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\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE VICTORIES OF LOVE, AND OTHER  
POEMS \*\*\*

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## **THE VICTORIES OF LOVE, AND OTHER POEMS.**

BY  
COVENTRY PATMORE.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

After the very cordial reception given to the poems of "The Angel in the House," which their author generously made accessible to the readers of these little books, it is evident that another volume from the same clear singer of the purity of household love requires no Introduction.

I have only, in the name of the readers, to thank Mr. Coventry Patmore for his liberality, and wish him—say, rather, assure him of—the best return he seeks in a wide influence for good.

H. M.

# THE VICTORIES OF LOVE.

## BOOK I.

### I. FROM FREDERICK GRAHAM.

Mother, I smile at your alarms!  
I own, indeed, my Cousin's charms,  
But, like all nursery maladies,  
Love is not badly taken twice.  
Have you forgotten Charlotte Hayes,  
My playmate in the pleasant days  
At Knatchley, and her sister, Anne,  
The twins, so made on the same plan,  
That one wore blue, the other white,  
To mark them to their father's sight;  
And how, at Knatchley harvesting,  
You bade me kiss her in the ring,  
Like Anne and all the others? You,  
That never of my sickness knew,  
Will laugh, yet had I the disease,  
And gravely, if the signs are these:  
As, ere the Spring has any power,  
The almond branch all turns to flower,  
Though not a leaf is out, so she  
The bloom of life provoked in me  
And, hard till then and selfish, I  
Was thenceforth nought but sanctity  
And service: life was mere delight  
In being wholly good and right,  
As she was; just, without a slur;  
Honouring myself no less than her;  
Obeying, in the loneliest place,  
Ev'n to the slightest gesture, grace,  
Assured that one so fair, so true,  
He only served that was so too.  
For me, hence weak towards the weak,  
No more the unnested blackbird's shriek  
Startled the light-leaved wood; on high  
Wander'd the gadding butterfly,  
Unscared by my flung cap; the bee,  
Rifling the hollyhock in glee,  
Was no more trapp'd with his own flower,  
And for his honey slain. Her power,  
From great things even to the grass  
Through which the unfenced footways pass,  
Was law, and that which keeps the law,  
Cherubic gaiety and awe;  
Day was her doing, and the lark  
Had reason for his song; the dark  
In anagram innumerable spelt  
Her name with stars that throbb'd and felt;  
'Twas the sad summit of delight  
To wake and weep for her at night;  
She turn'd to triumph or to shame  
The strife of every childish game;  
The heart would come into my throat  
At rosebuds; howsoe'er remote,  
In opposition or consent,  
Each thing, or person, or event,  
Or seeming neutral howsoe'er,  
All, in the live, electric air,  
Awoke, took aspect, and confess'd  
In her a centre of unrest,  
Yea, stocks and stones within me bred  
Anxieties of joy and dread.  
O, bright apocalyptic sky  
O'erarching childhood! Far and nigh  
Mystery and obsuration none,  
Yet nowhere any moon or sun!  
What reason for these sighs? What hope,  
Daunting with its audacious scope

The disconcerted heart, affects  
These ceremonies and respects?  
Why stratagems in everything?  
Why, why not kiss her in the ring?  
'Tis nothing strange that warriors bold,  
Whose fierce, forecasting eyes behold  
The city they desire to sack,  
Humbly begin their proud attack  
By delving ditches two miles off,  
Aware how the fair place would scoff  
At hasty wooing; but, O child,  
Why thus approach thy playmate mild?

One morning, when it flush'd my thought  
That, what in me such wonder wrought  
Was call'd, in men and women, love,  
And, sick with vanity thereof,  
I, saying loud, 'I love her,' told  
My secret to myself, behold  
A crisis in my mystery!  
For, suddenly, I seem'd to be  
Whirl'd round, and bound with showers of threads,  
As when the furious spider sheds  
Captivity upon the fly  
To still his buzzing till he die;  
Only, with me, the bonds that flew,  
Enfolding, thrill'd me through and through  
With bliss beyond aught heaven can have,  
And pride to dream myself her slave.

A long, green slip of wilder'd land,  
With Knatchley Wood on either hand,  
Sunder'd our home from hers. This day  
Glad was I as I went her way.  
I stretch'd my arms to the sky, and sprang  
O'er the elastic sod, and sang  
'I love her, love her!' to an air  
Which with the words came then and there;  
And even now, when I would know  
All was not always dull and low,  
I mind me awhile of the sweet strain  
Love taught me in that lonely lane.

Such glories fade, with no more mark  
Than when the sunset dies to dark.  
They pass, the rapture and the grace  
Ineffable, their only trace  
A heart which, having felt no less  
Than pure and perfect happiness,  
Is duly dainty of delight;  
A patient, poignant appetite  
For pleasures that exceed so much  
The poor things which the world calls such.  
That, when these lure it, then you may  
The lion with a wisp of hay.

That Charlotte, whom we scarcely knew  
From Anne but by her ribbons blue,  
Was loved, Anne less than look'd at, shows  
That liking still by favour goes!  
This Love is a Divinity,  
And holds his high election free  
Of human merit; or let's say,  
A child by ladies call'd to play,  
But careless of their becks and wiles,  
Till, seeing one who sits and smiles  
Like any else, yet only charms,  
He cries to come into her arms.  
Then, for my Cousins, fear me not!  
None ever loved because he ought.  
Fatal were else this graceful house,  
So full of light from ladies' brows.  
There's Mary; Heaven in her appears  
Like sunshine through the shower's bright tears;  
Mildred's of Earth, yet happier far  
Than most men's thoughts of Heaven are;  
But, for Honoria, Heaven and Earth  
Seal'd amity in her sweet birth.  
The noble Girl! With whom she talks

She knights first with her smile; she walks,  
Stands, dances, to such sweet effect,  
Alone she seems to move erect.  
The brightest and the chastest brow  
Rules o'er a cheek which seems to show  
That love, as a mere vague suspense  
Of apprehensive innocence,  
Perturbs her heart; love without aim  
Or object, like the sunlit flame  
That in the Vestals' Temple glow'd,  
Without the image of a god.  
And this simplicity most pure  
She sets off with no less allure  
Of culture, subtly skill'd to raise  
The power, the pride, and mutual praise  
Of human personality  
Above the common sort so high,  
It makes such homely souls as mine  
Marvel how brightly life may shine.  
How you would love her! Even in dress  
She makes the common mode express  
New knowledge of what's fit so well  
'Tis virtue gaily visible!  
Nay, but her silken sash to me  
Were more than all morality,  
Had not the old, sweet, feverous ill  
Left me the master of my will!

So, Mother, feel at rest, and please  
To send my books on board. With these,  
When I go hence, all idle hours  
Shall help my pleasures and my powers.  
I've time, you know, to fill my post,  
And yet make up for schooling lost  
Through young sea-service. They all speak  
German with ease; and this, with Greek,  
(Which Dr. Churchill thought I knew,)  
And history, which I fail'd in too,  
Will stop a gap I somewhat dread,  
After the happy life I've led  
With these my friends; and sweet 'twill be  
To abridge the space from them to me.

## II. FROM MRS. GRAHAM.

My Child, Honoria Churchill sways  
A double power through Charlotte Hayes.  
In minds to first-love's memory pledged  
The second Cupid's born full-fledged.  
I saw, and trembled for the day  
When you should see her beauty, gay  
And pure as apple-blooms, that show  
Outside a blush and inside snow,  
Her high and touching elegance  
Of order'd life as free as chance.  
Ah, haste from her bewitching side,  
No friend for you, far less a bride!  
But, warning from a hope so wild,  
I wrong you. Yet this know, my Child:  
He that but once too nearly hears  
The music of forefended spheres,  
Is thenceforth lonely, and for all  
His days like one who treads the Wall  
Of China, and, on this hand, sees  
Cities and their civilities,  
And on the other, lions. Well,  
(Your rash reply I thus foretell.)  
Good is the knowledge of what's fair,  
Though bought with temporal despair!  
Yes, good for one, but not for two.  
Will it content a wife that you  
Should pine for love, in love's embrace,  
Through having known a happier grace;  
And break with inward sighs your rest,  
Because, though good, she's not the best?  
You would, you think, be just and kind,

And keep your counsel! You will find  
You cannot such a secret keep;  
'Twill out, like murder, in your sleep;  
A touch will tell it, though, for pride,  
She may her bitter knowledge hide;  
And, while she accepts love's make-believe,  
You'll twice despise what you'd deceive.

I send the books. Dear Child, adieu!  
Tell me of all you are and do.  
I know, thank God, whate'er it be,  
'Twill need no veil 'twixt you and me.

### III. FROM FREDERICK.

The multitude of voices blithe  
Of early day, the hissing scythe  
Across the dew drawn and withdrawn,  
The noisy peacock on the lawn,  
These, and the sun's eye-gladdening gleam,  
This morning, chased the sweetest dream  
That e'er shed penitential grace  
On life's forgetful commonplace;  
Yet 'twas no sweeter than the spell  
To which I woke to say farewell.

Noon finds me many a mile removed  
From her who must not be beloved;  
And us the waste sea soon shall part,  
Heaving for aye, without a heart!  
Mother, what need to warn me so?  
I love Miss Churchill? Ah, no, no.  
I view, enchanted, from afar,  
And love her as I love a star.  
For, not to speak of colder fear,  
Which keeps my fancy calm, I hear,  
Under her life's gay progress hurl'd.  
The wheels of the preponderant world,  
Set sharp with swords that fool to slay  
Who blunders from a poor byway,  
To covet beauty with a crown  
Of earthly blessing added on;  
And she's so much, it seems to me,  
Beyond all women womanly,  
I dread to think how he should fare  
Who came so near as to despair.

### IV. FROM FREDERICK.

Yonder the sombre vessel rides  
Where my obscure condition hides.  
Waves scud to shore against the wind  
That flings the sprinkling surf behind;  
In port the bickering pennons show  
Which way the ships would gladly go;  
Through Edgemoor Park the rooted trees  
Are tossing, reckless, in the breeze;  
On top of Edgemoor's firm-set tower,  
As foils, not foibles, of its power,  
The light vanes do themselves adjust  
To every veering of the gust:  
By me alone may nought be given  
To guidance of the airs of heaven?  
In battle or peace, in calm or storm,  
Should I my daily task perform,  
Better a thousand times for love,  
Who should my secret soul reprove?  
Beholding one like her, a man  
Longs to lay down his life! How can  
Aught to itself seem thus enough,  
When I have so much need thereof?  
Blest in her place, blissful is she;  
And I, departing, seem to be  
Like the strange waif that comes to run  
A few days flaming near the sun,  
And carries back, through boundless night,  
Its lessening memory of light.

Oh, my dear Mother, I confess  
 To a deep grief of homelessness,  
 Unfelt, save once, before. 'Tis years  
 Since such a shower of girlish tears  
 Disgraced me! But this wretched Inn,  
 At Plymouth, is so full of din,  
 Talkings and trampings to and fro.  
 And then my ship, to which I go  
 To-night, is no more home. I dread,  
 As strange, the life I long have led;  
 And as, when first I went to school,  
 And found the horror of a rule  
 Which only ask'd to be obey'd,  
 I lay and wept, of dawn afraid,  
 And thought, with bursting heart, of one  
 Who, from her little, wayward son,  
 Required obedience, but above  
 Obedience still regarded love,  
 So change I that enchanting place,  
 The abode of innocence and grace  
 And gaiety without reproof,  
 For the black gun-deck's louring roof.  
 Blind and inevitable law  
 Which makes light duties burdens, awe  
 Which is not reverence, laughters gain'd  
 At cost of purities profaned,  
 And whatsoever most may stir  
 Remorseful passion towards her,  
 Whom to behold is to depart  
 From all defect of life and heart.

But, Mother, I shall go on shore,  
 And see my Cousin yet once more!  
 'Twere wild to hope for her, you say.  
 I've torn and cast those words away.  
 Surely there's hope! For life 'tis well  
 Love without hope's impossible;  
 So, if I love, it is that hope  
 Is not outside the outer scope  
 Of fancy. You speak truth: this hour  
 I must resist, or lose the power.  
 What! and, when some short months are o'er,  
 Be not much other than before?  
 Drop from the bright and virtuous sphere  
 In which I'm held but while she's dear?  
 For daily life's dull, senseless mood,  
 Slay the fine nerves of gratitude  
 And sweet allegiance, which I owe  
 Whether the debt be weal or woe?  
 Nay, Mother, I, forewarn'd, prefer  
 To want for all in wanting her.

For all? Love's best is not bereft  
 Ever from him to whom is left  
 The trust that God will not deceive  
 His creature, fashion'd to believe  
 The prophecies of pure desire.  
 Not loss, not death, my love shall tire.  
 A mystery does my heart foretell;  
 Nor do I press the oracle  
 For explanations. Leave me alone,  
 And let in me love's will be done.

## V. FROM FREDERICK

Fashion'd by Heaven and by art  
 So is she, that she makes the heart  
 Ache and o'erflow with tears, that grace  
 So lovely fair should have for place,  
 (Deeming itself at home the while,)  
 The unworthy earth! To see her smile  
 Amid this waste of pain and sin,  
 As only knowing the heaven within,  
 Is sweet, and does for pity stir  
 Passion to be her minister:  
 Wherefore last night I lay awake,  
 And said, 'Ah, Lord, for Thy love's sake,

Give not this darling child of Thine  
To care less reverent than mine!  
And, as true faith was in my word,  
I trust, I trust that I was heard.

The waves, this morning, sped to land,  
And shouted hoarse to touch the strand,  
Where Spring, that goes not out to sea,  
Lay laughing in her lovely glee;  
And, so, my life was sunlit spray  
And tumult, as, once more to-day,  
For long farewell did I draw near  
My Cousin, desperately dear.  
Faint, fierce, the truth that hope was none  
Gleam'd like the lightning in the sun;  
Yet hope I had, and joy thereof.  
The father of love is hope, (though love  
Lives orphan'd on, when hope is dead,)  
And, out of my immediate dread  
And crisis of the coming hour,  
Did hope itself draw sudden power.  
So the still brooding storm, in Spring,  
Makes all the birds begin to sing.

Mother, your foresight did not err:  
I've lost the world, and not won her.  
And yet, ah, laugh not, when you think  
What cup of life I sought to drink!  
The bold, said I, have climb'd to bliss  
Absurd, impossible, as this,  
With nought to help them but so great  
A heart it fascinates their fate.  
If ever Heaven heard man's desire,  
Mine, being made of altar-fire,  
Must come to pass, and it will be  
That she will wait, when she shall see.  
This evening, how I go to get,  
By means unknown, I know not yet  
Quite what, but ground whereon to stand,  
And plead more plainly for her hand!

And so I raved, and cast in hope  
A superstitious horoscope!  
And still, though something in her face  
Portended 'No!' with such a grace  
It burthen'd me with thankfulness,  
Nothing was credible but 'Yes.'  
Therefore, through time's close pressure bold,  
I praised myself, and boastful told  
My deeds at Acre; strain'd the chance  
I had of honour and advance  
In war to come; and would not see  
Sad silence meant, 'What's this to me?'

When half my precious hour was gone,  
She rose to meet a Mr. Vaughan;  
And, as the image of the moon  
Breaks up, within some still lagoon  
That feels the soft wind suddenly,  
Or tide fresh flowing from the sea,  
And turns to giddy flames that go  
Over the water to and fro,  
Thus, when he took her hand to-night,  
Her lovely gravity of light  
Was scatter'd into many smiles  
And flattering weakness. Hope beguiles  
No more my heart, dear Mother. He,  
By jealous looks, o'erhonour'd me.

With nought to do, and fondly fain  
To hear her singing once again,  
I stay'd, and turn'd her music o'er;  
Then came she with me to the door.  
'Dearest Honoria,' I said,  
(By my despair familiar made,)  
'Heaven bless you!' Oh, to have back then stepp'd  
And fallen upon her neck, and wept,  
And said, 'My friend, I owe you all  
I am, and have, and hope for. Call  
For some poor service; let me prove

To you, or him here whom you love,  
 My duty. Any solemn task,  
 For life's whole course, is all I ask!  
 Then she must surely have wept too,  
 And said, 'My friend, what can you do!'  
 And I should have replied, 'I'll pray  
 'For you and him three times a-day,  
 And, all day, morning, noon, and night,  
 My life shall be so high and right  
 That never Saint yet scaled the stairs  
 Of heaven with more availing prayers!'  
 But this (and, as good God shall bless  
 Somehow my end, I'll do no less,  
 I had no right to speak. Oh, shame,  
 So rich a love, so poor a claim!  
 My Mother, now my only friend,  
 Farewell. The school-books which you send  
 I shall not want, and so return.  
 Give them away, or sell, or burn.  
 I'll write from Malta. Would I might  
 But be your little Child to-night,  
 And feel your arms about me fold,  
 Against this loneliness and cold!

## VI. FROM MRS. GRAHAM.

The folly of young girls! They doff  
 Their pride to smooth success, and scoff  
 At far more noble fire and might  
 That woo them from the dust of fight  
 But, Frederick, now the storm is past,  
 Your sky should not remain o'ercast.  
 A sea-life's dull, and, oh, beware  
 Of nourishing, for zest, despair.  
 My Child, remember, you have twice  
 Heartily loved; then why not thrice,  
 Or ten times? But a wise man shuns  
 To cry 'All's over,' more than once.  
 I'll not say that a young man's soul  
 Is scarcely measure of the whole  
 Earthly and Heavenly universe,  
 To which he inveterately prefers  
 The one beloved woman. Best  
 Speak to the senses' interest,  
 Which brooks no mystery nor delay:  
 Frankly reflect, my Son, and say,  
 Was there no secret hour, of those  
 Pass'd at her side in Sarum Close,  
 When, to your spirit's sick alarm,  
 It seem'd that all her marvellous charm  
 Was marvellously fled? Her grace  
 Of voice, adornment, movement, face  
 Was what already heart and eye  
 Had ponder'd to satiety;  
 Amid so the good of life was o'er,  
 Until some laugh not heard before,  
 Some novel fashion in her hair,  
 Or style of putting back her chair,  
 Restored the heavens. Gather thence  
 The loss-consoling inference.  
 Yet blame not beauty, which beguiles,  
 With lovely motions and sweet smiles,  
 Which while they please us pass away,  
 The spirit to lofty thoughts that stay  
 And lift the whole of after-life,  
 Unless you take the vision to wife,  
 Which then seems lost, or serves to slake  
 Desire, as when a lovely lake  
 Far off scarce fills the exulting eye  
 Of one athirst, who comes thereby,  
 And inappreciably sips  
 The deep, with disappointed lips.  
 To fail is sorrow, yet confess  
 That love pays dearly for success!  
 No blame to beauty! Let's complain



Of the heart, which can so ill sustain  
Delight. Our griefs declare our fall,  
But how much more our joys! They pall  
With plucking, and celestial mirth  
Can find no footing on the earth,  
More than the bird of paradise,  
Which only lives the while it flies.

Think, also, how 'twould suit your pride  
To have this woman for a bride.  
Whate'er her faults, she's one of those  
To whom the world's last polish owes  
A novel grace, which all who aspire  
To courtliest custom must acquire.  
The world's the sphere she's made to charm,  
Which you have shunn'd as if 'twere harm.  
Oh, law perverse, that loneliness  
Breeds love, society success!  
Though young, 'twere now o'er late in life  
To train yourself for such a wife;  
So she would suit herself to you,  
As women, when they marry, do.  
For, since 'tis for our dignity  
Our lords should sit like lords on high,  
We willingly deteriorate  
To a step below our rulers' state;  
And 'tis the commonest of things  
To see an angel, gay with wings,  
Lean weakly on a mortal's arm!  
Honorina would put off the charm  
Of lofty grace that caught your love,  
For fear you should not seem above  
Herself in fashion and degree,  
As in true merit. Thus, you see,  
'Twere little kindness, wisdom none,  
To light your cot with such a sun.

