacation at Boulogne-sur-Mer, 1860. Includes eleven pages of watercolor drawings of local people, scenery and landscapes to accompany journal descriptions. On page eleven, Fenton also includes a sketch of the Colonnade ballroom floor plan. This volume contains letters from Fanny Crawford and Officer Crawford (of the 15th Bombay Regiment), clippings of "The Pope's Irish recruits" from 27 July 1860 and "To Englishmen Settling in Boulogne" and a playbill for *Le Songe*.

Fenton does not hesitate to announce the presence of Geraldine Ibotson at Boulogne. The majority of Fenton's journal entries are devoted to her young female friend, who accompanies the family on their annual holiday. Fenton appears to have endless admiration for Geraldine's beauty and grace: "how noble she looked! Never could the stately Duchess of Sutherland, in her grandest youth, have looked such a Duchess!" (4). Geraldine usurps Clara's usual position as the object of admiration, and Fenton amuses herself with conjectures about the many beaux who take interest in the new arrival. Fenton delights in describing the dandyish Monsieur Horeau, whom they nickname "Henrietta," and his pursuit of Geraldine. A bouquet and a book about love letters in French arrives at the Fenton's residence "and a marked passage about a declaration of love! We all suspected Henrietta" (70). Geraldine cannot seem to do any wrong in the eyes of

1860 July 17-  
August 11

her loyal chaperone, and she believes that none but the most sophisticated of men would comprehend "the rich contradictions of her character, so great and yet so childish, religious yet gay, earnest and yet so willing for nonsense. None but a poet, and one of versatile talent and very close observation, would understand her" (70). When she pays a visit to Mrs Russell, a wealthy Australian who resides at the Chateau Neuf, Fenton is taken aback by the governess's attacks on Geraldine's character. The governess claims she saw Geraldine "on Saturday, flirting with a gentleman, and she had felt ashamed of her countrywoman for her conduct, which was such that everyone was staring, and more, laughing, at her, that she was a disgrace" (86). Fenton counters by describing Mrs. Ibotson's model education of her daughters, and slips in "that one of her girls was 'the present Belle of Boulogne'" (87).

Although she rushes to Geraldine's defense, Fenton has no trouble describing the faults of others. She is irked by the governess's claims that Mademoiselle Dion was "unsurpassed" in beauty. This mademoiselle is believed to be the Marchioness Déhon, whom Fenton sketches (between pages 24 and 25). Fenton takes pleasure in describing the noblewoman's haughty and poor conduct, conceding that Dion is "pretty – a porcelain sort of look, reminding one of those old fashioned figures on Dresden China" (38). She is disgusted by the young woman's demands to be attended first at restaurants. When standing at a newspaper table at a ball, Fenton overhears some English gossip about Dion's faults in earshot of the marchioness. Fenton then delights in describing the young woman flee in a rage, banging doors behind her. "Dick ran to the door, and banged it again – which she seemed to return, by an explosion of another door... thus, when she [Dion] sat at our table, Geraldine aloud asked me, if I had heard the strange banging of doors, at the other end of the room... I said, I supposed it could only be servants" (43).

This trip to Boulogne is also distinguished by the presence of Mrs. Watson, an elderly charwoman whom Fenton brings along as a second servant. As Fenton's husband does not consent to Mrs. Watson's presence on the trip, nor is the woman cognizant of Fenton's designs for her in Boulogne, the departure from London is described as a "smuggling affair" (1). For fear that Mrs. Watson would escape, Fenton sends her by train to St. Paul's, where the family would pass by coach on the way to London Bridge wharf. Fenton is very amused by Mrs. Watson's first experience of foreign travel, noting how she kept awake for the entire steamship journey, and tried to trick the other servant, Charlotte, into admitting that the steamship was bound for New York. Geraldine and Fenton nickname the elderly woman "Mrs. Lacelles Jerningham-Birmingham" and Fenton admits "crying with laughter" at the woman's unusual queries: "did the vessel move, for it seemed for a long time, just in the same place... did the sea boil, it was like water in a kettle, bubbling and frothing[?]" (5). When at Boulogne, Fenton enjoys taking Mrs. Watson to St. Nicolas to observe her wonderment at Catholic ritual. When the Fenton family visit the dungeons, Mrs. Watson is unnerved by the excursion. At the citadel, the family comes across a company of soldiers from the 83rd regiment "looking as if they were a rank to fire on us" (56). When Mrs. Watson declares she can go no further, Fenton notes that she was "obliged to go with us, when I shewed her, she could not stay 'to be shot at,' which speech evidently went quite home" (57). As they descend into the "dismal chamber of horrors," Mrs. Watson again complains that she cannot go on, and Fenton confesses "I am quite ashamed to own, I felt not one particle of sympathy, but told her, if she went back or stood still, she must get lost, or shut up for life" (57). Fenton is herself unnerved, however, when the family is followed by a gaunt man of whom she includes a sketch and description: "I turned, and closely examined him – such a tremendous face! Long, flat, wrinkled, and with a look half stolid, half animal" (57-58).

