

# Mary Howitt

As the daughter of Quakers, Mary Howitt née Botham (1799-1888) was brought up in a strict household, where limited access to fiction meant creating her own tales and verses for amusement. This provided the impetus for her later career, as she became a prolific author of over 180 books and political pamphlets, many jointly authored with her husband, William. Her most famous work is the poem 'The Spider and the Fly' (1829), which was later parodied by Lewis Carroll as 'The Mock Turtle's Song' in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865). The Howitts moved from Heanor, in Derbyshire, to Nottingham in 1823, and joined the Nottingham Subscription Library, Angel Row, now known as Bromley House Library. They gifted to the Library their first collaborative

work, a signed copy of *The Forest Minstrels and Other Poems* (1823), inspired by William's Sherwood Forest wanderings.



Portrait of Mary Howitt.  
Frontispiece in *Mary Howitt: An autobiography Volume 1* edited by her daughter, Margaret Howitt (1889)  
East Midlands Special Collection,  
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