## VII. FROM FREDERICK.

Write not, my Mother, her dear name  
With the least word or hint of blame.  
Who else shall discommend her choice,  
I giving it my hearty voice?  
Wed me? Ah, never near her come  
The knowledge of the narrow home!  
Far fly from her dear face, that shows  
The sunshine lovelier than the rose,  
The sordid gravity they wear  
Who poverty's base burthen bear!  
(And all are poor who come to miss  
Their custom, though a crown be this.)  
My hope was, that the wheels of fate,  
For my exceeding need, might wait,  
And she, unseen amidst all eyes,  
Move sightless, till I sought the prize,  
With honour, in an equal field.  
But then came Vaughan, to whom I yield  
With grace as much as any man,  
In such cause, to another can.  
Had she been mine, it seems to me  
That I had that integrity  
And only joy in her delight—  
But each is his own favourite  
In love! The thought to bring me rest  
Is that of us she takes the best.

'Twas but to see him to be sure  
That choice for her remain'd no more!  
His brow, so gaily clear of craft;  
His wit, the timely truth that laugh'd  
To find itself so well express'd;  
His words, abundant yet the best;  
His spirit, of such handsome show  
You mark'd not that his looks were so;  
His bearing, prospects, birth, all these  
Might well, with small suit, greatly please;  
How greatly, when she saw arise

The reflex sweetness of her eyes  
In his, and every breath defer  
Humbly its bated life to her;  
Whilst power and kindness of command.  
Which women can no more withstand  
Than we their grace, were still unquell'd,  
And force and flattery both compell'd  
Her softness! Say I'm worthy. I  
Grew, in her presence, cold and shy.  
It awed me, as an angel's might  
In raiment of reproachful light.  
Her gay looks told my sombre mood  
That what's not happy is not good;  
And, just because 'twas life to please,  
Death to repel her, truth and ease  
Deserted me; I strove to talk,  
And stammer'd foolishness; my walk  
Was like a drunkard's; if she took  
My arm, it stiffen'd, ached, and shook:  
A likely wooer! Blame her not;  
Nor ever say, dear Mother, aught  
Against that perfectness which is  
My strength, as once it was my bliss.

And do not chafe at social rules.  
Leave that to charlatans and fools.  
Clay grafts and clods conceive the rose,  
So base still fathers best. Life owes  
Itself to bread; enough thereof  
And easy days condition love;  
And, kindly train'd, love's roses thrive,  
No more pale, scentless petals five,  
Which moisten the considerate eye  
To see what haste they make to die,  
But heavens of colour and perfume,  
Which, month by month, renew the bloom  
Of art-born graces, when the year  
In all the natural grove is sere.

Blame nought then! Bright let be the air  
About my lonely cloud of care.

### VIII. FROM FREDERICK.

Religion, duty, books, work, friends,—  
'Tis good advice, but there it ends.  
I'm sick for what these have not got.  
Send no more books: they help me not;  
I do my work: the void's there still  
Which carefullest duty cannot fill.  
What though the inaugural hour of right  
Comes ever with a keen delight?  
Little relieves the labour's heat;  
Disgust oft crowns it when complete;  
And life, in fact, is not less dull  
For being very dutiful.  
'The stately homes of England,' lo,  
'How beautiful they stand!' They owe  
How much to nameless things like me  
Their beauty of security!  
But who can long a low toil mend  
By looking to a lofty end?  
And let me, since 'tis truth, confess  
The void's not fill'd by godliness.  
God is a tower without a stair,  
And His perfection, love's despair.  
'Tis He shall judge me when I die;  
He suckles with the hissing fly  
The spider; gazes calmly down.  
Whilst rapine grips the helpless town.  
His vast love holds all this and more.  
In consternation I adore.  
Nor can I ease this aching gulf  
With friends, the pictures of myself.  
Then marvel not that I recur  
From each and all of these to her.  
For more of heaven than her have I

No sensitive capacity.  
Had I but her, ah, what the gain  
Of owning aught but that domain!  
Nay, heaven's extent, however much,  
Cannot be more than many such;  
And, she being mine, should God to me  
Say 'Lo! my Child, I give to thee  
'All heaven besides,' what could I then,  
But, as a child, to Him complain  
That whereas my dear Father gave  
A little space for me to have  
In His great garden, now, o'erblest,  
I've that, indeed, but all the rest,  
Which, somehow, makes it seem I've got  
All but my only cared-for plot.  
Enough was that for my weak hand  
To tend, my heart to understand.

Oh, the sick fact, 'twixt her and me  
There's naught, and half a world of sea.

### IX. FROM FREDERICK.

In two, in less than two hours more  
I set my foot on English shore,  
Two years untrod, and, strange to tell,  
Nigh miss'd through last night's storm! There fell  
A man from the shrouds, that roar'd to quench  
Even the billows' blast and drench.  
Besides me none was near to mark  
His loud cry in the louder dark,  
Dark, save when lightning show'd the deeps  
Standing about in stony heaps.  
No time for choice! A rope; a flash  
That flamed as he rose; a dizzy splash;  
A strange, inopportune delight  
Of mounting with the billowy might,  
And falling, with a thrill again  
Of pleasure shot from feet to brain;  
And both paced deck, ere any knew  
Our peril. Round us press'd the crew,  
With wonder in the eyes of most.  
As if the man who had loved and lost  
Honorias dared no more than that!

My days have else been stale and flat.  
This life's at best, if justly scann'd,  
A tedious walk by the other's strand,  
With, here and there cast up, a piece  
Of coral or of ambergris,  
Which, boasted of abroad, we ignore  
The burden of the barren shore.  
I seldom write, for 'twould be still  
Of how the nerves refuse to thrill;  
How, throughout doubly-darken'd days,  
I cannot recollect her face;  
How to my heart her name to tell  
Is beating on a broken bell;  
And, to fill up the abhorrent gulf,  
Scarce loving her, I hate myself.

Yet, latterly, with strange delight,  
Rich tides have risen in the night,  
And sweet dreams chased the fancies dense  
Of waking life's dull somnolence.  
I see her as I knew her, grace  
Already glory in her face;  
I move about, I cannot rest,  
For the proud brain and joyful breast  
I have of her. Or else I float,  
The pilot of an idle boat,  
Alone, alone with sky and sea,  
And her, the third simplicity.  
Or Mildred, to some question, cries,  
(Her merry meaning in her eyes,)  
'The Ball, oh, Frederick will go;  
Honorias will be there! and, lo,  
As moisture sweet my seeing blurs

To hear my name so link'd with hers,  
A mirror joins, by guilty chance,  
Either's averted, watchful glance!  
Or with me, in the Ball-Room's blaze,  
Her brilliant mildness threads the maze;  
Our thoughts are lovely, and each word  
Is music in the music heard,  
And all things seem but parts to be  
Of one persistent harmony,  
By which I'm made divinely bold;  
The secret, which she knows, is told;  
And, laughing with a lofty bliss  
Of innocent accord, we kiss:  
About her neck my pleasure weeps;  
Against my lip the silk vein leaps;  
Then says an Angel, 'Day or night,  
If yours you seek, not her delight,  
Although by some strange witchery  
It seems you kiss her, 'tis not she;  
But, whilst you languish at the side  
Of a fair-foul phantasmal bride,  
Surely a dragon and strong tower  
Guard the true lady in her bower.'  
And I say, 'Dear my Lord. Amen!'  
And the true lady kiss again.  
Or else some wasteful malady  
Devours her shape and dims her eye;  
No charms are left, where all were rife,  
Except her voice, which is her life,  
Wherewith she, for her foolish fear,  
Says trembling, 'Do you love me. Dear?'  
And I reply, 'Sweetest, I vow  
I never loved but half till now.'  
She turns her face to the wall at this,  
And says, 'Go, Love, 'tis too much bliss.'  
And then a sudden pulse is sent  
About the sounding firmament  
In smitings as of silver bars;  
The bright disorder of the stars  
Is solved by music; far and near,  
Through infinite distinctions clear,  
Their twofold voices' deeper tone  
Utters the Name which all things own,  
And each ecstatic treble dwells  
On one whereof none other tells;  
And we, sublimed to song and fire,  
Take order in the wheeling quire,  
Till from the throbbing sphere I start,  
Waked by the heaving of my heart.  
Such dreams as these come night by night,  
Disturbing day with their delight.  
Portend they nothing? Who can tell!  
God yet may do some miracle.  
'Tis nigh two years, and she's not wed,  
Or you would know! He may be dead,  
Or mad, and loving some one else,  
And she, much moved that nothing quells  
My constancy, or, simply wroth  
With such a wretch, accept my troth  
To spite him; or her beauty's gone,  
(And that's my dream!) and this man Vaughan  
Takes her release: or tongues malign,  
Confusing every ear but mine,  
Have smirch'd her: ah, 'twould move her, sure,  
To find I loved her all the more!  
Nay, now I think, haply amiss  
I read her words and looks, and his,  
That night! Did not his jealousy  
Show—Good my God, and can it be  
That I, a modest fool, all blest,  
Nothing of such a heaven guess'd?  
Oh, chance too frail, yet frantic sweet,  
To-morrow sees me at her feet!  
Yonder, at last, the glad sea roars  
Along the sacred English shores!

There lies the lovely land I know,  
Where men and women lordliest grow;  
There peep the roofs where more than kings  
Postpone state cares to country things,  
And many a gay queen simply tends  
The babes on whom the world depends;  
There curls the wanton cottage smoke  
Of him that drives but bears no yoke;  
There laughs the realm where low and high  
Are lieges to society,  
And life has all too wide a scope,  
Too free a prospect for its hope,  
For any private good or ill,

Except dishonour, quite to fill! <sup>[1]</sup>

—Mother, since this was penn'd, I've read  
That 'Mr. Vaughan, on Tuesday, wed  
The beautiful Miss Churchill.' So  
That's over; and to-morrow I go  
To take up my new post on board  
The Wolf, my peace at last restored;  
My lonely faith, like heart-of-oak,  
Shock-season'd. Grief is now the cloak  
I clasp about me to prevent  
The deadly chill of a content  
With any near or distant good,  
Except the exact beatitude  
Which love has shown to my desire.  
Talk not of 'other joys and higher,'  
I hate and disavow all bliss  
As none for me which is not this.  
Think not I blasphemously cope  
With God's decrees, and cast off hope.  
How, when, and where can mine succeed?

I'll trust He knows who made my need.

Baseness of men! Pursuit being o'er,  
Doubtless her Husband feels no more  
The heaven of heavens of such a Bride,  
But, lounging, lets her please his pride  
With fondness, guerdons her caress  
With little names, and turns a tress  
Round idle fingers. If 'tis so,  
Why then I'm happier of the two!  
Better, for lofty loss, high pain,  
Than low content with lofty gain.  
Poor, foolish Dove, to trust from me  
Her happiness and dignity!

## **X. FROM FREDERICK.**

I thought the worst had brought me balm:  
'Twas but the tempest's central calm.  
Vague sinkings of the heart aver  
That dreadful wrong is come to her,  
And o'er this dream I brood and dote,  
And learn its agonies by rote.  
As if I loved it, early and late  
I make familiar with my fate,  
And feed, with fascinated will,  
On very dregs of finish'd ill.  
I think, she's near him now, alone,  
With wardship and protection none;  
Alone, perhaps, in the hindering stress  
Of airs that clasp him with her dress,  
They wander whispering by the wave;  
And haply now, in some sea-cave,  
Where the ribb'd sand is rarely trod,  
They laugh, they kiss, Oh, God! oh, God!  
There comes a smile acutely sweet  
Out of the picturing dark; I meet  
The ancient frankness of her gaze,  
That soft and heart-surprising blaze  
Of great goodwill and innocence.  
And perfect joy proceeding thence!  
Ah! made for earth's delight, yet such

The mid-sea air's too gross to touch.  
At thought of which, the soul in me  
Is as the bird that bites a bee,  
And darts abroad on frantic wing,  
Tasting the honey and the sting;  
And, moaning where all round me sleep  
Amidst the moaning of the deep,  
I start at midnight from my bed—  
And have no right to strike him dead.

What world is this that I am in,  
Where chance turns sanctity to sin!  
'Tis crime henceforward to desire  
The only good; the sacred fire  
That sunn'd the universe is hell!  
I hear a Voice which argues well:  
'The Heaven hard has scorn'd your cry;  
Fall down and worship me, and I  
Will give you peace; go and profane  
This pangful love, so pure, so vain.  
And thereby win forgetfulness  
And pardon of the spirit's excess,  
Which soar'd too nigh that jealous Heaven  
Ever, save thus, to be forgiven.  
No Gospel has come down that cures  
With better gain a loss like yours.  
Be pious! Give the beggar pelf,  
And love your neighbour as yourself!  
You, who yet love, though all is o'er,  
And she'll ne'er be your neighbour more,  
With soul which can in pity smile  
That aught with such a measure vile  
As self should be at all named "love!"  
Your sanctity the priests reprove;  
Your case of grief they wholly miss;  
The Man of Sorrows names not this.  
The years, they say, graft love divine  
On the lopp'd stock of love like thine;  
The wild tree dies not, but converts.  
So be it; but the lopping hurts,  
The graft takes tardily! Men stanch  
Meantime with earth the bleeding branch.  
There's nothing heals one woman's loss,  
And lightens life's eternal cross  
With intermission of sound rest,  
Like lying in another's breast.  
The cure is, to your thinking, low!  
Is not life all, henceforward, so?'

Ill Voice, at least thou calm'st my mood:  
I'll sleep! But, as I thus conclude,  
The intrusions of her grace dispel  
The comfortable glooms of hell.

A wonder! Ere these lines were dried,  
Vaughan and my Love, his three-days' Bride,  
Became my guests. I look'd, and, lo,  
In beauty soft as is the snow  
And powerful as the avalanche,  
She lit the deck. The Heav'n-sent chance!  
She smiled, surprised. They came to see  
The ship, not thinking to meet me.

At infinite distance she's my day:  
What then to him? Howbeit they say  
'Tis not so sunny in the sun  
But men might live cool lives thereon!

All's well; for I have seen arise  
That reflex sweetness of her eyes  
In his, and watch'd his breath defer  
Humbly its bated life to her,  
His *wife*. My Love, she's safe in his  
Devotion! What ask'd I but this?

They bade adieu; I saw them go  
Across the sea; and now I know  
The ultimate hope I rested on,  
The hope beyond the grave, is gone,  
The hope that, in the heavens high,  
At last it should appear that I

Loved most, and so, by claim divine,  
 Should have her, in the heavens, for mine,  
 According to such nuptial sort  
 As may subsist in the holy court,  
 Where, if there are all kinds of joys  
 To exhaust the multitude of choice  
 In many mansions, then there are  
 Loves personal and particular,  
 Conspicuous in the glorious sky  
 Of universal charity,  
 As Phosphor in the sunrise. Now  
 I've seen them, I believe their vow  
 Immortal; and the dreadful thought,  
 That he less honour'd than he ought  
 Her sanctity, is laid to rest,  
 And blessing them I too am blest.  
 My goodwill, as a springing air,  
 Unclouds a beauty in despair;  
 I stand beneath the sky's pure cope  
 Unburthen'd even by a hope;  
 And peace unspeakable, a joy  
 Which hope would deaden and destroy,  
 Like sunshine fills the airy gulf  
 Left by the vanishing of self.  
 That I have known her; that she moves  
 Somewhere all-graceful; that she loves,  
 And is belov'd, and that she's so  
 Most happy, and to heaven will go,  
 Where I may meet with her, (yet this  
 I count but accidental bliss,)  
 And that the full, celestial weal  
 Of all shall sensitively feel  
 The partnership and work of each,  
 And thus my love and labour reach  
 Her region, there the more to bless  
 Her last, consummate happiness,  
 Is guerdon up to the degree  
 Of that alone true loyalty  
 Which, sacrificing, is not nice  
 About the terms of sacrifice,  
 But offers all, with smiles that say,  
 'Tis little, but it is for aye!

#### **XI. FROM MRS. GRAHAM.**

You wanted her, my Son, for wife,  
 With the fierce need of life in life.  
 That nobler passion of an hour  
 Was rather prophecy than power;  
 And nature, from such stress unbent,  
 Recurs to deep discouragement.  
 Trust not such peace yet; easy breath,  
 In hot diseases, argues death;  
 And tastelessness within the mouth  
 Worse fever shows than heat or drouth.  
 Wherefore take, Frederick, timely fear  
 Against a different danger near:  
 Wed not one woman, oh, my Child,  
 Because another has not smiled!  
 Oft, with a disappointed man,  
 The first who cares to win him can;  
 For, after love's heroic strain,  
 Which tired the heart and brought no gain.  
 He feels consoled, relieved, and eased  
 To meet with her who can be pleased  
 To proffer kindness, amid compute  
 His acquiescence for pursuit;  
 Who troubles not his lonely mood;  
 And asks for love mere gratitude.  
 Ah, desperate folly! Yet, we know,  
 Who wed through love wed mostly so.  
 At least, my Son, when wed you do,  
 See that the woman equals you,  
 Nor rush, from having loved too high,  
 Into a worse humility.

A poor estate's a foolish plea  
For marrying to a base degree.  
A woman grown cannot be train'd,  
Or, if she could, no love were gain'd;  
For, never was a man's heart caught  
By graces he himself had taught.  
And fancy not 'tis in the might  
Of man to do without delight;  
For, should you in her nothing find  
To exhilarate the higher mind,  
Your soul would deaden useless wings  
With wickedness of lawful things,  
And vampire pleasure swift destroy  
Even the memory of joy.  
So let no man, in desperate mood,  
Wed a dull girl because she's good.  
All virtues in his wife soon dim,  
Except the power of pleasing him,  
Which may small virtue be, or none!

I know my just and tender Son,  
To whom the dangerous grace is given  
That scorns a good which is not heaven;  
My Child, who used to sit and sigh  
Under the bright, ideal sky,  
And pass, to spare the farmer's wheat,  
The poppy and the meadow-sweet!  
He would not let his wife's heart ache  
For what was mainly his mistake;  
But, having err'd so, all his force  
Would fix upon the hard, right course.

She's graceless, say, yet good and true,  
And therefore inly fair, and, through  
The veils which inward beauty fold,  
Faith can her loveliness behold.  
Ah, that's soon tired; faith falls away  
Without the ceremonial stay  
Of outward loveliness and awe.  
The weightier matters of the law  
She pays: mere mint and cumin not;  
And, in the road that she was taught,  
She treads, and takes for granted still  
Nature's immedicable ill;  
So never wears within her eyes  
A false report of paradise,  
Nor ever modulates her mirth  
With vain compassion of the earth,  
Which made a certain happier face  
Affecting, and a gayer grace  
With pathos delicately edged!  
Yet, though she be not privileged  
To unlock for you your heart's delight,  
(Her keys being gold, but not the right,)  
On lower levels she may do!  
Her joy is more in loving you  
Than being loved, and she commands  
All tenderness she understands.  
It is but when you proffer more  
The yoke weighs heavy and chafes sore.  
It's weary work enforcing love  
On one who has enough thereof,  
And honour on the lowlihead  
Of ignorance! Besides, you dread,  
In Leah's arms, to meet the eyes  
Of Rachel, somewhere in the skies,  
And both return, alike relieved,  
To life less loftily conceived.  
Alas, alas!

