THE WORKS OF MARY BIRKETT CARD
1774-1817

ORIGINALLY COLLECTED
BY HER SON NATHANIEL CARD
IN 1834

AN EDITED TRANSCRIPTION
WITH AN INTRODUCTION TO HER LIFE AND WORKS
IN TWO VOLUMES

BY

JOSEPHINE TEAKLE

VOLUME 2

A thesis submitted to
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in accordance with the requirements of the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities

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OF VOLUME 2

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(Manuscript spelling and punctuation of titles and dates retained.)

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TRANSCRIPTION
(continued)

THE POETRY
CHILDHOOD

DATED POEMS, AND POEMS

THAT CAN BE ASCRIBED A DATE
This was the first poem Nathaniel Card included in the collection, and he wrote in pencil at the top 'Mother when aged about 6 yrs'. Actually, Mary was almost ten years old. The family - Mary's parents William and Sarah Birkett with Mary and her younger siblings Edward, Sarah and Elizabeth - moved to Dublin from Liverpool at the end of 1784. The Certificate of Removal from Hardshaw Monthly Meeting to Dublin is dated 21 December 1784, a week before Mary's tenth birthday.

This little poem reveals Mary's anxiety about leaving England and her friends, and going to Ireland, which she has learned to think of as a place of conflict. Like many Anglo-Irish, she was to retain a strong English identification.

A Farewell to Old England

Old England I am gone from thee
Must I no more Brittania see
Must I unto proud Ireland come
And leave dear England at random
To Britains isle a long farewell
Where plenty smiles and pleasures dwell
But here tumultuous folly raves
And dire discord her torch high waves
Oh haste me to my native plain
Where all those peaceful pleasures reign
Where sweet content and happiness dwell
And all those virtues which excel
Old England if I was with thee
And all my friends along with me
Oh! then how happy I should be
If unto Ireland I must go
And cross the seas where billows flow
But oh how joyful would I be
If my dear country I could see
To Britains isle I bid adieu
To all those pleasures and to you
For I've Hibernia's isle in view
Farewell ye Groves farewell ye bow'rs
Where I have spent such happy hours
Yet why so anxious would I be
Is my dear country so for me
I love my friends and they love me
Wherefore so anxious would I be
My friends are more contented than
Perhaps at present what I am
Eblana's towers their pride display
While seated in this beauteous bay
Farewell my friends and England too
Unto you all I bid adieu
1. Hibernia - Latin name for Ireland, corruption of 'Iverna', equivalent of the old Celtic word from which 'Erin' is derived.

2. Eblana - Latin name for Dublin. Dublin was sometimes referred to as a city of towers owing to the grandeur and dimensions of its major buildings, particularly if viewed from a distance.

3. This poem may have been written whilst still aboard ship in Dublin Bay, awaiting disembarkation.

The tone of this poem, written on arrival in Dublin itself, is still very wistful, though Mary cannot help admitting the 'grandeur' of her new home town, which was fast becoming one of the most fashionable cities in Europe.

On Entering into Dublin 1784

Blest Liverpooll no more my eyes thee meet
Tis to Hibernia I guide my feet
Her towers & grandeur often for to view
Which please the taste & mind being often new
Yet still methinks Britannia has more charms
For here the thief & robber oft alarms
Oh! will kind fortune me one favour give
That is, that in dear England I may live
And spend my days in quietness & rest
No more I ask, & think myself quite blest
Where virtue, peace & usefulness combined
Together make a very quiet mind
My native land once more I wish to see
If e'er that pleasure is reserved for me
Just so, a bird took from the wood while young
Kept in a cage to vent its tender song
In vain it wishes in the woods to be
For that alone poor bird has charms for thee

Mary Birkett

1. Hibernia - Latin name for Ireland, see note 1 to poem above.
On Spring 1785

When spring appears mild & serene
Diffusing gladness all around
All nature like herself appears
The birds with gladness do abound
Welcome to the sons of pleasure
Is the sweet and blooming spring
Welcome to the ploughman's labour
Is the dear enticing things[sic]
Let joy appear, for spring is near
Drive hoary¹ winter far away
Let happiness & mirth appear
And innocence keep up the day
Tho winters cold too rough may seem
If summers heat can pleasant be
Sweet spring makes up for all the year
Nor hot nor rough yet mild is she
Youth of year delightful spring
To thee my early lays I'll bring
I'll lay them down before thy feet
Thy wish'd arrival for to greet -

Mary Birkett

¹ hoary - white with frost or snow.
Truth, a concept of key significance to Friends, eludes easy definition. In the words of Quaker Faith and Practice (under 19.33), it 'is a complex concept; sometimes the word is used for God, sometimes for the conviction that arises from worship, sometimes for the way of life'. It is discovered through the leadings of the Light within. Here, Mary appears to use the word for God, but, interestingly, this Truth is personified as female - a 'celestial maid'.

Ode to Truth 1785

Hail Truth! thou bright celestial maid
In robes of innocence array'd
Unto my wounds thy balm impart
They can't be cured by gentle art

2

The little songsters of the grove
Tuning their voices, they happy rove
Of thee they learn by thee they are taught
The warbling music of their heart

3

In meadows see the little lambs
Are frisking by their tender dams
They are under thy protecting hand
For thou canst savage wolves withstand

4

And oft thou'lt grace the shepherd's voice
Who makes a rural life his choice
From every vice his heart set free
Oh! let them give it unto thee

5

With innocence thy bosom friend
To me your sweetest influence lend
Ye hills, ye dales, ye groves around
With echoing voice her choice resound
E'en you ye larks & nightingales
That sing in Meadows or in Vales
Exert your Sweet Melodious Voice
Resound ye trees your mistress's choice

When truth & innocence appear
How bright a face does Nature wear
But if they go no joys abound
Not even pleasures self seems crown'd⁵ -

Mary Birkett

1. Truth is personified as a heavenly maiden, with healing qualities that are invoked. However, there is a contradiction in the last two lines of this stanza. The nature of balm should be to shed a soothing influence yet it appears that the balm of Truth, if it is to be curative, cannot be gentle.
2. Songsters of the grove - poetic term for birds.
3. Meaning of this line unclear - possibly it was copied incorrectly.
4. Referring to Truth's choice of Mary Birkett as a recipient for her influence.
5. The sense of the stanza is that the presence of 'truth & innocence', once conferred on the speaker, endow the natural world with beauty. Without them, capacity for pleasure is blunted and the world becomes bleak, less meaningful.
Acrostics (poems in which the initial letters of each line, running downwards, spell out a word - often the name of the poem's addressee) were very popular in this period. Children were encouraged to write acrostics when learning the art of simple versifying.

Though this poem is undated, it must have been written before March 1787 when Mary’s brother Edward died of scarlet fever. See poem written on his death, p.17.

An Acrostic to my Brother.

Edward beware of bad company
Detest all evil ways for they
Will lead thee on as thou shalt bend
And then thou’lt pay for’rt in the end
Remember these few words I pray
Duty to thy parents pay

Brother these lines in love I write
In holiness take great delight
Rule and govern thy passions strong
Keep to thee only what doth belong
Ever remember that thou die must
Therefore to the world thyself don’t tie
Think always on eternity.¹

¹. If ‘eternity’ is spoken so as to rhyme with ‘tie’, the poem assumes a comic rather than a pious tone.
Night sable Goddess now appears¹
Now she a darksome aspect wears
The bright full moon like silver looks
How bright she shines along the brooks
The brilliant stars their courses try²
They look like diamonds in the sky
Ah! whither fled the sources of day
Alas! just now they were quite gay
Now they are fled & now is gone[sic]
And for a while let silence on
The morning like the morn of life
Is gay & noisy without strife
But when night comes & our short course is run
Tis finish'd ere some think tis scarce begun
Gods goodness let us now adore
Before in this world we are no more
The sun no longer now appears
Nature a silent aspect wears
But see 'tis darker, darker still
No longer bright yon purling rill³

Mary Birkett

¹ If punctuated, the line would read: 'Night, sable goddess, now appears,' Sable - black.
² The stars follow their set paths in the sky.
³ purling rill - stream flowing with a swirling or mazy motion and bubbling sound.
An Ode to Summer 1786

Oh! beauteous Summer welcome in
For with thee, thou wilt pleasure bring
The ploughman now
Can drive his plough
While birds do sing on every bough

2

See the trees blossom, oh how gay
When by the suns enlivening ray
Unabashed they are
Without a fear
They are the fairest of the fair

3

Oh sweetest summer, beauteous thou
How sport the birds from bough to bough
They chirp & Sing
They pleasure bring
They give new life to every thing -

4

Oh! see how green the grassy field
What beauteous flowers it doth yield
The tender sheep
Their mothers keep
They watch even while they sleep
Elizabeth Birkett, born in England in 1783, was one of the few Birkett children to survive into adulthood. She would marry Robert Hudson in 1806.

On my sister Betsy recovering out of a convulsion fit on the 13th of 3rd mo 1786

What sorrow all around appear
And mourn poor Betsy's fate
See! every eye bedew'd with tears
While we in sorrow wait

Dear innocent! thou hast no care
To disturb thy repose
Yet sickness all the world must fare[share?] Even babes themselves have foes

Oh! may our sorrows turn to joys
And Betsy's sickness go
We'd wipe the tears from off our eyes
(Save gladness made them flow[])

We have our wish, to joy it does turn!
And Betsy's sickness - left
Oh! may we never have to mourn
That we are of her bereft -

Mary Birkett aged 11 years
A Hymn composed by Mary Birkett
on her recovering out of a Pleurisy Fever 1787
Aged 12 Years

Gratitude rise, gratitude rise & Sing
Arise & all thy grateful ardour bring
Praise! Oh! my Soul & let me spread a towering wing
Arise my lute teach me to speak the theme
Let each harmonious string
Tremble with grateful joy & praise the Almighty's name
When sick & full of pain I lay
He did deliver me
Let me of his glory sing
Praise the Lord while I have breath
My Soul was taking wing
When he deliver'd me from the grim jaws of Death
Sickness made me full of pain
He gave me life & breath again
Oh! every nerve for him with pleasure strain
Oh! praise the Lord in deed & thought
For with a tender hand
To give me life again he did command
And that from sickness great & pain should be brought
Mercy to me my Saviour did impart
And heal'd my wounded heart
The Almighty cured me that I might know
That he alone had right to keep control
Oh! teach my heart with gratitude to flow
To praise thy name Oh! teach my Soul
At his command I rose & saw the light
Hush'd all my pain & sunk in night
Teach me to walk in holy ways,
Teach me thy holy Name to praise
Oh! thou who gave us life & breath & food
Thou who redeem'd us with thy blood
To us thou shew'd thy power, thy strength & might
Unerring wisdom! goodness Infinite!
Let me for ever praise his holy name
To Him direct my song, his mercy to my theme
Where e'er I be, what season, time or place
Do thou endue me with thy holy grace
Who thro' thy mercy did my days prolong
See! all a pleasing aspect wear
Methinks each thing - How gay
The Makers bounties thro' the world appear
Darting a heavenly ray
Oh! happy thought
The Lamb to us salvation brought
That we thro' grace might see the heavenly light
And not be lost in Darkness Death & Night
Endearing love -
And can we then ungrateful prove
Melt heart of steel, bow stubborn knee
Teach me, O Lord, to worship thee
Blest be thou for evermore
Who did this day deliver me
That I in health his heavenly light might see
Life to unworthy me he did restore
Eternal praises will I sing
Yea! to the Heaven of Heavens my thoughts take wing
With grateful ardour me inspire
Oh! set my gratitude on fire
His praise resound.
Ye Hills! ye Dales, ye Rocks; his praise again & yet again resound
Angels above who hear my lay
For me the grateful tribute pay
Ye saints & seraphs full of love
Who dwell in Heavens bright realms above
In chorus join with me to sing his praise
Whole hours on hours, whole days on days
Do you for me th'imperfect lay prolong
Complete my grateful lay & close my song

1. This line also appears in 'A Hymn and Prayer Conjoined' (v. 6), p. 21 in this volume.
2. Rom 14:11 - 'For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.' From Is 45:23 '[...]' That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.'
Sarah Birkett, known as Sally (then the usual diminutive, or short form, for girls named Sarah), was born in England in 1781. She was to die in March 1787 - see poem on her death, p.20.

To my Sister Sally Birkett 1787

True knowledge is a useful thing
And does much satisfaction bring
Beauty is but a fading flower
Growing & dying in an hour
But knowledge will unto the breast
Both sense & usefulness impart
Beauty is like a butterfly
Pleasant & gaudy to the eye
Vanity & gaudy things
Are but like butterflies[sic] with wings
Make knowledge then thy use of pleasure
Keep it for it will prove - A treasure
Honour thy parents, them obey
Religion too will lead the way
Oh! turn thy mind unto the Lord
And love to read his holy word
For that will pleasure unto thee afford
Most worldly things will sorrow bring
Envy & malice leave a sting
But in celestial Truth confide
And never from her precepts slide
In that thou may'st some comfort take
When worldly things do thee forsake
The mind is weak yet faith is strong
And temperance will thy days prolong

1. see forward - these words are reproduced in this transcript exactly as they appear in manuscript, centred beneath the body of the poem.
This poem is addressed to the same sister as the one above. Though it is undated it is placed here because it must have been written before Sarah's death in March 1787.

To My Sister Sarah Birkett

Dear Sister thou art young therefore give ear
To the advice of one who loves thee dear
Never refuse the advice of thy friend
When to thy good they mean that it should tend
Then first unto thy parents duty pay
Where e'er thou goes let bright truth lead the way
My dear when I mention thy faults to thee
It is with plainness and sincerity
Let friendships freedom never thee displease
Receive it gladly follow it always
Vain flattery and praise my dear avoid
And every other wicked thing beside
Do not be fond of hearing titles vain
Given to thee instead of thy right name¹
Since often those who fore our face will praise
Are the first behind our backs our faults to raise
An instance of this kind I somewhere read
It was in Prose to Verse I did translate²
It is about a Girl an only child
Her fortune great yet she was very Mild
One person praised her for her temper sweet
Another that her fortune was so great
Some praised her 'cause she was of noble birth
Others her honesty's excelling worth
Tho she was Mild this puffed her up with pride
And soon her Mother thought twas time to chide
She took her by the hand & sayed my dear
I see how thou art praised every where
Those very persons who first thee will praise
Will be the first, things against thee to raise
Thus being chid³ when she was so puffed up⁴
It sham'd her so that she could scarce look up
She ask'd her mother did she think they wo'd'[would]
When she said Yes her pride was nip't i'th bud
It happened as she said a person came
For to invite them in his Masters name
They went the company admir'd this child
And all about her thought her very Mild
Those very persons who had prais'd her so
Begun to tell her faults more than they Knew
Those very persons now did seem to be
Altho they'd praised her quite her enemy
Take warning by this instance my Sally
We are frail creatures very weak are we
My dear do not make room or leave a [part?]5
For Malice to get into thy young heart
So wishing that thou may to virtue bend
I style myself thy sister and thy friend

1. Quakers, considering all human beings equal in God's sight, disapproved of titles as seeming to elevate one person above another.
2. Mary, either for amusement or as an educational exercise, was perhaps accustomed to writing poems based on prose narratives she had read.
3. chid - told off or scolded.
4. puffed up - inflated with pride.
5. Last word of line omitted in manuscript.
1787 was a year of very great sadness for the Birkett family, tragic even by eighteenth-century standards when the loss of some children in infancy or early childhood was to be expected. In March, Mary lost her brother Edward aged seven or eight (he was born in England in 1779), and two of her sisters - Sarah (Sally) aged five or six (also born in England, in 1781) and Hannah who was just three days short of her second birthday (born in Ireland on 16 March 1785) - when they died within a few days of one another. Mary composed a poem of mourning very shortly after each death. The poem on Edward's death reveals that he died of scarlet fever and it is probable that Hannah and Sally also caught the infection. The poem is marked by acceptance and expresses the firm conviction that he, with his kind, gentle and resigned disposition, has been rewarded by entry to a far happier place.

On Hannah's death, though there is the same certainty that she is also now with God, a feeling of horror at the cruelty of another loss following so swiftly upon the first and a questioning as to why such innocents should be 'snatch'd away' creep in. When Sally too is taken, Mary's grief and questioning is keenest. Not only is there a note of utter disbelief that a third death has taken place within a fortnight, but with Sally gone Mary has lost her 'only kind companion here', in this new country. Sally, though at the most only six years old, was the closest sister to Mary in age, and, it would appear, in intimacy. Mary, now aged twelve, had only two siblings left - Elizabeth aged three or four and the baby Susanna, to both of whom she would perhaps be, necessarily, more of a nursemaid than a playmate or companion.

Edward died on 5 March 1787 - hence this poem was written five days later.

On the Death of my dear & only brother
3rd mo 10th---------Edward Birkett----------1787

Addressed to my Mother
________________________

Our grief & sorrow great what words can tell
To lose our Edward whom we loved so well
My only brother dear, my Edwards gone
I've lost a brother thou hast lost a son
Happy the day that ever he was born
Whither on-Winters eve or Summers morn
For now he's gone where nought disturbs his rest
And in his Saviours arms my brother's blest
Our loss is great, yet greater far his gain
His glory now doubly repays his pain
Tho' by a scarlet fever he was burn'd
And a sore throat with double force return'd
Yet patient he - he seldom did complain
Even when in an - agony of pain
Obliging he to all: manly: yet mild
In wit' he seem'd a man; altho' a child
In play thats innocent he took delight
That which was guilty he put from his sight
His dying words such tenderness affords
"I'm sorry for my Mother" were his words
Three times "he'd die at five o Clock" he said
At five o Clock the debt of Nature paid
Obedient to his parents, well inclined
Tender, submissive gentle, modest kind
Loving & well beloved by all he knew
The tears which were shed for him were not few
But what are tears, to one who is so blest
They can do him no good nor hurt his rest
He's happy now in glorious realms of love
Shed then no tears for him rather rejoice
'Tis hard to lose one whom we knew before
Yet let us think his happiness is more
Than ours, he now is in that glorious place
Where he can see his Maker face to face
And in true happiness he now can sing
"Thrice Hallelujah! to our Glorious king"
Conclude my muse,¹ his glory thou can't paint
The subjects great & words alas! are faint
For what are words Compared with Gods great love
Like chaff before the wind they will no substance prove

Mary Birkett

¹. wit - understanding.
². muse - first instance of Mary addressing her muse (goddess of poetry), the source of poetic inspiration.
This elegy was composed four days after Hannah's death on 13 March 1787.

On the Death of my dear Sister
3mo 17th_________Hannah Birkett___________1787
An Elegy

Teach me my muse a Sisters death to mourn
Who from our arms by death was rudely torn
Must I alas no more my sister see
With whom so oft I would delighted be
Sweet innocent clasp'd in deaths cold embrace
Fled are the smiling roses on thy face
In a cold grave! oh! must my Hannah lie?
Oh! is it not a fearful thing to die
Thy beauteous limbs must in the grave be lain
And on the body will the worms sustain
What no longer trip thy nimble feet
Nor on thy blooming cheeks sits health so sweet
What tho no friend shall clasp thee in their arms
Nor tender parents to protect from harms
Nor sister who would oft delighted be
Thy playful tricks, or dimpled smiles to see
Yet thou in God more happiness shall find
Than in both parents, Friend or Sister kind
Already thou hast soared above the sky
Blest in the favour of thy God on high
Far - Far from dangers which to us are nigh
Three days thou languish'd, what a little time
Thus to be snatch'd away before thy prime
Oh! cruel death, would nought thee satisfy
But that a Brother & Sister too should die
Why would thou tear from us our little dears
Why wouldst thou snatch them while so young in years
But sure they are gone unto a happier place
Where they can see their Maker face to face
And they more solid joy & comfort know
Than mortals can, while they do live below
"Oh! grant to me thou great Almighty power"
"Whoses strength & might presides o'er every hour"
"In that dread hour when life is at an end"
"Thou with thy needful presence me befriend"
"Then neither life nor death nor aught I'll fear"
"If thou'lt protect me while I'm living here"
"That when I die, with them I hope to sing"
"Praises to my glorious God & King -"]"

Mary Birkett
Sally died on 19 March 1787 - hence this was written eight days later.