Another victim of Fenton and Geraldine's fun-making is the eccentric and pestering Dr. Adolphus, who is represented in a few of Fenton's drawings in this volume. Fenton describes the family's several attempts of avoiding him, especially

at balls. "We flew whenever we saw him," jests Fenton, noting that they "had the fun to see him vainly hunting for us all" (30). She and Geraldine play more than a few pranks on the unsuspecting doctor, inventing a "Miss Perrot" for him to pursue. When the doctor asks if Fenton's young friend, Miss Gattey was this Miss Perrot, Fenton says "yes, for the fun of it, and trusting to the chapter of accidents" (36). When Fanny Emmett, the Gattey family, and a Mr. Whitsed come over for tea, Dr. Adolphus arrives, acting "so absurd, that the idea of making him the general butt, was quite irresistible to us all" (52). The group plays "Mother Crump," a game that involves a chair in the middle of the room that the captain of the game was to sit upon. Fenton sketches the doctor "shaking one finger and one foot, on his uneasy seat, rolling about on what he intended for graceful attitudes." (see page 52-53). This game goes on until two in the morning, when a neighbor threatens to call the police.

In addition to humorous social foibles, Fenton's journal draws attention to political events that effect the family's experience of Boulogne in 1860. Growing tensions between the English and French are precipitated by Lord Palmerston's speech to parliament, "so remarkable against the entente cordiale" (74). On the 23rd of July, Palmerston announced that England was now threatened by their ally's growing economic and military supremacy, warning that it might have to defend itself against the power. Wondering "if some explosion is at hand," this new distrust registers in the ballrooms of Boulogne, says Fenton, where a French Colonel whom Fenton tries to match with a partner angrily prevents her party from so much as sitting nearby (74).

The latter part of Fenton's trip is colored by her interaction with a group of Irish prisoners bound for Dublin. A clipping, pasted in her journal (between pages 56-57) explains that 116 Irishmen were led to believe by a Mr. Sullivan, of *The Nation*, that they would be paid handsomely to join the Pope's army. The article reports that they were sent to Rome on an arduous journey, and once there, made to live in wretched conditions with little food to survive. Fenton speaks to these men, now en route back to Ireland after refusing to sign the work contracts, and finds them "dreadfully exhausted... They had been confined ten days in Cells, down deep in a prison" (92). Fenton takes the opportunity to rail against Catholicism: "I said, I hoped they would give up their false religion, now they had experienced the gross deception it all was, to them, and which Protestants, in vain, warned them of." Yet she also seems pleased by the men's reaction to her perceived Irish roots. Fenton resolves to take food and brandy to the groups of Irish prisoners as they pass through Boulogne.

Genres / Formats:

Diaries  
Travel sketches -- France  
Watercolors (paintings)

Geographic Names:

Boulogne-sur-Mer (France) -- Description and travel  
Boulogne-sur-Mer (France) -- Views

Names:

Fenton, Ellen, b. circa 1813 -- Diaries

b. Vol. 9

**Diary**

1 volume (170 pages); 42 pages of watercolor drawings; 1 card; 3 clippings ; c. 32.5 x 20.5 cm.

Fenton, Ellen, b. circa 1813

Holograph journal describing Ellen Fenton's family vacation at Boulogne-sur-Mer, 1862. Includes 42 pages of watercolor drawings of local people, scenery and landscapes to accompany journal descriptions--the most numerous of all

1862 August 25-  
September 9

of her volumes. This volume contains three clippings, "The Nouveau Riche in Boulogne" (September 24, 1862), "Our Leader of Last Week" (October 1), a brief synopsis of the burlesque "A Fuss Amongst the Fogies" (October 8), along with letters to the editor. It also includes Mademoiselle Legendre's calling card, affixed above her portrait. Pages 27-32 are partially or completely torn. Pages 91-94 are missing. The journal is incomplete or missing the last few pages.