Then wait the mood  
In which a woman may be woo'd  
Whose thoughts and habits are too high  
For honour to be flattery,  
And who would surely not allow  
The suit that you could proffer now.  
Her equal yoke would sit with ease;  
It might, with wearing, even please,



(Not with a better word to move  
The loyal wrath of present love);  
She would not mope when you were gay,  
For want of knowing aught to say;  
Nor vex you with unhandsome waste  
Of thoughts ill-timed and words ill-placed;  
Nor reckon small things duties small,  
And your fine sense fantastical;  
Nor would she bring you up a brood  
Of strangers bound to you by blood,  
Boys of a meaner moral race,  
Girls with their mother's evil grace.  
But not her chance to sometimes find  
Her critic past his judgment kind;  
Nor, unaccustom'd to respect,  
Which men, where 'tis not claim'd, neglect,  
Confirm you selfish and morose,  
And slowly, by contagion, gross;  
But, glad and able to receive  
The honour you would long to give,  
Would hasten on to justify  
Expectancy, however high,  
Whilst you would happily incur  
Compulsion to keep up with her.

## XII. FROM FREDERICK.

Your letter, Mother, bears the date  
Of six months back, and comes too late.  
My Love, past all conceiving lost,  
A change seem'd good, at any cost,  
From lonely, stupid, silent grief,  
Vain, objectless, beyond relief,  
And, like a sea-fog, settled dense  
On fancy, feeling, thought, and sense.  
I grew so idle, so despised  
Myself, my powers, by Her unprized,  
Honouring my post, but nothing more,  
And lying, when I lived on shore,  
So late of mornings: weak tears stream'd  
For such slight came,—if only gleam'd,  
Remotely, beautifully bright,  
On clouded eyes at sea, the light  
Of English headlands in the sun,—  
That soon I deem'd 'twere better done  
To lay this poor, complaining wraith  
Of unreciprocated faith:  
And so, with heart still bleeding quick.  
But strengthen'd by the comfort sick  
Of knowing that *She* could not care,  
I turn'd away from my despair,  
And told our chaplain's daughter, Jane,—  
A dear, good girl, who saw my pain,  
And look'd as if she pitied me,—  
How glad and thankful I should be  
If some kind woman, not above  
Myself in rank, would give her love  
To one that knew not how to woo.  
Whereat she, without more ado,  
Blush'd, spoke of love return'd, and closed  
With what I meant to have proposed.  
And, trust me, Mother, I and Jane,  
We suit each other well. My gain  
Is very great in this good Wife,  
To whom I'm bound, for natural life,  
By hearty faith, yet crossing not  
My faith towards—I know not what!  
As to the ether is the air,  
Is her good to Honoria's fair;  
One place is full of both, yet each  
Lies quite beyond the other's reach  
And recognition.  
If you say,  
Am I contented? Yea and nay!  
For what's base but content to grow

With less good than the best we know?  
But think me not from life withdrawn.  
By passion for a hope that's gone,  
So far as to forget how much  
A woman is, as merely such,  
To man's affection. What is best,  
In each, belongs to all the rest;  
And though, in marriage, quite to kiss  
And half to love the custom is,  
'Tis such dishonour, ruin bare,  
The soul's interior despair,  
And life between two troubles toss'd,  
To me, who think not with the most;  
Whatever 'twould have been, before  
My Cousin's time, 'tis now so sore  
A treason to the abiding throne  
Of that sweet love which I have known,  
I cannot live so, and I bend  
My mind perforce to comprehend  
That He who gives command to love  
Does not require a thing above  
The strength He gives. The highest degree  
Of the hardest grace, humility;  
The step t'ward heaven the latest trod,  
And that which makes us most like God,  
And us much more than God behoves,  
Is, to be humble in our loves.  
Henceforth for ever therefore I  
Renounce all partiality  
Of passion. Subject to control  
Of that perspective of the soul  
Which God Himself pronounces good.  
Confirming claims of neighbourhood.  
And giving man, for earthly life,  
The closest neighbour in a wife,  
I'll serve all. Jane be much more dear  
Than all as she is much more near!  
I'll love her! Yea, and love's joy comes  
Ever from self-love's martyrdoms!

Yet, not to lie for God, 'tis true  
That 'twas another joy I knew  
When freighted was my heart with fire  
Of fond, irrational desire  
For fascinating, female charms,  
And hopeless heaven in Her mild arms.  
Nor wrong I any, if I profess  
That care for heaven with me were less  
But that I'm utterly imbued  
With faith of all Earth's hope renew'd  
In realms where no short-coming pains  
Expectance, and dear love disdains  
Time's treason, and the gathering dross,  
And lasts for ever in the gloss  
Of newness.

All the bright past seems,  
Now, but a splendour in my dreams,  
Which shows, albeit the dreamer wakes,  
The standard of right life. Life aches  
To be therewith conform'd; but, oh,  
The world's so stolid, dark, and low!  
That and the mortal element  
Forbid the beautiful intent,  
And, like the unborn butterfly,  
It feels the wings, and wants the sky.

But perilous is the lofty mood  
Which cannot yoke with lowly good.  
Right life, for me, is life that wends  
By lowly ways to lofty ends.  
I will perceive, at length, that haste  
T'ward heaven itself is only waste;  
And thus I dread the impatient spur  
Of aught that speaks too plain of Her.  
There's little here that story tells;  
But music talks of nothing else.  
Therefore, when music breathes, I say,

(And urge my task,) Away, away!  
Thou art the voice of one I knew,  
But what thou say'st is not yet true;  
Thou art the voice of her I loved,  
And I would not be vainly moved.

So that which did from death set free  
All things, now dons death's mockery,  
And takes its place with tunings that are  
But little noted. Do not mar  
For me your peace! My health is high.  
The proud possession of mine eye  
Departed, I am much like one  
Who had by haughty custom grown  
To think gilt rooms, and spacious grounds,  
Horses, and carriages, and hounds.  
Fine linen, and an eider bed  
As much his need as daily bread,  
And honour of men as much or more.  
Till, strange misfortune smiting sore,  
His pride all goes to pay his debts,  
A lodging anywhere he gets,  
And takes his family thereto  
Weeping, and other relics few,  
Allow'd, by them that seize his pelf,  
As precious only to himself.  
Yet the sun shines; the country green  
Has many riches, poorly seen  
From blazon'd coaches; grace at meat  
Goes well with thrift in what they eat;  
And there's amends for much bereft  
In better thanks for much that's left!

Jane is not fair, yet pleases well  
The eye in which no others dwell;  
And features somewhat plainly set,  
And homely manners leave her yet  
The crowning boon and most express  
Of Heaven's inventive tenderness,  
A woman. But I do her wrong,  
Letting the world's eyes guide my tongue!  
She has a handsomeness that pays  
No homage to the hourly gaze,  
And dwells not on the arch'd brow's height  
And lids which softly lodge the light,  
Nor in the pure field of the cheek  
Flow'rs, though the soul be still to seek;  
But shows as fits that solemn place  
Whereof the window is the face:  
Blankness and leaden outlines mark  
What time the Church within is dark:  
Yet view it on a Festal night,  
Or some occasion else for light,  
And each ungainly line is seen  
A special character to mean  
Of Saint or Prophet, and the whole  
Blank window is a living scroll.

For hours, the clock upon the shelf,  
Has all the talking to itself;  
But to and fro her needle runs  
Twice, while the clock is ticking once;  
And, when a wife is well in reach,  
Not silence separates, but speech;  
And I, contented, read, or smoke,  
And idly think, or idly stroke  
The winking cat, or watch the fire,  
In social peace that does not tire;  
Until, at easeful end of day,  
She moves, and puts her work away,  
And, saying 'How cold 'tis,' or 'How warm,'  
Or something else as little harm,  
Comes, used to finding, kindly press'd,  
A woman's welcome to my breast,  
With all the great advantage clear  
Of none else having been so near.

But sometimes, (how shall I deny!)  
There falls, with her thus fondly by,

Dejection, and a chilling shade.  
Remember'd pleasures, as they fade,  
Salute me, and colossal grow,  
Like foot-prints in the thawing snow.  
I feel oppress'd beyond my force  
With foolish envy and remorse.  
I love this woman, but I might  
Have loved some else with more delight;  
And strange it seems of God that He  
Should make a vain capacity.

Such times of ignorant relapse,  
'Tis well she does not talk, perhaps.  
The dream, the discontent, the doubt,  
To some injustice flaming out,  
Were't else, might leave us both to moan  
A kind tradition overthrown,  
And dawning promise once more dead  
In the pernicious lowlihead  
Of not aspiring to be fair.  
And what am I, that I should dare  
Dispute with God, who moulds one clay  
To honour and shame, and wills to pay  
With equal wages them that delve  
About His vines one hour or twelve!

### XIII. FROM LADY CLITHEROE TO MARY CHURCHILL.

I've dreadful news, my Sister dear!  
Frederick has married, as we hear,  
Oh, *such* a girl! This fact we get  
From Mr. Barton, whom we met  
At Abury once. He used to know,  
At Race and Hunt, Lord Clitheroe,  
And writes that he 'has seen Fred Graham,  
Commander of the Wolf,—the same  
The Mess call'd Joseph,—with his Wife  
Under his arm.' He 'lays his life,  
The fellow married her for love,  
For there was nothing else to move.  
H is her Shibboleth. 'Tis said  
Her Mother was a Kitchen-Maid.'

Poor Fred! What *will* Honoria say?  
She thought so highly of him. Pray  
Tell it her gently. I've no right,  
I know you hold, to trust my sight;  
But Frederick's state could not be hid!  
Awl Felix, coming when he did,  
Was lucky; for Honoria, too,  
Was half in love. How warm she grew  
On 'worldliness,' when once I said  
I fancied that, in ladies, Fred  
Had tastes much better than his means!  
His hand was worthy of a Queen's,  
Said she, and actually shed tears  
The night he left us for two years,  
And sobb'd, when ask'd the cause to tell,  
That 'Frederick look'd so miserable.'  
He *did* look very dull, no doubt,  
But such things girls don't cry about.

What weathercocks men always prove!  
You're quite right not to fall in love.  
*I* never did, and, truth to tell,  
I don't think it respectable.  
The man can't understand it, too.  
He likes to be in love with you,  
But scarce knows how, if you love him,  
Poor fellow. When 'tis woman's whim  
To serve her husband night and day,  
The kind soul lets her have her way!  
So, if you wed, as soon you should,  
Be selfish for your husband's good.  
Happy the men who relegate  
Their pleasures, vanities, and state  
To *us*. Their nature seems to be  
To enjoy themselves by deputy,

For, seeking their own benefit,  
 Dear, what a mess they make of it!  
 A man will work his bones away,  
 If but his wife will only play;  
 He does not mind how much he's teased,  
 So that his plague looks always pleased;  
 And never thanks her, while he lives,  
 For anything, but what he gives!  
 'Tis hard to manage men, we hear!  
 Believe me, nothing's easier, Dear.  
 The most important step by far  
 Is finding what their colours are.  
 The next is, not to let them know  
 The reason why they love us so.  
 The indolent droop of a blue shawl,  
 Or gray silk's fluctuating fall,  
 Covers the multitude of sins  
 In me. *Your* husband, Love, might wince  
 At azure, and be wild at slate,  
 And yet do well with chocolate.  
 Of course you'd let him fancy he  
 Adored you for your piety.

#### **XIV. FROM JANE TO HER MOTHER.**

Dear Mother, as you write, I see  
 How glad and thankful I should be  
 For such a husband. Yet to tell  
 The truth, I am so miserable!  
 How could he—I remember, though,  
 He never said me loved me! No,  
 He is so right that all seems wrong  
 I've done and thought my whole life long!  
 I'm grown so dull and dead with fear  
 That Yes and No, when he is near,  
 Is all I have to say. He's quite  
 Unlike what most would call polite,  
 And yet, when first I saw him come  
 To tea in Aunt's fine drawing-room,  
 He made me feel so common! Oh,  
 How dreadful if he thinks me so!  
 It's no use trying to behave  
 To him. His eye, so kind and grave,  
 Sees through and through me! Could not you,  
 Without his knowing that I knew,  
 Ask him to scold me now and then?  
 Mother, it's such a weary strain  
 The way he has of treating me  
 As if 'twas something fine to be  
 A woman; and appearing not  
 To notice any faults I've got!  
 I know he knows I'm plain, and small,  
 Stupid and ignorant, and all  
 Awkward and mean; and, by degrees,  
 I see a beauty which he sees,  
 When often he looks strange awhile,  
 Then recollects me with a smile.

I wish he had that fancied Wife,  
 With me for Maid, now! all my life  
 To dress her out for him, and make  
 Her looks the lovelier for his sake;  
 To have her rate me till I cried;  
 Then see her seated by his side,  
 And driven off proudly to the Ball;  
 Then to stay up for her, whilst all  
 The servants were asleep; and hear  
 At dawn the carriage rolling near,  
 And let them in; and hear her laugh,  
 And boast, he said that none was half  
 So beautiful, and that the Queen,  
 Who danced with him the first, had seen  
 And noticed her, and ask'd who was  
 That lady in the golden gauze?  
 And then to go to bed, and lie  
 In a sort of heavenly jealousy,

Until 'twas broad day, and I guess'd  
She slept, nor knew how she was bless'd.

Pray burn this letter. I would not  
Complain, but for the fear I've got  
Of going wild, as we hear tell  
Of people shut up in a cell,  
With no one there to talk to. He  
Must never know he is loved by me  
The most; he'd think himself to blame;  
And I should almost die for shame.

If being good would serve instead  
Of being graceful, ah, then, Fred—  
But I, myself, I never could  
See what's in women's being good;  
For all their goodness is to do  
Just what their nature tells them to.  
Now, when a man would do what's right,  
He has to try with all his might.

Though true and kind in deed and word,  
Fred's not a vessel of the Lord.  
But I have hopes of him; for, oh,  
How can we ever surely know  
But that the very darkest place  
May be the scene of saving grace!

#### **XV. FROM FREDERICK.**

'How did I feel?' The little wight  
Fill'd me, unfatherly, with fright!  
So grim it gazed, and, out of the sky,  
There came, minute, remote, the cry,  
Piercing, of original pain.  
I put the wonder back to Jane,  
And her delight seem'd dash'd, that I,  
Of strangers still by nature shy,  
Was not familiar quite so soon  
With her small friend of many a moon.  
But, when the new-made Mother smiled,  
She seem'd herself a little child,  
Dwelling at large beyond the law  
By which, till then, I judged and saw;  
And that fond glow which she felt stir  
For it, suffused my heart for her;  
To whom, from the weak babe, and thence  
To me, an influent innocence,  
Happy, reparative of life,  
Came, and she was indeed my wife,  
As there, lovely with love she lay,  
Brightly contented all the day  
To hug her sleepy little boy,  
In the reciprocated joy  
Of touch, the childish sense of love,  
Ever inquisitive to prove  
Its strange possession, and to know  
If the eye's report be really so.

#### **XVI. FROM JANE TO MRS. GRAHAM**

Dear Mother,—such if you'll allow,  
In *love*, not *law*, I'll call you now,—  
I hope you're well. I write to say  
Frederick has got, besides his pay,  
A good appointment in the Docks;  
Also to thank you for the frocks  
And shoes for Baby. I, (D.V.,)  
Shall soon be strong. Fred goes to sea  
No more. I *am* so glad; because,  
Though kinder husband never was,  
He seems still kinder to become  
The more he stays with me at home.  
When we are parted, I see plain  
He's dull till he gets used again  
To marriage. Do not tell him, though;  
I would not have him know I know,  
For all the world.

I try to mind  
All your advice; but sometimes find  
I do not well see how. I thought  
To take it about dress; so bought  
A gay new bonnet, gown, and shawl;  
But Frederick was not pleased at all;  
For, though he smiled, and said, 'How smart!'  
I feel, you know, what's in his heart.  
But I shall learn! I fancied long  
That care in dress was very wrong,  
Till Frederick, in his startling way,  
When I began to blame, one day,  
The Admiral's Wife, because we hear  
She spends two hours, or something near,  
In dressing, took her part, and said  
How all things deck themselves that wed;  
How birds and plants grow fine to please  
Each other in their marriages;  
And how (which certainly is true—  
It never struck me—did it you?)  
Dress was, at first, Heaven's ordinance,  
And has much Scripture countenance.  
For Eliezer, we are told,  
Adorn'd with jewels and with gold  
Rebecca. In the Psalms, again,  
How the King's Daughter dress'd! And, then,  
The Good Wife in the Proverbs, she  
Made herself clothes of tapestry,  
Purple and silk: and there's much more  
I had not thought about before!  
But Fred's so clever! Do you know,  
Since Baby came, he loves me so!  
I'm really useful, now, to Fred;  
And none could do so well instead.  
It's nice to fancy, if I died,  
He'd miss me from the Darling's side!  
Also, there's something now, you see,  
On which we talk, and quite agree;  
On which, without pride too, I can  
Hope I'm as wise as any man.  
I should be happy now, if quite  
Sure that in *one* thing Fred was right.  
But, though I trust his prayers are said,  
Because he goes so late to bed,  
I doubt his Calling. Glad to find  
A text adapted to his mind,—  
That where St. Paul, in Man and Wife,  
Allows a little worldly life,—  
He smiled, and said that he knew all  
Such things as that without St. Paul!  
And once he said, when I with pain  
Had got him just to read Romaine,  
'Men's creeds should not their hopes condemn.  
Who wait for heaven to come to them  
Are little like to go to heaven,  
If logic's not the devil's leaven!'  
I cried at such a wicked joke,  
And he, surprised, went out to smoke.  
But to judge him is not for me,  
Who myself sin so dreadfully  
As half to doubt if I should care  
To go to heaven, and he not there.  
He *must* be right; and I dare say  
I shall soon understand his way.  
To other things, once strange, I've grown  
Accustom'd, nay, to like. I own  
'Twas long before I got well used  
To sit, while Frederick read or mused  
For hours, and scarcely spoke. When he,  
For all that, held the door to me,  
Pick'd up my handkerchief, and rose  
To set my chair, with other shows  
Of honour, such as men, 'tis true,  
To sweethearts and fine ladies do,  
It almost seem'd an unkind jest;

But now I like these ways the best.  
They somehow make me gentle and good;  
And I don't mind his quiet mood.  
If Frederick *does* seem dull awhile,  
There's Baby. You should see him smile!  
I'm pretty and nice to him, sweet Pet,  
And he will learn no better yet:  
Indeed, now little Johnny makes  
A busier time of it, and takes  
Our thoughts off one another more,  
In happy as need be, I'm sure!

