

# Editorial Practice

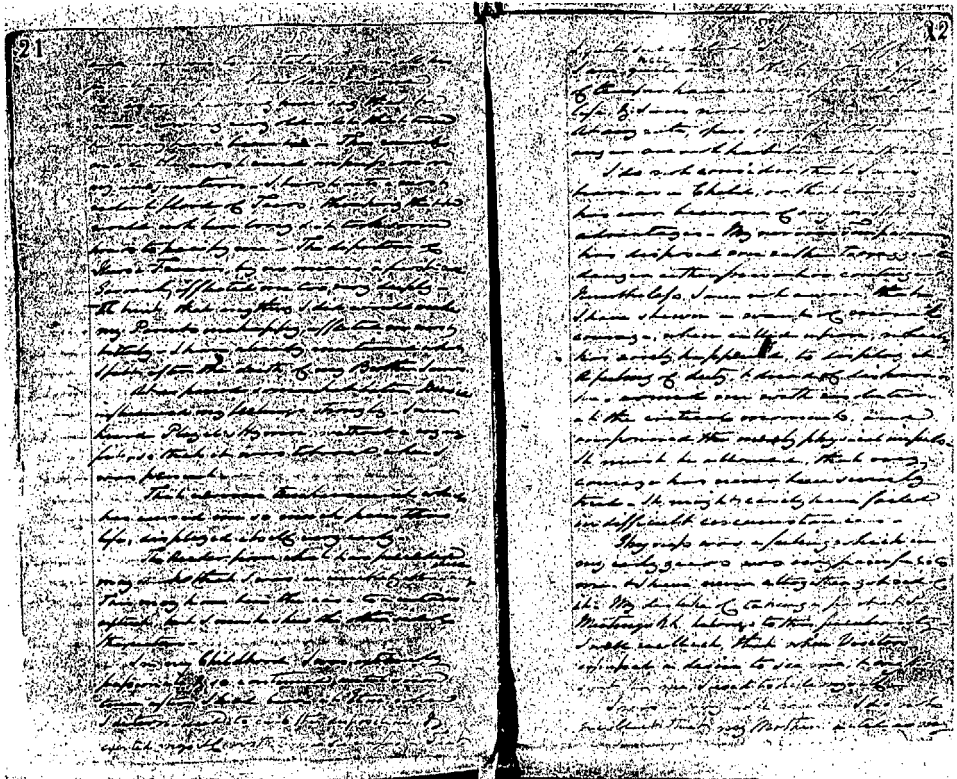


Figure 1: Pages 21 and 22 of the Manuscript

This note describes the process and editorial decisions involved in producing the Camera Ready Copy for the present book. The production of a foolscap typescript of Norman's manuscript has been described in the preface

above, and the ageing carbon copy was used as the starting point (the top copy having been given to General C.W. Norman). The carbon, being too frail to be placed in a sheet feeder, was photocopied and this copy was digitally scanned for word processing. Not surprisingly, this initial scan produced a very imperfect document, with missing segments and strange symbols replacing the text in many places. The next step was to go through this word by word to try to produce a reasonably 'clean' version.

Norman's original manuscript contained a number of features necessitating editorial decisions, with a view to making it more readable for modern users. First, it consisted of continuous text without any headings. The division into separate chapters, and the choice of titles, was made by the editors. Second, Norman capitalised initial letters of virtually all nouns, and it was decided to convert these to lower case. Third, virtually the only form of punctuation used was a dash, a not uncommon feature at the time when using a steel nib. As it was often not clear, without repeated reading, to determine the sentence breaks, it was decided to introduce modern punctuation, and this could only be done 'silently'. Fourth, paragraph breaks were not always clear, though often these appeared to consist of single sentences. Thus, not only the structure of sentences but that of paragraphs required many difficult editorial decisions. Fifth, Norman returned to the manuscript at various times and added marginal notes, sometimes attaching dates. Most of these notes have simply been incorporated into the text with, where available, an indication of the date. In order to distinguish Norman's notes from our editorial notes, the latter are placed within square brackets.

The sixth and most profound difficulty was raised by the truly dreadful nature of Norman's handwriting, something he himself acknowledged, combined with the state of the manuscript after surviving its exposure to fire and water. Examples are given of a small selection of pages, taken at random, reproduced here (Norman wrote on foolscap paper). This difficulty becomes particularly acute when mention is made of people and place-names, many of which are not English. Norman's autobiography is indeed replete with such names. They resisted attempts both with a magnifying glass applied to the original manuscript and the use of the 'zoom' facility when viewing the