On the Death of my dear Sister
3mo 27th---------------Sally Birkett-------------1787

And is it true that Sally too is dead
Must she so soon make the cold grave her bed
Oh yes! it is too true; those tidings - sore
And I must see my Sally dear no more
Oh cruel Death - art thou now satisfied
In less than fourteen days they all three died
First Edward went, then Hannah went also
And soon too soon, Sally was call'd to go
Yet she obey'd with patience - Lovely child
For she was always innocent & mild
A cruel stroke, we thought when Edward went
Another too, which was for Hannah sent
Oh! that was hard which took my Sally dear
She was my only kind companion here
While she was here no other I desired
She was by all belov'd, by all admir'd
Her body only sleeps, her soul's not dead
For 'tis to far more glorious regions fled
Over her rosy cheeks & sparkling eyes
And beauteous limbs, fell Death has won the prize
Her gain is great & tho the loss is mine
To Providence's will we must resign
For He alone is merciful & just
We'll comfort find, if we in Him do trust
Tho' nature's weak, yet 'tis a happy thought
That she from Sin & Death to Heaven was brought
Oh! she was full of love, too much to tell
She named us all, then bid us all farewell
Then spoke no more, but closed her dying eyes
And now no doubt a glorious crown her prize
I've lost a sister & companion dear
While she has gain'd eternal blessings there
Like her Oh! may I live Oh may I die!
That we may meet in Heaven with endless joy
We'll never part, if once we meet again
And then we'll find a great reward for all our pain
For those who are good, kind Heaven has bliss in store
Where sorrow sin & Pain will be no more
That Kitty, Edward, Hannah too may join
With Sally & myself, that wish is mine

Dublin 3mo 27th 1787 Mary Birkett
This poem combines a song of praise to God with, towards the end, a prayer that Mary will obtain a place in heaven where she can be reunited with her lost brother and sisters. The date given - 1786 - must be wrong because sisters Hannah and Sally (Sarah), and brother Edward, died in March 1787. Kitty (Catherine) was a sister who had died in Liverpool in 1777, before the family moved to Dublin - her death is noted in the Hardshaw Meeting registers.

A Hymn & Prayer Conjoined 1786[1787?]

Sure thou art better than the best
Of all our joys below
For we can never be at rest
For sorrow sin & woe

2

Oh! let us turn our minds to thee
Yea! till our latest breath
Our hearts shall ever joyful be
Nor need we fear our death

3

Tis thou our God alone art great
True happiness thou["]t bring
For what is grandeur - but a cheat
Which always leaves a sting

4

Use me Oh! Lord unto thy will
Still will I worship thee
Thy holy name I'll reverence still
And strive for to obey

5

Praise for ever let me sing
To the Almighty Lord
Sure thou'rt my Father & my King
And I will bless thy word

6

When sick & full of pain I lay
Thou blooming health didst bring
To thee for ever will I pray
And of thy praises sing
When e'er I cast my eyes around
Thy tenderness I see
In hills & dales thy bounty's found
To make us think of thee

What e'er thou'st pleased to give oh! Lord
I'll thankfully receive
Depend upon thy holy word
And on thy son believe

If adversity pull me down
Nor suffer me to rest
I'll bless the hand which gave the wound
And know 'twas for the best

Lord guard me from the tempters wiles
From Satan set me free
Then whether fortune frowns or smiles
I still will worship thee

Oh! Lord in thee I put my trust
And give myself to thee
For thou art holy good & just
And merciful thou'lt be

Help Lord those who are poor in heart
And save them in the end
To them thy loving grace impart
For thou wilt them befriend

Praise, Praise the Lord for evermore
Ye Kings, oh praise your King
Worship your God & him adore
And of his praises sing
Oh! Lord of hosts I'll worship thee
If thou wilt help me in my need
That I may humbly righteous be
For sure thou art a friend indeed

Save me oh Lord from discontent
Truth let me imitate
And let me think that I was sent
Upon the Lord to wait

That when the day of Judgment comes
With joy I may sit down
When all have got their solemn dooms
I wear an endless crown

Then may I ever hope to praise
The fountain of our Good
Who did us to such glory raise
And that to whom he would

Oh! then once more I hope to know
My Kittys, Edwards face
My darling Hannahs Sallys too
What joy will then take place

Mary Birkett

Oh with a sisters fondest wish comply
That thou mayst live to be thy parents joy
And happy may thou live & happy may thou die

Mary Birkett

1. Probably referring to the bout of pleurisy Mary suffered in 1787. The same line appears in a poem composed after the illness - see 'A Hymn composed by Mary Birkett on her recovering out of a Pleurisy Fever 1787 Aged 12 Years', p.12. This would confirm the date of composition of 'A Hymn and Prayer Conjoined' as being 1787 or later, not 1786.

2. This line appears to contain a notion of 'the elect', the few chosen for salvation.

3. Mary's siblings - Kitty (Catherine), Edward, Hannah and Sally (Sarah) - died in England aged 14 months in 1777, and 5 March, 13 March, 19 March 1787 respectively. See poems written on Edward's, Hannah's and Sally's deaths, pp.17-20.

4. This postscript could be addressed to either of Mary's surviving sisters - Betsy (Elizabeth) born in England in 1783, or the new baby Susanna born 19 June 1786.
As if 1787 had not been full enough of sorrow, in November that year Mary's friend Mary Haughton died. The Haughtons were a prominent Quaker family, some of whom lived in Ferns near Ballitore. Joseph Naughton of Ferns attempted to help victims in his area, both Catholic and Protestant, and mediate between individuals during the Irish Rebellion. (See 'Some Account of Remarkable deliverances [...]', in Vol.1 of this edition, pp.160-67, note 27.) Some Haughtons were involved in the bay-yarn industry. Of the several Mary Haughtons traced so far, none died in 1787.

An Elegy on the Death of my dear friend Mary Haughton -----

And art thou gone so soon my much lov'd friend
Must now thy kindness, duty, friendship end
Ah yes! tis true thy time on Earth is o'er
And much lov'd Mary Haughton is no more
Sudden she left the Earth & wing'd her way
To the blest regions of Eternal day
How soon her soul resign'd all Earthly cares
And left her once glad friends (to mourn) in tears
Once glad, when we beheld her all array'd
In youthful innocence - a virtuous maid
Oh if it be thy glorious task above
To be the messenger of heavenly love
Or if (to bring us down comfort divine
And consolation when in grief) be thine
Oh then remember those thou left behind
And bring some comfort to thy mothers mind
Let thy kind Brothers, Sisters, sorrow cease
And gently whisper thou'rt at rest in peace
Patient may they resign, till soon they rise
And meet our mary glorious in the skies
This mournful tribute, sadly have I paid
To my departed friends respected shade
But where is all that gaiety of youth
That lovely innocence, that sacred truth
Ahh! where that friendly heart, that honest mind
Which ever was to virtue pure inclin'd
Where all that social intercourse which we
Have oft indulged, ah never more 'twill be
Alas! low in the grave they now are laid
Closed in that sacred name, respected shade
Respected! yea beloved by many here
Who o'er thy grave, no doubt will drop a tear
Perhaps (with me) may wish to die like thee
In Heaven soon to meet & happy be
There crown'd, on golden harps to sing the praise
Of innocence that 'scap'd the Tempters ways
There we shall immortality enjoy
And pleasure glorious, which ne'er meets a cloy\(^2\)
There to be Angels, Angels see & know
Far from the regions, desolate of woe
And tho' we have lost a friend so justly dear
Let's strive to imitate her while we're here
That soon we all may meet nor e'er again
Know what it is, to feel a parting pain.

11mo 16th 1787    Mary Birkett

1. shade - ghost or spirit.
2. cloy - a word more often used as a verb, meaning to satiate, or dull.
This poem considers the power and majesty of God, concentrating on God the Father and God the Son within the Holy Trinity. It contrasts God's greatness with human insignificance and stresses His love in purchasing the salvation of humanity through the gift of Himself in the form of His Son. Exploring the mysterious nature of God and the Trinity in a remarkable manner for so young a child, it uses different names for God, from 'the great I AM', denoting inexpressible mystery and power, to the Lord of Life and the Old Testament Jehovah. It draws on Psalm 86 and the title may have been taken from notes at the head of this psalm in the King James version – in verses 5-11, David seeks to strengthen his prayer, 'By God's power and goodness'.

'On the Power and Goodness of God a Poem' is found on pp. 283-87 of the manuscript collection. Another, undated, version appears earlier (MS pp. 28-32), entitled 'On The Attributes of God'. Textual variants are shown in the notes below, indicated by closing square brackets (the text after the closing square bracket giving the text of the undated manuscript version). As there are so many variants (almost 100), they are shown separately from other notes, divided into sections for each ten lines of the poem. Line numbers are added to the poem for this purpose.

The great I AM is full of strength & power
He stretcheth forth his arm all nations bow
And own the King of worlds, the Lord of life
The God of power, the Author of us all
Maker omnipotent & full of love
Oh! He is beneficent to us he made
At His command the world or goes to dust
Or rises, Night & day obey his word
The Stars are all his handy work, [sic] the Sun
That glorious light, at his command arose
He bid the silver moon to rise & shine
With borrow'd light, the nightly travellers guide
How wondrous great, he rides upon the storm
He guides the winds, "blow here" they straight obey
"Waters no farther flow" they stop their course
- God is a holy Being good & just
Almighty Powerful & wise, Author of all
Things that were ever made or e'er will be
He's mans Creator, form'd him from the dust
Stampt his own Image on his manly brow
Gave him the breath of life & food to eat
And more than all his favour & his grace
Oh! what is man! that he should e'er be proud
He is but dust & clay & soon he must
Return to dust, because from dust he came
Or what a woman but a crooked rib
Look to thy Maker, what is He - oh! what!
A Matchless Being, of Perfection full!
Of mercy infinite, yet strictly just!
His love to poor fallen disobedient man
Is wondrous, oh tis wondrous, which of us
Would send their only well beloved son
A ransom for the trespasses of men
Of Frail, ungrateful disobedient men
None - none would do it - none so full of love
No son so duteous or so good as he!
He heaved a burthen from a guilty world
And paid the dear bought ransom for our souls
Oh! Jesus what we owe thee for thy love
Thou glorious Saviour, son of the Most High
Thou Prince of Peace, thou holy Lamb of God
Thou on thyself fulfill'd the strictest duty
And gave us an Example - how to live
And all for us - 'twas all for poor fallen man
To save our souls from Hells Eternal flames
And set us all from dire perdition free
For us thou suffer'd a most shameful death
An ignominious death, the death of thieves
But he was innocent, he never sinned
Tho' like a malefactor to the cross
Meek as a lamb, nor spake a word
Nor shew'd resentment, but forgave them all
But on the tree he dying thus pronounced
"Father forgive they know not what they do"
How shall we thank thee, how repay the debt
For us thou didst thy glory all resign
That thou mightest buy us to thyself entire
Purchase us with thy blood & make us blest
Now at thy Fathers right hand crown'd in bliss
Thou makest unwearied intercession for
Us wretches who despited thee on Earth
But thou art full of love & tenderness
And art the Eternal Heir of Glory great
Oh! Thou the Triune God, the Lord of Life
Ahl what am I, that I should speak thy power
Thy love, thy bounty, mercy to us all
Lord what am I, compared to thee - a worm
Scarce visible; a worthless useless being
Thou great Jehovah! awful solemn name
Yet full of mercy, as in justice strict
Or shall I now attempt to praise thy name
Or sing thy bounties in the grassy field
Or in a garden planted with choice flowers
Sure all creation marks thy generous hand
Didst thou not raise them all for use to man
Or useful emblems, to improve his life
The feather'd choir direct their songs to thee
And seem each day to bid the human race
Do ye as we & praise each day your God
The dove the pattern of a mothers love
The busy ant industrious tho' so small
Is an example striking to mankind
The rose an emblem of a virtuous man
Whose lovely scent's acceptable to all
The lily emblem sweet of innocence
All pleasing innocence, which ne'er offends
But I vain thought, shall I pretend to point
Out all his Goodness or descry his works
I'll praise his name, I'll glorify the Lord
And I'll extol him for his mercies great

Then join with me ye nations to adore
Your God, your King, your Everlasting friend
Adore him for his goodness, for his love
And for his bounty to the world throughout
Ye feather'd choristers your songs direct
To God & praise him for your whole existence
Ye Angels who surround his Glorious throne
Oh! tell us of the wonders of your Lord
Instruct the world how best to obey his will
And let me sing with you for evermore
Ten thousand Hallelujahs to his name

1. A name for God. See Ex 3:14 where God speaks to Moses from the burning bush, naming Himself 'I AM THAT I AM'.
2. Ps 86:9 - 'All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name.'
3. Author - creator.
4. I.e. at God's command the world exists, or turns to dust.
5. with borrow'd light - borrowed because the moon's light is only a reflection of the sun's.
6. Probably thinking of Ex 14:21 which describes how God created a 'strong east wind' to push back the sea, dividing the waters so that the Israelites could cross the Red Sea when fleeing from the Egyptians. Also Christ's calming of the wind and sea, Mk 4:39.
7. Gen 2:7 - 'And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed Into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.'
8. Gen 3:19 - 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.'
10. burthen - archaic form of 'burden'.
11. The poem alternates between use of the third person, and directly addressing Christ in the second person. It also does this later with God the Father. The effect is to combine a telling, for others, of God's virtues and power, with a meditational prayer to God from the speaker herself.
12. Is 9:6 - '[... ] and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.' Jn 1:29 - John the Baptist hailed Jesus as 'the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world'.
13. Word difficult to read in manuscript - 'strictest' seems most likely.
14. Two thieves were crucified with Jesus, according to Mt 27:38. In Lk 23:32-33 they are called malefactors. Crucifixion was a punishment the Romans inflicted on thieves and other criminals.
15. Lk 23:34 - Christ's prayer, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do', only appears in Luke's Gospel, as does the term 'malefactors' for the men crucified with Christ.

MB
16. despited - hated or injured.
17. Triune - three in one, therefore a description of the Holy Trinity.
18. Jehovah - Hebrew personal name for God, originally Yahweh. Thought by the Jews too holy to be spoken, hence described here as 'awful solemn' (awful being used in its original meaning - 'awe full').
19. James Thomson, *The Seasons*, 'Summer', 465-66 - the man sheltering from the heat in shady forest or a cool cave is an 'Emblem instructive of the virtuous man,Who keeps his tempered mind serene and pure'.
20. Ps 88:12-13 - 'I will praise thee, 0 Lord my God, with all my heart; and I will glorify thy name for evermore. For great is thy mercy toward me; and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.'
21. The word 'evermore' also echoes Psalm 86 - see note 18 immediately above.
22. Hallelujah - derived from two Hebrew words meaning 'praise Jehovah'. Therefore it ties in with the naming of God as Jehovah in the latter part of the poem.

Textual variants in undated version of this poem, entitled 'On The Attributes of God', shown after square closing brackets:

Lines 1-10
The great [AM] The Great I am nations] Nations worlds.] World's
The God of power, the Author of us all] The Author of us all the God of power
Oh! He is beneficent to us he made] O he's beneficent unto us all His command the world] his command the World Or rises, Night & day] Or rises - Night and day
The Stars are all his handy work, the Sun] The stars are all his handy work; the sun glorious light, at his] Glorious Light at His
Lines 11-20
bid the silver moon to rise & shine] bade the silver Moon to rise & shew With borrow'd light,] A peaceful light How wondrous great,] Oh he is great winds, "blow here"] winds "blow here "Waters no farther flow"] Waters no farther flow - God is a holy Being good & just] He is a holy being good and just Powerful & wise,] powerful & wise mans Creator, form'd] Mans creator formed Stampd his own Image] Stamp't his own Image Lines 21-30
life & food] life and food. And more than all his favour & his grace] (this line omitted) man] dust & clay & soon] dust and clay and soon Return to dust,] Return to dust Or what a woman] Or what is woman Maker, what is He - oh! what!] Maker what is he Oh! what Being, of Perfection full!] being of perfection full mercy infinite, yet strictly just!] Mercy infinite yet strictly just disobedient man] disobedient Man Lines 31-40
Is wondrous, oh tis wondrous,] Is endless and immortal their only] his only trespasses of men] sins of sinful men Of Frail, ungrateful disobedient men] (this line omitted) None - none would do it - none so full of love] None would do it with that tenderness] That Heavenly love & pity to poor man (additional line)] good as he! Good as he He heaved [.] our souls] (these two lines omitted) Oh! Jesus] Oh Jesus] Thou art a ransom for the sins of all] (additional line) Thou glorious Saviour, son of the Most High] Oh Glorious Saviour Holy Lamb of God Lines 41-50
Thou Prince of Peace, thou holy Lamb of God/Thou on thyself fulfill'd the strictest duty] Thou Prince of Peace King of us all thou didst!Fulfil the strictest duty on thy self And gave us an Example - how to live] (this line omitted) And all for us - 'twas all for poor fallen man] And all for us twas all for poor fall'n man Eternal] eternal And set us all] To set us all thou suffer'd he suffer'd An Ignominious death, the death of thieves] An Ignominious death; the death of Thieves] And Murderers thither Justly doom'd to die (additional line) innocent, he never sinned] Innocent he ne'er did sin Thou' like a malefactor to] Though like a Malefactor on Lines 51-60
Meek as a lamb, nor spake a word] Meek as a Lamb he went nor spake a word Nor shew'd resentment, but forgave them all] Nor show'd resentment to his enemies But on the tree [.] the debt (three lines)] Oh Jesus didst thou do all that for us/Thou didst Oh Lamb of God Oh Saviour pure (three lines replaced with two lines) thy glory] thy Glory mightest buy us to thyself] might buy us to thy self at thy Fathers right hand crown'd in bliss] at thy fathers right hand dost thou sit Thou makest unwearied intercession for] Enthron'd in bliss thou intercedes for us
Us wretches who despited thee on Earth] For us who evil entreated thee on earth
love & tenderness) love and tenderness
Eternal Heir) eternal heir
Oh! Thou the Triune God, the Lord of Life] Oh thou the Triune God the Lord of life
Ah! what am I] Ah what am I
Thy love, thy bounty, mercy to us all] Thy strength; thy love thy bounty to us all
I, compared to thee - a worm] I compar'd to thee a worm
Scarce visible; a worthless useless being] Scarce visible to thee thou mighty God
Jehovah awful solemn name] Jehovah awful solemn Name mercy,) mercy
Lines 71-80
thy name] thy Name thy bounties in the grassy field thy bounty's in the Grassy field
garden planted with choice flowers] Garden planted with choice flow'r's
Sure all creation marks thy generous hand] Raised all by thee with sweet endearing love
use to man] Use to man emblems,) emblems feather'd] feathered
] With grateful chirpings early every morn (additional line)
Do ye as we & praise each day your God] To do the same and praise each day their God
The dove the pattern of a mothers love] The Dove the pattern of a Mothers love
Lines 81-90
busy ant industrious tho' so small] busy Ant industrious tho small mankind our race
The rose an emblem of a virtuous man] The Garden Rose an emblem of a Man
] Who worships God who loves him & adores (additional line) scent's] scents
lily emblem sweet of innocence] Lilly emblem sweet of Innocence
innocence, which ne'er offends] innocence which never gave
] Offence to any but delighted all (additional line) vain thought,) vain thought Goodness] goodness I'll praise
his name] III praise his Name mercies] Mercies
Lines 91-101
- Then join with me ye nations] Then join with me ye Nations
Your God, your King, your Everlasting friend] Your God your King your everlasting friend
goodness,] goodness
Ye feather'd choristers your songs direct] Ye Birds lend me your voice to praise his name
To God [..] existence] (this line omitted)
Angels who surround his Glorious throne] angels who surround his glorious throne
O!t tell us] Oh tell us to obey his will] to please your King
Ten thousand Hallelujahs to his name] Ten Thousand Hallelujah's to his Name
The Pikes were a leading Irish Quaker family. Joseph Pike came to Ireland with Cromwell's army in 1648. The family had wool, linen-draping and banking interests (Harrison, *Biographical Dictionary of Irish Quakers*, pp.80-82). There were at least three Deborah Pikes contemporary with Mary:

Deborah, daughter of Richard and Ann Pike of Dublin, born 23 March 1776, died 15 January 1788,

Deborah, daughter of Samuel and Catherine Pike, born 4 April 1774. The family's residence at Cork makes it unlikely that this was Mary's friend,

Deborah, daughter of Wight and Mary Pike of Dublin, born 2 October 1768. Married George Penrose.