## **XVII. FROM FELIX TO HONORIA.**

Let me, Beloved, while gratitude  
Is garrulous with coming good,  
Or ere the tongue of happiness  
Be silenced by your soft caress,  
Relate how, musing here of you,  
The clouds, the intermediate blue,  
The air that rings with larks, the grave  
And distant rumour of the wave,  
The solitary sailing skiff,  
The gusty corn-field on the cliff,  
The corn-flower by the crumbling ledge,  
Or, far-down at the shingle's edge,  
The sighing sea's recurrent crest  
Breaking, resign'd to its unrest,  
All whisper, to my home-sick thought,  
Of charms in you till now uncaught,  
Or only caught as dreams, to die  
Ere they were own'd by memory.  
High and ingenious Decree  
Of joy-devising Deity!  
You whose ambition only is  
The assurance that you make my bliss,  
(Hence my first debt of love to show,  
That you, past showing indeed do so!)  
Trust me the world, the firmament,  
With diverse-natured worlds besprent,  
Were rear'd in no mere undivine  
Boast of omnipotent design,  
The lion differing from the snake  
But for the trick of difference sake,  
And comets darting to and fro  
Because in circles planets go;  
But rather that sole love might be  
Refresh'd throughout eternity  
In one sweet faith, for ever strange,  
Mirror'd by circumstantial change.  
For, more and more, do I perceive  
That everything is relative  
To you, and that there's not a star,  
Nor nothing in't, so strange or far,  
But, if 'twere scanned, 'twould chiefly mean  
Somewhat, till then, in you unseen,  
Something to make the bondage strait  
Of you and me more intimate,  
Some unguess'd opportunity  
Of nuptials in a new degree.  
But, oh, with what a novel force  
Your best-conn'd beauties, by remorse  
Of absence, touch; and, in my heart,  
How bleeds afresh the youthful smart  
Of passion fond, despairing still  
To utter infinite goodwill  
By worthy service! Yet I know  
That love is all that love can owe,  
And this to offer is no less  
Of worth, in kind speech or caress,  
Than if my life-blood I should give.  
For good is God's prerogative,  
And Love's deed is but to prepare  
The flatter'd, dear Belov'd to dare  
Acceptance of His gifts. When first



On me your happy beauty burst,  
 Honoria, verily it seem'd  
 That naught beyond you could be dream'd  
 Of beauty and of heaven's delight.  
 Zeal of an unknown infinite  
 Yet bade me ever wish you more  
 Beatified than e'er before.  
 Angelical, were your replies  
 To my prophetic flatteries;  
 And sweet was the compulsion strong  
 That drew me in the course along  
 Of heaven's increasing bright allure,  
 With provocations fresh of your  
 Victorious capacity.  
 Whither may love, so fledged, not fly?  
 Did not mere Earth hold fast the string  
 Of this celestial soaring thing,  
 So measure and make sensitive,  
 And still, to the nerves, nice notice give  
 Of each minutest increment  
 Of such interminable ascent,  
 The heart would lose all count, and beat  
 Unconscious of a height so sweet,  
 And the spirit-pursuing senses strain  
 Their steps on the starry track in vain!  
 But, reading now the note just come,  
 With news of you, the babes, and home,  
 I think, and say, 'To-morrow eve  
 With kisses me will she receive;  
 And, thinking, for extreme delight  
 Of love's extremes, I laugh outright.

#### **XVIII. FROM FREDERICK.**

Eight wedding-days gone by, and none  
 Yet kept, to keep them all in one,  
 Jane and myself, with John and Grace  
 On donkeys, visited the place  
 I first drew breath in, Knatchley Wood.  
 Bearing the basket, stuff'd with food.  
 Milk, loaves, hard eggs, and marmalade,  
 I halted where the wandering glade  
 Divides the thicket. There I knew,  
 It seem'd, the very drops of dew  
 Below the unalter'd eglantine.  
 Nothing had changed since I was nine!  
 In the green desert, down to eat  
 We sat, our rustic grace at meat  
 Good appetite, through that long climb  
 Hungry two hours before the time.  
 And there Jane took her stitching out,  
 And John for birds'-nests pry'd about,  
 And Grace and Baby, in between  
 The warm blades of the breathing green,  
 Dodged grasshoppers; and I no less,  
 In conscientious idleness,  
 Enjoy'd myself, under the noon  
 Stretch'd, and the sounds and sights of June  
 Receiving, with a drowsy charm,  
 Through muffled ear and folded arm.  
 And then, as if I sweetly dream'd,  
 I half-remember'd how it seem'd  
 When I, too, was a little child  
 About the wild wood roving wild.  
 Pure breezes from the far-off height  
 Melted the blindness from my sight,  
 Until, with rapture, grief, and awe,  
 I saw again as then I saw.  
 As then I saw, I saw again  
 The harvest-waggon in the lane,  
 With high-hung tokens of its pride  
 Left in the elms on either side;  
 The daisies coming out at dawn  
 In constellations on the lawn;  
 The glory of the daffodil;

The three black windmills on the hill,  
Whose magic arms, flung wildly by,  
Sent magic shadows o'er the rye.  
Within the leafy coppice, lo,  
More wealth than miser's dreams could show,  
The blackbird's warm and woolly brood,  
Five golden beaks agape for food;  
The Gipsies, all the summer seen  
Native as poppies to the Green;  
The winter, with its frosts and thaws  
And opulence of hips and haws:  
The lovely marvel of the snow;  
The Tamar, with its altering show  
Of gay ships sailing up and down,  
Among the fields and by the Town;  
And, dearer far than anything,  
Came back the songs you used to sing.  
(Ah, might you sing such songs again,  
And I, your child, but hear as then,  
With conscious profit of the gulf  
Flown over from my present self!)  
And, as to men's retreating eyes,  
Beyond high mountains higher rise,  
Still farther back there shone to me  
The dazzling dusk of infancy.  
Thither I look'd, as, sick of night,  
The Alpine shepherd looks to the height,  
And does not see the day, 'tis true,  
But sees the rosy tops that do.

Meantime Jane stitch'd, and fann'd the flies  
From my repose, with hush'd replies  
To Grace, and smiles when Baby fell.  
Her countenance love visible  
Appear'd, love audible her voice.  
Why in the past alone rejoice,  
Whilst here was wealth before me cast  
Which, I could feel, if 'twere but past  
Were then most precious? Question vain,  
When ask'd again and yet again,  
Year after year; yet now, for no  
Cause, but that heaven's bright winds will blow  
Not at our pray'r but as they list,  
It brought that distant, golden mist  
To grace the hour, firing the deep  
Of spirit and the drowsy keep  
Of joy, till, spreading uncontain'd,  
The holy power of seeing gained  
The outward eye, this owning even  
That where there's love and truth there's heaven.

Debtor to few, forgotten hours  
Am I, that truths for me are powers.  
Ah, happy hours, 'tis something yet  
Not to forget that I forget!

And now a cloud, bright, huge and calm,  
Rose, doubtful if for bale or balm;  
O'ertopping towers and bulwarks bright  
Appear'd, at beck of viewless might.  
Along a rifted mountain range.  
Untraceable and swift in change,  
Those glittering peaks, disrupted, spread  
To solemn bulks, seen overhead;  
The sunshine quench'd, from one dark form  
Fumed the appalling light of storm.  
Straight to the zenith, black with bale,  
The Gipsies' smoke rose deadly pale;  
And one wide night of hopeless hue  
Hid from the heart the recent blue.  
And soon, with thunder crackling loud,  
A flash reveal'd the formless cloud:  
Lone sailing rack, far wavering rim,  
And billowy tracts of stormland dim.

We stood, safe group'd beneath a shed.  
Grace hid behind Jane's gown for dread,  
Who told her, fondling with her hair,  
'The naughty noise! but God took care

Of all good girls.' John seem'd to me  
Too much for Jane's theology,  
Who bade him watch the tempest. Now  
A blast made all the woodland bow;  
Against the whirl of leaves and dust  
Kine dropp'd their heads; the tortured gust  
Jagg'd and convuls'd the ascending smoke  
To mockery of the lightning's stroke.  
The blood prick'd, and a blinding flash  
And close coinstantaneous crash  
Humbled the soul, and the rain all round  
Resilient dimm'd the whistling ground,  
Nor flagg'd in force from first to last,  
Till, sudden as it came, 'twas past,  
Leaving a trouble in the copse  
Of brawling birds and tinkling drops.

Change beyond hope! Far thunder faint  
Mutter'd its vast and vain complaint,  
And gaps and fractures, fringed with light,  
Show'd the sweet skies, with squadrons bright  
Of cloudlets, glittering calm and fair  
Through gulfs of calm and glittering air.

With this adventure, we return'd.  
The roads the feet no longer burn'd.  
A wholesome smell of rainy earth  
Refresh'd our spirits, tired of mirth.  
The donkey-boy drew friendly near  
My Wife, and, touch'd by the kind cheer  
Her countenance show'd, or sooth'd perchance  
By the soft evening's sad advance,  
As we were, stroked the flanks and head  
Of the ass, and, somewhat thick-voiced, said,  
'To 'ave to wop the donkeys so  
'Ardens the 'art, but they won't go  
Without!' My wife, by this impress'd,  
As men judge poets by their best,  
When now we reach'd the welcome door,  
Gave him his hire, and sixpence more.

### **XIX. FROM JANE.**

Dear Mrs. Graham, the fever's past,  
And Fred is well. I, in my last,  
Forgot to say that, while 'twas on,  
A lady, call'd Honoria Vaughan,  
One of his Salisbury Cousins, came.  
Had I, she ask'd me, heard her name?  
'Twas that Honoria, no doubt,  
Whom he would sometimes talk about  
And speak to, when his nights were bad,  
And so I told her that I had.

She look'd so beautiful and kind!  
And just the sort of wife my mind  
Pictured for Fred, with many tears,  
In those sad early married years.

Visiting, yesterday, she said,  
The Admiral's Wife, she learn'd that Fred  
Was very ill; she begg'd to be,  
If possible, of use to me.  
What could she do? Last year, his Aunt  
Died, leaving her, who had no want,  
Her fortune. Half was his, she thought;  
But he, she knew, would not be brought  
To take his rights at second hand.  
Yet something might, she hoped, be plann'd.  
What did I think of putting John  
To school and college? Mr. Vaughan,  
When John was old enough, could give  
Preferment to her relative;  
And she should be *so* pleased.—I said  
I felt quite sure that dearest Fred  
Would be most thankful. Would we come,  
And make ourselves, she ask'd, at home,  
Next month, at High-Hurst? Change of air  
Both he and I should need, and there

At leisure we could talk, and then  
Fix plans, as John was nearly ten.  
It seemed so rude to think and doubt,  
So I said, Yes. In going out,  
She said, 'How strange of Frederick, Dear,'  
(I wish he had been there to hear,  
'To send no cards, or tell me what  
A nice new Cousin I had got!'  
Was not that kind?

When Fred grew strong,  
I had, I found, done very wrong.  
Anger was in his voice and eye.  
With people born and bred so high  
As Fred and Mrs. Vaughan and you,  
It's hard to guess what's right to do;  
And he won't teach me!

Dear Fred wrote,  
Directly, such a lovely note,  
Which, though it undid all I had done,  
Was, both to me and Mrs. Vaughan,  
So kind! His words. I can't say why,  
Like soldiers' music, made me cry.

## **BOOK II.**

### **I. FROM JANE TO HER MOTHER.**

Thank Heaven, the burthens on the heart  
Are not half known till they depart!  
Although I long'd, for many a year,  
To love with love that casts out fear,  
My Frederick's kindness frighten'd me,  
And heaven seem'd less far off than he;  
And in my fancy I would trace  
A lady with an angel's face,  
That made devotion simply debt,  
Till sick with envy and regret,  
And wicked grief that God should e'er  
Make women, and not make them fair.  
That me might love me more because  
Another in his memory was,  
And that my indigence might be  
To him what Baby's was to me,  
The chief of charms, who could have thought?  
But God's wise way is to give nought  
Till we with asking it are tired;  
And when, indeed, the change desired  
Comes, lest we give ourselves the praise,  
It comes by Providence, not Grace;  
And mostly our thanks for granted pray'rs  
Are groans at unexpected cares,  
First Baby went to heaven, you know,  
And, five weeks after, Grace went, too,  
Then he became more talkative,  
And, stooping to my heart, would give  
Signs of his love, which pleased me more  
Than all the proofs he gave before;  
And, in that time of our great grief,  
We talk'd religion for relief;  
For, though we very seldom name  
Religion, we now think the same!  
Oh, what a bar is thus removed  
To loving and to being loved!  
For no agreement really is  
In anything when none's in this.  
Why, Mother, once, if Frederick press'd  
His wife against his hearty breast,  
The interior difference seem'd to tear  
My own, until I could not bear  
The trouble. 'Twas a dreadful strife,  
And show'd, indeed, that faith is life.  
He never felt this. If he did,  
I'm sure it could not have been hid;  
For wives, I need not say to you,

Can feel just what their husbands do,  
Without a word or look; but then  
It is not so, you know, with men.

From that time many a Scripture text  
Help'd me, which had, before, perplex'd.  
Oh, what a wond'rous word seem'd this  
He is my head, as Christ is his!  
None ever could have dared to see  
In marriage such a dignity  
For man, and for his wife, still less,  
Such happy, happy lowliness,  
Had God himself not made it plain!  
This revelation lays the rein—  
If I may speak so—on the neck  
Of a wife's love, takes thence the check  
Of conscience, and forbids to doubt  
Its measure is to be without  
All measure, and a fond excess  
Is here her rule of godliness.

I took him not for love but fright;  
He did but ask a dreadful right.  
In this was love, that he loved me  
The first, who was mere poverty.  
All that I know of love he taught;  
And love is all I know of aught.  
My merit is so small by his,  
That my demerit is my bliss.  
My life is hid with him in Christ,  
Never therefrom to be enticed;  
And in his strength have I such rest  
As when the baby on my breast  
Finds what it knows not how to seek,  
And, very happy, very weak,  
Lies, only knowing all is well,  
Pillow'd on kindness palpable.

## II. FROM LADY CLITHEROE TO MARY CHURCHILL.

Dear Saint, I'm still at High-Hurst Park.  
The house is fill'd with folks of mark.  
Honoraria suits a good estate  
Much better than I hoped. How fate  
Loads her with happiness and pride!  
And such a loving lord, beside!  
But between us, Sweet, everything  
Has limits, and to build a wing  
To this old house, when Courtholm stands  
Empty upon his Berkshire lands,  
And all that Honor might be near  
Papa, was buying love too dear.

With twenty others, there are two  
Guests here, whose names will startle you:  
Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Graham!  
I thought he stay'd away for shame.  
He and his wife were ask'd, you know,  
And would not come, four years ago.  
You recollect Miss Smythe found out  
Who she had been, and all about  
Her people at the Powder-mill;  
And how the fine Aunt tried to instil  
*Haut ton*, and how, at last poor Jane  
Had got so shy and *gauche* that, when  
The Dockyard gentry came to sup,  
She always had to be lock'd up;  
And some one wrote to us and said  
Her mother was a kitchen-maid.  
Dear Mary, you'll be charm'd to know  
It *must* be all a fib. But, oh,  
She *is* the oddest little Pet  
On which my eyes were ever set!  
She's so *outrée* and natural  
That, when she first arrived, we all  
Wonder'd, as when a robin comes  
In through the window to eat crumbs  
At breakfast with us. She has sense,

Humility, and confidence;  
And, save in dressing just a thought  
Gayer in colours than she ought,  
(To-day she looks a cross between  
Gipsy and Fairy, red and green,)  
She always happens to do well.  
And yet one never quite can tell  
What she *might* do or utter next.  
Lord Clitheroe is much perplex'd.  
Her husband, every now and then,  
Looks nervous; all the other men  
Are charm'd. Yet she has neither grace,  
Nor one good feature in her face.  
Her eyes, indeed, flame in her head,  
Like very altar-fires to Fred,  
Whose steps she follows everywhere  
Like a tame duck, to the despair  
Of Colonel Holmes, who does his part  
To break her funny little heart.  
Honor's enchanted. 'Tis her view  
That people, if they're good and true,  
And treated well, and let alone,  
Will kindly take to what's their own,  
And always be original,  
Like children. Honor's just like all  
The rest of us! But, thinking so,  
'Tis well she miss'd Lord Clitheroe,  
Who hates originality,  
Though he puts up with it in me.

Poor Mrs. Graham has never been  
To the Opera! You should have seen  
The innocent way she told the Earl  
She thought Plays sinful when a girl,  
And now she never had a chance!  
Frederick's complacent smile and glance  
Towards her, show'd me, past a doubt,  
Honor had been quite cut out.  
'Tis very strange; for Mrs. Graham,  
Though Frederick's fancy none can blame,  
Seems the last woman you'd have thought  
*Her* lover would have ever sought.  
She never reads, I find, nor goes  
Anywhere; so that I suppose  
She got at all she ever knew  
By growing up, as kittens do.

Talking of kittens, by-the-bye,  
You have more influence than I  
With dear Honoria. Get her, Dear,  
To be a little more severe  
With those sweet Children. They've the run  
Of all the place. When school was done,  
Maud burst in, while the Earl was there,  
With 'Oh, Mama, do be a bear!'

Do you know, Dear, this odd wife of Fred  
Adores his old Love in his stead!  
She *is* so nice, yet, I should say,  
Not quite the thing for every day.  
Wonders are wearying! Felix goes  
Next Sunday with her to the Close,  
And you will judge.

Honor asks  
All Wiltshire Belles here; Felix basks  
Like Puss in fire-shine, when the room  
Is thus aflame with female bloom.  
But then she smiles when most would pout;  
And so his lawless loves go out  
With the last brocade. 'Tis not the same,  
I fear, with Mrs. Frederick Graham.  
Honor should not have her here,—  
And this you might just hint, my Dear,—  
For Felix says he never saw  
Such proof of what he holds for law,  
That 'beauty is love which can be seen.'  
Whatever he by this may mean,  
Were it not dreadful if he fell

In love with her on principle!

### III. FROM JANE TO MRS. GRAHAM

Mother, I told you how, at first,  
I fear'd this visit to the Hurst.  
Fred must, I felt, be so distress'd  
By aught in me unlike the rest  
Who come here. But I find the place  
Delightful; there's such ease, and grace,  
And kindness, and all seem to be  
On such a high equality.  
They have not got to think, you know,  
How far to make the money go.  
But Frederick says it's less the expense  
Of money, than of sound good-sense,  
Quickness to care what others feel  
And thoughts with nothing to conceal;  
Which I'll teach Johnny. Mrs. Vaughan  
Was waiting for us on the Lawn,  
And kiss'd and call'd me 'Cousin.' Fred  
Neglected his old friends, she said.  
He laugh'd, and colour'd up at this.  
She was, you know, a flame of his;  
But I'm not jealous! Luncheon done,  
I left him, who had just begun  
To talk about the Russian War  
With an old Lady, Lady Carr,—  
A Countess, but I'm more afraid,  
A great deal, of the Lady's Maid,—  
And went with Mrs. Vaughan to see  
The pictures, which appear'd to be  
Of sorts of horses, clowns, and cows  
Call'd Wouvermans and Cuyps and Dows.  
And then she took me up, to show  
Her bedroom, where, long years ago,  
A Queen slept. 'Tis all tapestries  
Of Cupids, Gods, and Goddesses,  
And black, carved oak. A curtain'd door  
Leads thence into her soft Boudoir,  
Where even her husband may but come  
By favour. He, too, has his room,  
Kept sacred to his solitude.  
Did I not think the plan was good?  
She ask'd me; but I said how small  
Our house was, and that, after all,  
Though Frederick would not say his prayers  
At night till I was safe upstairs,  
I thought it wrong to be so shy  
Of being good when I was by.  
'Oh, you should humour him!' she said,  
With her sweet voice and smile; and led  
The way to where the children ate  
Their dinner, and Miss Williams sate.  
She's only Nursery-Governess,  
Yet they consider her no less  
Than Lord or Lady Carr, or me.  
Just think how happy she must be!  
The Ball-Room, with its painted sky  
Where heavy angels seem to fly,  
Is a dull place; its size and gloom  
Make them prefer, for drawing-room,  
The Library, all done up new  
And comfortable, with a view  
Of Salisbury Spire between the boughs.  
When she had shown me through the house,  
(I wish I could have let her know  
That she herself was half the show;  
She *is* so handsome, and so kind!)  
She fetch'd the children, who had dined;  
And, taking one in either hand,  
Show'd me how all the grounds were plann'd.  
The lovely garden gently slopes  
To where a curious bridge of ropes  
Crosses the Avon to the Park.

