I got the idea for this book on the day I defended my doctoral dissertation at Indiana University in 1999. As my committee members and I discussed my rather broad project on women and religion in the Victorian novel, Susan Gubar suggested that a book specifically on Victorians’ attraction to Roman Catholicism would be “fascinating.” So I want to thank Susan first, and also my dissertation director, James Eli Adams. This book is a completely separate project from my dissertation, but Jim’s unflagging faith in the value of my research, his conviction of the centrality of religion in Victorian culture and society, and his tremendous excitement at my “discovery” of obscure figures such as Georgiana Fullerton and Elizabeth Missing Sewell, all sustained me in the eight years it took to envision, research, and write Masked Atheism.

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