Later in the collection (see p.50), there is a poem written on the death of Deborah Pike, undated - though its position in the manuscripts indicates the 1780s. If, as seems likely, this is the same Deborah as the friend addressed here, the first Deborah above is probably the right one. This supposition is reinforced by there being, in the collection, poems to Eliza and William Pike, both dated 1787 and reproduced below. The first Deborah listed above had a sister Elizabeth (Eliza was the usual short form of Elizabeth), born 1774, who later married Joseph Barrington and became a minister, and a brother William who died on 3 August 1788. The Barringtons 'were extensively involved in chandlery and soap-boiling' and their 'business was eventually absorbed in Unilever in 1910' (Harrison, *Biographical Dictionary of Irish Quakers*, p.27). An Edward Barrington would marry Sarah Leadbeater, daughter of William Leadbeater and Mary, née Shackleton - the 'loved maid' mentioned in this poem (see note 3).

A Poem to my much esteem'd friend
Deborah Pike 1787

My muse do instruct me where the words to find
That speak true friendship, or will write my mind
For sure if friendship in the world is found
In its most pleasing yoke we three are bound
Nor can I say I ever rightly knew
What sincere friendship was, till I saw you
Vain affectation never did I see
About thy Amiable Sister,1 or thee
Unknown to vice, you spend your virtuous days
Brought up in true religious holy ways
Thrice happy you who virtue only know
Altho' surrounded by a world of woe
Oh! blissful dwelling, that such worth contains
Where love & modest simplicity reigns
In all your miens2 such well pleas'd smiles appear
Which none but virtues peaceful children wear
Nor think my lovd companions of my youth
That this is flattery, which is simple truth
For flatterys art no weight with me will find
I speak the sentiments of my heart & mind
Oh! happy family, my pens too faint
Some abler hand than I your worth must paint
Let that loved maid*, whose words so fluent flow
For surely she also your worth must know
Like you in virtue she conspicuous shone
Like you by all belov'd sure all will own
Debby do thou my many faults excuse
'Twas sincere friendship prompted now my muse
With friendships freedom I my thoughts exprest[sic]
Thou art I wish thou ever might be blest
These simple lines may they my friendship prove
For what is wanting, I'll make up in love
If I am happy then your bliss I see
What then must you who are so happy be
Continue still to walk in virtuous ways
And then no doubt prosperous will be thy days
Th[e] Almighty Lord at last your friend will prove
And He'll conduct you to the realms of love
With what delight you'll view his glorious face
And all the blissful joys of that good place
When the last solemn day of Judgment come
And all the world have got their final doom
May Jesus then pronounce us good & blest
Oh! then we'll enter into glorious rest
With what great joy we'll hymn the sacred throne
Of him who made such blissful joys our own
Tho' now embodied in a prison of clay
Yet still we'll praise the Lord each night & day
Oh! of his glory may I ever write
His yoke's easy & his burden light
Oh! to his precious will may we still bend
And then I'm sure we'll never want a friend

Mary Birkett

* Mary Shackleton

1. Almost certainly Elizabeth (Eliza) Pike - see headnote.
2. miens - usually found in the singular form: mien - manners and bearing or demeanour.
3. The phrase 'whose words so fluent flow' indicate this was Mary Shackleton (1758-1826), daughter of Richard Shackleton (schoolmaster at Ballitore and friend of the politician and orator Edmund Burke), who later became Mary Leadbeater, author and poet. In her Annals of Ballitore, Mary Leadbeater sometimes mentions the ministry and charitable actions of her friend Betsy Barrington, née Pike. Mary Leadbeater did not start to publish until 1794, but this poem shows her verse was already circulating and was highly regarded in Quaker circles.
4. doom - judgement.
5. Mt 11:30 - 'For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'
The addressee of this poem was almost certainly Elizabeth Pike, later Barrington (see notes on poem to Deborah Pike, immediately above). Elizabeth would have been about twelve or thirteen years old at this time. In 1788 she stayed with the Shackleton family at Ballitore. She married Joseph Barrington in 1795. He was director of various railway companies and a member of the Port and Docks Board (see Extracts from the Diary of Edward Barrington of Co. Wicklow 1796-1877 (Dublin: Dublin University Press, 1916)). Later returning to live at Ballitore, Elizabeth Barrington maintained her friendship with Mary Leadbeater and played a central part in the life of the village. She is mentioned several times in Leadbeater's Annals.

A Poem to my dear & much esteemed friend Eliza Pike 1787

To thee my Friend these simple lines I send
I dare call Betsy¹ by the name of friend
Ambition, grandeur, pride & outward form
Never can prove, the hearts with friendship warm
Of these I'm sure thou never wast possess[ sic]
Else, with such peace thou would not have been blest
Accept these lines, nor with disdain refuse
If I am wrong, reprove my humble muse
My harp which ne'er was strong to lofty strain
Nor ever did resound beyond the plain²
Those plains where all the humble muses grow
Friendship & gratitude on all they know
To thirst of fame they never did aspire
Nor pride, nor glory ever did them fire
For nicity³ to friendship now give way
For if I'm wrong 'tis friendships simple lay
Tis but the friendship which I owe to thee
Thy mildness, gratitude & duty all
Deserve esteem & praise from great & small
Yet praise thou values not unless tis just
And if it is of thee it surely must
Disdainful pride & thee'll as soon agree
As dire ambition & simplicity
Womanly thou to all in temper mild
Behaviour sweet not stupid nor yet wild
With modest neatness thou thyself arrays
Which inward beauty of thy mind displays
For 'tis not gaudy dress that beauty shows
How different from the tulip from the rose
The rose is beautiful, the tulip fit for beaus⁴
May thou a pattern bright of virtue grow
May thou both happiness & plenty know
May thou to truth celestial give the sway
And let religion bright lead all the way
Long may thou live to know a prosperous peace  
And never - never may thy pleasure cease  
Long live to be esteem'd by all thou knows  
Cast on no coast where adversity grows  
Yet if thou'rt good & never swerves from God  
He'll love thee, tho' he chastens with his rod  
And when thou long hast walk'd in righteous ways  
May thou in virtue end thy peaceful days  
And when that path, tho' dread, we once have trod  
Oh! may we go where all the just behold their God  
Then may we meet in Heaven with happiness  
Where God our souls with endless joy will bless  
Where we before Th'Almighty throne will sing  
Thrice Hallelujahs to our God & King  
With saints & seraphs we in praise will join  
And an immortal crown be thine & mine  
Then we while here shall all that pleasure know  
Which does from using virtuous actions flow  
That we at virtues shrine may always bend  
Is the sincere wish of thy faithful friend

Mary Birkett

1. Betsy - the use of this diminutive for Elizabeth helps to confirm the girl's identity as Elizabeth Barrington, née Pike, known to her friend Mary Leadbeater as 'Betsy' (Leadbeater, Annals of Ballitore).
2. plain - punning on 'plain' as both simple and a large open space.
3. nicity - excessive politeness and correctness, following formalities not feelings.
4. beaus - a term for lovers or admirers, but also for fops or fashionable young men about town.
The William Pike addressed here was almost certainly the brother of Deborah and Eliza Pike (see two poems immediately above). The poem tries to comfort him in a severe sickness. Sadly, William died not long afterwards, in August 1788 aged ten.

To William Pike on his affliction 1787

Although afflictions sorely thee possess
Altho' they interrupt thy earthly peace
Yet he who gave them also thee can bless
And thee conduct to joys which never cease

2

What tho' tedious hours may irksome be
To thee when weary & with incipient pain
Yet surely there is bliss prepar'd for thee
If thou art good thy life's not spent in vain

3

True happiness was never made for man
While in this fleeting world we mortals stay
Our days are short & liken'd to a span
And ere we know our time is flown away

4

Fix thy whole happiness upon thy God
In heavenly wisdom he afflicted thee
What tho' he sometimes use his chastening rod
'Tis for our good & glad we should obey

5

Stamp his lov'd precepts deep upon thy breast
Obey them strict, yea every one fulfil
In them, his holy will to man exprest
And 'tis true happiness to do his will

6

Pleasure or pain on earth long cannot last
Do thou like Mary choose the better part
Nor e'er forget on Earth thy time dies fast
So worship thou th'Almighty in thine (he)art
Remember Job with patience great he bore
His great afflictions, they were hard to bear
His loss how great, struck with sore boils all o'er
Yet he made his great Maker his great care

His great example William imitate
Tis worthy thee yea all, 'twas nobly done
Patient resign for Gods great will is fate
Remember Job immortal honours won

May thou in peaceful virtue spend thy days
And then thy pleasure shall immortal be
Thy peaceful mind, thou wilt find will never cease
And thou the land of promise soon shall see

Mary Birkett

1. Lk 10:42 - On Martha's plea that He bid her sister Mary help her with serving, Christ said that Mary, by sitting and listening to Him, had chosen the 'good part'.
2. Reason for parentheses obscure.
3. Job 2:7 - God allowed Satan to 'smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown'.
Hannah Wilson Forbes (1768-1799) became one of Mary's closest friends. They wrote poetry to one another, and would maintain contact until Hannah's early death after childbirth at the age of thirty-one. (See Appendix 7, 'Individuals Featuring in the Writings of Mary Birkett Card.') Mary was perhaps a precocious child who enjoyed the company of older girls. When this piece was written, Hannah was about nineteen, while Mary was only twelve years old.

The Forbes were prominent Quakers, related to the Pikes. James Forbes was Clerk to Dublin Meeting in 1780 (Dublin Monthly Meeting Minutes and letter to Hardshaw Monthly Meeting regarding the move to Dublin of Mary Birkett's uncle Henry Birkett, 14 August 1780). This was probably Hannah's father, James Forbes of Lower Ormond-Quay, Dublin (1713-1783).

Mary flatters her friend by lavishing fulsome praise upon the Forbes family home in a conventional manner that she was to adopt in similar poems when visiting friends' houses over the next couple of decades. What is rather fascinating about this particular poem is that the item she singles out for most praise - the 'handsome painting o'er the door' - could be traced. The subject, Andromache mourning the death of Hector, was a popular one - for instance, Gavin Hamilton painted Andromache Weeping Over the Body of Hector in 1761. Hector, the great hero of the Trojan War, was the son of King Priam of Troy. He killed Patroclus, friend of the Greek hero Achilles, in battle. In revenge, Achilles slaughtered Hector and dragged his body behind a chariot in triumph outside the city. Hector left a widow, Andromache, and a young son, Astyanax. This painting, as Mary describes it, depicts Andromache weeping beside the urn containing her husband's ashes while their child, poignantly unaware of his father's death, attempts to comfort his nurse who is weeping also.

This description matches exactly the scene portrayed in Andromache and Hecuba Weeping over the Ashes of Hector by Angelica Kauffmann, one of the most highly regarded neo-classical artists of the eighteenth century. A founder member of the Royal Academy, who counted other leading artists such as Sir Joshua Reynolds and Benjamin West amongst her friends, she excelled in historical subjects, considered, by Reynolds et al, as the highest form of painting - and previously a male domain. The Trojan legend provided themes for some of her earliest paintings shown in England. This one, after exhibition at the Royal Academy, was published in a hugely successful series of prints by William Ryland of London in 1772.

A review of it in The Middlesex Journal (1772) commented, 'This lady seems to have a peculiar turn for history painting, in which branch of the art she has long since acquired a very eminent character'. But such praise was later qualified by reference to her gender. A London Chronicle reviewer wrote in 1777:

> It is surely somewhat singular, that while so many of our male artists are employed upon portraits, landscapes, and other inferior species of painting, this lady should be almost uniformly carried, by the boldness and sublimity of her genius, to venture upon historical pieces; which is as great a phenomenon in the painting as it would be if our poets dealt in nothing but sonnets and epigrams, while our poetesses aspired to the highest and most difficult department of their art, the producing of epic and heroic compositions. But though Miss Kauffman possesses this masculine and daring spirit, she still retains so much of the softness natural to her sex, that she always pitches upon such historical subjects as have in them a strong mixture of the tender and pathetic [. . .]


Though her work was admired by both sexes, Roworth's book highlights how Kauffmann enjoyed the patronage of women particularly, who were the subjects of the majority of her portraits, and frequently chose themes that featured, or appealed to, women. She became a major arbiter of late eighteenth-century taste through the popularity of her designs, deployed as decorative motifs on walls, ceilings, ceramics and furniture. Her prints, though popular, were by no means cheap. The purchase of one would represent a fairly substantial outlay, and show that the owner had a sense of taste and fashion.
To H W Forbes 1787

Wilt thou accept this little task of care
And now excuse the muse who strives to please
Wilt thou a moment thy attention lend
And kindly join the critic & the friend
Say am I too presumptious, am I vain
To wish thy attention to my muse to gain
Thou wilt not surely scorn my humble lays
I do not wish nor do I seek for praise
The little walk & summers house1 are neat
The flowers which ornament each side are sweet
The pictures round seem skill'd in pleasing lore
But most that handsome painting o'er the door
There Hector's urn upon the glass appears
And fair Andromache, bedew'd with tears
The nurse too weeping for her master slain
While young Astyanax seems full of pain
Seems but to wish to calm his nurses fears
Alas! he knows not their loss is his own
He knows not, the true cause which makes their moan
All this & more is upon the glass display'd
In that retreat by bounty all array'd
An air of neatness thro' the whole is seen
Each pleasant side is edged with lively green
As one calm eve I sat beneath its shade
Twas then I saw its beauties all display'd
Nor lack'd we musick[sic] in that cool retreat
The feather'd songsters harmoniz'd the seat
We heard the flute by gentle Zephyrs2 brought
To our attentive ears, - calm was each thought
Thus the cool evening gently stole away
And may you spend as happy every day
May you be ever blest with joy & peace
And may your happiness nor ever cease
Both long and joyful be your peaceful years
Unknown to trouble & to worldly cares
Then may you when your earthly course is run
Depart in peace & rest - just like the sun
May thou in peaceful slumbers lay thee down
And rise with joy to wear an endless crown
This is my wish, this is my simple lay
Did it offend, Oh! much lov'd Hannah say
Methinks thou says Conclude & I obey -

Mary Birkett
1. **summers house** - summer houses, often built in newly landscaped gardens, were becoming very fashionable. It seems from the description given that the Kauffmann print was hung in this structure, and so it must have been a fairly substantial building, not open to the air.

2. **Zephyrs** - westerly winds. Zephyrus was the classical personification of the west wind.

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**On the Pleasures of a Good Conscience**

-------------1787-------------

The joy & comforts a good conscience brings
Surel ought to take our mind from worldly things
Not that I say we should not follow trade
But that our conscience ought to be obey'd
Oh! when the dictates of our God we mind
What peace, what heavenly comforts do we find
Who for the sake of the worlds paltry pleasure
Would then divest himself of such a treasure
The pleasure of a good conscience - I hold
Far too invaluable to be - sold
Who like Esau their own birthright would sell!
To fill their belly - which they love too well
A good conscience will richer pleasures bring
Than ever can be gain'd by such a thing
O'er Kingdoms kings with cruelty may reign
But all their efforts to true joy is vain
Without that blessed jewel peace of mind
They never can much satisfaction find

Question, Can beauty give inward & lasting peace?
Answer, No, all the powers of beauty soon will cease

Q - Can worldly pleasure or our mortal weal
A - No - without peace of conscience that would fail

Q, Can being King or Queen that jewel give
A - No never while we mortals here do live

Tis God alone who reigns enthron'd above
Can give us peace of mind, thro' divine love
Search then thy heart nor mind what mortals say
Follow the Lord thy god & him obey
And then no doubt, but thou in time wilt find
That precious heavenly jewel peace of mind

Mary Birkett

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1. Gen 25:21-34. Esau and Jacob were twins. Esau was born first and therefore held the birthright of the eldest son, but he valued it lightly and when hungry sold it to Jacob for a supper of bread and lentils.

2. weal - well-being.
Lambs often feature in eighteenth-century poetry as emblems of innocence, but it is not so usual to find them portrayed as victims of human cruelty. Mary may well have read James Thomson's passage, in *The Seasons* (1726-46), asking what the 'flocks' have done 'To merit death', those 'who have [. . .] lent us your own coat/Against the Winter's cold?' - see 'Spring', 357-62. A later example is *The Farmer's Boy* (1800) - see Spring I, 339-52 in Robert Bloomfield, *Selected Poems*, ed. by John Goodridge and John Lucas (Nottingham, Trent Editions, 1998). Vegetarianism was rare, though it was later practiced by the poet Shelley and others, including some Quakers. Mary's brother, George Harrison Birkett, became vegetarian (Harrison, *Biographical Dictionary*, p.34). This poem shows that, as early as 1787, a Quaker child was keenly aware of the suffering caused to animals killed for food, and empathised with them, assuming their capacity to feel pain comparable to that of humans: 'Think you, can't those creatures tell/When they're hurt (like you) as well'.

### On Lambs
**An ode 1787**

See the pretty little lambs
How they sport beside their dams
They jump, they skip, they run away
And thus in pleasure sweet they pass their time all day

2

They've no horns for their defence
Nothing but their innocence
Stole by cruel wolves away
While butchers still more cruel these sweet creatures slay

3

Think you, can't those creaturestell
When they're hurt (like you) as well
Their mothers feeble them protect
Far as they can but tis of very small effect

4

Man is thirsty, cruel too
Those sweet creatures to undo
To rob them of their life & good
And after that, with cruelty to take their blood

5

Oh! Cruelty, hard to express
Man alas, does more not less
Can those creatures live at ease
Yet Man's return to all is very vile and base
Little lambs to man are kind
Emblem of a virtuous mind
They to us afford their wool
Which from their tender feeble backs for clothes we pull

Meek and mild and useful they
Tis hardhearted them to slay
I conclude, yet do say still
They're very cruel who those little creatures kill

Mary Birkett

On Innocence 1787

Hail innocence who doubly lovely fair!¹
Thou friend to truth! Thou stranger to despair
Is it in town, or cell I thee shall find
Or in the mansion of the pious mind
Yes! heavenly innocence tis there thou reigns
Thyself the sweet protectress of the plains
In Court or City seldom art thou found
Tis oft by rural shepherds thou art crown'd
They for their gratitude their friendship prove
And in return thou grants them peace and love

Mary Birkett

¹. Innocence is 'doubly lovely' because a friend to truth and a stranger to despair. Presumably, to experience despair one must have lost one's innocence.
Oh! Death why wilt thou captive lay
Such numbers at thy door
Yet thou continues still to slay
Thousands on thousands more
Promptivly[sic] curiosity[sic]
Oh! Eve to taste the fatal tree
Sin brought fell death into the curse¹
And us in dire destruction hurled

Dreaded & fear'd by human race
For such thou art oh Death
They seek to hide them from thy face
Lest thou should take their breath
Thou finds them out in rock or cave
And oft thou meets them in the wave²
Yet there were two who saw not thee³
And e'en thyself shalt conquer'd be

Mary Birkett

1. Eve's consumption of the forbidden fruit is attributed, as is often the case, to curiosity. In fact, however, according to the Biblical account, she ate it because it 'was good for food', 'pleasant to the eyes' and would 'make one wise' - Gen 3:6. In Gen 3:14-19 a curse is pronounced by God on Adam and Eve and all their progeny for disobedience.

2. Rev 6:15-16 describes how men, on the Last Day, will try to hide themselves 'in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains' but will not be able to escape. Rev 20:13 also describes how the drowned will be given up by the sea for judgement.

3. Perhaps Lazarus and the daughter of Jairus, both raised from the dead by Jesus. For the story of Lazarus see Jn 11:1-44, for Jairus's daughter Lk 8:40-56 and Mk 5:22-43.
J. Lancashire has not been identified. It was thought Lancashire might have been an alternative form of 'Lancaster', and therefore that this might be Joseph Lancaster, Quaker founder of the famous Lancastrian education system. But Lancaster (1778-1838) was still a child in 1787. He did indeed visit Dublin, but not until 1806 and 1811 (Mora Dickson, Teacher Extraordinary: Joseph Lancaster (Lewis, Sussex: Bookguild, 1986), p.88 and 137-38.) There was a Quaker family called 'Lancashire' - the name crops up in the Irish registers earlier in the eighteenth century. But J. Lancashire came from England or elsewhere. This poem indicates he is about to set sail and he later returned to Dublin for another visit in 1792 (see poems addressed to him on pp.175, 177 in this volume). He was perhaps a 'weighty friend' or travelling minister but, if so, it is odd that he is not listed, with regard to his 1792 visit, in the 'Visitors to the Dublin Yearly Meeting' by Thomas Webb, a fairly comprehensive list of ministers and elders who attended between 1790 and 1874.