We rested by the stream, to mark  
 The brown backs of the hovering trout.  
 Frank tickled one, and took it out  
 From under a stone. We saw his owls,  
 And awkward Cochinchina fowls,  
 And shaggy pony in the croft;  
 And then he dragg'd us to a loft,  
 Where pigeons, as he push'd the door,  
 Fann'd clear a breadth of dusty floor,  
 And set us coughing. I confess  
 I trembled for my nice silk dress.  
 I cannot think how Mrs. Vaughan  
 Ventured with that which she had on,—  
 A mere white wrapper, with a few  
 Plain trimmings of a quiet blue,  
 But, oh, so pretty! Then the bell  
 For dinner rang. I look'd quite well  
 ('Quite charming,' were the words Fred said,)  
 With the new gown that I've had made  
     I *am* so proud of Frederick.  
 He's so high-bred and lordly-like  
 With Mrs. Vaughan! He's not quite so  
 At home with me; but that, you know,  
 I can't expect, or wish. 'Twould hurt,  
 And seem to mock at my desert.  
 Not but that I'm a duteous wife  
 To Fred; but, in another life,  
 Where all are fair that have been true,  
 I hope I shall be graceful too,  
 Like Mrs. Vaughan. And, now, good-bye!  
 That happy thought has made me cry,  
 And feel half sorry that my cough,  
 In this fine air, is leaving off.

#### IV. FROM FREDERICK TO MRS. GRAHAM.

Honoria, trebly fair and mild  
 With added loves of lord and child,  
 Is else unalter'd. Years, which wrong  
 The rest, touch not her beauty, young  
 Within youth which rather seems her clime,  
 Than aught that's relative to time.  
 How beyond hope was heard the prayer  
 I offer'd in my love's despair!  
 Could any, whilst there's any woe,  
 Be wholly blest, then she were so.  
 She is, and is aware of it,  
 Her husband's endless benefit;  
 But, though their daily ways reveal  
 The depth of private joy they feel,  
 'Tis not their bearing each to each  
 That does abroad their secret preach,  
 But such a lovely good-intent  
 To all within their government  
 And friendship as, 'tis well discern'd,  
 Each of the other must have learn'd;  
 For no mere dues of neighbourhood  
 Ever begot so blest a mood.

And fair, indeed, should be the few  
 God dowers with nothing else to do,  
 And liberal of their light, and free  
 To show themselves, that all may see!  
 For alms let poor men poorly give  
 The meat whereby men's bodies live;  
 But they of wealth are stewards wise  
 Whose graces are their charities.

The sunny charm about this home  
 Makes all to shine who thither come.  
 My own dear Jane has caught its grace,  
 And, honour'd, honours too the place.  
 Across the lawn I lately walk'd  
 Alone, and watch'd where mov'd and talk'd,  
 Gentle and goddess-like of air,  
 Honoria and some Stranger fair.  
 I chose a path unblest by these;



When one of the two Goddesses,  
With my Wife's voice, but softer, said,  
'Will you not walk with us, dear Fred?'

She moves, indeed, the modest peer  
Of all the proudest ladies here.  
Unawed she talks with men who stand  
Among the leaders of the land,  
And women beautiful and wise,  
With England's greatness in their eyes.  
To high, traditional good-sense,  
And knowledge ripe without pretence,  
And human truth exactly hit  
By quiet and conclusive wit,  
Listens my little, homely Jane,  
Mistakes the points and laughs amain;  
And, after, stands and combs her hair,  
And calls me much the wittiest there!

With reckless loyalty, dear Wife,  
She lays herself about my life!  
The joy I might have had of yore  
I have not; for 'tis now no more,  
With me, the lyric time of youth,  
And sweet sensation of the truth.  
Yet, past my hope or purpose bless'd,  
In my chance choice let be confess'd  
The tenderer Providence that rules  
The fates of children and of fools!

I kiss'd the kind, warm neck that slept,  
And from her side this morning stepp'd,  
To bathe my brain from drowsy night  
In the sharp air and golden light.  
The dew, like frost, was on the pane.  
The year begins, though fair, to wane.  
There is a fragrance in its breath  
Which is not of the flowers, but death;  
And green above the ground appear  
The lilies of another year.  
I wander'd forth, and took my path  
Among the bloomless aftermath;  
And heard the steadfast robin sing  
As if his own warm heart were Spring.  
And watch'd him feed where, on the yew,  
Hung honey'd drops of crimson dew;  
And then return'd, by walls of peach,  
And pear-trees bending to my reach,  
And rose-beds with the roses gone,  
To bright-laid breakfast. Mrs. Vaughan  
Was there, none with her. I confess  
I love her than of yore no less!  
But she alone was loved of old;  
Now love is twain, nay, manifold;  
For, somehow, he whose daily life  
Adjusts itself to one true wife,  
Grows to a nuptial, near degree  
With all that's fair and womanly.  
Therefore, as more than friends, we met,  
Without constraint, without regret;  
The wedded yoke that each had donn'd  
Seeming a sanction, not a bond.

## V. FROM MRS. GRAHAM.

Your love lacks joy, your letter says.  
Yes; love requires the focal space  
Of recollection or of hope,  
E'er it can measure its own scope.  
Too soon, too soon comes Death to show  
We love more deeply than we know!  
The rain, that fell upon the height  
Too gently to be call'd delight,  
Within the dark vale reappears  
As a wild cataract of tears;  
And love in life should strive to see  
Sometimes what love in death would be!  
Easier to love, we so should find.

It is than to be just and kind.

She's gone: shut close the coffin-lid:  
What distance for another did  
That death has done for her! The good  
Once gazed upon with heedless mood,  
Now fills with tears the famish'd eye,  
And turns all else to vanity.  
'Tis sad to see, with death between,  
The good we have pass'd and have not seen!  
How strange appear the words of all!  
The looks of those that live appal.  
They are the ghosts, and check the breath:  
There's no reality but death,  
And hunger for some signal given  
That we shall have our own in heaven.  
But this the God of love lets be  
A horrible uncertainty.

How great her smallest virtue seems,  
How small her greatest fault! Ill dreams  
Were those that foil'd with loftier grace  
The homely kindness of her face.  
'Twas here she sat and work'd, and there  
She comb'd and kiss'd the children's hair;  
Or, with one baby at her breast,  
Another taught, or hush'd to rest.  
Praise does the heart no more refuse  
To the chief loveliness of use.  
Her humblest good is hence most high  
In the heavens of fond memory;  
And Love says Amen to the word,  
A prudent wife is from the Lord.  
Her worst gown's kept, ('tis now the best,  
As that in which she oftenest dress'd,)  
For memory's sake more precious grown  
Than she herself was for her own.  
Poor child! Foolish it seem'd to fly  
To sobs instead of dignity,  
When she was hurt. Now, none than all,  
Heart-rending and angelical  
That ignorance of what to do,  
Bewilder'd still by wrong from you:  
For what man ever yet had grace  
Ne'er to abuse his power and place?  
No magic of her voice or smile  
Suddenly raised a fairy isle,  
But fondness for her underwent  
An unregarded increment,  
Like that which lifts, through centuries,  
The coral-reef within the seas,  
Till, lo! the land where was the wave.  
Alas! 'tis everywhere her grave.

## VI. FROM JANE TO MRS. GRAHAM.

Dear Mother, I can surely tell,  
Now, that I never shall get well  
Besides the warning in my mind,  
All suddenly are grown so kind.  
Fred stopp'd the Doctor, yesterday,  
Downstairs, and, when he went away,  
Came smiling back, and sat with me,  
Pale, and conversing cheerfully  
About the Spring, and how my cough,  
In finer weather, would leave off.  
I saw it all, and told him plain  
I felt no hope of Spring again.  
Then he, after a word of jest,  
Burst into tears upon my breast,  
And own'd, when he could speak, he knew  
There was a little danger, too.  
This made me very weak and ill,  
And while, last night, I lay quite still,  
And, as he fancied, in the deep,  
Exhausted rest of my short sleep,  
I heard, or dream'd I heard him pray:

'Oh, Father, take her not away!  
 Let not life's dear assurance lapse  
 Into death's agonised "Perhaps,"  
 A hope without Thy promise, where  
 Less than assurance is despair!  
 Give me some sign, if go she must,  
 That death's not worse than dust to dust,  
 Not heaven, on whose oblivious shore  
 Joy I may have, but her no more!  
 The bitterest cross, it seems to me,  
 Of all is infidelity;  
 And so, if I may choose, I'll miss  
 The kind of heaven which comes to this.  
 If doom'd, indeed, this fever ceased,  
 To die out wholly, like a beast,  
 Forgetting all life's ill success  
 In dark and peaceful nothingness,  
 I could but say, Thy will be done;  
 For, dying thus, I were but one  
 Of seed innumerable which ne'er  
 In all the worlds shall bloom or bear.  
 I've put life past to so poor use  
 Well may'st Thou life to come refuse;  
 And justice, which the spirit contents,  
 Shall still in me all vain laments;  
 Nay, pleased, I will, while yet I live,  
 Think Thou my forfeit joy may'st give  
 To some fresh life, else unelect,  
 And heaven not feel my poor defect!  
 Only let not Thy method be  
 To make that life, and call it me;  
 Still less to sever mine in twain,  
 And tell each half to live again,  
 And count itself the whole! To die,  
 Is it love's disintegrity?  
 Answer me, "No," and I, with grace,  
 Will life's brief desolation face,  
 My ways, as native to the clime,  
 Adjusting to the wintry time,  
 Ev'n with a patient cheer thereof—'  
 He started up, hearing me cough.  
 Oh, Mother, now my last doubt's gone!  
 He likes me *more* than Mrs. Vaughan;  
 And death, which takes me from his side,  
 Shows me, in very deed, his bride!

## VII. FROM JANE TO FREDERICK.

I leave this, Dear, for you to read,  
 For strength and hope, when I am dead.  
 When Grace died, I was so perplex'd,  
 I could not find one helpful text;  
 And when, a little while before,  
 I saw her sobbing on the floor,  
 Because I told her that in heaven  
 She would be as the angels even,  
 And would not want her doll, 'tis true  
 A horrible fear within me grew,  
 That, since the preciousness of love  
 Went thus for nothing, mine might prove  
 To be no more, and heaven's bliss  
 Some dreadful good which is not this.  
 But being about to die makes clear  
 Many dark things. I have no fear,  
 Now that my love, my grief, my joy  
 Is but a passion for a toy.  
 I cannot speak at all, I find,  
 The shining something in my mind  
 That shows so much that, if I took  
 My thoughts all down, 'twould make a book.  
 God's Word, which lately seem'd above  
 The simpleness of human love,  
 To my death-sharpen'd hearing tells  
 Of little or of nothing else;  
 And many things I hoped were true,

When first they came, like songs, from you,  
Now rise with witness past the reach  
Of doubt, and I to you can teach,  
As if with felt authority  
And as things seen, what you taught me.

Yet how? I have no words but those  
Which every one already knows:  
As, 'No man hath at any time  
Seen God, but 'tis the love of Him  
Made perfect, and He dwells in us,  
If we each other love.' Or thus,  
'My goodness misseth in extent  
Of Thee, Lord! In the excellent  
I know Thee; and the Saints on Earth  
Make all my love and holy mirth.'  
And further, 'Inasmuch as ye  
Did it to one of these, to Me  
Ye did it, though ye nothing thought  
Nor knew of Me, in that ye wrought.'

What shall I dread? Will God undo  
Our bond, which is all others too?  
And when I meet you will you say  
To my reclaiming looks, 'Away!  
A dearer love my bosom warms  
With higher rights and holier charms.  
The children, whom thou here may'st see,  
Neighbours that mingle thee and me,  
And gaily on impartial lyres  
Renounce the foolish filial fires  
They felt, with "Praise to God on high,  
Goodwill to all else equally;"  
The trials, duties, service, tears;  
The many fond, confiding years  
Of nearness sweet with thee apart;  
The joy of body, mind, and heart;  
The love that grew a reckless growth,  
Unmindful that the marriage-oath  
To love in an eternal style  
Meant—only for a little while:  
Sever'd are now those bonds earth-wrought;  
All love, not new, stands here for nought!'

Why, it seems almost wicked, Dear,  
Even to utter such a fear!  
Are we not 'heirs,' as man and wife,  
'Together of eternal life?'  
Was Paradise e'er meant to fade,  
To make which marriage first was made?  
Neither beneath him nor above  
Could man in Eden find his Love;  
Yet with him in the garden walk'd  
His God, and with Him mildly talk'd!  
Shall the humble preference offend  
In Heaven, which God did there commend?  
Are 'Honourable and undefiled'  
The names of aught from heaven exiled?  
And are we not forbid to grieve  
As without hope? Does God deceive,  
And call that hope which is despair,  
Namely, the heaven we should not share!  
Image and glory of the man,  
As he of God, is woman. Can  
This holy, sweet proportion die  
Into a dull equality?  
Are we not one flesh, yea, so far  
More than the babe and mother are,  
That sons are bid mothers to leave  
And to their wives alone to cleave,  
'For *they* two are one flesh!' But 'tis  
In the flesh we rise. Our union is,  
You know 'tis said, 'great mystery.'  
Great mockery, it appears to me;  
Poor image of the spousal bond  
Of Christ and Church, if loosed beyond  
This life!—'Gainst which, and much more yet,  
There's not a single word to set.

The speech to the scoffing Sadducee  
Is not in point to you and me;  
For how could Christ have taught such clods  
That Caesar's things are also God's?  
The sort of Wife the Law could make  
Might well be 'hated' for Love's sake,  
And left, like money, land, or house;  
For out of Christ is no true spouse.

I used to think it strange of Him  
To make love's after-life so dim,  
Or only clear by inference:  
But God trusts much to common sense,  
And only tells us what, without  
His Word, we could not have found out  
On fleshly tables of the heart  
He penn'd truth's feeling counterpart  
In hopes that come to all: so, Dear,  
Trust these, and be of happy cheer,  
Nor think that he who has loved well  
Is of all men most miserable.

There's much more yet I want to say,  
But cannot now. You know my way  
Of feeling strong from Twelve till Two  
After my wine. I'll write to you  
Daily some words, which you shall have  
To break the silence of the grave.

### VIII. FROM JANE TO FREDERICK.

You think, perhaps, 'Ah, could she know  
How much I loved her!' Dear, I do!  
And you may say, 'Of this new awe  
Of heart which makes her fancies law,  
These watchful duties of despair,  
She does not dream, she cannot care!'  
Frederick, you see how false that is,  
Or how could I have written this?  
And, should it ever cross your mind  
That, now and then, you were unkind.  
You never, never, were at all!  
Remember that! It's natural  
For one like Mr. Vaughan to come,  
From a morning's useful pastime, home,  
And greet, with such a courteous zest  
His handsome wife, still newly dress'd,  
As if the Bird of Paradise  
Should daily change her plumage thrice.  
He's always well, she's always gay.  
Of course! But he who toils all day,  
And comes home hungry, tired, or cold,  
And feels 'twould do him good to scold  
His wife a little, let him trust  
Her love, and say the things he must,  
Till sooth'd in mind by meat and rest.  
If, after that, she's well caress'd,  
And told how good she is, to bear  
His humour, fortune makes it fair.  
Women like men to be like men;  
That is, at least, just now and then.  
Thus, I have nothing to forgive,  
But those first years, (how could I live!)  
When, though I really did behave  
So stupidly, you never gave  
One unkind word or look at all:  
As if I was some animal  
You pitied! Now in later life,  
You used me like a proper Wife.

You feel, Dear, in your present mood,  
Your Jane, since she was kind and good,  
A child of God, a living soul,  
Was not so different, on the whole,  
From Her who had a little more  
Of God's best gifts: but, oh, be sure,  
My dear, dear Love, to take no blame  
Because you could not feel the same

Towards me, living, as when dead.  
A hungry man must needs think bread  
So sweet! and, only at their rise  
And setting, blessings, to thine eyes,  
Like the sun's course, grow visible.  
If you are sad, remember well,  
Against delusions of despair,  
That memory sees things as they were,  
And not as they were misenjoy'd,  
And would be still, if aught destroy'd  
The glory of their hopelessness:  
So that, in truth, you had me less  
In days when necessary zeal  
For my perfection made you feel  
My faults the most, than now your love  
Forgets but where it can approve.  
You gain by loss, if that seem'd small  
Possess'd, which, being gone, turns all  
Surviving good to vanity.

Oh, Fred, this makes it sweet to die!  
Say to yourself: "Tis comfort yet  
I made her that which I regret;  
And parting might have come to pass  
In a worse season; as it was,  
Love an eternal temper took,  
Dipp'd, glowing, in Death's icy brook!''  
Or say, 'On her poor feeble head  
This might have fallen: 'tis mine instead!  
And so great evil sets me free  
Henceforward from calamity.  
And, in her little children, too,  
How much for her I yet can do!'  
And grieve not for these orphans even;  
For central to the love of Heaven  
Is each child as each star to space.  
This truth my dying love has grace  
To trust with a so sure content,  
I fear I seem indifferent.

You must not think a child's small heart  
Cold, because it and grief soon part.  
Fanny will keep them all away,  
Lest you should hear them laugh and play.  
Before the funeral's over. Then  
I hope you'll be yourself again,  
And glad, with all your soul, to find  
How God thus to the sharpest wind  
Suits the shorn lambs. Instruct them, Dear,  
For my sake, in His love and fear.  
And show now, till their journey's done,  
Not to be weary they must run.

Strive not to dissipate your grief  
By any lightness. True relief  
Of sorrow is by sorrow brought.  
And yet for sorrow's sake, you ought  
To grieve with measure. Do not spend  
So good a power to no good end!  
Would you, indeed, have memory stay  
In the heart, lock up and put away  
Relies and likenesses and all  
Musings, which waste what they recall.  
True comfort, and the only thing  
To soothe without diminishing  
A prized regret, is to match here,  
By a strict life, God's love severe.  
Yet, after all, by nature's course,  
Feeling must lose its edge and force.  
Again you'll reach the desert tracts  
Where only sin or duty acts.  
But, if love always lit our path,  
Where were the trial of our faith?

Oh, should the mournful honeymoon  
Of death be over strangely soon,  
And life-long resolutions, made  
In grievous haste, as quickly fade,  
Seeming the truth of grief to mock,

Think, Dearest, 'tis not by the clock  
That sorrow goes! A month of tears  
Is more than many, many years  
Of common time. Shun, if you can,  
However, any passionate plan.  
Grieve with the heart; let not the head  
Grieve on, when grief of heart is dead:  
For all the powers of life defy  
A superstitions constancy.

The only bond I hold you to  
Is that which nothing can undo.  
A man is not a young man twice;  
And if, of his young years, he lies  
A faithful score in one wife's breast,  
She need not mind who has the rest.  
In this do what you will, dear Love,  
And feel quite sure that I approve.  
And, should it chance as it may be,  
Give her my wedding-ring from me;  
And never dream that you can err  
T'wards me by being good to her;  
Nor let remorseful thoughts destroy  
In you the kindly flowering joy  
And pleasure of the natural life.

But don't forget your fond, dead Wife.  
And, Frederick, should you ever be  
Tempted to think your love of me  
All fancy, since it drew its breath  
So much more sweetly after death,  
Remember that I never did  
A single thing you once forbid;  
All poor folks liked me; and, at the end,  
Your Cousin call'd me 'Dearest Friend!'

