

Born Mary Gladys Meredith on 25th March 1881 at Leighton, a little village near Cressage. Her father was a private schoolteacher who inspired her with his love of literature and the local countryside and she became very observant of both people and place which comes out in her writings.

She spent her early life at The Grange, a small country house near Much Wenlock; from 12 to 21 she lived at Stanton upon Hine Heath, in 1895 she went to a finishing school in Southport, however, the following year her mother suffered a fall from her horse whilst hunting and took to her bed for the next 5 years, this meant that Mary was brought home from boarding school to care for her father and the five younger children.

When her mother eventually recovered, the roles were reversed and for the next 2 years, listless, moody, and painfully thin Mary lay propped by cushions on the sofa, this heralded the onset of Graves' Disease, a thyroid disorder, which in addition to the lethargy caused bulging eyes and a goitre which caused ill health throughout her life and probably contributed to her early death, but, her affliction made her empathetic to suffering; she was a vegetarian and loathed the slaughter of animals. It was during this time that Mary started writing poems and in 1902 the family moved to The Old Mill at Meole Brace.

On 12th June 1912 she married Henry Webb, a teacher, and they lived for a time in Weston-Super-Mare before moving back to Shropshire working as market gardeners and selling their produce at Shrewsbury Market until Henry got a teaching job in Chester and then subsequently at the Priory Grammar School in Shrewsbury.

The couple lived briefly in Pontesbury between 1914 and 1916 where she wrote her first novel 'The Golden Arrow' (if you ever visit, the bakers opposite the church do the best butter buns in Shropshire). This change in fortune enabled them to move to Lyth Hill by Bayston Hill where they built Spring Cottage. In 1921 they bought another house at Hampton Grove in London hoping that she would achieve greater literary recognition - but it didn't happen.

By 1927 with her health deteriorating and her marriage failing she returned to Spring Cottage alone. She died on 8th October 1927 at St. Leonards on Sea and was buried in Shrewsbury.

She was admired by contemporaries like Rebecca West, Walter de la Mare and Arnold Bennett but, it was not until 6 months after her death when Stanley Baldwin read and publicly praised 'Precious Bane' that her work reached a wider audience.

"She is in the tradition of the Thomas Hardy, but the style and voice are utterly her own".

"Her writing is recognised for poetic description of nature and a fatalistic view on human psychology"

1916 The Golden Arrow

1917 Gone To Earth

1920 The House In Dormer Forest (~~1919~~)

1922 Seven For A Secret

1924 Precious Bane

1929 *Armour Wherein He Trusted*