A Poem to J Lancashire 1787

Come now my favorite muse, wilt thou attend
My invocation - for to please - a friend
That friend oft call'd thee, nor in vain did he
But why so very partial wilt thou be?
True he has merit, why do I complain
Thou keeps me humble, lest I should be vain?
Thou oft has help'd me to record with ease
A grateful subject, which I strove to please
How shall I gratitude & friendship blend?
How shall I please & yet shall thank this friend
How shall I tell him, what I wish'd to say?
Without thy help my views are flown away
I wish to thank him for his kindness great
I wish my humble wishes to relate
But yet to thank thee even words are weak
I am grateful - let the rest - my conduct speak
Yet still methinks a hearty wish prevails
May'st thou attended be, with prosperous gales
Gentle & swift, thy course along the main
And soon be happy, in the wish'd for plain
Blast him not Boreas! let him go in peace
May his prosperity nor ever cease
Neptune be gentle! all thy rage give o'er
Let Zephyrs meet him on the distant shore
Both long & joyful be his earthly days
Blest with the happiness of pious ways
And may he live to see his children grow
Patterns of virtue, unto all below
Even tho' twelve winters I have only seen
We may be friends as many a one have been
And may our peaceful friendship last till death
With gentle hand shall stop this fleeting breath
Mary Birkett
Small, pocket-sized books that could be carried around were very popular and many works by leading authors were produced in this form, especially poetry. J. Lancashire presented Mary with a volume by 'Young'. Edward Young (1683-1765) was an author of plays, satires and poetry. The mention of 'Lorenzo' makes it clear that the work referred to is Young's most popular - *The Complaint, or Night Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality* (1742-45). One of the most frequently reprinted texts of the eighteenth century, it belongs to a genre known as the Graveyard School of poetry owing to a preoccupation with melancholy, death and the hereafter. This huge work consists of 10,000 lines of blank verse published in nine volumes. Books 2-8 take the form of a soliloquy addressed to a young man named Lorenzo, appealing for him to mend his ways and return to religion.

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**On being presented with a pocket book**

------17 by J Lancashire 87------

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While I accept the friendly gift excuse
The humble freedom of a grateful muse
Nor think that I'm ungrateful to my friends
For what their bounty gives & kindness lends
Thy kindness to my muse, she cant[can't] repay
She takes the gift so now accept her lay
Our only wish is not to give offence
And let simplicity make up for sense
Simplicity attends her every scheme
Fired at the sound my muse pursues her theme
Sure young Eliza was a virtuous child
Of manners gentle & of temper mild
And what was better, walk'd in Godly ways
Altho' so young, sure she deserved praise
Yea, more than praise - Oh Young what thoughts divine
What energy appears in every line
What loftiness of thought! what grandeur seen
Yea! even in every thread throughout the skein
Surely thy words Lorenzo must reform
Thy gentle mildness or thy frowning storm
Sure all thy glaring proofs will make him own
There is a God who still presides alone
None can too much admire thy works Oh Young
Thy wisdom seems dropt[sic] from an angels tongue
Precepts how great, arranged in every line
Which tell the Author was inspired divine
Even thou whose kindness bid me them peruse
Thou too art favor'd by the generous muse
Excuse my faults, yet condemn me quite
If I am wrong & thou entire art right
My faults are shewn the longer I rehearse
And them to lessen I conclude my verse

Mary Birkett

1. It looks as though J. Lancashire had complimented Mary on the previous poem addressed to him.
2. Our - i.e. the wish of both Mary and her muse.
3. It is thought that Young was drawn to write Night Thoughts following the deaths of his wife, Lady Elizabeth Lee, in 1741, her daughter, Elizabeth Lee, later Mrs Temple, in 1736, and his stepdaughter's husband, Henry Temple, in 1740. His stepdaughter may be the Eliza referred to.
4. A reference once again to J. Lancashire writing poetry.
A Prayer 1787

Do thou Almighty gracious power
Whose mercy gave me life & breath
Assist me in that needful hour
When struggling with the pangs of death

2

Teach me oh! Lord from pride to run
For 'tis I know a dangerous vice
Ambition also let me shun
And truth & virtue make my choice

3

Teach me thy name for to adore
Love & obey thy holy word
Drop of thy love I value more
Than joys which this world can afford

4

The pleasures of this world are frail
And soon they'll fly away
Thy Love oh! Lord, if we are good
Will ever with us stay -

Mary Birkett
C. and B. Ellerton have not been identified as yet. There were some Quaker Ellertons, and a Mary Ellerton who died in 1736 was a minister who travelled in Scotland and Ireland (Dictionary of Quaker Biography).

To C & B Ellerton 1787
on their return to Ireland

Welcome my friends, again arrived on shore
Welcome to those you now behold once more
To those you left behind thrice welcome ye1
For they were lonely when you were away
The very walls methinks look'd dull & sad
Those walls which once used to appear so glad
With melancholy sound they seem'd to say
We've lost our mistress, how can we be gay
But see they2 come to gladden all around
By peace attended & by plenty crown'd
Joy they wo'd[would] (where they can) bestow
How smoothly must their hours glide on below
Say ye who know, if charity combined
With peace & friendship make a happy mind
For if they do see them all joined in those
Who for the subject of my verse I chose
A happy mind is sure a blessing great
A faint resemblance of a future state3
But what will Bristol say, now you are gone
For that which she has lost, fair Dublin soon[,]2
Sure 'tis no village mean, deserves to own
Such worth as in you three conspicuous shone
Benevolence bedect[sic] with every grace
And quietness & joy - never may they cease
But why should I - I cant[can't] your worth reveal
Neither could I your virtue e'er conceal
Do you excuse what I have said before
My muse shall here conclude & say no more

Mary Birkett

1. An awkward line. Presumably, to those the Ellertons left behind, they are 'thrice welcome' as this is the third line of the poem in which 'welcome' is expressed. Use of the word 'thrice' by way of extra emphasis was also a poetic convention.
2. I.e. the Ellertons - the speaker is viewing their Ellertons' joyous return.
3. A future state - the after-life (heaven).
A Reflection 1787

How weak is mortal man, his strength is grass
Soon he must mingle with the common mass
How vain is pride, the proud shall yield their breath
And be at last a prey to worms & death
Pride empty pride was never made for man
His life a fickle dream or a short span
One moment here, the next a journey gone
A lonely journey to the realms unknown
Along that path which none dare e'er explore
Or tell the way which once they trod before
But all must die - then time will be no more

Mary Birkett

Although this poem is dated 1787, this must be an error. The correct date should be 1788, as it goes over the tragic deaths of 1787. Though very simple, it reveals how these deaths affected Mary: the keen sense of her own mortality (a feeling surely common to many children at this time when losing siblings or friends quite suddenly could be a frequent experience given the high child mortality rates), and a view of this life as transient and full of sorrow so that all hope for true happiness lies in a better hereafter.

On New Years Day 1787 [1788]

New Years day does soon appear
Soon is gone another year
Since the last so quickly fled
How many are numbered with the dead
Dearest Edward¹ here was then
But here he ne'er will be again
Lovely Sally² is no more
She who shone so fair before
Even Darling Hannah's³ dead
All her charming beauty fled
Soon to Heaven she did rise
Blest with Jesus in the skies
Mary⁴ our well beloved friend
Her sojourning here did end  
Even he who ruled us here⁵  
In Ireland does no more appear  
Even I the next may go  
Soon or late there is none can know  
Perhaps before tomorrows day  
May be a lump of lifeless clay  
And before this years fled  
Many a mortal may be dead  
Let us be but good while here  
Death we surely need not fear  
For when we die we shall be blest  
And go with Jesus into rest  
Jesus will enthrone us high  
We shall dwell above the sky  
And may look down on all below  
As nought but sorrow, sin & woe

1. Mary's brother Edward - see poem on his death, p.17 and acrostic, p.8.  
2. Mary's sister Sally (Sarah) - see poem on her death, p.20 and poems on pp.14 and 15.  
3. Mary's sister Hannah - see poem on her death, p.19.  
4. Mary's friend Mary Haughton - see poem on her death, p.24.  
5. He who ruled us here - Charles Manners, fourth Duke of Rutland (1754-1787), was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland from February 1784 until his death, from a fever, on 24 October 1787, aged only thirty-three. He supported the union of Britain and Ireland and was a great friend of William Pitt. He and his wife were leaders of fashionable society in Dublin and considered a handsome couple, being painted several times by Sir Joshua Reynolds.
The beginning of 1788 did not bode well as Mary lost yet another young friend in January. Deborah Pike was almost certainly the daughter of Richard and Ann Pike of Dublin, sister of Elizabeth (Betsy) Pike, later Barrington. She died aged eleven on 15 January 1788. Her brother William also died young. (See entries for the Pikes in Appendix 7, 'Individuals Featuring in the Writings of Mary Birkett Card'.) The poem is placed here because, though undated, it is included in the manuscripts with other 1788 material, supporting the supposition that it was written after Deborah Pike's death in January 1788.

On the Death of our much esteemed & well beloved friend Deborah Pike addressed to her Mother

Oh! is it true our much loved Debby's dead
The solemn grave is now her awful bed
Those hands which oft have ply'd the needle well
Once so industrious - Now no more excell
That mind! that lovely mind by duty formed
By truth enlighten'd & by friendship warm'd
Ahl whither fled that dear accomplish'd maid
In whom the charms of virtue were display'd
Ahl where my loved companion, where my friend
Must all the joys of peace & friendship end
Thy pleasing form shall I no longer know
Since dearest Debby to the grave must go
The cruel grave shall not possess that mind
Nor hinder it to leave a trace behind
I'll ever love tho' thou didst depart
I'll wear thy memory graven\(^1\) next my heart
I'll ne'er forget my well beloved friend
Who did with kindness true affection blend
Her countenance serene bespoke her mind
And seemed to say to virtue was inclined
A pattern\(^2\) she for duty stood confest[sic]
For love & duty reign'd within her breast
Many a glad hour together we have spent
Pleased with each other, with ourselves content
But ahl those days of Peace are now no more
Our free, our social converse now is o'er
No more to thee my friend can I impart
The every joy or sorrow of my heart
No more I see thee lend a listening ear
For even thyself no longer now art here
Goodnatured, sensible & mild wert thou
But all thy virtues are no longer now
Oh! thou her tender sorrowing Parent, kind
Thou knew the rising virtues of her mind
Ah! grieve not for her quick removal hence
'Twas for some end of wise Omnipotence
Thy loss is great, yet how dare we complain
For sure thy Debby did not die in vain
She now in Heaven enjoys true peace & rest
She knows with Angels, she is truly blest
She is the handmaid of her glorious King
And she will his Eternal praises sing
Thy happy daughter unmolested roves
Amidst blest Paradises blooming groves
Het[Her] meats (the tree of live[sic] & good) each day
For she is under Gods all gentle sway
Her drink the well of living water (free
To all who will th' Almighty's servant be)
How soft & gentle glide along those days
Whose bus'ness prayer, whose pleasure all is praise
Then at our loss, Oh! may we ne'er repine
But may we to our Makers will resign
If we're obedient He will seal our peace
And we shall go with him to joys which never cease

Mary Birkett

1. graven - engraven, inscribed Indelibly.
2. pattern - model.
3. Debby has now gained immortality. The Tree of Life stood in the centre of the Garden of Eden next to the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (Gen 2:9). God banished Adam and Eve from Eden as punishment for their disobedience in eating the fruit of the latter. But it was also because eating it had made them 'as one of us', God-like in knowledge. Banishment would ensure they did not also eat the fruit of the Tree of Life, enabling them to live forever like God (Gen 3:22). According to traditional Christian theology, the coming of Christ and His sacrifice on the cross allows man to gain eternal life and thus, figuratively, eat from the Tree of Life forever.
4. Her drink [. . ] be - image derived from Jn 4:7-15 - the exchange between Jesus and the Samarian woman at the well, where Jesus speaks of Himself as the source of living water. 'But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life' (v. 14). See also Jn 7:38 - 'He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.'
The initial given for the Christian name of the person to whom this is dedicated is difficult to read in manuscript, but 'S' seems most likely. If so, the person addressed was probably Sarah, Hannah Wilson Forbes's sister. She lived from 1756 to 1790, so was aged about thirty-two at this time. Mary also wrote a poem on her death, see p.132 in this volume. The 'Pocket Book' could have been either a pocket-sized edition of a text, possibly poetry, or a small volume containing excerpts from assorted texts and useful information.

A Poem to S Forbes on being presented with a Pocket Book by her 1788

While I accept the token given by thee
Of thy unmerited regard for me
Do thou also accept this grateful lay
And suffer me this tribute small to pay
I have not learnt to dress my words with art
They're all in pure simplicity of heart
Humility's a path we all should learn
And pride correct whene'er we it discern
I know thou wilt not scorn my humble lay
What's due to friendship I to friendship pay
Thy friendly gift say shall I let it go!
Without once noticing - oh surely no!
'Twas given with kindness, sure thou'll allow me
This very small return to offer thee
To thank thee for thy kindness, to impart
The warm effulgence\(^1\) of a grateful heart
To wish thee welfare, which will never cease
To wish thee endless happiness & peace
To wish that all the joys we ever know
The great Creator may on thee bestow
That He will bless thee in the Realms above
And all the bliss of angels thou shalt prove
Perhaps thou'll think me vain, nor will excuse
The great presumption of my too free muse
Perhaps I tire thee & thou'llt think me rude
I'll only ask excuse & then conclude
Thy sincere & much obliged friend

M Birkett

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1. effulgence - radiance.
'A Wish' shows how Mary, at thirteen, envisaged her ideal future, and reveals the values that informed such a vision. Simplicity, as ever, is the keynote. In several places, she echoes Goldsmith's *The Deserted Village* (1770) and her specification of the moderate income needed to maintain a simple standard of living ('Let me enjoy a fifty Pound a year' after rent) may have been prompted by his description of the 'village preacher' who is 'passing rich with forty pounds a year,' (140-42).

**A Wish 1788**

Oh! bright content how happy should I be
If thou & peace would ever dwell with me
Then I'd be double blest while freed from care
I with the giddy world will never share
Yet while I stray'd in fancy ever new
This picture of a happy life I drew
I'd ask no more for sure I'd then be blest
While virtuous peace would deign to be my guest
Beside where Lucan rears its beauteous head
And murmuring Liffey rolls along its bed
Upon its grassy banks or by its side
Where simple nature seems to be the guide
There might I dwell, there might a peaceful cot
Humble & small, be my contented lot
Before my door, no surly porters wait
To guard from poverty the splendid gate
No proud attendants, haughty to the poor
Against distress to shut the pompous door
But let two lofty trees, to cause a shade
Be ever-green before my door display'd
Let Roses be before the blest retreat
And peaceful jissamine grow along the seat
With woodbine twined to cause a pleasant smell
There with one Kind & Sincere friend to dwell
A garden planted well with useful roots
With verdant flowers & with pleasant fruits
And water'd by a cool refreshing spring
A kitchen furnished with each useful thing
One servant on my wants that might attend
A parlour neat just to receive a friend
Six handsome painted chairs of lively green
I'd have no grandeur nor yet meanness seen
Two tables in good order kept I'd wish
Oh which each day I'd spread my simple dish
No dainty feast luxurious would I eat
But - when I'm hungry plain & healthy meat
One chamber useful when disposed to sleep
In decent cleanliness I'd ever keep
The bed in which the wearied seek repose
The chest of drawers in which we put our clothes
The glass reflective shews our face or head
The handsome carpet spreading round the bed
The table, chairs in order kept & bright
The floors which ever must be clean & white
I'd have a dining room, there to survey
The beauteous landscapes, meadows rocks & sea
I'd have a glass between two windows seen
Carpet & chairs I'd have of lively green
The tables which for brightness can't be blamed
The pictures round, well drawn & neatly framed
The marble chimney piece, painted see
On which images of china be
The handsome grate of brass kept shining bright
In which hot coals on a cold winter night
In summer flowers shall fill the place of fire
For then no heat we surely can desire
No pomp or pride, shall in my house be seen
Let every thing be lively neat & clean
My beauteous garden, well laid out shall be
To suit my taste, planted improved by me
I'd have behind my house a piece of ground
On which (to give me milk the whole year round)
Should feed a cow, - should feed a tender lamb
Nourished by me, unknowing by its dam
Its harmless bleatings shall amuse my hours
To climb my knee, see it exerts its powers
A gentle fav'rite! no deceitful art
It learned to practice, for to gain my heart
I'd like a bird, but all that tender race
Could I confine it, to so little space
Ah! could I it of liberty deprive
Like me, from God its freedom did derive
Of every tax, of ground & house rent clear
Let me enjoy a fifty Pound a year
No more I wish, no more my heart desires
If I but think of more, that thought expires
Each day, I'll set apart three leisure hours
For neighbouring children I'll exert my powers
To teach them all the art of reading well
And give rewards to those who best excell
To teach them how to ply the needles too
And please them all by telling something new
Their prattling lisplings I'll delight to hear
While they are pleased to see me lend an ear
Nor would I e'en my yearly portion spend
All for myself, to answer no good end
T'afflicted merit, sure I will not spare
And unregarded worth shall of it share
Let o'er my door be wrote (tho' scarcely seen
Lest some may think the owner proud within)
"Afflicted sons of virtue, here's your home
"Enter (unnoticed worth) this humble dome
"Here dwells a lover of the virtuous poor
"Enter ye in & share her little store
"Tho' small this dome, the owner dares to vie
"With richest mortals in true real joy
"Let none presumptious on their riches, say
"They know real happiness without allay
"For she's more blest, who from her little share
"Has just enough, contented, & to spare"

And might I that inscription strict fulfil
If e'er it be the great Creators will
To call me to that truly happy state
Glad I'd obey the whole decree of fate
But if thy will that I must dwell in town
Straight I'll obey nor see a single frown
For thou art wiser, better far than I
And 'tis by thy command I live or die
I shall be blest, if thou wilt keep me still
And may I walk obedient to thy will
Then there's no fear but I shall e'er be blest
And when I die, shall go with thee to rest

Mary Birkett

1. Lucan - small village beside the River Liffey, near Dublin.
3. Mary's ensuing description of the rooms in her imagined cottage draw on Goldsmith's depiction of the parlour of the homely inn in The Deserted Village, 225-36.
4. The following information compiled from John Burnett, A History of the Cost of Living (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1969), pp.141-82, places Mary's £50 in perspective. At the close of the eighteenth century, some 400 peerage and titled families owned estates producing £5-6,000 a year (their average income was c. £10,000), while around 2000 better-off merchant or banking families had about £2000. In the 1790s, the gentry ranged from poorer squires with only £2-300 to families with £3-4,000, while yeomen and tenant farmers ranged from £30 up to £700. The head cook in a peer's household might earn £40 and farm labourers probably averaged £20. But many curates existed on livings of only £30-40, and some poorer schoolmasters on as little as £20. A maid's salary was just £3-4. Figures for townspeople varied greatly, but it was not unusual for prosperous tradesmen to make over £300 annually. Wages for skilled workers varied dramatically - in the early 1790s a weaver could earn up to 30s. a week after the spinning jenny was introduced, but only a few shillings by 1800 owing to a huge increase in the number of weavers. Many other urban workers only earned a few pounds a year. Fees at a good boarding school could run to £30-40 a year. At the Warrington Academy, attended by Mary's uncle George Harrison thanks to the generosity of the Fothergill brothers, fees in 1777 were £17 for boarding, plus lectures at one to three guineas a course (Burnett, p.158). Mary stipulates 'clear' of tax and rent. A small country cottage might cost £50 to buy. Yet Wordsworth rented Dove Cottage for only £5-8 annually between 1799 and 1808 (Dove Cottage Museum, Grasmere).
5. afflicted merit - i.e. the so called 'deserving poor', as opposed to those considered feckless or idle.
This dialogue between two young girls contrasts the different attitudes and patterns of daily life in their respective families. Charlotte is 'surrounded with poverty', whereas Maria lives 'amongst grandeur and pomp'. However, Charlotte, in her first reply to Maria, speaks of those 'in a middling station', and the account of her daily routine confirms that this, rather than true poverty, describes her family's situation. So the contrast is not actually between a poor family and a rich one, but between a life frittered away in leisurely pursuits and a disciplined existence devoted to useful employment and self-improvement. According to the values exhibited in the poem, the first produces ennui and bad temper, the second genuine contentment. One feels that some aspects of the daily routine Charlotte describes, such as twice-daily Bible readings, may replicate those of the Birkett household. The dialogue also contrasts attitudes to alms-giving and, through Charlotte's words, Mary Birkett attempts a definition of 'true charity' which must encapsulate what she had learned from her own family or in the schoolroom.