And, new, 'twill calm your grief to know,—  
You, who once loved Honoria so,—  
There's kindness, that's look'd kindly on,  
Between her Emily and John.  
Thus, in your children, you will wed!  
And John seems *so* much comforted,  
(Like Isaac when *his* mother died  
And fair Rebekah was his bride),  
By his new hope, for losing me!  
So *all* is happiness, you see.  
And that reminds me how, last night,  
I dreamt of heaven, with great delight.  
A strange, kind Lady watch'd my face,  
Kiss'd me, and cried, 'His hope found grace!'  
She bade me then, in the crystal floor,  
Look at myself, myself no more;  
And bright within the mirror shone  
Honorias smile, and yet my own!  
'And, when you talk, I hear,' she sigh'd,  
'How much he loved her! Many a bride  
In heaven such countersemblance wears  
Through what Love deem'd rejected prayers.'  
She would have spoken still; but, lo,  
One of a glorious troop, aglow  
From some great work, towards her came,  
And she so laugh'd, 'twas such a flame,  
Aaron's twelve jewels seem'd to mix  
With the lights of the Seven Candlesticks.

#### IX. FROM LADY CLITHEROE TO MRS. GRAHAM.

My dearest Aunt, the Wedding-day,  
But for Jane's loss, and you away,  
Was all a Bride from heaven could beg  
Skies bluer than the sparrow's egg.  
And clearer than the cuckoo's call;  
And such a sun! the flowers all  
With double ardour seem'd to blow!  
The very daisies were a show,  
Expanded with uncommon pride,  
Like little pictures of the Bride.

Your Great-Niece and your Grandson were

Perfection of a pretty pair.  
How well Honoria's girls turn out,  
Although they never go about!  
Dear me, what trouble and expense  
It took to teach mine confidence!  
*Hers* greet mankind as I've heard say  
That wild things do, where beasts of prey  
Were never known, nor any men  
Have met their fearless eyes till then.  
Their grave, inquiring trust to find  
All creatures of their simple kind  
Quite disconcerts bold coxcombry,  
And makes less perfect candour shy.  
Ah, Mrs. Graham! people may scoff,  
But how your home-kept girls go off!  
How Hymen hastens to unband  
The waist that ne'er felt waltzer's hand!  
At last I see my Sister's right,  
And I've told Maud this very night,  
(But, oh, my daughters have such wills!)  
To knit, and only dance quadrilles.

You say Fred never writes to you  
Frankly, as once he used to do,  
About himself; and you complain  
He shared with none his grief for Jane.  
It all comes of the foolish fright  
Men feel at the word, hypocrite.  
Although, when first in love, sometimes  
They rave in letters, talk, and rhymes,  
When once they find, as find they must,  
How hard 'tis to be hourly just  
To those they love, they are dumb for shame,  
Where we, you see, talk on the same.

Honoria, to whose heart alone  
He seems to open all his own  
At times, has tears in her kind eyes,  
After their private colloquies.  
He's her most favour'd guest, and moves  
My spleen by his impartial loves.  
His pleasure has some inner spring  
Depending not on anything.  
Petting our Polly, none e'er smiled  
More fondly on his favourite child;  
Yet, playing with his own, it is  
Somehow as if it were not his.  
He means to go again to sea,  
Now that the wedding's over. He  
Will leave to Emily and John  
The little ones to practise on;  
And Major-domo, Mrs. Rouse,  
A dear old soul from Wilton House,  
Will scold the housemaids and the cook,  
Till Emily has learn'd to look  
A little braver than a lamb  
Surprised by dogs without its dam!

Do, dear Aunt, use your influence,  
And try to teach some plain good sense  
To Mary. 'Tis not yet too late  
To make her change her chosen state  
Of single silliness. In truth,  
I fancy that, with fading youth,  
Her will now wavers. Yesterday,  
Though, till the Bride was gone away,  
Joy shone from Mary's loving heart,  
I found her afterwards apart,  
Hysterically sobbing. I  
Knew much too well to ask her why.  
This marrying of Nieces daunts  
The bravest souls of maiden Aunts.  
Though Sisters' children often blend  
Sweetly the bonds of child and friend,  
They are but reeds to rest upon.  
When Emily comes back with John,  
Her right to go downstairs before  
Aunt Mary will but be the more



Observed if kindly waived, and how  
Shall these be as they were, when now  
Niece has her John, and Aunt the sense  
Of her superior innocence?  
Somehow, all loves, however fond,  
Prove lieges of the nuptial bond;  
And she who dares at this to scoff,  
Finds all the rest in time drop off;  
While marriage, like a mushroom-ring,  
Spreads its sure circle every Spring.

She twice refused George Vane, you know;  
Yet, when he died three years ago  
In the Indian war, she put on gray,  
And wears no colours to this day.  
And she it is who charges *me*,  
Dear Aunt, with 'inconsistency!'

#### **X. FROM FREDERICK TO HONORIA.**

Cousin, my thoughts no longer try  
To cast the fashion of the sky.  
Imagination can extend  
Scarcely in part to comprehend  
The sweetness of our common food  
Ambrosial, which ingratitude  
And impious inadvertence waste,  
Studious to eat but not to taste.  
And who can tell what's yet in store  
There, but that earthly things have more  
Of all that makes their inmost bliss,  
And life's an image still of this,  
But haply such a glorious one  
As is the rainbow of the sun?  
Sweet are your words, but, after all  
Their mere reversal may befall  
The partners of His glories who  
Daily is crucified anew:  
Splendid privations, martyrdoms  
To which no weak remission comes  
Perpetual passion for the good  
Of them that feel no gratitude,  
Far circlings, as of planets' fires,  
Round never-to-be-reach'd desires,  
Whatever rapturously sighs  
That life is love, love sacrifice.  
All I am sure of heaven is this:  
Howe'er the mode, I shall not miss  
One true delight which I have known.  
Not on the changeful earth alone  
Shall loyalty remain unmoved  
T'wards everything I ever loved.  
So Heaven's voice calls, like Rachel's voice  
To Jacob in the field, 'Rejoice!'  
Serve on some seven more sordid years,  
Too short for weariness or tears;  
Serve on; then, oh, Beloved, well-tried,  
Take me for ever as thy Bride!'

#### **XI. FROM MARY CHURCHILL TO THE DEAN.**

Charles does me honour, but 'twere vain  
To reconsider now again,  
And so to doubt the clear-shown truth  
I sought for, and received, when youth,  
Being fair, and woo'd by one whose love  
Was lovely, fail'd my mind to move.  
God bids them by their own will go,  
Who ask again the things they know!  
I grieve for my infirmity,  
And ignorance of how to be  
Faithful, at once to the heavenly life,  
And the fond duties of a wife.  
Narrow am I and want the art  
To love two things with all my heart.  
Occupied singly in His search,

Who, in the Mysteries of the Church,  
Returns, and calls them Clouds of Heaven,  
I tread a road, straight, hard, and even;  
But fear to wander all confused,  
By two-fold fealty abused.  
Either should I the one forget,  
Or scantily pay the other's debt.

You bid me, Father, count the cost.  
I have; and all that must be lost  
I feel as only woman can.  
To make the heart's wealth of some man,  
And through the untender world to move,  
Wrapt safe in his superior love,  
How sweet! How sweet the household round  
Of duties, and their narrow bound,  
So plain, that to transgress were hard,  
Yet full of manifest reward!  
The charities not marr'd, like mine,  
With chance of thwarting laws divine;  
The world's regards and just delight  
In one that's clearly, kindly right,  
How sweet! Dear Father, I endure,  
Not without sharp regret, be sure,  
To give up such glad certainty,  
For what, perhaps, may never be.  
For nothing of my state I know,  
But that t'ward heaven I seem to go,  
As one who fondly landward hies  
Along a deck that seaward flies.  
With every year, meantime, some grace  
Of earthly happiness gives place  
To humbling ills, the very charms  
Of youth being counted, henceforth, harms:  
To blush already seems absurd;  
Nor know I whether I should herd  
With girls or wives, or sadlier balk  
Maids' merriment or matrons' talk.

But strait's the gate of life! O'er late,  
Besides, 'twere now to change my fate:  
For flowers and fruit of love to form,  
It must be Spring as well as warm.  
The world's delight my soul dejects.  
Revenging all my disrespects  
Of old, with incapacity  
To chime with even its harmless glee,  
Which sounds, from fields beyond my range,  
Like fairies' music, thin and strange.  
With something like remorse, I grant  
The world has beauty which I want;  
And if, instead of judging it,  
I at its Council chance to sit,  
Or at its gay and order'd Feast,  
My place seems lower than the least  
The conscience of the life to be  
Smiles me with inefficiency,  
And makes me all unfit to bless  
With comfortable earthliness  
The rest-desiring brain of man.  
Finally, then, I fix my plan  
To dwell with Him that dwells apart  
In the highest heaven and lowliest heart;  
Nor will I, to my utter loss,  
Look to pluck roses from the Cross.  
As for the good of human love,  
'Twere countercheck almost enough  
To think that one must die before  
The other; and perhaps 'tis more  
In love's last interest to do  
Nought the least contrary thereto,  
Than to be blest, and be unjust,  
Or suffer injustice; as they must,  
Without a miracle, whose pact  
Compels to mutual life and act,  
Whether love shines, or darkness sleeps  
Cold on the spirit's changeful deeps.

Enough if, to my earthly share,  
Fall gleams that keep me from despair.  
Happy the things we here discern;  
More happy those for which we yearn;  
But measurelessly happy above  
All else are those we guess not of!

## XII. FROM FELIX TO HONORIA.

Dearest, my Love and Wife, 'tis long  
Ago I closed the unfinish'd song  
Which never could be finish'd; nor  
Will ever Poet utter more  
Of Love than I did, watching well  
To lure to speech the unspeakable!  
*'Why, having won her, do I woo?'*  
That final strain to the last height flew  
Of written joy, which wants the smile  
And voice that are, indeed, the while  
They last, the very things you speak,  
Honoriam, who mak'st music weak  
With ways that say, 'Shall I not be  
As kind to all as Heaven to me?'  
And yet, ah, twenty-fold my Bride!  
Rising, this twentieth festal-tide,  
You still soft sleeping, on this day  
Of days, some words I long to say,  
Some words superfluously sweet  
Of fresh assurance, thus to greet  
Your waking eyes, which never grow  
Weary of telling what I know  
So well, yet only well enough  
To wish for further news thereof.

Here, in this early autumn dawn,  
By windows opening on the lawn.  
Where sunshine seems asleep, though bright,  
And shadows yet are sharp with night,  
And, further on, the wealthy wheat  
Bends in a golden drowse, how sweet  
To sit and cast my careless looks  
Around my walls of well-read books,  
Wherein is all that stands redeem'd  
From time's huge wreck, all men have dream'd  
Of truth, and all by poets known  
Of feeling, and in weak sort shown,  
And, turning to my heart again,  
To find I have what makes them vain,  
The thanksgiving mind, which wisdom sums,  
And you, whereby it freshly comes  
As on that morning, (can there be  
Twenty-two years 'twixt it and me?)  
When, thrill'd with hopeful love, I rose  
And came in haste to Sarum Close,  
Past many a homestead slumbering white  
In lonely and pathetic light,  
Merely to fancy which drawn blind  
Of thirteen had my Love behind,  
And in her sacred neighbourhood  
To feel that sweet scorn of all good  
But her, which let the wise forfend  
When wisdom learns to comprehend!

Dearest, as each returning May  
I see the season new and gay  
With new joy and astonishment,  
And Nature's infinite ostent  
Of lovely flowers in wood and mead.  
That weet not whether any heed,  
So see I, daily wondering, you,  
And worship with a passion new  
The Heaven that visibly allows  
Its grace to go about my house,  
The partial Heaven, that, though I err  
And mortal am, gave all to her  
Who gave herself to me. Yet I  
Boldly thank Heaven, (and so defy

The beggarly soul'd humbleness  
Which fears God's bounty to confess,  
That I was fashion'd with a mind  
Seeming for this great gift design'd,  
So naturally it moved above  
All sordid contraries of love,  
Strengthen'd in youth with discipline  
Of light, to follow the divine  
Vision, (which ever to the dark  
Is such a plague as was the ark  
In Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron,) still  
Discerning with the docile will  
Which comes of full persuaded thought,  
That intimacy in love is nought  
Without pure reverence, whereas this,  
In tearfullest banishment, is bliss.

And so, dearest Honoria, I  
Have never learn'd the weary sigh  
Of those that to their love-feasts went,  
Fed, and forgot the Sacrament;  
And not a trifle now occurs  
But sweet initiation stirs  
Of new-discover'd joy, and lends  
To feeling change that never ends;  
And duties which the many irk,  
Are made all wages and no work.

How sing of such things save to her,  
Love's self, so love's interpreter?  
How the supreme rewards confess  
Which crown the austere voluptuousness  
Of heart, that earns, in midst of wealth,  
The appetite of want and health,  
Relinquishes the pomp of life  
And beauty to the pleasant Wife  
At home, and does all joy despise  
As out of place but in her eyes?  
How praise the years and gravity  
That make each favour seem to be  
A lovelier weakness for her lord?  
And, ah, how find the tender word  
To tell aright of love that glows  
The fairer for the fading rose?  
Of frailty which can weight the arm  
To lean with thrice its girlish charm?  
Of grace which, like this autumn day,  
Is not the sad one of decay,  
Yet one whose pale brow pondereth  
The far-off majesty of death?  
How tell the crowd, whom a passion rends,  
That love grows mild as it ascends?  
That joy's most high and distant mood  
Is lost, not found in dancing blood;  
Albeit kind acts and smiling eyes,  
And all those fond realities  
Which are love's words, in us mean more  
Delight than twenty years before?

How, Dearest, finish without wrong  
To the speechless heart, the unfinish'd song,  
Its high, eventful passages  
Consisting, say, of things like these:—

One morning, contrary to law,  
Which, for the most, we held in awe,  
Commanding either not to intrude  
On the other's place of solitude  
Or solitary mind, for fear  
Of coming there when God was near,  
And finding so what should be known  
To Him who is merciful alone,  
And views the working ferment base  
Of waking flesh and sleeping grace,  
Not as we view, our kindness check'd  
By likeness of our own defect,  
I, venturing to her room, because  
(Mark the excuse!) my Birthday 'twas,  
Saw, here across a careless chair,

A ball-dress flung, as light as air,  
And, here, beside a silken couch,  
Pillows which did the pressure vouch  
Of pious knees, (sweet piety  
Of goodness made and charity,  
If gay looks told the heart's glad sense,  
Much rather than of penitence,)  
And, on the couch, an open book,  
And written list—I did not look,  
Yet just in her clear writing caught:—  
'Habitual faults of life and thought  
Which most I need deliverance from.'  
I turn'd aside, and saw her come  
Adown the filbert-shaded way,  
Beautified with her usual gay  
Hypocrisy of perfectness,  
Which made her heart, and mine no less,  
So happy! And she cried to me,  
'You lose by breaking rules, you see!  
Your Birthday treat is now half-gone  
Of seeing my new ball-dress on.'  
And, meeting so my lovely Wife,  
A passing pang, to think that life  
Was mortal, when I saw her laugh,  
Shaped in my mind this epitaph:  
'Faults had she, child of Adam's stem.  
But only Heaven knew of them.'

Or thus:

For many a dreadful day,  
In sea-side lodgings sick she lay,  
Noteless of love, nor seem'd to hear  
The sea, on one side, thundering near,  
Nor, on the other, the loud Ball  
Held nightly in the public hall;  
Nor vex'd they my short slumbers, though  
I woke up if she breathed too low.  
Thus, for three months, with terrors rife,  
The pending of her precious life  
I watched o'er; and the danger, at last,  
The kind Physician said, was past.  
Howbeit, for seven harsh weeks the East  
Breathed witheringly, and Spring's growth ceased,  
And so she only did not die;  
Until the bright and blighting sky  
Changed into cloud, and the sick flowers  
Remember'd their perfumes, and showers  
Of warm, small rain refreshing flew  
Before the South, and the Park grew,  
In three nights, thick with green. Then she  
Revived, no less than flower and tree,  
In the mild air, and, the fourth day,  
Looked supernaturally gay  
With large, thanksgiving eyes, that shone,  
The while I tied her bonnet on,  
So that I led her to the glass,  
And bade her see how fair she was,  
And how love visibly could shine.  
Profuse of hers, desiring mine,  
And mindful I had loved her most  
When beauty seem'd a vanish'd boast,  
She laugh'd. I press'd her then to me,  
Nothing but soft humility;  
Nor e'er enhanced she with such charms  
Her acquiescence in my arms.  
And, by her sweet love-weakness made  
Courageous, powerful, and glad.  
In a clear illustration high  
Of heavenly affection, I  
Perceived that utter love is all  
The same as to be rational,  
And that the mind and heart of love,  
Which think they cannot do enough,  
Are truly the everlasting doors  
Wherethrough, all unpetition'd, pours  
The eternal pleasance. Wherefore we

Had innermost tranquillity,  
And breathed one life with such a sense  
Of friendship and of confidence,  
That, recollecting the sure word:  
'If two of you are in accord  
On earth, as touching any boon  
Which ye shall ask, it shall be done  
In heaven,' we ask'd that heaven's bliss  
Might ne'er be any less than this;  
And, for that hour, we seem'd to have  
The secret of the joy we gave.

How sing of such things, save to her,  
Love's self, so love's interpreter?  
How read from such a homely page  
In the ear of this unhomely age?  
'Tis now as when the Prophet cried:  
'The nation hast Thou multiplied,  
But Thou hast not increased the joy!'  
And yet, ere wrath or rot destroy  
Of England's state the ruin fair,  
Oh, might I so its charm declare,  
That, in new Lands, in far-off years,  
Delighted he should cry that hears:  
'Great is the Land that somewhat best  
Works, to the wonder of the rest!  
We, in our day, have better done  
This thing or that than any one;  
And who but, still admiring, sees  
How excellent for images  
Was Greece, for laws how wise was Rome;  
But read this Poet, and say if home  
And private love did e'er so smile  
As in that ancient English isle!'

### **XIII. FROM LADY CLITHEROE TO EMILY GRAHAM.**

My dearest Niece, I'm charm'd to hear  
The scenery's fine at Windermere,  
And glad a six-weeks' wife defers  
In the least to wisdom not yet hers.  
But, Child, I've no advice to give!  
Rules only make it hard to live.  
And where's the good of having been  
Well taught from seven to seventeen,  
If, married, you may not leave off,  
And say, at last, 'I'm good enough!'  
Weeding out folly, still leave some.  
It gives both lightness and *aplomb*.  
We know, however wise by rule,  
Woman is still by nature fool;  
And men have sense to like her all  
The more when she is natural.  
'Tis true, that if we choose, we can  
Mock to a miracle the man;  
But iron in the fire red hot,  
Though 'tis the heat, the fire 'tis not:  
And who, for such a feint, would pledge  
The babe's and woman's privilege,  
No duties and a thousand rights?  
Besides, defect love's flow incites,  
As water in a well will run  
Only the while 'tis drawn upon.  
'Point de culte sans mystère,' you say,  
'And what if that should die away?'  
Child, never fear that either could  
Pull from Saint Cupid's face the hood.  
The follies natural to each  
Surpass the other's moral reach.  
Just think how men, with sword and gun,  
Will really fight, and never run;  
And all in sport: they would have died,  
For sixpence more, on the other side!  
A woman's heart must ever warm  
At such odd ways: and so we charm  
By strangeness which, the more they mark,

The more men get into the dark.  
The marvel, by familiar life,  
Grows, and attaches to the wife  
By whom it grows. Thus, silly Girl,  
To John you'll always be the pearl  
In the oyster of the universe;  
And, though in time he'll treat you worse,  
He'll love you more, you need not doubt,  
And never, never find you out!