Fenton begins this volume describing her "heavy heart," but quickly moves on from her unspecified sorrows by reminding "I intend to write to amuse you, dear Mrs. Ibotson, and my children, who in years to come, may read this, will know it all too well" (1). Fenton's husband is entirely absent from this volume, perhaps an indication of strained relations. Another of her sorrows seems to be the death of her child, Horace, who is recalled by his grief-stricken mother. It appears that Fenton may have anticipated his early death, possibly due to a congenital illness: "Responsible for his birth, for his training, for the life he leads, yet powerless for good. Seeing the Vessel hurrying to a wreck, and yet told, that if I speak, I shall hasten its doom" (20).

Despite this melancholy, Fenton continues to engage in lighthearted fun-making, and she especially enjoys challenging the snobberies of others. When she observes an artist aboard her steamship who "affected exclusiveness, and after several disgusted inspections of people at breakfast, he waited to breakfast alone," Fenton decides to sit down "opposite to his Lordship, the artist! Did he not stare!" simply to cause discomfort (4). She, herself, is not immune to rash discrimination however, when she puzzles over one lady on board "with very pretty aristocratic features" but the "bronzed complexion of a gleaner" (4). The woman, a Miss Breakspear and her sister (see Fenton's portrait, same volume) are English orphans who Fenton later befriends, expressing guilty feelings about her initial rash judgments. Fenton's party (which includes her younger children 'Dall', 'May', 'Deeny', 'Fred', and 'Hal') arrives at Boulogne, where they spend only one fortnight. Clara, who has spent three weeks already at Boulogne staying with John Emmett's family, joins them at an apartment above an Estaminet's (small café).

Fenton's second daughter, Evelyn ('Dall') seems to have 'debuted' by 1862, as she and the eldest, Clara, are the subject of much of talk in Boulogne: "Care had been hoping Dall would make a sensation, and so she did. It was quite a study to observe mens faces shade over, seriously, as they stared at her, puzzled and awed by her purity" (26). Dall is characterized by both her grace and by her 'indifferent' look, which seems to put off some of her suitors. Count Voiscourt is particularly enchanted by Dall, and he asks her to dance several times at the balls. On an outing, Fenton meets a young Captain named De Savigny (see his portrait in this volume), an officer of the Tuileries artillery guard who waxes on about her daughters' innocence and perfection: "He assured me... that they were the most beautiful girls of the whole season, by far, and that every young man was raving" (58). Indeed, it seems everywhere they go, Fenton observes men in groups staring and talking about her daughters as "Quelles demoiselles" and Clara as "la princess Clotilde." Fenton is particularly taken by a "singularly handsome Englishman" she nicknames "Richard, Coeur de Lion," who appears to be interested in Clara (Fenton produces two watercolors of the gentleman). He shocks Fenton and her friend, Mrs. Hunter, who think him deceitful by masquerading with "very French manners, and that perfect accent" (45). A "handsome stern looking man" is also the subject of much scrutiny, and Fenton depicts him in several sketches. "Argus" as they nickname him, is "dreadfully strong in purposes" when asking Clara for dances. The lighthearted mischief-maker, Captain De Savigny, makes several overtures for Clara's hand in marriage, but Fenton discourages him. Finally, he concludes that England and France "would never unite, and it was [England's] fault for we indulged 'orgueil' as a virtue" (95).

As the children grow older and more self-reliant, Fenton seems to rely less on her servants, who only peripherally figure in this volume's entries. Fenton takes her children to the Vallée du Nacre, traveling the whole distance by foot. They are joined by Fenton's niece, Fanny Emmett, and soon meet with Major and Mrs. Hunter, and Mrs. Russell and her children. They return to the same mill they visited in 1854 (see vol. 2, and like then, her children are accused by the miller of eating his apples. Fenton retorts in French that she "knew them in 54 as uneatable crabs, fit for his pigs" (22). 'May', who is now fourteen, figures more prominently in this volume, most distinctly for her over-active imagination and the anti-Catholic views she seems to have inherited from her mother. "She has a source of constant fright here, from having read of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and the priests are her constant dread" (12). 'May' and 'Deeny' are characterized "as the soul of propriety" and seem increasingly scandalized by raucous parties of carousers or processions of nuns and priests.