A Dialogue between Charlotte & Maria on Poverty & Riches 1788

Maria It has often been a matter of great wonder to me Charlotte to see thee always look so chearful[sic] & so happy when I know that thou art surrounded with poverty, thou seems always contented while I who dwell amongst grandeur & pomp & am far richer than thou art, always have something to fret me & make me discontented with myself & every one around me, I am cloy'd & satiated with everything which makes me cross & for ever out of humour, since there is no bliss in poverty no real enjoyment in that wretched state yet thou art always happy & gay as if thou had no care to oppress thee & weigh thee down, canst thou explain to me the cause why thou art so blest & I am so unhappy? thou art poor I envy the peace thou enjoys

Charlotte I never desired wealth for I know that much riches bring much care & any one who has much of the world, is generally more liable to temptations & vices, than they who are in a middling station, for too many enjoyments are worse than none I do not think that poverty is a more wretched state than much riches, on the contrary, it is in many respects better & I would not change conditions with thee if I might -

Maria That is what I wonder at, but how dost thou spend thy time! I know mine hangs very heavy on my hands, notwithstanding all the amusements my kind parents permit me to use, my days are one continual round of entertainments of different kinds & yet I am quite wearied with them & were it not that I expect a happier life when I die, I should be quite miserable, for I cannot enjoy pleasure like thee -

Charlotte Thou cannot enjoy a happier life when thou dies, except thou be good while here - remember our dear & blessed Saviour says, it is easier for a camel to go thro' the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven1 -
Maria: Yes I have read that in the testament & if it be true what shall all the
great & rich people do, it is very dreadful indeed but I know that he[He] can do
every thing, for he[He] knows best, but I want to know the manner in which
thou spends thy time thou art always so much happier than I

Charlotte: In the morning I rise with the sun

Maria: Oh! terrible what to leave a warm bed

Charlotte: Certainly & take a fine healthy walk before breakfast -

Maria: Oh! dear sure I would be starved to leave my bed before ten oClock at
any rate why I durst2 not go out before breakfast for the world, it would kill me

Charlotte: Nay it would not kill thee, it would make thee much healthier than
thou art, to get the fine fresh air from the fields which will create one such an
appetite when one comes home & every thing seems so fragrant, pleasant &
serene, surely the morning is the very best time for walking -

Maria: I never knew that before, however I intend to try the experiment if thou
wilt call on me

Charlotte: I will with all my heart, when we return we get our breakfast but we
always make it a constant rule every Morning & Evening to read a chapter in
the Bible or Testament it is a very good rule -

Maria: It may be so to thee, but it would not I could not attend to it, when I rise
my head is too unsettled to think of it & when I retire to rest, I am too sleepy or
my thoughts entirely engrossed by the scenes of the day & I think the last is far
more pleasant but when breakfast is over, what do you do then -

Charlotte: We employ ourselves about the business of the house, until
dinner or improve ourselves in the useful arts of writing reading sewing etc -
Our dinner is wholesome healthy food, which revives the spirits & not cloys the
appetite & fills our bodys[sic] full of humours,3 we always assemble together at
night to worship the Lord & before we retire we each of us read a chapter as in
the morning & go to rest with minds peaceful, our bodys[sic] healthy & our
heads sound, our time is never irksome, we are always happy & contented &
that is more than many great people can say: but might I make so free as to
ask in what manner thou spends thy time

Maria: I rise at ten or Eleven & get my breakfast, after which I dress myself &
go out to pay my morning visits, in the politest manner that I can, I return in the
afternoon just time for dinner, after which I amuse myself with my music or
dancing etc until tea, or perhaps go out to see some of our friends & the night
is spent in all the fashionable amusements of the age, would thou not think that
such a life as this was real happiness itself & yet I am a poor unhappy creature -

Charlotte: No, indeed I should be quite miserable, if I was to lead such a life
as I said before I would not change conditions with thee if I might why you who
have nothing to do in a manner cannot even spare time to use good actions or relieve the indigent -

**Maria** Ah! yes we do, when a poor person comes to the door, we give them a penny or two pence or if we hear of a poor family, rather than be plagued with them, we would give them a shilling or half a crown, is not that relieving the wants of the indigent

**Charlotte** It is in some measure relieving their bodily wants, but far be it from me to say that that is true charity -

**Maria** What is true charity? since relieving their bodily wants by giving them money is not it -

**Charlotte** It is rather hard for me to explain the nature of true charity, the scriptures will tell thee much better than I can inform thee, it is of a most seraphic\(^4\) nature if I see a person in distress & know that they are in great poverty, I may give them all my substance & yet not be charitable,\(^5\) but if I feel sincerely for their misfortunes & can shed the tear of compassion for their woes, if I sincerely wish them better fortune & do all in my power to promote their interest & that from a good heart & a sympathizing & real concern for their distress & a wish to relieve them in my opinion this approaches much nearer to true charity, than that which thou just now mentioned -

**Maria** True, but is it not very disagreeable & equally painful to be obliged to endure those sensations of compassion for every ones woes, if that was the case I should never have a moments ease sure I would be as disturbed as themselves -

**Charlotte** Thou may think so Maria but I do not, I could wish we had resumed the subject we began upon, but it is too late now, for I must not stay any longer for I believe it is now late -

**Maria** It is, I am sorry we must part, but we will meet tomorrow, for I want to have a little more discourse concerning poverty & Riches & I hope to be satisfied soon

**Charlotte** I shall do all in my power to give thee any satisfaction, tho' I am but a poor hand to discourse upon that subject my desire was to please, if I have not done it, impute it to my youth and inexperience, but I can stay no longer so Farewell -

---

1. Mt 19:24 - '... It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.' Jesus's comment to his disciples after telling a young man that, to be perfect, he should give all he had to the poor. The story is also told in Mk 10:17-27.

2. durst - dare.

3. humours - physical and mental well-being was thought to be affected by imbalances in the 'humours' - the fluids thought to be contained in the body: phlegm, blood, choler and melancholy.
4. seraphic - like seraphs, 'one of the highest order of the ninefold celestial hierarchy gifted especially with love and associated with light, ardour, and purity' (OED). The element Mary goes on to stress is purity - sincerity of feeling and intention, disinterested action.

5. Echoing St Paul, 1 Cor 13: 3 - 'And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.'

A fable is a short story with a moral, usually set in a supernatural or mythical context. In this poetic fable, Mary personifies Ambition and Content, the first as a male character and the second as female, who argue about which one of them has greater power over humankind. They engage in an 'experiment' to find the answer.

**Ambition & Content**

_a Fable 1788_

---

Once on a time upon the green
Ambition & content were seen
Ambition will insist again
That he is most beloved of men
Content declares till'[tis] hardly true
For she can make them happier too
While thus in grand debate they sit
Nor one nor t'other will submit
To clear by fair experiment
They agree their powers shall be sent
To one whom they think fit to choose
Lest many might their power abuse
But if mankind to dire ambition
Honours paid with due submission
Then Content should straight obey
And own his great despotic sway
But if content was best belov'd
And on the earth was most approved
Then Ambition should resign
And bow before the powerful shrine
The bargain struck, now each agree
That Roger shall their subject be
Roger an humble rustic swain¹
As any of the village train²
Then first Ambition filled his mind
With thoughts how he might riches find
And painted (tho' at loss of health)
How he'd be honor'd for his wealth
Be call'd "My Lord" in pomp how great
Or if "Prime Minister of State"
Tis true, 'twas far too high a view
But what can't strong ambition do
Partly at last his wish he gains
The Petty Monarch of the plains
And now he lives in pomp & state
Num'rous attendants round his gate
They cringe & bow - while every word
Changes plain "Roger" for "my Lord"
He views them all with scornful eye
So pleased & vexed he knows not why
Content, ambition greatly blamed
And made the Goddess quite ashamed
Says he "I'm sure I now shall shine
"So poor Content thy power resign"
But which did Roger greatest call?
Have patience friend I'll tell thee all
One day he sat, his dinner done
To Count the riches he had won
Says he "how vastly great am I
"Yet I'm unblest I know not why
"What numerous crouds attend my gate
"Who all my wants & wishes wait
"I thrice ten thousand pounds did gain
"Th'interest of which does me maintain
"How alter'd I, once poor forlorn
"I'd think a feast what now I scorn"
He said but scarce the sentence spoke
When lo! two forms his reverie broke
The one with haughty scornful mien
The other peaceful humble seen
When thus the haughty vision "know
"That I'm almighty power below
"To me thy pleasures all thou owes
"Thy riches great, thy calm repose
"The servants crouding round thy door
"Thy lands & houses all thy store
"Then scorn content, she humble, mean
"And in the gay world seldom seen
"And me & me alone adore
"And scorn her for she's ever poor
"I sit to thee the wight replies
"With anger glaring from his eyes
"Is it to thee I owe my power
"Give me Content & take thy store
"Tis by thy wines - which ne'er can bless
"This constant head-ach I possess
"With food unwholesome yet polite
"I'm rack'd with cholic day & night
"Thy jellies tarts & sweetmeats fill
"My jaws with dreadful tooth-ach[sic] still
"Behold the gout, tis in my toe
"Sure every things become my foe
"Thou hated power, haste from my sight
"Quick down to Hell, shut up from light
"Come bright content & dwell with me
"!And then I'll doubly happy be
"He said - she with her humble train
"Dwell[dwelt] with the wight on yonder plain
"His labour now is peaceful made
"His bread is sweet, 'tis earn'd by trade
He owns himself, he's doubly blest
And now tho' poor enjoys true rest -
Poetry describing rural scenes at different times of the day or year was very popular, James Thomson’s *The Seasons* (1726-46) being perhaps the prime exemplar. This was a set of four poems, one for each season, which ‘first challenged the artificiality of English poetry, and inaugurated a new era by their sentiment for nature’ (*The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, ed. Sir Paul Harvey, 4th edn, rev. Dorothy Eagle (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967) p.816). This poem of Mary’s, and its undated ‘twin’ - ‘A Summer’s Morning in the Country’ (see p.101 below) - are, in many respects, typical of the genre, and draw heavily on Thomson. They have parallels, too, with poems rather similarly entitled ‘A Summer’s Day’ and ‘A Winter’s Day’ by the Scottish poet and dramatist Joanna Baillie (1762-1851). Like Baillie, Mary concentrates, to begin with, on the arrival of dawn and then moves to descriptions of rural folk going about their tasks, though Baillie’s main concern is to create a rural idyll whereas Mary also emphasises the suffering experienced by rural workers labouring in all weathers. Baillie herself could not have been an influence, however, as she did not publish any work until *Fugitive Verses* in 1790.

### A Winter Morning in the Country 1788

Once more I’ll now invoke the wintry muse  
To try her power, to soar along the air  
And search amidst th’unsolid heaps of snow  
Ah! how deceitful to the travellers feet  
Tis morn! the humble shepherds faithful clock  
Loudly proclaims tis morn to all around  
Aurora casts away her blooming robe  
All full of cheerfulness[sp] & gaiety  
For spring or summer fit, & now puts on  
A snowy garment, suiting to the season\(^1\)  
And to the keeness of the piercing air  
Not loosely flowing gentle, airy, light  
But closely wrapt in clouds of thick dark hue  
Tis now the hail descends, the tempest howls  
Against the weather beaten traveller\(^2\)  
Who trembling fearful of th’impending snow  
Wraps close his cloak about him, looks around  
With palpitating heart & anxious breast  
To see some shelter or some little dome  
Whose hospitable inhabitants perhaps  
Will give some shelter to his wearied limbs  
The ground is cover’d o’er with harden’d frost  
Which binds the slippery Earth in icy chains  
The foggy mists, the morning dews descend  
And hide the Earth from every mortals Eye  
Oh! now beware ye merchants now’s the time  
The dangerous time! the rocks ye cant[can’t] foresee  
The fog impedes your sight & falsely leads  
You on, fearless of danger, knowing not  
Tis near! Alas! too near, yet cant[can’t] be seen
The valleys now are turn'd to hills of snow
Which rising by degrees to monstrous heaps
Heaps upon heaps, & mountains large compose
The mist continues & encreases[sic] still
It fills the houses with unwholesome clouds
But see yon wandering shepherd now unseen
To every mortals eyes, save of the muse
The muse can pierce thro' thickets & thro' caves
And in imaginations airy fields
Can call the choicest flowers & leaves the worst
For those who know no better, who are young
And not long favor'd by the generous muse
See how he follows hard yon straying sheep
Hid by the mist, can scarcely see around
Yet fancy or his evil Genius3 paints
To his imagination, tho' the mist
A sheep on yonder mountain, dripping wet
And cover'd half with snow, Ah! fancy why
Woulds[t] thou delude him with the hopes of that
Which is unreal & a shadow - all —
He climbs & hits upon a solid stone
Again he climbs, & thinks he's just at top
Again, but ah! deluded fancy here
Displays itself, & down he sinks among
Whole heaps of snow, & there alas! he dies4
Behold, the milkmaid with her daggled5 cows
She tries to milk, but ere she's scarce begun
The piercing frost, pinches her fingers sore
And holds them fast in stiff hard chains of ice
While her red nose hangs dropping o'er the pail
The beast looks piteously & seems just froze
While icicles hang pendant all around
She blows her aching fingers with her breath
And scarce can get her bus'ness done for cold
The tempest whistles thro' the leafless trees
Where are the verdant flowerets where the grass

[The poem ends abruptly here as, for some reason, the copyist never finished writing it up.
Two and a half pages are left blank in manuscript, either to allow the copyist to complete his/her task at a later date or, if the original text was missing, to leave sufficient space to insert it if found.]

1. Thomson, The Seasons, 'Winter', 232-33 - 'The cherished fields/Put on their winter-robe of purest white.'
2. Ibid., 179-80 - 'The dark wayfaring stranger breathless toils/And, often falling, climbs against the blast.'
3. evil Genius - opposed spirits or angels (one good, one evil) were supposed to attend each person (OED).
4. See Thomson, The Seasons, 'Winter', 276-321, where a 'swain' mistakes his way in the snow 'and down he sinks/Beneath the shelter of the shapeless drift' (305-06). A passage well-known for its acute pathos and one which Mary was to draw on again later, in her anti-slavery poem. The idea of imagination, the man's 'fancy or his evil Genius', cruelly deluding him, is not found in Thomson. His 'swain' fears real possibilities: 'covered pits' and 'faithless bogs'.
5. daggled - bedraggled, sodden.
The Boltons were cousins of the Birketts and lived in the north of England, mainly the Warrington area near Liverpool. On later visits to England Mary wrote a poem after the death of an uncle, Thomas Bolton of Warrington, in 1789 and an acrostic to E. S. Bolton in 1794 (see entries for Bolton in Appendix 7, 'Individuals Featuring in the Writings of Mary Birkett Card').

This particular cousin, probably Sal short for Sally, the commonly used diminutive of Sarah (though the Christian name is difficult to read in manuscript), has not been traced. She was perhaps a daughter of Thomas Bolton and his wife, Mary's maternal aunt, Hannah Harrison. The couple married in 1779. But only two sons have been found in the Quaker registers. There was a couple named Edwin and Sarah Bolton, whose son Thomas is listed under deaths in 1832. But their relationship to Mary has not been ascertained, and Bolton would, of course, have been this Sarah's married name, whereas the poem is addressed to a child.

1788 A Poem to my dear Cousin Sal[?] Bolton

Excuse the freedom of a sincere friend
And to these lines a little while attend
For thee I now invoke the muse retired
Tis for thy happiness my ardour's fired
Thy happiness oh! may it [n]ever cease
I wish thee health prosperity & peace
For peace thou wilt enjoy if thou art still
Obedient to the great Almighty's will
And if thou art 'twill[sic] make thee ever blest
Obedience is the road to peace & rest
By that thou wilt thy makers favor gain
Thy great Creator who o'er all does reign
Consider then the duty which thou owes
Thy God, thy parents & thy own repose
Oh! let no vice allure thy tender heart
Let heavenly truth her lessons oft impart
Obey her strict & walk in peace & love
And when thou dies, thou shalt be blest above
Oh then what bliss, what perfect bliss thou'll know
Far from the realms of sorrow & of woe
Thou'llt have a great reward a glorious crown
Shall still be blest [n]or ever be cast down
Oh! may thou e'er be full of joy & bliss
Blest in the other world & blest in this
A Blessing to thy parents may'st thou prove
Obey & ever shew them filial love
Mayest thou be call'd the friend of the distress'd
And strive to set the sorrowing heart at rest
Oh! mayest thou ever walk in holy ways
Nor guided be, by faithless flattering praise
Let wisdom, [guide] thy actions, sense refined
Reign peaceful o'er thy humble worthy mind
Reason on thee, her genuine influence shed
Ten thousand blessings flow around thy head
May all thy actions to thy glory tend
And that thy happiness may never end
Is wish'd sincerely by thy cousin & friend

Mary Birkett

1. Word missing in manuscript - 'guide' fits the sense.
This poem is typical of the late eighteenth-century cult of sensibility. Composed in a Gothic ruin, surrounded by 'mountains on Mountains' to evoke sensations of the sublime, the scene is contemplated upon so as to give rise to an overflow of emotion, 'a swelling sigh', 'a rising tear'. The source of emotion, however, is also deeply personal. Kendal was home to generations of Birketts and was where Mary's mother, originally Sarah Harrison, had been born and brought up. Sarah was one of a large family of at least eight children, including George Harrison the anti-slave trade campaigner, born to Edward Harrison, shoemaker, and his wife Sarah.

Kendal Castle was originally the domicile of the barons of Kendal, at one time the Parr family to which Katherine Parr, last wife of Henry VIII, belonged. It was built in the thirteenth century, but fell into neglect in Tudor times.

There are two copies of this poem in manuscript. Both are dated 13 June, but the first gives the year as 1787, the second as 1789. 1789 is the more probable date for two reasons. When compared with other 1787 material, the style is more mature. Secondly, Mary was in the North of England in the summer of 1789 because she wrote a poem there on the death of an uncle, who died in August. See poem immediately below.

Differences between the two copies are minimal - minor details of punctuation and capitalisation. Because it is more likely to bear the correct date, the second is reproduced here, with textual variants from the first shown in the notes, indicated by a closing square bracket: e.g. in the first line, 'sigh?'] sigh'.

Written in the Ruins of Kendal Castle

Why gives my heart this swelling sigh?
Why from mine eye this rising tear -
As here the mouldring[sic] ruins lie;
And pensive contemplation, here?1

Full many an age to years allied
Since first this Castle rose to sight
The owners strength2 the owners pride
No more that owner views the light

Let us revolve[sic]3 on ages past
And on these ruins contemplate
"Take physic pomp" - thy pride won't last4
Thyself thy all must yield to fate.5

But not6 I'll turn mine eye around
And view the beauteous prospects nigh
Then take mine eye thine utmost bound
And Melancholy thee defy - 7

Just situate in a pleasant vale
And humbly low fair Kendal lies
And all around her peopled dale
Mountains on Mountains shadowy rise8
Here let me greet thee Kendal fair
For loves mine eye on thee to dwell
For many dear to me there are
Who rose in thee and love thee well

There are - who on Hibemias shore
Tho' distant far, they love thee still
Fair Kendal tho' they see no more
Nor seek the dale nor climb the hill

I see my honor'd mother's form
In Kendal first she viewed the light
And absent love & friendship warm
Bring to my anxious sight

Ye dear possessors of my heart
I now may in your footsteps tread
And now perhaps I press the part
Where once my honor'd parent play'd.

But when the ancient dome I see
In which her infant years were past
Th'involuntary sigh gets free
And the tear starting follows fast

Yet why? - the cause I cannot tell
For in my breast does Pleasure dwell.

