Contents

Acknowledgments ix

Introduction: Reading Things 1

1 Souvenirs of Sadism: Mahogany Furniture, Deforestation, and Slavery in Jane Eyre 30

2 Coziness and Its Vicissitudes: Checked Curtains and Global Cotton Markets in Mary Barton 55

3 Realism, Fetishism, and Genocide: Negro Head Tobacco in and around Great Expectations 81

4 Toward a History of Literary Underdetermination: Standardizing Meaning in Middlemarch 111

Coda: Victorian Thing Culture and the Way We Read Now 139

Notes 159 Index 187