My Dear, I know that dreadful thought  
That you've been kinder than you ought.  
It almost makes you hate him! Yet  
'Tis wonderful how men forget,  
And how a merciful Providence  
Deprives our husbands of all sense  
Of kindness past, and makes them deem  
We always were what now we seem.  
For their own good we must, you know  
However plain the way we go,  
Still make it strange with stratagem;  
And instinct tells us that, to them,  
'Tis always right to bate their price.  
Yet I must say they're rather nice,  
And, oh, so easily taken in  
To cheat them almost seems a sin!  
And, Dearest, 'twould be most unfair  
To John your feelings to compare  
With his, or any man's; for she  
Who loves at all loves always; he,  
Who loves far more, loves yet by fits,  
And, when the wayward wind remits  
To blow, his feelings faint and drop  
Like forge-flames when the bellows stop.  
Such things don't trouble you at all  
When once you know they're natural.

My love to John; and, pray, my Dear,  
Don't let me see you for a year;  
Unless, indeed, ere then you've learn'd  
That Beauties wed are blossoms turn'd  
To unripe codlings, meant to dwell  
In modest shadow hidden well,  
Till this green stage again permute  
To glow of flowers with good of fruit.  
I will not have my patience tried  
By your absurd new-married pride,  
That scorns the world's slow-gather'd sense  
Ties up the hands of Providence,  
Rules babes, before there's hope of one,  
Better than mothers e'er have done,  
And, for your poor particular,  
Neglects delights and graces far  
Beyond your crude and thin conceit.  
Age has romance almost as sweet  
And much more generous than this  
Of yours and John's. With all the bliss  
Of the evenings when you coo'd with him  
And upset home for your sole whim,  
You might have envied, were you wise,  
The tears within your Mother's eyes,  
Which, I dare say, you did not see.  
But let that pass! Yours yet will be,  
I hope, as happy, kind, and true  
As lives which now seem void to you.  
Have you not seen shop-painters paste  
Their gold in sheets, then rub to waste  
Full half, and, lo, you read the name?  
Well, Time, my Dear, does much the same  
With this unmeaning glare of love.

But, though you yet may much improve,  
In marriage, be it still confess'd,  
There's little merit at the best.  
Some half-a-dozen lives, indeed,  
Which else would not have had the need,  
Get food and nurture as the price  
Of antedated Paradise;

But what's that to the varied want  
Succour'd by Mary, your dear Aunt,  
Who put the bridal crown thrice by,  
For that of which virginity,  
So used, has hope? She sends her love,  
As usual with a proof thereof—  
Papa's discourse, which you, no doubt,  
Heard none of, neatly copied out  
Whilst we were dancing. All are well,  
Adieu, for there's the Luncheon Bell.

## THE WEDDING SERMON.

### 1

The truths of Love are like the sea  
For clearness and for mystery.  
Of that sweet love which, startling, wakes  
Maiden and Youth, and mostly breaks  
The word of promise to the ear,  
But keeps it, after many a year,  
To the full spirit, how shall I speak?  
My memory with age is weak,  
And I for hopes do oft suspect  
The things I seem to recollect.  
Yet who but must remember well  
'Twas this made heaven intelligible  
As motive, though 'twas small the power  
The heart might have, for even an hour.  
To hold possession of the height  
Of nameless pathos and delight!

### 2

In Godhead rise, thither flow back  
All loves, which, as they keep or lack.  
In their return, the course assign'd,  
Are virtue or sin. Love's every kind.  
Lofty or low, of spirit or sense,  
Desire is, or benevolence.  
He who is fairer, better, higher  
Than all His works, claims all desire,  
And in His Poor, His Proxies, asks  
Our whole benevolence: He tasks,  
Howbeit, His People by their powers;  
And if, my Children, you, for hours,  
Daily, untortur'd in the heart,  
Can worship, and time's other part  
Give, without rough recoils of sense,  
To the claims ingrate of indigence,  
Happy are you, and fit to be  
Wrought to rare heights of sanctity,  
For the humble to grow humbler at.  
But if the flying spirit falls flat,  
After the modest spell of prayer  
That saves the day from sin and care,  
And the upward eye a void descries,  
And praises are hypocrisies,  
And, in the soul, o'erstrain'd for grace,  
A godless anguish grows apace;  
Or, if impartial charity  
Seems, in the act, a sordid lie,  
Do not infer you cannot please  
God, or that He His promises  
Postpones, but be content to love  
No more than He accounts enough.  
Account them poor enough who want  
Any good thing which you can grant;  
And fathom well the depths of life  
In loves of Husband and of Wife,  
Child, Mother, Father; simple keys  
To what cold faith calls mysteries.

### 3



The love of marriage claims, above  
All other kinds, the name of love,  
As perfectest, though not so high  
As love which Heaven with single eye  
Considers. Equal and entire,  
Therein benevolence, desire,  
Elsewhere ill-join'd or found apart,  
Become the pulses of one heart,  
Which now contracts, and now dilates,  
And, both to the height exalting, mates  
Self-seeking to self-sacrifice.  
Nay, in its subtle paradise  
(When purest) this one love unites  
All modes of these two opposites,  
All balanced in accord so rich  
Who may determine which is which?  
Chiefly God's Love does in it live,  
And nowhere else so sensitive;  
For each is all that the other's eye,  
In the vague vast of Deity,  
Can comprehend and so contain  
As still to touch and ne'er to strain  
The fragile nerves of joy. And then  
'Tis such a wise goodwill to men  
And politic economy  
As in a prosperous State we see,  
Where every plot of common land  
Is yielded to some private hand  
To fence about and cultivate.  
Does narrowness its praise abate?  
Nay, the infinite of man is found  
But in the beating of its bound,  
And, if a brook its banks o'erpass,  
'Tis not a sea, but a morass.

#### 4

No giddiest hope, no wildest guess  
Of Love's most innocent loftiness  
Had dared to dream of its own worth,  
Till Heaven's bold sun-gleam lit the earth.  
Christ's marriage with the Church is more,  
My Children, than a metaphor.  
The heaven of heavens is symbol'd where  
The torch of Psyche flash'd despair.  
But here I speak of heights, and heights  
Are hardly scaled. The best delights  
Of even this homeliest passion, are  
In the most perfect souls so rare,  
That they who feel them are as men  
Sailing the Southern ocean, when,  
At midnight, they look up, and eye  
The starry Cross, and a strange sky  
Of brighter stars; and sad thoughts come  
To each how far he is from home.

#### 5

Love's inmost nuptial sweetness see  
In the doctrine of virginity!  
Could lovers, at their dear wish, blend,  
'Twould kill the bliss which they intend;  
For joy is love's obedience  
Against the law of natural sense;  
And those perpetual yearnings sweet  
Of lives which dream that they can meet  
Are given that lovers never may  
Be without sacrifice to lay  
On the high altar of true love,  
With tears of vestal joy. To move  
Frantic, like comets to our bliss,  
Forgetting that we always miss,  
And so to seek and fly the sun,  
By turns, around which love should run,  
Perverts the ineffable delight

Of service guerdon'd with full sight  
And pathos of a hopeless want,  
To an unreal victory's vaunt,  
And plaint of an unreal defeat.  
Yet no less dangerous misconceit  
May also be of the virgin will,  
Whose goal is nuptial blessing still,  
And whose true being doth subsist,  
There where the outward forms are miss'd,  
In those who learn and keep the sense  
Divine of 'due benevolence,'  
Seeking for aye, without alloy  
Of selfish thought, another's joy,  
And finding in degrees unknown  
That which in act they shunn'd, their own.  
For all delights of earthly love  
Are shadows of the heavens, and move  
As other shadows do; they flee  
From him that follows them; and he  
Who flies, for ever finds his feet  
Embraced by their pursuings sweet.

## 6

Then, even in love humane, do I  
Not counsel aspirations high,  
So much as sweet and regular  
Use of the good in which we are.  
As when a man along the ways  
Walks, and a sudden music plays,  
His step unchanged, he steps in time,  
So let your Grace with Nature chime.  
Her primal forces burst, like straws,  
The bonds of uncongenial laws.  
Right life is glad as well as just,  
And, rooted strong in 'This I must,'  
It bears aloft the blossom gay  
And zephyr-toss'd, of 'This I may,'  
Whereby the complex heavens rejoice  
In fruits of uncommanded choice.  
Be this your rule: seeking delight  
Esteem success the test of right;  
For 'gainst God's will much may be done,  
But nought enjoy'd, and pleasures none  
Exist, but, like to springs of steel,  
Active no longer than they feel  
The checks that make them serve the soul,  
They take their vigour from control.  
A man need only keep but well  
The Church's indispensable  
First precepts, and she then allows,  
Nay, more, she bids him, for his spouse,  
Leave even his heavenly Father's awe,  
At times, and His immaculate law,  
Construed in its extremer sense.  
Jehovah's mild magnipotence  
Smiles to behold His children play  
In their own free and childish way,  
And can His fullest praise descry  
In the exuberant liberty  
Of those who, having understood  
The glory of the Central Good,  
And how souls ne'er may match or merge,  
But as they thitherward converge,  
Take in love's innocent gladness part  
With infantine, untroubled heart,  
And faith that, straight t'wards heaven's far Spring,  
Sleeps, like the swallow, on the wing.

## 7

Lovers, once married, deem their bond  
Then perfect, scanning nought beyond  
For love to do but to sustain  
The spousal hour's delighted gain.

But time and a right life alone  
Fulfil the promise then foreshown.  
The Bridegroom and the Bride withal  
Are but unwrought material  
Of marriage; nay, so far is love,  
Thus crown'd, from being thereto enough,  
Without the long, compulsive awe  
Of duty, that the bond of law  
Does oftener marriage-love evoke,  
Than love, which does not wear the yoke  
Of legal vows, submits to be  
Self-rein'd from ruinous liberty.

Lovely is love; but age well knows  
'Twas law which kept the lover's vows  
Inviolate through the year or years  
Of worship pieced with panic fears,  
When she who lay within his breast  
Seem'd of all women perhaps the best,  
But not the whole, of womankind,  
Or love, in his yet wayward mind,  
Had ghastly doubts its precious life  
Was pledged for aye to the wrong wife.

Could it be else? A youth pursues  
A maid, whom chance, not he, did choose,  
Till to his strange arms hurries she  
In a despair of modesty.  
Then, simply and without pretence  
Of insight or experience,  
They plight their vows. The parents say  
'We cannot speak them yea or nay;  
The thing proceedeth from the Lord!  
And wisdom still approves their word;  
For God created so these two  
They match as well as others do  
That take more pains, and trust Him less  
Who never fails, if ask'd, to bless  
His children's helpless ignorance  
And blind election of life's chance.  
Verily, choice not matters much,  
If but the woman's truly such,  
And the young man has led the life  
Without which how shall e'er the wife  
Be the one woman in the world?  
Love's sensitive tendrils sicken, curl'd  
Round folly's former stay; for 'tis  
The doom of all unsanction'd bliss  
To mock some good that, gain'd, keeps still  
The taint of the rejected ill.

## 8

Howbeit, though both were perfect, she  
Of whom the maid was prophecy  
As yet lives not, and Love rebels  
Against the law of any else;  
And, as a steed takes blind alarm,  
Disowns the rein, and hunts his harm,  
So, misdespairing word and act  
May now perturb the happiest pact.

The more, indeed, is love, the more  
Peril to love is now in store.  
Against it nothing can be done  
But only this: leave ill alone!  
Who tries to mend his wife succeeds  
As he who knows not what he needs.  
He much affronts a worth as high  
As his, and that equality  
Of spirits in which abide the grace  
And joy of her subjected place;  
And does the still growth check and blur  
Of contraries, confusing her  
Who better knows what he desires  
Than he, and to that mark aspires  
With perfect zeal, and a deep wit  
Which nothing helps but trusting it.

So, loyally o'erlooking all  
In which love's promise short may fall  
Of full performance, honour that  
As won, which aye love worketh at!  
It is but as the pedigree  
Of perfectness which is to be  
That our best good can honour claim;  
Yet honour to deny were shame  
And robbery: for it is the mould  
Wherein to beauty runs the gold  
Of good intention, and the prop  
That lifts to the sun the earth-drawn crop  
Of human sensibilities.

Such honour, with a conduct wise  
In common things, as, not to steep  
The lofty mind of love in sleep  
Of over much familiarness;  
Not to degrade its kind caress,  
As those do that can feel no more,  
So give themselves to pleasures o'er;  
Not to let morning-sloth destroy  
The evening-flower, domestic joy;  
Not by uxoriousness to chill  
The warm devotion of her will  
Who can but half her love confer  
On him that cares for nought but her;—  
These, and like obvious prudencies  
Observed, he's safest that relies,  
For the hope she will not always seem,  
Caught, but a laurel or a stream,  
On time; on her unsearchable  
Love-wisdom; on their work done well,  
Discreet with mutual aid; on might  
Of shared affliction and delight;  
On pleasures that so childish be  
They're 'shamed to let the children see,  
By which life keeps the valleys low  
Where love does naturally grow;  
On much whereof hearts have account,  
Though heads forget; on babes, chief fount  
Of union, and for which babes are  
No less than this for them, nay far  
More, for the bond of man and wife  
To the very verge of future life  
Strengthens, and yearns for brighter day,  
While others, with their use, decay;  
And, though true marriage purpose keeps  
Of offspring, as the centre sleeps  
Within the wheel, transmitting thence  
Fury to the circumference,  
Love's self the noblest offspring is,  
And sanction of the nuptial kiss;  
Lastly, on either's primal curse,  
Which help and sympathy reverse  
To blessings.

## 9

God, who may be well  
Jealous of His chief miracle,  
Bids sleep the meddling soul of man,  
Through the long process of this plan,  
Whereby, from his unweeting side,  
The Wife's created, and the Bride,  
That chance one of her strange, sweet sex  
He to his glad life did annex,  
Grows more and more, by day and night,  
The one in the whole world opposite  
Of him, and in her nature all  
So suited and reciprocal  
To his especial form of sense,  
Affection, and intelligence,  
That, whereas love at first had strange  
Relapses into lust of change,  
It now finds (wondrous this, but true!)

The long-accustom'd only new,  
And the untried common; and, whereas  
An equal seeming danger was  
Of likeness lacking joy and force,  
Or difference reaching to divorce,  
Now can the finish'd lover see  
Marvel of me most far from me,  
Whom without pride he may admire,  
Without Narcissus' doom desire,  
Serve without selfishness, and love  
'Even as himself,' in sense above  
Niggard 'as much,' yea, as she is  
The only part of him that's his.

## 10

I do not say love's youth returns;  
That joy which so divinely yearns!  
But just esteem of present good  
Shows all regret such gratitude  
As if the sparrow in her nest,  
Her woolly young beneath her breast,  
Should these despise, and sorrow for  
Her five blue eggs that are no more.  
Nor say I the fruit has quite the scope  
Of the flower's spiritual hope.  
Love's best is service, and of this,  
Howe'er devout, use dulls the bliss.  
Though love is all of earth that's dear,  
Its home, my Children, is not here:  
The pathos of eternity  
Does in its fullest pleasure sigh.

Be grateful and most glad thereof.  
Parting, as 'tis, is pain enough.  
If love, by joy, has learn'd to give  
Praise with the nature sensitive,  
At last, to God, we then possess  
The end of mortal happiness,  
And henceforth very well may wait  
The unbarring of the golden gate,  
Wherethrough, already, faith can see  
That apter to each wish than we  
Is God, and curious to bless  
Better than we devise or guess;  
Not without condescending craft  
To disappoint with bliss, and waft  
Our vessels frail, when worst He mocks  
The heart with breakers and with rocks,  
To happiest havens. You have heard  
Your bond death-sentenced by His Word.  
What, if, in heaven, the name be o'er,  
Because the thing is so much more?  
All are, 'tis writ, as angels there,  
Nor male nor female. Each a stair  
In the hierarchical ascent  
Of active and recipient  
Affections, what if all are both  
By turn, as they themselves betroth  
To adoring what is next above,  
Or serving what's below their love?

Of this we are certified, that we  
Are shaped here for eternity,  
So that a careless word will make  
Its dint upon the form we take  
For ever. If, then, years have wrought  
Two strangers to become, in thought.  
Will, and affection, but one man  
For likeness, as none others can,  
Without like process, shall this tree  
The king of all the forest, be,  
Alas, the only one of all  
That shall not lie where it doth fall?  
Shall this unflagging flame, here nurs'd  
By everything, yea, when reversed,  
Blazing, in fury, brighter, wink,

Flicker, and into darkness shrink,  
When all else glows, baleful or brave,  
In the keen air beyond the grave?

Beware; for fiends in triumph laugh  
O'er him who learns the truth by half!  
Beware; for God will not endure  
For men to make their hope more pure  
Than His good promise, or require  
Another than the five-string'd lyre  
Which He has vow'd again to the hands  
Devout of him who understands  
To tune it justly here! Beware  
The Powers of Darkness and the Air,  
Which lure to empty heights man's hope,  
Bepraising heaven's ethereal cope,  
But covering with their cloudy cant  
Its ground of solid adamant,  
That strengthens ether for the flight  
Of angels, makes and measures height,  
And in materiality  
Exceeds our Earth's in such degree  
As all else Earth exceeds! Do I  
Here utter aught too dark or high?  
Have you not seen a bird's beak slay  
Proud Psyche, on a summer's day?  
Down fluttering drop the frail wings four,  
Missing the weight which made them soar.  
Spirit is heavy nature's wing,  
And is not rightly anything  
Without its burthen, whereas this,  
Wingless, at least a maggot is,  
And, wing'd, is honour and delight  
Increasing endlessly with height.

## 11

If unto any here that chance  
Fell not, which makes a month's romance,  
Remember, few wed whom they would.  
And this, like all God's laws, is good;  
For nought's so sad, the whole world o'er,  
As much love which has once been more.  
Glorious for light is the earliest love;  
But worldly things, in the rays thereof,  
Extend their shadows, every one  
False as the image which the sun  
At noon or eve dwarfs or protracts.  
A perilous lamp to light men's acts!  
By Heaven's kind, impartial plan,  
Well-wived is he that's truly man  
If but the woman's womanly,  
As such a man's is sure to be.  
Joy of all eyes and pride of life  
Perhaps she is not; the likelier wife!  
If it be thus; if you have known,  
(As who has not?) some heavenly one.  
Whom the dull background of despair  
Help'd to show forth supremely fair;  
If memory, still remorseful, shapes  
Young Passion bringing Eshcol grapes  
To travellers in the Wilderness,  
This truth will make regret the less:  
Mighty in love as graces are,  
God's ordinance is mightier far;  
And he who is but just and kind  
And patient, shall for guerdon find,  
Before long, that the body's bond  
Is all else utterly beyond  
In power of love to actualise  
The soul's bond which it signifies,  
And even to deck a wife with grace  
External in the form and face.  
A five years' wife, and not yet fair?  
Blame let the man, not Nature, bear!  
For, as the sun, warming a bank

Where last year's grass droops gray and dank,  
Evokes the violet, bids disclose  
In yellow crowds the fresh primrose,  
And foxglove hang her flushing head,  
So vernal love, where all seems dead,  
Makes beauty abound.

Then was that nought,  
That trance of joy beyond all thought,  
The vision, in one, of womanhood?  
Nay, for all women holding good,  
Should marriage such a prologue want,  
'Twere sordid and most ignorant  
Profanity; but, having this,  
'Tis honour now, and future bliss;  
For where is he that, knowing the height  
And depth of ascertain'd delight,  
Inhumanly henceforward lies  
Content with mediocrities!