6 mo. 13th. 1789

1. Last word in every line of the first verse is unpunctuated in copy dated 1787, viz: sigh? sigh - tear - lie; lie contemplation, here? contemplation here
2. strength] strength,
3. revolve - ponder.
4. "Take physic pomp" - Shakespeare, King Lear, III. 4. 33. From Lear's speech outside the hovel on the heath, when he realises how little regard he has had for 'houseless poverty'. 'Take physic pomp/ Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel/ That thou mayst shake the superflux to them/ And show the heavens more just.' Mary instructs 'pomp', a personification of grandeur, to swallow 'physic' or medicine - the message contained in these ruins that pride cannot last. - thy] thy
5. Thyself] Thyself, fate,] fate
6. no] no,
7. And Melancholy thee defy -] And - melancholy - thee defy
8. Thomson, The Seasons, 'Winter', 906 - 'And icy mountains high on mountains piled'.
9. and] &
10. Mary's mother and relatives now in Ireland (Hibernia), who originated in Kendal. There are -] There are,
11. tho] tho'
12. dale] dale,
13. mother's] mothers
14. viewed] view'd
15. Name omitted in manuscript.
16. press the part - step on the place.
17. play'd,] play'd
While Mary was visiting relatives in Warrington and Liverpool, an uncle, named 'Bolton', died. Mary wrote this obituary poem while waiting at Liverpool to embark on a ship returning to Ireland. She had plenty of time, apparently, as sailing was delayed by 'unfav'ring gales' - a not infrequent occurrence. Severe winds could delay a ship's sailing for days.

The poem is undated. However, Lancashire Quaker registers reveal that Mary's maternal aunt, Hannah Harrison, from Kendal, married a Thomas Bolton, son of corn and flour dealer Benjamin Bolton, at Warrington on 20 May 1779. He died on 24 August 1789 at the young age of thirty-two. By this time, the couple had at least one child, Benjamin, born 26 September 1782. It looks as though another child, Thomas, was born around the time of his father's death, because the registers - not easy to read at this point - seem to say the little boy died on 16 March 1790 aged twenty-nine weeks. I could not find his date of birth. There may also have been a daughter, see 'To Sal[?] Bolton', p.64 above.

Liverpool

To the Memory of an Uncle

How frail! how transcient[sic] is our earthly date
How full of change, this sublunary1 state!
Our dying friends a sad memento give!
Each hour revolving tells us how to live
- Yes! most sincerely I his loss deplore;
For much lamented Bolton is no more
   Oft as I heave the unavailing sigh
His gentle form salutes my mental eye!
A thousand ideas crowd[sic] my brooding mind
Of pleasures past! of sorrows yet behind!
Full to my view his every act appears;
His fond caresses of my infant years;2
His smiles! on which my childish hopes have hung
The language of his mild persuasive tongue
Before me throng - & to my thoughts impart
The tenfold pangs which rend his widows heart
Who most th'irreparable loss will feel
And grief which but a Saviour's love can heal.
   Oh! much lamented, dear, & sacred shade!3
To thee my heart an early homage paid;
And, while of kindreds grafted tie possest[sic]
The bond of friendship twin'd around my breast.
Oh! that my sorrows scatter'd o'er thy urn
Might bid thy sad survivors, cease to mourn!
Or that the force of sympathy might steal,
As balm, thy consorts bleeding woes to heal!
Then, long forgetful of each meamer tie,
Stamp[stamped] on my soul thy form rever'd should lie
To Erins shore, Id[ld] every sigh convey
And bear the voice of mourning far away.5

But vain the wish - if I with deep regret
These smiling plains, where first I breath'd must quit
Where Patricks free born sons preside6 I haste
Impell'd by duty, o'er the watery waste;
Yet, while unfav'ring gales detain my stay
This humble tribute to thy worth I pay;
And still engraved within my sorrowing breast
Mark'd in strong characters these lines shall rest

A man he was - to all who knew him dear
A loving husband, & a friend sincere;
A tender father & a duteous son
Mourn Warrington! thy ornament is gone!
Each Station's varied duty knew he well
He felt each care & did each tie fulfil!
Warm in the cause of truth, of soul sincere;
In Business faithful; & in honour clear.

You ye near kindred of his sober youth
Thou, widow'd partner of his generous truth
And you ye offspring of an honor'd sire
Who strove, to virtuous deeds your minds to inspire,
In mutual sorrow, you, your loss deplore;
Ah! what avails it --- Bolton is no more!

No more you share his unaffected smiles,
No more his wit the evening hours beguiles;
Nor his lov'd accents o'er the circle glide
Attract each ear & charm the illum'd fire-side

But he no doubt hath wing'd his glorious way
To blissful mansions of Eternal day!7
Where freed from Earth & Earths entangling cares
Seraphic joys his harmless spirit shares!
Whose pure affections8 round his heart entwine
And all is Harmony & Love divine.

Then cease my tears - for can my feeble eye
The wonderous[sic] ways of Providence descry?9
Or tell for what wise end these woes are shed
With tenfold anguish o'er his consorts head?
Let us, frail mortals! bow in silent dust
And where we cant[can't] unravel learn to trust.
1. sublunary - earthly. Literally, under the moon.
2. my infant years - before Mary, aged almost ten, moved with her family to Ireland in 1784.
3. shade - ghost or spirit.
4. my sorrows scatter'd o'er thy urn - figurative only. Uncle Bolton would almost certainly have been buried, in keeping with usual Quaker practice, not cremated.
5. To Erin's shore [. . . ] far away - Erin is an ancient name for Ireland. Mary is saying that, if she could, she would like to relieve the bereaved family by bearing their sorrows home with her to Ireland.
6. Where Patrick's free born sons preside - St Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland. From 1782 until the Union with Britain on 1 January 1801, Ireland had its own Parliament in Dublin.
7. Jn 14:2 - Christ's promise that 'in my Father's house are many mansions'.
8. Whose pure affections - the affections of seraphs, 'one of the highest order of the ninefold celestial hierarchy gifted especially with love and associated with light, ardour, and purity' (OED).
9. descry - discern.
UNDATED POEMS

CONSIDERED TO HAVE BEEN

WRITTEN BEFORE 1790
One Ann Card Birkett (born 1791) was the daughter of Mary's paternal uncle, Henry Birkett, and his wife Mary, née Sharp. However, this is problematic, as, if she were the addressee, this poem would have to have been written well into the 1790s. But the diction and style is too immature for Mary in her late teens or early twenties. It is more like her writing at the age of ten or eleven, and indeed seems similar to poems written on her arrival in Dublin (see the first two poems in this collection). It is probable, then, that it was written for another cousin on the Card side of the family. The Cards and Birketts were related - Mary had to obtain permission from her Quaker Meeting to marry Nathaniel Card because he was her cousin, and he had a sister named Ann, who died young, according to the Card Family Bible.

To my Cousin Ann Card on her return

To Irelands Kingdom welcome be
Welcome unto thy dear country
Thou left the sweetly purling rills
Thou left the green inviting hills
Thou left the songsters of the grove
Who with sweet warbling beauty rove
Thou left the meadows pleasant green
Where birds and flowers are to be seen
Thou cross'd the seas where billows roam
And all to come unto thy home
What if thou had by th' cruel sea
Been shipwreck'd and been cast away
Yet Neptune\(^3\) stopp'd while thou came by
And did not on thee his powers try
Then welcome safely to the land
Where plenteous freedom's prosp'rous hand
Where plenty, honour. Peace, combine
And all in Irelands happiness join
May thou both peace and plenty know
And may thou also both bestow
And that thou may to virtue bend
Is the best wishes of thy friend

1. purling rills - streams flowing with a mazy motion and bubbling sound.
2. songsters of the grove - poetic term for birds.
3. Neptune - Roman name for the god of the sea, called Poseidon by the Greeks.
Poetry
Welcome to a Summers Morning

See how pleasant is the Morning
See the lambs are up and play
Every thing seems quite adorning
I never saw a scene so gay
Rise ye Sluggards sleep no longer
Do not waste yr[sic] hours in bed
You complain and tis no wonder
That time flies fast oer your head
See how the sun with radiance cheers
See how the flowers both smell and look
All Nature now serene appears
Which from the sun their brightness took
One Morn when we went out to Walk
And went down into the country
We did behold upon a stalk
The little Ant and busy Bee¹
Altho twas early in the Morn
They both were busy then
Take warning then before you are worn²
Ye young and idle Men

1. Ants and bees were popular as images of diligence and industry. The most well known poem of this ilk is 'Against Idleness and Mischief' by Isaac Watts (1674-1748), commencing 'How doth the little busy bee', later parodied by Lewis Carroll as 'How doth the little crocodile' in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland (1865). Mary would have been familiar with work by Watts - his pious verse was hugely popular and much used in the nursery and schoolroom, particularly his Divine Songs for Children (1715) which ran into five editions in the 1770s alone.

2. worn - worn out, near the end of life.
A branch of Quaker Woodwards lived at Waterford, but no record of a Jane Woodward has been found.

An Acrostick on the death of Jane Woodward a child

My friend why wilt thou weep for thy dear child
And cant[can't] resign her freely fore she is soiled\(^1\)
Rivers of tears dropping down from thine eyes
Yet Nature's weak and death must bear the prize
Behold her weeping oer her daughters clay\(^2\)
In dreadful sorrow yet we must give way
Rich, Poor, Young, Old all free ought to submit
Kings, and young Princes must give way to it
Elders and Prophets in one clay are knit
Thrice happy Babe! thy sorrows are no more
Thrice happy welcome to the blissful shore

Joyful she is and happy too in Heaven
And if we are good those blessings will be given
Never more shall our sorrows there appear
Every happiness that we can wish is there

With Glorious Cherubims\(^3\) thy daughter plays
On hills or dales in Paradise always
Or praise her God in happiness complete
Destruction's far away they can not see it
Weep not my friend thy daughters glorious change
And think she can in happy plenty range
Religion follow strict that when death is
Departed from us we may meet in bliss

---

1. **fore she is soiled** - before she loses her innocence in this corrupt world, but also before being soiled, literally, by burial.
2. **clay** - earthly body.
3. **Cherubims** - cherubim (plural, without need to add an 's'), or cherubs, are the second order of angels, endowed with knowledge, but often represented in art as plump winged infants with innocent faces.
An Eliza Woodward of Waterford married Joshua Mason Junior, also of Waterford, between 1833 and 1836 (no clear date is given in the Quaker register). She may have been the child to whom Mary sent this little verse.

A Poem to Eliza Woodward

These lines I write to thee my little friend
That thou may unto truth and virtue bend
Oh may Eliza like a Willow grow\(^1\)
And every day more truth and justice know
Deceit and malice of all things avoid
With every other wicked thing beside
If envy with insinuating art
Comes into thy young heart to take a part
Suffer it not detest that evil vice
But make Celestial truth thy happy choice
So may thou in this world prosper & grow
With all the happiness that Mortals know
Long may thou live beloved in this World
On no rude coast by adversity hurl'd\(^2\)
Yet if thou shou'd as who escapes in part
Pray to God with a sincere humble heart
His mercy's great unlimited and free
And if thou'rt good he will deliver thee
And when thy body this frail World does leave
May thou eternal happiness receive
May thou in Heaven with the Angels sing
Thrice Hallelujah to the Glorious King

---

\(^1\) The pliant branches of the willow tree bend down towards the ground or water.

\(^2\) rude coast by adversity hurl'd - metaphor for misfortune.
Flavilla and Vernold  a Poem

Down a green bank by the river side
Where waters sweetly murmuring glide
  Their lives a happy pair
No household jars¹ either possest[sic]
No Worldly cares disturb their rest
  Their fleecy flock their care
A son and daughter lived with them
Flavilla was the daughters Name
  The sons Name was Vernold
Their lives were pious and devout
And if you would trace their lives throughout
  You would not hear them scold
They lived retired from the world
But were not by misfortune's[misfortunes] hurled²
  To seek a safe retreat
Flavilla helped her mothers cares
To keep with her with house affairs
  The cottage clean & neat
Vernold the fathers was
And could help him in any case
  To cut the grass so green
The world they knew not till that day
When they set out with hearts so gay
  For to attend the scene
The father said unto Vernold
Of one another mind take hold
  And do not go astray
Then said the Mother to the Girl
Flavilla do not mind the World
  Or thou wilt cheated be
The world is fickle as the Wind
Then the things of it do not mind
  To this she gave good heed
They then ascended up a hill
Their Parents words for to fulfil
  With all their haste and speed
Their parents then with heavy heart
Saw their dear children safe depart
  And then went to their home
The young ones saw down from the hill
Where a great croud kept standing still
   A Lofty Lordly Dome
Then said Flavilla to Vernold
Methinks I hear somebody scold
   In yonder Lordly place
If such things attend a towns life
And scold be'tween[sic] man and Wife
   Come away let us haste
The next thing which they both saw then
Was a croud[sic] and bustle of men
   Buying and selling things
Flavilla said I never thought
That things were here so dearly bought
   Or the world such sights would bring
Where are the birds so gaily clad
That with their songs make our hearts glad
   Sure there's no happiness here
I cannot bear to hear the Noise
With such great croud[sic] of men and boys
   As here are all the year
Then homeward now they bend their pace
And soon another scene takes place
   Instead of men and boys
The flowers begin for to appear
And birds with songs their hearts do cheer
   For here's no bustling noise
With hasty steps they soon get home
Unto their happy little dome
   Their parents then enquire
What did befal them in the way
And how it happened all that day
   Which answered their desire
The father then said unto them
I hope you will not go again
   Since you have seen the World
You see tis fickle as the Wind
Then the things of it do not mind
   Since they are toss'd & hurl'd3

1. jars - quarrels, discord.
2. hurled - forced (it was not 'misfortune' that made them 'seek a safe retreat' but their own choice).
3. The poem appears unfinished.
Welcome to Summer

When Summer cloath'd in rich array  
First begins to appear  
All Nature seems one joyful day  
And gladness every where  
Behold! the sun how shining bright  
Over the beauteous blooming flowers  
Oh never may dark doleful night  
Hinder those peaceful pleasant hours  
See the stars at night appearing  
And the Moon our Heavenly light  
With their glorious beauty cheering  
Travelling strangers in the night  
But in Summer little's wanted  
For the day holds out so long  
Nightly robbers come undaunted  
For to rob the passing throng  
Oh! thou sweet delightful spring  
And how mild and pleasant too  
See how blooming every thing  
And ee'ry [ev'ry] thing a gaudy hue  
In spring the little seeds are sown  
In Summer trees and flowers bloom  
In Winter snows cover the ground  
In Summer sends the rich perfume  
Summer must not for ever last  
Spring will not live for evermore  
So when my life does Meet a blast¹  
I'll think on happiness before

¹ blast - misfortune or set-back.
The wild dove, known as the turtle dove, with its soft cooing voice and affection for its mate and young, was a symbol of gentleness and loyalty.

On the Death of a Favorite Turtle Dove

As Damon walked along the grove
He happened for to meet
A Lady mourned a Turtle Dove
And thus she mourned its fate
Alas! for my poor Turtle Dove
My muse assist my song
For as one morn it chanced to rove
I thought it stayed too long
I went to see what made it stay
And went thro yonder fields
Which now were full of flow'rs of May
That sweetest fragrance yields
I chanced to look before my feet
And what else should I see
But my poor bird no longer sweet
Lay Murder'd before me
I wept I gave my sighs to th' air
But nothing now would do
For my poor bird's no longer here
I ne'er did sorry know
Until that ever fatal day
When my poor bird did die
Alas I can no longer stay
For sorrow no not I
When Damon heard her say that word
That ever fatal day
And also how she mourn'd the bird
Unto himself did say
Let them to weep & moan give way
For a poor harmless bird
That th' Gunner happen'd for to slay
How she makes use o' th' word
The Lady hearing him say so
Thus to herself did say
Tis I alone that sorrow know
And I that must give way

1. Damon - a name frequently adopted by poets for a rustic. Mary may have picked up the name from Thomson's *The Seasons*, where Damon and Musidora are a pair of lovers in 'Summer' (1269-370), though the passage is somewhat risqué.
2. them - seems to imply girls in general, the female sex being, in Damon's view, prone to excess of emotion.
3. makes use o' th' word - makes a fuss.
In this little elegy on the death of a young girl called Hannah, the imagined speaker is the child's mother, mourning the loss of an only daughter. It cannot refer, therefore, to Mary's sister Hannah who died in 1787. It is followed in the manuscript collection by an acrostic on the death of Hannah Hillary (see immediately below). This cannot be the same child, however, for the acrostic calls Hannah Hillary 'an eldest daughter'.

On the Death of an only Daughter

When the bright sun went back to the Hemisphere\(^1\)
The Moon in doleful sadness did appear
The shining stars e'en they in dulness seem
The once gay birds how solemn is their theme
And why? Because my Hannah's dead & gone
My only child I never had a son
When I went out unto my Hannah's tomb
For to bemoan her destitute alone
She's gone she has left me the best friend I have
My child my daughter is gone to the grave
A shroud now covers my once darling child
And in a bed of earth her body's soiled
Since she is gone gone Alas what shall I do
For no kind friend sincere as her I know
Misfortune's mine too grievous to be borne
I mourn for Hannah still both night and Morn
Before she died the last words that she said
The debt of Nature by us must be paid
Dear Mother do not wish me here to stay
Or in this World to make the least delay
May I not die while I'm in innocence
And not committed any great offence\(^2\)
Then Mother do not weep when I am gone
But think that Hannah's made of angels one
No more she said but raised her dying eyes
Saying death has not over me a prize
And when she died she say'd[sic] while I was by
Death where's thy sting? Grave where's thy victory\(^3\)

---

1. When the sun sinks back below the horizon and therefore to the Earth's other hemisphere.
2. Being only a child, Hannah has not had time or opportunity to commit any great sin.
3. 1 Cor 15:55 - '0 death, where is thy sting? 0 grave, where is thy victory?'
The name spelled out by the initial letters of each line in this acrostic is Hannah Hillary, a child who has died. The Hillary family was Quaker from the seventeenth century and lived mainly in Wexford. One member, Samuel, born in 1682, emigrated to Pennsylvania (Harrison, *Biographical Dictionary*, p.63). Others appear in the eighteenth-century registers. Ann, daughter of Henry Hillary of Wexford, married John Langtry in 1767, and an Anne Hillary of Dublin died in 1793. No Hannah has been found in the Irish registers. But branches of the family also lived in England. The birth of a daughter named Mary to a Richard and Hannah Hillary is recorded in the eighteenth-century Lancashire rolls.

An Acrostic

How vain is pomp and grandeur here below
And pride how scornful: all is empty show
Never shou'd pride of us get upper hand
Nor shou'd our passions o'er us have command
And now a maid the subject of my lays
How fickle life! Died in her blooming days

Her parents weeping o'er her tender clay¹
In sorrow, tis no wonder they gave way
Life's tender thread at once was cut in two
Lived here a while but soon was called to go
An eldest daughter this beloved youth
Religion followed and was bred in truth
Young as she was a much lamented youth

¹. clay - earthly body.
This poem once again, like 'A Wish' (p.53) and 'A Dialogue between Charlotte & Maria' (p.56), endorses a simple way of life with a structured routine of work and worship, apart from 'the world'. However, it strikes that note of realism also found in 'A Wish', where Mary mentions the sum of £50 a year she thought necessary to enable her to live simply and independently. The imagined couple in this poem have only been able to realise their ideal of rural self-sufficiency because a brother conveniently died and left them £50 with which to purchase the land to build 'The Cottage'.

