British writer and social reformer. She was one of several minor poets whose works of the 1830s and early 1840s prefigure the more famous ‘social-problem novels’ of the 1840s. Her chief volumes of verse are *The Sorrows of Rosalie* 1829, *The Undying One* 1830, and *The Lady of La Garaye* 1861. She also wrote the long poems *A Voice from the Factories* 1836, attacking child labour, and *The Child of the Islands* 1845, expressing her views on the social conditions of the poor. Her pamphlets on infant custody 1839, and on divorce and married women's property rights 1854–55, influenced public opinion and played an important part in bringing about reform. She was the granddaughter of the dramatist Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

She was born in London, and in 1827 married a dissolute barrister, the Hon George Norton, but the couple soon separated and she interested herself in trying to amend the laws regarding the social conditions of women and children. She was a close friend of Disraeli and Lord Melbourne and in 1836 her husband falsely accused Lord Melbourne of seducing her, obtained custody of their children, and tried to obtain the profits from her books. Among her novels are *Stuart of Dunleath* 1851 and *Lost and Saved* 1863. In 1877, after the death of her first husband, she married Sir William Stirling-Maxwell.

**quotations**

Norton, Caroline

**weblinks**

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