## AMELIA.

Whene'er mine eyes do my Amelia greet  
It is with such emotion  
As when, in childhood, turning a dim street,  
I first beheld the ocean.

There, where the little, bright, surf-breathing town,  
That shew'd me first her beauty and the sea,  
Gathers its skirts against the gorse-lit down  
And scatters gardens o'er the southern lea,  
Abides this Maid  
Within a kind, yet sombre Mother's shade,  
Who of her daughter's graces seems almost afraid,  
Viewing them ofttimes with a scared forecast,  
Caught, haply, from obscure love-peril past.  
Howe'er that be,  
She scants me of my right,  
Is cunning careful evermore to balk  
Sweet separate talk,  
And fevers my delight  
By frets, if, on Amelia's cheek of peach,  
I touch the notes which music cannot reach,  
Bidding 'Good-night!'  
Wherefore it came that, till to-day's dear date,  
I curs'd the weary months which yet I have to wait  
Ere I find heaven, one-nested with my mate.

To-day, the Mother gave,  
To urgent pleas and promise to behave  
As she were there, her long-besought consent  
To trust Amelia with me to the grave  
Where lay my once-betrothed, Millicent:  
'For,' said she, hiding ill a moistening eye,  
'Though, Sir, the word sounds hard,  
God makes as if He least knew how to guard  
The treasure He loves best, simplicity.'

And there Amelia stood, for fairness shewn  
Like a young apple-tree, in flush'd array  
Of white and ruddy flow'r, auroral, gay,  
With chilly blue the maiden branch between;  
And yet to look on her moved less the mind  
To say 'How beauteous!' than 'How good and kind!'

And so we went alone  
By walls o'er which the lilac's numerous plume  
Shook down perfume;  
Trim plots close blown  
With daisies, in conspicuous myriads seen,  
Engross'd each one  
With single ardour for her spouse, the sun;  
Garths in their glad array  
Of white and ruddy branch, auroral, gay,  
With azure chill the maiden flow'r between;  
Meadows of fervid green,

With sometime sudden prospect of untold  
Cowslips, like chance-found gold;  
And broadcast buttercups at joyful gaze,  
Rending the air with praise,  
Like the six-hundred-thousand-voiced shout  
Of Jacob camp'd in Midian put to rout;  
Then through the Park,  
Where Spring to livelier gloom  
Quicken'd the cedars dark,  
And, 'gainst the clear sky cold,  
Which shone afar  
Crowded with sunny alps oracular,  
Great chestnuts raised themselves abroad like cliffs of bloom;  
And everywhere,  
Amid the ceaseless rapture of the lark,  
With wonder new  
We caught the solemn voice of single air,  
'Cuckoo!'

And when Amelia, 'bolden'd, saw and heard  
How bravely sang the bird,  
And all things in God's bounty did rejoice,  
She who, her Mother by, spake seldom word,  
Did her charm'd silence doff,  
And, to my happy marvel, her dear voice  
Went as a clock does, when the pendulum's off.  
Ill Monarch of man's heart the Maiden who  
Does not aspire to be High-Pontiff too!  
So she repeated soft her Poet's line,  
'By grace divine,  
Not otherwise, O Nature, are we thine!'  
And I, up the bright steep she led me, trod,  
And the like thought pursued  
With, 'What is gladness without gratitude,  
And where is gratitude without a God?'  
And of delight, the guerdon of His laws,  
She spake, in learned mood;  
And I, of Him loved reverently, as Cause,  
Her sweetly, as Occasion of all good.  
Nor were we shy,  
For souls in heaven that be  
May talk of heaven without hypocrisy.

And now, when we drew near  
The low, gray Church, in its sequester'd dell,  
A shade upon me fell.  
Dead Millicent indeed had been most sweet,  
But I how little meet  
To call such graces in a Maiden mine!  
A boy's proud passion free affection blunts;  
His well-meant flatteries oft are blind affronts,  
And many a tear  
Was Millicent's before I, manlier, knew  
That maidens shine  
As diamonds do,  
Which, though most clear,  
Are not to be seen through;  
And, if she put her virgin self aside  
And sate her, crownless, at my conquering feet,  
It should have bred in me humility, not pride.  
Amelia had more luck than Millicent,  
Secure she smiled and warm from all mischance  
Or from my knowledge or my ignorance,  
And glow'd content  
With my—some might have thought too much—superior age,  
Which seem'd the gage  
Of steady kindness all on her intent.  
Thus nought forbade us to be fully blent.

While, therefore, now  
Her pensive footstep stirr'd  
The darnell'd garden of unheeded death,  
She ask'd what Millicent was like, and heard  
Of eyes like her's, and honeysuckle breath,  
And of a wiser than a woman's brow,  
Yet fill'd with only woman's love, and how  
An incidental greatness character'd  
Her unconsider'd ways.



But all my praise  
 Amelia thought too slight for Millicent  
 And on my lovelier-freighted arm she leant,  
 For more attent;  
 And the tea-rose I gave,  
 To deck her breast, she dropp'd upon the grave.  
 'And this was her's,' said I, decorating with a band  
 Of mildest pearls Amelia's milder hand.  
 'Nay, I will wear it for *her* sake,' she said:  
 For dear to maidens are their rivals dead.  
 And so,  
 She seated on the black yew's tortured root,  
 I on the carpet of sere shreds below,  
 And nigh the little mound where lay that other,  
 I kiss'd her lips three times without dispute,  
 And, with bold worship suddenly aglow,  
 I lifted to my lips a sandall'd foot,  
 And kiss'd it three times thrice without dispute.  
 Upon my head her fingers fell like snow,  
 Her lamb-like hands about my neck she wreathed.  
 Her arms like slumber o'er my shoulders crept,  
 And with her bosom, whence the azalea breathed,  
 She did my face full favourably smother,  
 To hide the heaving secret that she wept!  
 Now would I keep my promise to her Mother;  
 Now I arose, and raised her to her feet,  
 My best Amelia, fresh-born from a kiss,  
 Moth-like, full-blown in birthdew shuddering sweet,  
 With great, kind eyes, in whose brown shade  
 Bright Venus and her Baby play'd!  
 At inmost heart well pleased with one another,  
 What time the slant sun low  
 Through the plough'd field does each clod sharply shew,  
 And softly fills  
 With shade the dimples of our homeward hills,  
 With little said,  
 We left the 'wilder'd garden of the dead,  
 And gain'd the gorse-lit shoulder of the down  
 That keeps the north-wind from the nestling town,  
 And caught, once more, the vision of the wave,  
 Where, on the horizon's dip,  
 A many-sailed ship  
 Pursued alone her distant purpose grave;  
 And, by steep steps rock-hewn, to the dim street  
 I led her sacred feet;  
 And so the Daughter gave,  
 Soft, moth-like, sweet,  
 Showy as damask-rose and shy as musk,  
 Back to her Mother, anxious in the dusk.  
 And now 'Good-night!'  
 Me shall the phantom months no more affright.  
 For heaven's gates to open well waits he  
 Who keeps himself the key.

## **THE DAY AFTER TO-MORROW.**

Perchance she droops within the hollow gulf  
 Which the great wave of coming pleasure draws,  
 Not guessing the glad cause!  
 Ye Clouds that on your endless journey go,  
 Ye Winds that westward flow,  
 Thou heaving Sea  
 That heav'st 'twixt her and me,  
 Tell her I come;  
 Then only sigh your pleasure, and be dumb;  
 For the sweet secret of our either self  
 We know.  
 Tell her I come,  
 And let her heart be still'd.  
 One day's controlled hope, and then one more,  
 And on the third our lives shall be fulfill'd!

Yet all has been before:  
 Palm placed in palm, twin smiles, and words astray.  
 What other should we say?  
 But shall I not, with ne'er a sign, perceive,  
 Whilst her sweet hands I hold,  
 The myriad threads and meshes manifold  
 Which Love shall round her weave:  
 The pulse in that vein making alien pause  
 And varying beats from this;  
 Down each long finger felt, a differing strand  
 Of silvery welcome bland;  
 And in her breezy palm  
 And silken wrist,  
 Beneath the touch of my like numerous bliss  
 Complexly kiss'd,  
 A diverse and distinguishable calm?  
 What should we say!  
 It all has been before;  
 And yet our lives shall now be first fulfill'd.  
 And into their summ'd sweetness fall distill'd  
 One sweet drop more;  
 One sweet drop more, in absolute increase  
 Of unrelapsing peace.  
     O, heaving Sea,  
 That heav'st as if for bliss of her and me,  
 And separatest not dear heart from heart,  
 Though each 'gainst other beats too far apart,  
 For yet awhile  
 Let it not seem that I behold her smile.  
 O, weary Love, O, folded to her breast,  
 Love in each moment years and years of rest,  
 Be calm, as being not.  
 Ye oceans of intolerable delight,  
 The blazing photosphere of central Night,  
 Be ye forgot.  
 Terror, thou swarthy Groom of Bride-bliss coy,  
 Let me not see thee toy.  
 O, Death, too tardy with thy hope intense  
 Of kisses close beyond conceit of sense;  
 O, Life, too liberal, while to take her hand  
 Is more of hope than heart can understand;  
 Perturb my golden patience not with joy,  
 Nor, through a wish, profane  
 The peace that should pertain  
 To him who does by her attraction move.  
 Has all not been before?  
 One day's controlled hope, and one again,  
 And then the third, and ye shall have the rein,  
 O Life, Death, Terror, Love!  
 But soon let your unrestful rapture cease,  
 Ye flaming Ethers thin,  
 Condensing till the abiding sweetness win  
 One sweet drop more;  
 One sweet drop more in the measureless increase  
 Of honied peace.

## **THE AZALEA.**

There, where the sun shines first  
 Against our room,  
 She train'd the gold Azalea, whose perfume  
 She, Spring-like, from her breathing grace dispersed.  
 Last night the delicate crests of saffron bloom,  
 For that their dainty likeness watch'd and nurst,  
 Were just at point to burst.  
 At dawn I dream'd, O God, that she was dead,  
 And groan'd aloud upon my wretched bed,  
 And waked, ah, God, and did not waken her,  
 But lay, with eyes still closed,  
 Perfectly bless'd in the delicious sphere  
 By which I knew so well that she was near,

My heart to speechless thankfulness composed.  
Till 'gan to stir  
A dizzy somewhat in my troubled head—  
It *was* the azalea's breath, and she *was* dead!  
The warm night had the lingering buds disclosed,  
And I had fall'n asleep with to my breast  
A chance-found letter press'd  
In which she said,  
'So, till to-morrow eve, my Own, adieu!  
Parting's well-paid with soon again to meet,  
Soon in your arms to feel so small and sweet,  
Sweet to myself that am so sweet to you!'

## DEPARTURE.

It was not like your great and gracious ways!  
Do you, that have nought other to lament,  
Never, my Love, repent  
Of how, that July afternoon,  
You went,  
With sudden, unintelligible phrase,  
And frighten'd eye,  
Upon your journey of so many days,  
Without a single kiss, or a good-bye?  
I knew, indeed, that you were parting soon;  
And so we sate, within the low sun's rays,  
You whispering to me, for your voice was weak,  
Your harrowing praise.  
Well, it was well,  
To hear you such things speak,  
And I could tell  
What made your eyes a growing gloom of love,  
As a warm South-wind sombres a March grove.  
And it was like your great and gracious ways  
To turn your talk on daily things, my Dear,  
Lifting the luminous, pathetic lash  
To let the laughter flash,  
Whilst I drew near,  
Because you spoke so low that I could scarcely hear.  
But all at once to leave me at the last,  
More at the wonder than the loss aghast,  
With huddled, unintelligible phrase,  
And frighten'd eye,  
And go your journey of all days  
With not one kiss, or a good-bye,  
And the only loveless look the look with which you pass'd:  
'Twas all unlike your great and gracious ways.

## THE TOYS.

My little Son, who look'd from thoughtful eyes  
And moved and spoke in quiet grown-up wise,  
Having my law the seventh time disobey'd,  
I struck him, and dismiss'd  
With hard words and unkiss'd,  
His Mother, who was patient, being dead.  
Then, fearing lest his grief should hinder sleep,  
I visited his bed,  
But found him slumbering deep,  
With darken'd eyelids, and their lashes yet  
From his late sobbing wet.  
And I, with moan,  
Kissing away his tears, left others of my own;  
For, on a table drawn beside his head,  
He had put, within his reach,  
A box of counters and a red-vein'd stone,  
A piece of glass abraded by the beach

And six or seven shells,  
A bottle with bluebells  
And two French copper coins, ranged there with careful art,  
To comfort his sad heart.  
So when that night I pray'd  
To God, I wept, and said:  
Ah, when at last we lie with tranced breath,  
Not vexing Thee in death,  
And Thou rememberest of what toys  
We made our joys,  
How weakly understood,  
Thy great commanded good,  
Then, fatherly not less  
Than I whom Thou hast moulded from the clay  
Thou'lt leave Thy wrath, and say,  
'I will be sorry for their childishness.'

## **'IF I WERE DEAD.'**

'If I were dead, you'd sometimes say, Poor Child!  
The dear lips quiver'd as they spake,  
And the tears brake  
From eyes which, not to grieve me, brightly smiled.  
Poor Child, poor Child!  
I seem to hear your laugh, your talk, your song.  
It is not true that Love will do no wrong.  
Poor Child!  
And did you think, when you so cried and smiled,  
How I, in lonely nights, should lie awake,  
And of those words your full avengers make?  
Poor Child, poor Child!  
And now, unless it be  
That sweet amends thrice told are come to thee,  
O God, have Thou *no* mercy upon me!  
Poor Child!

## **A FAREWELL**

With all my will, but much against my heart,  
We two now part.  
My Very Dear,  
Our solace is, the sad road lies so clear.  
It needs no art,  
With faint, averted feet  
And many a tear,  
In our opposed paths to persevere.  
Go thou to East, I West.  
We will not say  
There's any hope, it is so far away.  
But, O, my Best,  
When the one darling of our widowhead,  
The nursling Grief,  
Is dead,  
And no dews blur our eyes  
To see the peach-bloom come in evening skies,  
Perchance we may,  
Where now this night is day,  
And even through faith of still averted feet,  
Making full circle of our banishment,  
Amazed meet;  
The bitter journey to the bourne so sweet  
Seasoning the termless feast of our content  
With tears of recognition never dry.

## **SPONSA DEI.**

What is this Maiden fair,  
 The laughing of whose eye  
 Is in man's heart renew'd virginity:  
 Who yet sick longing breeds  
 For marriage which exceeds  
 The inventive guess of Love to satisfy  
 With hope of utter binding, and of loosing endless dear despair?  
 What gleams about her shine,  
 More transient than delight and more divine!  
 If she does something but a little sweet,  
 As gaze towards the glass to set her hair,  
 See how his soul falls humbled at her feet!  
 Her gentle step, to go or come,  
 Gains her more merit than a martyrdom;  
 And, if she dance, it doth such grace confer  
 As opens the heaven of heavens to more than her,  
 And makes a rival of her worshipper.  
 To die unknown for her were little cost!  
 So is she without guile,  
 Her mere refused smile  
 Makes up the sum of that which may be lost!  
 Who is this Fair  
 Whom each hath seen,  
 The darkest once in this bewailed dell,  
 Be he not destin'd for the glooms of hell?  
 Whom each hath seen  
 And known, with sharp remorse and sweet, as Queen  
 And tear-glad Mistress of his hopes of bliss,  
 Too fair for man to kiss?  
 Who is this only happy She,  
 Whom, by a frantic flight of courtesies,  
 Born of despair  
 Of better lodging for his Spirit fair,  
 He adores as Margaret, Maude, or Cecily?  
 And what this sigh,  
 That each one heaves for Earth's last lowlihead  
 And the Heaven high  
 Ineffably lock'd in dateless bridal-bed?  
 Are all, then, mad, or is it prophecy?  
 'Sons now we are of God,' as we have heard,  
 'But what we shall be hath not yet appear'd.'  
 O, Heart, remember thee,  
 That Man is none,  
 Save One.  
 What if this Lady be thy Soul, and He  
 Who claims to enjoy her sacred beauty be,  
 Not thou, but God; and thy sick fire  
 A female vanity,  
 Such as a Bride, viewing her mirror'd charms,  
 Feels when she sighs, 'All these are for his arms!'  
 A reflex heat  
 Flash'd on thy cheek from His immense desire,  
 Which waits to crown, beyond thy brain's conceit,  
 Thy nameless, secret, hopeless longing sweet,  
 Not by-and-by, but now,  
 Unless deny Him thou!

## **THE ROSY BOSOM'D HOURS.**

A florin to the willing Guard  
   Secured, for half the way,  
 (He lock'd us in, ah, lucky-starr'd,)  
   A curtain'd, front coupé.  
 The sparkling sun of August shone;  
   The wind was in the West;  
 Your gown and all that you had on  
   Was what became you best;  
 And we were in that seldom mood  
   When soul with soul agrees,  
 Mingling, like flood with equal flood,  
   In agitated ease.

Far round, each blade of harvest bare  
 Its little load of bread;  
 Each furlong of that journey fair  
 With separate sweetness sped.  
 The calm of use was coming o'er  
 The wonder of our wealth,  
 And now, maybe, 'twas not much more  
 Than Eden's common health.  
 We paced the sunny platform, while  
 The train at Havant changed:  
 What made the people kindly smile,  
 Or stare with looks estranged?  
 Too radiant for a wife you seem'd,  
 Serener than a bride;  
 Me happiest born of men I deem'd,  
 And show'd perchance my pride.  
 I loved that girl, so gaunt and tall,  
 Who whispered loud, 'Sweet Thing!'  
 Scanning your figure, slight yet all  
 Round as your own gold ring.  
 At Salisbury you stray'd alone  
 Within the shafted glooms,  
 Whilst I was by the Verger shown  
 The brasses and the tombs.  
 At tea we talk'd of matters deep,  
 Of joy that never dies;  
 We laugh'd, till love was mix'd with sleep  
 Within your great sweet eyes.  
 The next day, sweet with luck no less  
 And sense of sweetness past,  
 The full tide of our happiness  
 Rose higher than the last.  
 At Dawlish, 'mid the pools of brine,  
 You stept from rock to rock,  
 One hand quick tightening upon mine,  
 One holding up your frock.  
 On starfish and on weeds alone  
 You seem'd intent to be:  
 Flash'd those great gleams of hope unknown  
 From you, or from the sea?  
 Ne'er came before, ah, when again  
 Shall come two days like these:  
 Such quick delight within the brain,  
 Within the heart such peace?  
 I thought, indeed, by magic chance,  
 A third from Heaven to win,  
 But as, at dusk, we reach'd Penzance,  
 A drizzling rain set in.

## **EROS.**

Bright thro' the valley gallops the brooklet;  
 Over the welkin travels the cloud;  
 Touch'd by the zephyr, dances the harebell;  
 Cuckoo sits somewhere, singing so loud;  
 Two little children, seeing and hearing,  
 Hand in hand wander, shout, laugh, and sing:  
 Lo, in their bosoms, wild with the marvel,  
 Love, like the crocus, is come ere the Spring.  
 Young men and women, noble and tender,  
 Yearn for each other, faith truly plight,  
 Promise to cherish, comfort and honour;  
 Vow that makes duty one with delight.  
 Oh, but the glory, found in no story,  
 Radiance of Eden unquench'd by the Fall;  
 Few may remember, none may reveal it,  
 This the first first-love, the first love of all!

## **FOOTNOTES:**

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