The Cottage

Where morn serene both light and gay
Where birds do sing where lambs do play
Where gentle breezes fan the grove
And tune the mind to Heavenly love
There stands a Cot both clean and neat
A favorite yet retired retreat
There the green fields and gardens too
With trees and flowers of different hue
All join to make this little Cot
A very pleasant happy spot
In it do live an aged pair
Where tho old yet both from care
Are freed and are not only so
But liberty they do bestow
Unto two children who are theirs
That are not now past twenty years
Their little fortunes are four sheep
Two Cows & one horse which they keep
With fields and garden & their cot
Which is with them a happy lot
A boy and Girl their children are
And all are free from Wordly[worldly] care
Ambition too was laid aside
And all vain glory with them died
One Morn as they went out to Walk
And all seem'd busied in talk
The son unto the father said
Father thy laws I have obeyed
And with a faithful heart I served
Nor ever from thy precepts swerved
There is one thing I wish to know
If that thou will it for us do
It is how we came to this place
And then our lives back again trace
The father said "I'll tell you how
We came and lived until now"
Our parents lived in the town
I'th World, they were of some renown
We thought we would our fortunes try
Because our parents both did die
Now when we almost ready be
A Letter came. The Contents see
To my Dear Friends
this letter is
I hope I have not done amiss
As you behaved so cool to me
Not to let me have your company
I heard of your dear parents death
Your brother has breathed his last breath
By will he's left you fifty pounds
And to his widow a thousand
I join with son and second self
To wish you four in all good health
I also wish to let you see
I am your sincere friend R:J
We soon set out our money got
To meet what ever was our lot
My children you were 5 years old
And many prattling things you told
But soon the clouds proclaim the rain
The cattle send across the plain
We all took shelter in a tree
And soon the rain no more we see
We saw many things that I cant tell
But these I do remember well
At last we got into a wood
Where trees and flowers in plenty stood
And there we stayed two nights and days
Now this green wood let out four ways
And in the middle of the wood
A Green and grassy hill there stood
Along the east side of the hill
There flow'd a little purling rill
With meadows plains and Groves combined
With trees and warbling songsters joined
So pleasant as the air did seem
Made us to praise the Almighty's Name
The West side led into a town
The north by trees and weeds oergrown
The south side by a small descent
Unto a pleasant sea side went
We chose the east side of the hill
And in that place we now live still
When we looked out about the cot
We found t'was a convenient spot
So we took from the ground some clays
And built this cot in ninety days
Took wood for chairs and tables too
From off the trees of strongest hue
And when my children wanted cloaths[sic]
From the poor sheep I spun their hose4
Our carpets are of grassy green
And as neat work as e'er was seen
Description of the way we live )
To you, my children will I give )
I'th morning then we rise at five )
Soon as we rise we go to prayer
And then we spend an hour there
At six we dress and in the grove
Or hill or dale or wood we rove
At seven O Clock we break our fast
Then work till two O Clock is past
At two our business then we leave
Roots Milk or fruits are all we crave
I'th afternoon we read or talk
Or if tis pleasant take a walk
At seven at night on milk or fruits
We supper get or bread or roots
Instead of meat the herbs we took
And drank the water of the brook
Then I the evening hours employ
Instructing you to me tis joy
Then end the day as we begun
And thus has fifteen years run on
Two hours we always set apart
To worship God with all our heart
And ever since that time I live
Retir'd from the world I give
To you my children when I die
Whatever is my property
And now my son the father said
Thou see's that I have thee obeyed
What more dost thou require of me
And I will do it thou shalt see

1. This salutation and the following twelve lines contain the content of the letter.
2. RJ - perhaps pronounced 'RG' to rhyme with 'see'.
3. purling rill - stream flowing with a swirling or mazy motion and bubbling sound.
4. hose - stockings.
This lengthy poem on the Last Judgement graphically portrays the fears of the damned and indicates the sufferings they will undergo in Hell. Though it is also about hope (for Mary’s own salvation) and comfort (that her dead brother and sisters are now in Heaven), in its concentration on horror it takes on some lineaments of the Gothic. Note, too, the atmospheric staging of the plight of the resurrected bodies awaiting judgement on the sea shore and of the damned sinking down to Hell, the dramatic characterisation alternating between the voices of the damned and the saved.

‘Last Day’ poems formed a genre of their own. It was a subject treated frequently - see, for instance, ‘The Day of Judgement. An Ode’ (1706) by Isaac Watts, available in The New Oxford Book of Eighteenth-Century Verse, ed. Roger Lonsdale (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984) - and Mary would surely have been encouraged in this effort by her family or teachers. She draws heavily from St Matthew’s Gospel and the Book of Revelation, displaying a keen familiarity with the biblical texts. Another major source is Milton’s Paradise Lost. Beside a direct quote from Book I, she draws on Milton’s epic for much of her language and imagery: ‘expire’, ‘contending’, ‘host of heaven’, the groaning in hell, the crowning of the elect in heaven with golden harps, and the figure of Christ in His glorious chariot bringing retribution, are just some examples.

A Poem on the Last Day

Tis the last day the Hills and dales rebound
    Angels proclaim it in the upper sky
The awful trump declare the solemn sound
    Awake ye dead the Judgment day is nigh

---2---

The sea affrighted pours her dead around
The Trembling thousands crowd the echoing shore
But soon, nor shore nor sea shall e’er be found
No more shall hear the sounding billows roar

---3---

Some miserable Wretches full of woe
In vain Even wishing for eternal night
Distracted crying whither shall we go
What shall we do to s’cape all piercing light

---4---

Hide me ye Mountains cover me ye caves
Oh is there none the Wretched to befriend
Might I unnoticed rest beneath the Waves
Alas my Misery ne’er will have an end
Well may we tremble at his vengeful rod
Twill drive us where our torments ne'er shall cease
Ye just why wish you to behold your God
Oh horror! how we dread to see his face

See with their guardian innocence a few
A happy few who fear not endless night
Impatient, Gods Great Majesty to view
To be with him for ever cloath'd in light

Methinks I see amidst the truly blest
My Edward taking up an endless Crown
My Sally, Hannah full of peace & rest
And Kitty with Immortals sitting down?

Methinks I see our dear departed friend
Our much lov'd Mary who is gone before
But we will meet when time even time shall end
In joy we'ell meet upon the blissful shore

Methinks I see far from the Realms of Woe
Love, Innocence & Peace their charge resign
They were her faithfull Guardians while below
They now conduct her to the realms Divine

See now the Eternal son come forth in state
To judge the World in Majesty how bright
Twelve Cherubim support their vast, their great
Almighty treasure thro the realms of light

His Chariot Wheels made of the purest Gold
Of Everlasting Workmanship are they
And full eyes Most Glorious to behold
Their mighty Authors will they still obey
He comes He comes with Justice, Truth & Power
To judge the World! ye Righteous now be Glad
For know that he in that tremendous hour
Will bless the just but he'll torment the bad

At last the dreaded judgment book is brought
The Lamb is worthy He the seals hath broke
My soul thou shalt be there Oh! awful thought
When loud in thunder Great Jehovah spoke

Depart from me ye cursed into chains
To Adamantine chains & penal fire
Go wretches Go where darkness ever reigns
Your just rewards to Meet nor e'er expire

But come my Lambs for ever dwell with me
I'll be the subject of your grateful praise
Each day my holy face you blest shall see
For while on earth you walked in holy ways

Oh now what shrieks what hollow groans arise
Such groans as never sure were heard before
They seem to rend the earth & pierce the skies
Deep Deep they sink & soon are heard no more

Is there no mercy left they seem to cry
Already I'm tormented with affright
On earth I little thought so soon to die
To be in Hell for ever shut from light

Mercy alas Mercy I ne'er deserved
Oft was I told this would be my sad fate
While from Gods Precepts careless still I swerved
Nor e'er repented till it was too late
I did despite to God nor would believe  
Upon his Son I mock'd his Holy Word  
Wretch that I am I would not him receive  
And woe is me I quite forgot the Lord

But now deservedly I pay for all  
I ah! too willingly was made a fool  
In vain for ever we on mercy call  
Bound to the bottom of the burning pool

With Devil's[devils'] horrid thought I still must dwell  
My tortur'd soul in pieces they will tear  
Why Esau like[Esau-like] my birth right did I sell  
Alas my heart is full of keen despair

See now the Wretched souls sink down to Woe  
With direful furies they must ever dwell  
Excruciating misery now they know  
While Satan on them bars the Gates of Hell

No more are heard those hollow groans no more  
Their ah! too late repentance now is heard  
They are gone for ever gone Hell's bolted door  
Proclaims His justice when they should have fear'd

But why so long those dreadful scenes pursue  
Hells Gate hath hid them from the dawn of light  
I'll now return and leave the horrid view  
To a more happy scene; quick turn thy sight

The glorious just with every beauty seen  
Their countenances full of love and peace  
What youthful innocence in every Mien  
They know they go to joys which never cease
To them a Golden Crown a harp are given
Besides a robe angelic pure as light
Such as are worn by all the blest in Heaven
And they're permitted to their Makers sight

Heavens Golden gates open at the sons' command
They go to bliss complete ne'er known before
The host of Heaven unite a Glorious band
And close the lofty Gates for evermore

Th' assembled light wings kindle a mighty flame
Not to be quenched by ought (so great the fire)
Where now the Palaces once of such fame
Alas! they're levell'd to the dust & mire

The flames obedient to the sons command
Destroy alike Prisons, Palaces, and towns
Alike the Wat'ry Ocean and the land
See burning now the once contending crown'd

Ye Kings why anxious so to raise your Name
Why long ye to be fam'd thro'out the World
Sure even that World will be a prey to flame
And all in dire confusion must be hurl'd

Oh Grant thou Great Creator of us all
That I may live obedient to thy light
Then in that day I shall escape the fall
And shall be happy ever in thy sight

Sure thou wilt save me from the Wrath to come
Yes I have hope thro my Redeemers blood
Oh in thy Mercy surely there is room
What Bliss might I be number'd with the good
1. Mt 24:31 - The trumpet to be sounded by angels on the Last Day.
2. Rev 20:13 - all those who, over the ages, have suffered death by drowning, will be given up by the sea so that
   they can be judged. The next line of the poem carries through this image by envisaging these resurrected people,
   trembling perhaps with cold as well as fear, amassed on the shore.
3. Rev 21:1 - in the new heaven and earth there will be no sea.
4. Rev 6:15-17 describes how the people of the earth, from the greatest to the least, will try to hide themselves 'in the
dens and the rocks of the mountains', asking the mountains to fall on them and hide from the wrath of the Lamb of
God.
5. Picturing the resurrected dead as yearning to be resting still, beneath the sea.
6. where our torments shall ne'er cease - Hell.
7. Mary imagines her lost brother and sisters being granted everlasting life, and taking their places in Heaven.
8. Mary Haughton, a friend. Mary wrote a poem on her death in November 1787.
9. Mary draws on the description in Paradise Lost of the Son descending on his enemies, the evil angels, in a chariot
with 'burning', 'living wheels, Distinct alike with multitude of eyes'. See John Milton, Paradise Lost (1667), ed. by
prophet Ezekiel describes his vision of cherubim (members of the second order of angelic beings), each by a
wheel, all covered with eyes.)
10. Rev 5 and 6 describe how the slain Lamb of God (Christ) is found worthy to unloose the seven seals and open the
Book of Judgement. In Rev 20:12, the dead are judged 'according to their works' as written in the books.
11. Mt 25:41 - Christ prophesies the coming of the Son of Man when He shall say to the evildoers on His left hand,
'Deport from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels'.
Adamantine chains and penal fire - Milton, Paradise Lost (1667), I. 48. Also Alexander Pope, The Messiah (1712)
I. 47, 'In adamantine Chains shall Death be bound, And Hell's grim Tyrant feel th'eternal Wound'.
12. despite - injury.
13. Rev 20:15 - 'And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.'
14. One of the torments devils were thought to inflict, in Hell, was tearing off chunks of flesh from the damned with
pincers - an activity often depicted graphically in paintings of the Last Judgement.
15. Gen 25:30-34 - Esau sold his birthright as the elder brother to his younger twin, Jacob, in return for supper when
he was hungry. Similarly, the damned have sold their human birthright of eternal life for earthly rewards.
16. Furies feature in Paradise Lost. For example, the evil angels are driven to Hell, 'pursued/With terrors and with
furies' (VI. 858-69).
17. In every Mien - in every aspect of demeanour.
18. The light or airy wings of angels kindle and fan the flame.
19. once contending crown'd - the world's rulers who once vied with one another. In Paradise Lost, Satan and
Belial, both angels fallen from glory in Heaven to burn in Hell, describe themselves as having contended with God:
Satan - 'with the mightiest raised me to contend' (I.99); Belial - 'against so great a foe Contending' (II.202-03);
also Satan, assuming the form of a serpent to tempt Eve - 'I who erst contended/With gods to sit the highest, am
now constrained/into a beast,' (IX.163-65).
20. save - repeated in manuscript. The line could be intended to read, 'Sure thou wilt save, save me from the wrath
to come', but it is more probable that this repetition is simply a copyist's error as the line does not scan correctly if
'save' is repeated.
This poem is interesting in its attitude to Eve and exploration of the consequences of her eating the forbidden fruit. Eve's responsibility for bringing sin and death into the world is seen, first, as not such a great curse on humankind. If we act rightly it makes little difference to us in the after-life, as we shall be saved in any case, and the responsibility for this is ours not Eve's. And, secondly, the sufferings we are condemned to endure on Earth as a result of being turned out of Eden will only make us appreciate the joys of Heaven more. Eve is not considered to blame. Rather, her action is understandable under circumstances where all human beings would fall prey to temptation. It is more the fault of her Guardian Angel for leaving her so unprotected — an idea probably drawn from Book IV of Milton's Paradise Lost, where Satan, entering Eden unnoticed by Gabriel and his guarding angels, lays the ground for Eve's disobedience by whispering in her ear while she sleeps.

On Eve

Dissatisfied why do we grieve
And still complain of curious Eve
What loss to us if we are good
We shall be sav'd thro Jesu's Blood
True bliss is sealed in the mind
And if we are good that bliss we'll find
Sure when we grief and sorrow know
Sure when we've lived a while below
Sure when we here temptations meet
Will it not make Heavens rest more sweet
True we've lost our innocence
And innocence is our defence
Jesus has bought it with his blood
And Jesus leads the way to God
Eve's disobedience still was great
But which of us if in that state
Our Guardian Angel far away
And Satan lurking for his prey
Which of us could perceive the snare
And of the tempters Wiles beware
For if we did no faults possess
The faults of others would seem less
Jesus the way of life and rest
For us became an earthly Guest
For us his precious life laid down
That we may wear an endless crown
On Friendship

Hail sacred friendship gentle Heavenly flame
Tho' in this World too oft thou'rt but a name
Friendship that sacred sound so dear to me
True Friendship oft I hear but seldom see

Friendship sincere methinks as well as truth
Looks amiable whether in age or youth
When I'm in joy my friend will joyful be
Or when in grief she'll sympathize with me

Say W - E - know you that name
Or rather do your hearts possess that flame
That pure, angelic flame of source divine
Oh could I ever say twas really mine

David and Jonathan by it were held
And long their sincere friendship they contend
He was the object of Sauls Groundless hate
For he was virtuous but Sauls sins were great

Tho Saul was Davids bitter enemy
And oft his life by stratagem sought to slay
Yet Jonathan his son more kindness knew
And David lov'd altho his friends were few

Friendship sprung from a source truly divine
With thee the sons of Men sure cant repine
Ambition, Grandeur, Pride, & outward form
Never can prove the heart's with friendship warm
True Friendship is to stedfastness[sic] inclin'd
Nor is it found save in the stedfast[ sic] Mind
The steadfast Mind the joys of friendship know
Not *4 heightened or obscured by Woe

1. Use of the plural ('hearts') indicates 'W' and 'E' are two individuals.
2. The story of King Saul's hatred of the young David, and the unswerving friendship between David and Saul's son Jonathan, is told mainly in 1 Sam 18-20.
3. contend - perhaps 'struggle' or 'try', i.e. David and Jonathan sought to maintain their friendship despite the problems that beset them. Another meaning of 'contend' is to compete, so the sense could be that David and Jonathan's love was so great that they vied with one another in the sincerity of their friendship.
4. Space in manuscript, asterisked. Probably the copyist was unable to read a word in the original.
This poem is inspired by the penultimate verse of the Book of Revelation, which reads, 'He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus'. It is, effectively, the last verse in the Bible as the final verse consists only of a blessing.

Come Lord Jesus = Revalations[sic] 22:20

Lord Jesus come unto my soul  
And all my sinful thoughts controul[sic]  
Lord with thy mercy come away  
And let me brighten into day  
Lord take my heart from earthly things  
Give to my soul a Seraphs wings  
That she may soar and be with thee  
In bliss to all eternity  
Come Lord and set my soul at rest  
And tell me I shall soon be blest  
Blest in the realms of Peace & Love  
Blest in the Glorious Heaven above  
But ah How can that bliss now be  
Sin gets between my God and me  
Oh when shall I and Jesus meet  
When at my dear Redeemers feet  
Oh when shall I to Heaven ascend  
When shall I see my God my friend  
When shall I see enthron'd on high  
Jesus the ruler of the Sky  
When shall I see him face to face  
Oh! when will all that bliss take place  
Lord will it not till grimly² death  
Shall cut my life and take my breath  
Then welcome death without affright  
Lord lead me to the realms of light  
My Saviour thou direct my way  
And let me wake in endless day

1. grimly - used as an adjective, describing Death as merciless and ghastly to behold.
On The Birth of Jesus

Now nows the time the Holy Jesus born
Arise ye Saints and Hail the Glorious Morn
Be Glad thou World the joyful News proclaim
And sing eternal praises to his Name
And thou my soul proclaim those news so blest
Jesus is born the way of life and rest
Oh sinful Mortals could not you afford
Room for your blessed Saviour for your Lord
No Room for Jesus in the crowd[ed] inns
Jesus who came from Heaven to purge yr sins
The stars denote the Lovely Saviours birth
And soon the News is spread upon the earth
Oh chosen Mary bless the happy day
Thy Glorious son will purge thy sins away
Rejoice ye Nations & be glad ye Kings
Worship the Lord nor mind your earthly things
Why lay your body on a stately bed
Your Saviour had not where to lay his head
Gods only son was poor was meanly born
While you with Ornaments yourselves adorn
Then Haill the Morn oh bless the happy day
When he the Lord will cleanse our sins away
Will make us blest with angels we shall sing
Immortal praises to our endless King
Then without ceasing we will bless the Morn
In which blest Jesus on the earth was born
The Great Messiah promised long before
But now he reigns in Heaven for evermore

1. Lk 2:7.
2. yr - manuscript abbreviation of 'your'.
3. Mt 2:2, 9-10.
4. Mt 8:20 - speaking to a scribe who had promised to follow Him, Jesus said, 'The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head'.
5. Resonant of Lk 2:13-14, where 'with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praise God, 'saying ./ Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.'
On Gods Goodness

The Lord he is a mighty Lord indeed
He is a comforter in time of need
Oh! he is bounteous He's a God of love
To save our souls He came from Heaven above
The Lord is good he is a friend indeed
He is a God to help in time of need
He is a Gracious father to us all
And He'll protect us Mortals lest we fall
The Lord his duteous Lambs will surely feed
He always will protect them when they need
Soon their oppressions all He'll make to cease
For He's the King of Glory & the Prince of Peace

1. King of Glory - Ps 24:7-10, Prince of Peace - Is 9:6. See also Lk 2:14 - the words of the angels at Christ's birth, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men'. Echoed in Lk 19:38 where the disciples praise Jesus, 'Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven and glory in the highest.'
A Short Reflection on Death

How dreadful is thy Name Oh! awful death
Why wilt thou take so many thousands breath
Why wilt thou make such Multitudes thy prey
The yawning grave gets thousands every day
Sorrow and Greediness belong to thee
Yet by thyself thou swallowed up shall be
Then to the righteous shall be no more pain
For what's thy sons is our Eternal gain
What art thou to the soul that's good now say
Thou separate's[sic] the soul from mortal clay
And let's it brighten in eternal day
But to the wicked those who hate the sight
Thou brings both horror, darkness, dismal night
And well may thou their wretched souls affright
For thou wilt drive them to the shades of hell
With direful Satan in that place to dwell
Eternally they roll in burning fire
In pain and torture nor again expire

1. 1 Cor 15:54 - When the 'corruptible' puts on 'incorruption' and the 'mortal' puts on 'immortality', 'Death is swallowed up in victory'.
2. Rev 21:4 - '... and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.'
3. A cross is written above the word 'sons' in manuscript, reason unknown.
4. the sight - i.e. of God. There is also a cross in manuscript above the word 'sight', reason unknown.
Mary imagines a scenario in which an interlocutor asks Death to justify its pitilessness toward the human race, and Death replies.