Fenton refers to a book of her own sketches, entitled *Week at Boulogne*, which draws favorable attention from her friends, especially the Hunters. The Hunters ask if "they might lend my 'weeks sketches' to Mrs. Crowe, the authoress, as she had seen some and been much delighted, so much so, as to refuse walking with a party of people to look at them. They asked me to call on her, but I do not feel inclined for a selfish engagement that the children would not share" (46). The admirer of Fenton's sketches is likely Catherine Crowe, the popular English novelist, playwright and mesmerist whose works at this time period revolved around supernatural subjects.

At the thought of leaving Boulogne, Fenton again returns to her melancholy: "I could see the English coast, and being reminded our holiday is over here, I also remembered I should soon return to a full sense of all my woes, which I own I have made, alas! For myself... When I am here again, on these ramparts, if I come – how shall I then fell, upon this subject?" (87). She includes a rare self-portrait to illustrate this scene. It is unclear what predicament Fenton will face upon her return to England.

Genres / Formats:

Diaries  
Travel sketches -- France  
Watercolors (paintings)

Geographic Names:

Boulogne-sur-Mer (France) -- Description and travel  
Boulogne-sur-Mer (France) -- Views

Names:

Crowe, Catherine, 1790-1876  
Fenton, Ellen, b. circa 1813 -- Diaries



b. Vol. 10(a)

**Diary Fragment***4 pages ; 32.5 x 20.5 cm.*

Fenton, Ellen, b. circa 1813

A loose page from a diary, most likely from Volume 9 (1862) or later. A watercolor drawing of "our last ball" shows Dall dancing in the officer's quadrille.

## Genres / Formats:

Diaries  
Travel sketches -- France  
Watercolors (paintings)

## Geographic Names:

Boulogne-sur-Mer (France) -- Description and travel  
Boulogne-sur-Mer (France) -- Views

## Names:

Fenton, Ellen, b. circa 1813 -- Diaries

b. Vol. 10(b)

**Diary Fragment***1 page ; 32.5 x 20.5 cm.*

Fenton, Ellen, b. circa 1813

Loose pages of a journal by Ellen Fenton. This diary describes life in Ealing, England, suggesting that Fenton kept diaries when in England, separate from her Boulogne travel diaries. This fragment also indicates that her son "Dick" (Adolphus) worked for his father at John Fenton & Co. wine merchants.

## Genres / Formats:

Diaries

## Geographic Names:

Middlesex (England)

## Names:

Fenton, Ellen, b. circa 1813

**Marriage certificate (copy)** of John Fenton and Ellen Emmett, 1839 May 2

2012

*1 certified copy of an entry of marriage ; 17 x 37 cm.*

Marriage solemnized in the Parish of Walcot, Somerset. Presided by J.L. Wolley and witnessed Willshire John Emmett and Emma Katherine Gordon.

## Genres / Formats:

Marriage certificates

## Names:

Fenton, Ellen, b. circa 1813  
Fenton, John, b. circa 1812

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## Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### Subjects

Anti-Catholicism  
Balls (Parties) -- France  
British -- France  
Chron -- 1854-1862  
Clothing and dress -- France  
Crimean War, 1853-1856  
Women travelers -- Great Britain

### Geographic Names

Boulogne-sur-Mer (France) -- Description and travel  
Boulogne-sur-Mer (France) -- Views  
France -- Foreign relations -- Great Britain  
Great Britain -- Foreign relations -- France

### Genres / Formats

Diaries  
Sketchbooks  
Travel sketches -- France  
Watercolors (paintings)

### Names

Albert, Prince Consort, consort of Victoria, Queen of Great Britain, 1819-1861  
Fenton, Anna H., b. ca. 1851  
Fenton, Clara Leycetter, b. ca. 1841  
Fenton, Ellen, b. ca. 1813 -- Diaries  
Fenton, Evelyn M., b. ca. 1846  
Fenton, Florence May Revell, 1849-1866  
Fenton, Francis M. P., b. ca. 1844  
Fenton, Frederick A. R., 1852-1879  
Fenton, Henry John Horstman, 1854-1929  
Fenton, Horace W. R., b. ca. 1849  
Fenton, John, b. ca. 1812  
Fenton, John Adolphus, b. ca. 1842  
Ibotson, Geraldine  
Napoleon, Emperor of the French, III, 1808-1873

### Families

Fenton family