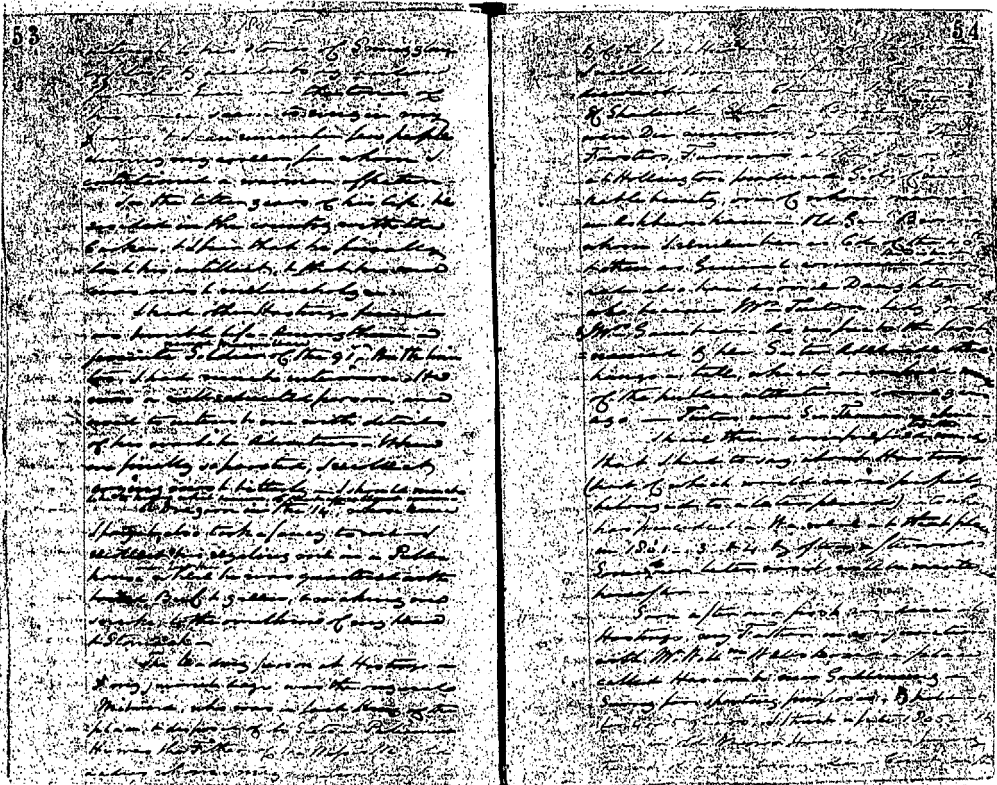


Figure 2: Pages 53 and 54 of the Manuscript

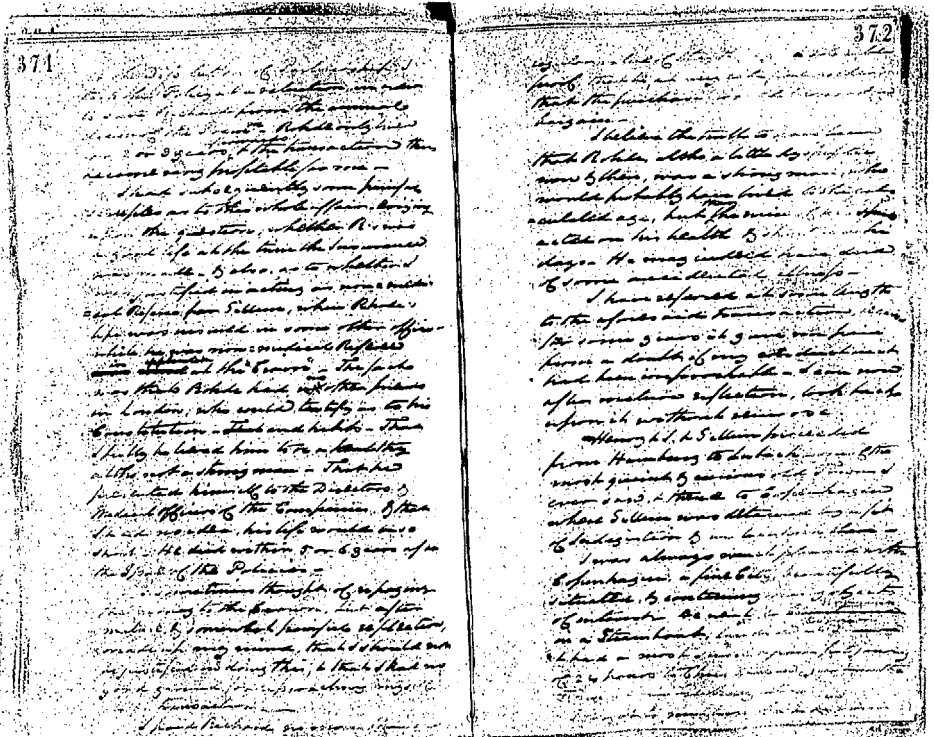


Figure 3: Pages 371 and 372 of the Manuscript

digital copies. It soon became clear that it would be impossible to decipher many of these words without carrying out extensive research based on alternative readings. This process often led us down false paths before a positive identification was found. The idea of first producing an accurate text which could then provide a starting point for further investigations was simply an illusion. As mentioned above, we cannot guarantee that all the readings given are correct, and in some cases mention is made of missing words because of the damaged nature of the manuscript. However, the modern reader should now find that Norman's Autobiography reads fluently and conveys the full range of his interests and the problems he faced.