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**A Poem in Blank Verse On Death**

Oh cruel death why wilt thou captive lay
Such numbers daily at thy dreaded feet
Nor spares the young or old or wise or fools
But gives them over to the yawning grave
Nor pities any! cruelty how great
Thou from fond parents takes their only hope
Their only joy in their declining years
And leaves the sad survivor still to weep
Didst thou not snatch in early bloom of youth
A lovely maiden from her mourning friends
Deep in distress see the fond Mothers Grief
See! to the sister weeping for her loss
Even their tears cant[can't] soften thy hard heart
To pity closed and deaf to hear distress
Thou seem as tho' t'was[sic] thy delight to hear
Groans for the death doleful mourning sighs
Oh! when wilt thou resign thy power & leave
The World that we may be in peace & rest
Oh! leave thy quest of prey & seek no more
Not any more our happiness destroy
Nor make us sink under such loads of grief
Say why dost thou exert thy barbarous power
Why tyrannize oer Nations as thou dost
Why strike such fear in every Mortals breast
To make us dread & hate thy cruel Name
Say why thou dost explain to us the cause
When thus none but the wicked dread to see!
My face[,] the righteous even sometimes wish
For me before th' appointed time of God
For know to them I'm but a road to bliss
A road which must by every one be trod
If you would ever wish to Go to God
How can you think me hard & dread to go
When even Jesus trod that path before
The Servant is not greater than his Lord
And Jesus did not in the least complain
Meek as a Lamb then why shou'd you repine
Would you not like to be with him in bliss
Would you not like to see him in the Heavens
Enthron'd on high in glory & in power
Would you not like to see your friends again
And what is best of all to see your God
You cannot surely see them without me
I'm a safe Pilot to conduct you there
The good no doubt will say that I'm their friend
Just like a shatter'd vessel toss'd about
By adverse winds & seas is Mortal Man
Does he not wish to find some happy port
To rest from his fatigue & be at ease
He cannot reach the much desired Port
Without my Guidance I'm his sincere friend
Tis true the wicked dread me well they may
For they shall go into eternal Death
To dwell with Satan & his host in Hell
And even tho' I cause sorrow for a time
From mourning parents or from weeping friends
Patient let them resign a little while
And follow Gods commandments then no doubt
They soon will meet in bliss unmix'd & pure
Their dear departed children or their friends
Think you I come to rob you of my self
No God Ordained me I'm his Messenger
I spread forth darts of death at his Command
You love him then repine not at his Will
Tis true among the plants & trees & flowers
I make some havock[sic] but it is designed
A spur to our industrious carefulness
But see the pretty songsters of the Grove2
Whose grateful voices charm the list'ning ear
Harmless & Innocent they hop about
And sing and play and oft delight your ears
Say which do I or man destroy the most
The pretty little Lambs who gives[give] their wool
To you, who feed upon the grassy mead
Whose harmless bleatings never did you hurt
The patterns of true innocence & peace
Say? dont[don't] the human race kill more than I
And ev'n the poor inhabitants of sea
What numbers do you daily take for food
Then why accuse me of such cruelty
When even your selves so imitate the same
Tis true I take great numbers off the earth
You also do it too & oft destroy
Thro wantonness Hundreds of creatures lives
I am commission'd from on high to slay
And when I take the wicked mids't[sic] their sins
Tis for a warning to you all on earth.
Or when I take from sorrowing pain the just
Tis to lead them to a place of bliss
A happy place for them prepared by God
Tis true we destroy many well as Death3
But let us truly worship God and love
And love4 him in our heart & fear to gain his wrath
And then we need not dread what death can do
He cannot hurt the soul nor hinder it
From being good, Death only seperates[sic]
The Body from the soul and sets it free
Tis to the just a welcome Messenger
By which they go to God: then welcome Death
If thou wilt bring me to the realms of Bliss

1. In this line, Death starts to reply.
2. songsters of the grove - poetic term for birds.
3. From this line, the poem's speaker responds. well as - as well as (just as Death does).
4. And love - repeated, probably copyist's error.
This long, meandering poem moves from one scenario to another in a manner reminiscent of Thomson's *The Seasons* (1726-46), undoubtedly a major influence. (Some of Mary's most obvious 'borrowings' are included in my footnotes.) It begins in a conventional manner with an address to the goddess of the dawn and a description of a summer morning in a pastoral setting. Then it digresses. Mary tells, in an imaginative way, the Old Testament story of Rahab, the woman of Jericho who helped the Israelites take the city, before switching back to the pastoral idiom - to 'a romantic view' of meadows where, however, the young shepherd is David, future king of Israel. But this idyll is marred by the suffering of rural labourers, scorched by the midday sun, and the cruelty of hunters out hare-coursing. A storm breaks out, followed by the return of 'the welcome sun', emblematic of God's light. She then switches to depiction of a country milkmaid who, typically, enjoys more genuine riches in her simple state than those who entertain 'earthly pomp', and goes on to draw tableaux of unfortunate characters deserving help and pity. Finally, she ends by musing on the powers of Nature.

However disparate these subjects seem, they are loosely connected by one theme which emerges in the course of the poem – that of gratitude.

The poem would seem to form a counterpart to 'A Winter Morning in the Country' (see headnotes, p. 62) and may have been written about the same time - 1788.

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**A Summers Morning in the Country**

Aurora Goddess of the blissful Morn  
New riding in the chariot of the sun  
Appears to cheer us from the drowsy night  
When she appears the darkness flees away  
The Rosy Goddess drives it from her sight  
Nor suffers it to leave a trace behind

The pretty birds have risen from their nests  
And soaring high in air begins[ sic] their songs  
To thee thou great Creator of us all  
See some who want to teach their young to fly  
The fineness of the Morning tempts them out  
And wilt thou learn to soar with them my muse  
Or now behold a lovely rural scene  
Amid the vernal[2] Groves the beauteous flow'r's  
And plants reviving with refreshing dews  
Seel rising now amid this verdant plain  
Shaking their peaceful slumbers from their eyes  
Now each to different work employ their hands  
Some drive the plough some work amid the field  
Large drops of sweat run down their scorched cheeks  
While they pursue their daily labours still  
How different now from winters starving cold  
Then the poor labourers scarce can earn their bread  
Perish'd with cold perhaps half drowned in snow  
Or nipt[ sic] with pinching frost amid their work
But now emprov’d with heat scorch’d with the sun
Who fiercely darts his bright Meridian rays
On them or even Grants them small respite
Until the evening then he sets and leaves
Them to their rest & the refreshing dews
See! now the Greyhounds light tripping o’er
The Hills or dales & with their nimble feet
They strive to catch the almost breathless hare
The Hunters run and if perchance they see
Her quick fatigued: then with cruel joy
They quicker run impatient to pursue
Affrighted trembling here & there she runs
But all in vain at last her nimble feet
Betray her course unable to hold out
She droops, is caught; & wounded by the dogs
Oh then what triumph in the Hunters looks
They bring her home with such hard hearted joy
And think themselves sufficiently repaid
For the fatigue & heat they’ve undergone
Oh! cruelty tis shocking to relate
Are there not beasts enough to make your prey
And take their life by some less shocking way
Are there not sports enough to employ your time
Without destroying both the peace and life
Of one poor harmless playful animal
And all to pass your time those cruel sports
But turn my muse already thou too long
Hast spent thy time with those hard hearted sports
Be humble still: & still be innocent
See now! with joy the Peasant boy run out
To play and sport among the grassy fields
He sees a serpent basking in the sun
Stretching his Mazy variegated folds
Of Gold or Green bright glittering in the sun
Sudden he starts and turns with hasty steps
An universal terror thr’o’ his limbs
Diffusing quick, he runs toward the Cot
The peaceful Cot his plain contented home
But see! the cattle scud across the plain
The Birds seem frighten’d a terrific scene
The little Lambs all croud around their dams
Their Dams are frighten’d terrified as they
They run: a tender mournful bleating hear
The Lordly Bull he roars he stamps his feet
And fear posseses nowl even to his breast
The Laborers all seek shelter, a naked
Prospect only is open to the view
Tis Thunder how it seems to rend the Earth
How dreadful! see the livid lightning flames
A quick broad sheet along the Azure sky
And now see quick succeeds a heavy shower
But soon it ends and soon the welcome sun
Dries up the wet and spreads his cheery beams
To all at once diffusing light & heat
His bounteous rays how welcome to the earth
Tis a faint emblem of the power supreme
The Great Creator who with wisdom rules
That earth he made Those Heavens his handy work
The Sun gives light & heat to all around
But even that ceases when the darksome night
Resumes her empire & spreads around her sway
Yet oft at noon days Heat we with that sun
Are cloy'd & scorch'd & wish for cooler Eve
But Gods life giving influence never cloys
The longer we enjoy it the more we're blest
And when he sends his light unto our hearts
And we receive it Oh! what glorious Peace
What heartfelt satisfaction do we find
And all that's in this world is nought to us
We care not whether fortune smiles or frowns
While we enjoy the favors of our God
And that will ever last while we obey
His dictates. surely the reward is great:
No less than an Eternal Crown in Heaven
But still the sun's a Welcome Messenger
To cheer us from the darkness of the Night
When nor too sultry Gently, Mild, it shines
It is the glory of this lower World
And like its Great Creator when it shines
Amidst its brightness cannot be beheld
By our poor naked eye too blind to see
Those Heavenly objects shining bright above
How despicably mean is Mortal Man
And yet how great; Immortal tho a span

But see that little Bird with fluttering wing
It seems half dead with fear half drown'd with rain
It bends its feeble course to yonder dome
Whose hospitable windows open'd wide
For that kind end to screen em from the rain
It is a little Robin Pretty Bird
It enters in and see[s] the scattered crumbs
On purpose laid its simple welcome meat
Behold the children how they gather round
And view the harmless stranger with surprize
How they admire the Red upon its breast
And all the different colors which adorn
Its body: while half terrified with fear
Yet joy'd to see itself so warm so dry
It stands before them finishing its meat
The vicious cat now comes into the room
And seeing it runs quick to seize her prey
But Robin soon betakes himself to flight
The Gazing children follow with their eyes
And wish in vain the strangers longer stay
High soaring soon He's out of Pusse's[ sic] reach
Who dissappoind[ sic] of her wish'd for prey
Turns back to rest her limbs upon the Hearth

While now the Birds are singing in the air
While now the harmless Lambs are frisking round
And every little heart & every thing
Seems grateful for the kindness they've received
While now the Laborers all renew their toil
And all is peace & joy, I'll introduce
Thee lovely Gratitute, How[ now?] to my muse
For thou art doubly lovely; thou art sweet
And pleasant to the heart, which loves its God
Hail Gratitute! Thou greatest good to man
Dependant[ sic] on th'[" Almighty Lord of all
In ancient times men strictly followed thee
And are there not a happy few who now
Follow thy steps even as their fathers did
Then there were few who did not love thy Name
Even foes to virtue still remember'd thee
[(For gentle) thou wilt make thy subjects blest
Did not the grateful spie* remember thee
Who kindly hid them even in her roof
When Joshua son of Nun commanded them
Go view the land search even Jericho
They went obedient to their Masters word
And lodged in the Harlot Rahabs house
Perhaps there were some enemies to them
And Joshua too at whose command they came
Who quickly told the King of Jericho
Behold this night came men from Shittim's land
Like to the children of Israel are they
They came to search the country they are spies
We know them they're not like our brethren here
We saw them enter into Rahabs house
Search it Oh King! Thou'lt surely find them there
Immediately the King sent messengers
To Rahabs house saying its I bid ye do.
Have ye not heard that spies are come from far
To search our land. Go then to Rahabs house
Be not afraid to speak even in my name
And as I've you commanded now perform,
But Rahab framed a lie them to deceive
And save the lives of those within her roof
For well she knew the King would murder them
Cause jealous possessed him when he heard
That all their business was to spy the land
That if they did succeed in that intent
No doubt he thought (perhaps with reason) they
Would back return & bring their master word
How all things with them stood[,] their fertile land
How fruitful and how plenteous every thing
For sure 'twas Summer then with them as now
Or if it was not would the spies have gone
So long a journey & so distant far
From favour'd Shittim from the Native place
Since they would go when each thing was in bloom
What great advantage Jericho obtained
And were the People, many, strong or weak
Meanwhile behold the servants of the King
Have entered Rahabs house & now request
The spies who lodged there ; in words like these
Bring forth the men who came to thee this night
There are who saw them enter in thine house
And kindly us inform'd of that event
Deliver them to us for know that they
Are come to search this fruitful country round
And know'st thou not that if they take our land
Ourselves, our wives, our little ones, our all
Shall be their Bondsmen & their Wretched slaves
Or Murder'd with the greatest cruelty
Oh! save thy country Rahab save thy self
Thy parents Brethren all thy kindred save
And they shall bless thee and esteem thy name
None know the weight of such persuasive words
But those who have been importun'd the same
But she was stedfast[sic] and fulfill'd her word
Nor would betray them - thus she sav'd their lives
But she had hid them; then she answered thus
Tis true there came to me two men this day
I wist not whence they were, I knew them not
Nor would I them receive least they were foes
Or sent to spie[sic] us. And it came to pass
About the time of shutting of the Gate
When it was dark this Evening they went out
Whither they went I wot not nor which way
They bent their course; for I saw them no more
And now ye servants of my Lord the King
Do you with speed pursue them for you shall
O'ertake them:21 by this time they're not gone far.
The Messengers pursued them, but in vain
They went the way to Jordan to the fords
And soon as they were gone they shut the gate
But she had brought the spies up to the roof
And hid them with the stalks of flax which she
Had laid in order there on the House top
And e'er they were laid down, Rahab came up
To see them: then these words spake she to them
I know the Lord hath given you this land
And that your terrour[sic] is fallen on our hearts
We faint because of you we dread your Name
For we have heard what wonders God hath done
For you his chosen people Israel
And sure I now believe that God even your God
Is Lord of Heaven above of earth beneath
And every thing he made them; they are his
Now swear to me I pray you by the Lord
Since I have shewed you kindness, also shew
Kindness to us nor evil entreat your slaves
Give me a token true that ye will save
My Brethren, Sisters & my parents dear
That ye will us deliver for my sake
And all we have and save our lives from death
Nor let us perish with the common herd
The men then answered her our life for yours
If ye will never tell our business here
And it shall be when God to us hath given
This land[,] kindly will we behave to thee
And will fulfil all that thy heart desires
Then Rahab let them both down by a cord
Even thro' the window (for t'was now dark
Each thing was still & scarce a breeze was heard
The world was hush'd & all was quiet round[]?)
Now Jericho was strong & fortified
The town was encompass'd by a wall
And Rahabs house was built upon that wall
A pleasant situation lofty high
While from the Windows of her house she could
Command a prospect of the country round
Its lofty hills its humble vales its fields
Covered with grassy green its pleasant fruits
Ripe on the trees delicious to the taste
Its Gardens and the Cool refreshing springs
Of Water or the fountains spouting up
The murmuring rills which purling down the brooks
Into the bottom form a pleasant Noise
The Beauteous birds now singing thro the air
Or chirping, perch upon a Neighbouring tree
At once were lovely to the Gazing eye
And with delighted music charmed the ear
The sportive Lambs which on the Meadows play
The Shepherds boy who tends his fleecy charge
Delightful work! (were open to her view
Or if she chose the town of Jericho
She could at once behold its busy streets
Crouded[sic] with Merchants hasty passengers
Or men of business - a confused mixed throng
Its Houses and the palace of its King
Its strong stern gates of sturdy Iron made
Which tho they hindered all th'unhabitants
Of Jericho from passing in the night
Could not restrain her from her wish'd intent
Of kindness to preserve the lives & peace
Of those two men who came to spy the land
To whom she said get to the mountain quick
Lest the pursuers meet you) there you'll find
A spot convenient for a hiding place
Unknown to them unknown to all but me
There hide yourselves three days until ye find
That your pursuers are returned home
And returned depart & go your way
And may you go in safety & in peace
And as I've saved your lives do you save mine
And the men said unto her we will be
Blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made
We swear to save your lives which we will do
But say how shall we know ye from the rest
Without some token of distinguishment
Behold when we come to invade the land
Then thou shalt bind this line of Scarlett[sic] thread
In the Window by which thou let us down
And thou shalt bring thy father Mother and
Thy Brethren - all thy fathers household bring
Home unto thee that they may dwell with thee
That we may save them Rahab for thy sake
And it shall be that who soeer[whosoever] shall go
Out of thy doors into the street - His blood
Shall be upon his head & we be clear
And whosoever shall be with thee then
In thine house his blood shall be on our head
If we for thy sake dont preserve his life
But if thou mention this our bus'ness here
Then we are ever quit of this thine oath
Which we have took & thou hast made us swear
She answer'd "As you've said so let it be["
Again she bid them to the Mountains haste
Lest they unhappily should meet their glad
Pursuers so in haste they did depart
And soon they to the Mountain came & there
Abode three days As Rahab them desired
Till from their fruitless search the Messengers
Returned & told the King "twas[sic] all in vain["
For they had sought them all the ways thro out[throughout]
Nor could they find out whether they were gone
So then the joyful spies descended down
The Mountain quick! the Land they passed oer
And soon to Shittim came & all things told,
Rahab mean while had hung the scarlet line
Along the Window thro which they escaped
She took her kindred all to live with her
For Joshua's coming made them ready be
But ah! when she would see the Poplous[sic] streets
When she would see her neighbours or her king
When she would see what plenty reigned thro all
The handsome buildings or the lofty domes
What tears of sorrow came into her eyes
For well she knew that soon it all would end
Sore would she cry ah me! ah wretched me
Who thus betrayed my country and my King
Their curse will fall upon my wretched head
And I what shall I do no friends have I
Since those two men will soon forget their word
And gall my wretched heart with misery keen
And well I it deserved for I rebell'd
Against my country ever kind to me
Ah how I sink ungrateful in despair
Is there no ray of hope to cheer my soul
To calm my fears to ease my troubl'd heart
Oh Yes! I feel the glorious ray divine
It cheers my sinking soul it comforts me
It whispers Rahab fear not I'm thy friend
It was not thee delivered up the Land
To Joshua t'was the land[Lord] the God of power
Joshua's his servant God will him assist
Soon thou shalt see them come t'invade the land
Then fear not Rahab for thou shalt be saved
Lord I obey no longer I repine
I'll wait their coming with a joyful heart
I hear it whispered that they wont behave
As Pharaoh's Butler did to Joseph good
For I will put my trust in God above
And he'll deliver me I know he will
But soon as she heard the sounding trumpets blown
She heard the armys shouts of triumph great
She saw them burn the town with dreadful fire
She heard the shrieks of parents for their babes
Of Those in agonizing dying pains
But she was saved for Joshua bid the two
Young men who came before to spie the land
Go to the harlots house who saved your lives
And bring out thence her kindred & herself
And all she hath that they with us may dwell
And all ye promised do ye unto her
So they fulfilled their oaths & brought her out
In to the camp nor did ungrateful prove
And tho the land was cursed yet she was free
And saved & long she did in Israel dwell
Because she hid the spies nor them betrayed
Then Gratitude thy force was prevalent
Thou led the spies and they obeyed thee strict
The warm effulgence of a grateful heart
Is precious tho but seldom truly found
My Muse & Gratitude be ye two friends
Who love each others welfare as their own
Then ne'er forsake my muse bright gratitude
Attend her every therewe[everywhere] be with her still
For well she loves thee cause thou art her friend
And she is Grateful like the two young spies.

See yonder meadows a romantic view
Covered with grassy green & simple flowers
The Gift of Bounteous Nature & kind earth
Thither the daisy rears its modest head
Of white or pink or yellow pretty flower
It seems to have no pride no selfish pride
To vie above the rest but humble all
See here a flower that loves the sun alone
She drinks his beams & feeds on none but him
For him she lives Sol$^{32}$ is her whole delight
If he departs she dies nor will she live
A careful emblem of the state of man
Is not our God more bounteous than the sun
Is not he powerful merciful & Good
Shall we not live and die for him alone
The yellow cowslip grows along the mead
While here the clover blooms with humble grace
Around the meadows sportive lambkins play
They know no cares but gaily innocent
They pass their short lived date[day] in joy & peace
When pinched by hunger tender grass supplies
Their wants or when to quench their heat or thirst
The gurgling brook that falls down yonder hill
Allays their thirst and cools their parching heat
See tired with sportive dance or frisking play
They now retire beneath the shady grove
And stretch their limbs reclining on the grass
Hid from Sol's scorching rays by the thick trees
Whose leaves soft whispering to the gentle breeze
Cool from embrowning$^{33}$ heat they shelter there
Behold! their gentle leader shepherd young$^{34}$
Whose only care to keep them from the Wolves
Those fierce devourers of the Gentle race
Who go in bands to oppress the tender flocks
He sits all watchful of his bleating charge
Lest some dread enemy is lurking near
The Birds in concert join to tune his mind
To heavenly love they tune their little throats
And tempt him to imitate the same
Beauteous & ruddy as the opening morn
Of stature manly countenance serene
Sensible courageous & strong was he
At once the shepherd & Philosopher
To tend his fleecy charge was his delight
For he was full of Innocence as they
His Ancient father was a Shepherd too
Eight manly sons had he - the eldest three
Followed their King & served him in his wars$^{35}$
David the youngest kept his fathers sheep
And oft while tending on the playful flocks
He'd sit & ruminate on things to come
Ambition never swayed his artless mind
Which was to virtuous contemplation given
And seeking after Heaven & Heavenly things
For in the days of Youth he sought his God
And found him and the Lord rewarded him
He made him King & famous on the earth
Gave him a son who was with Wisdom crowned
He made him conqueror o'er his enemies
And promised him in future ages Even
His only son should in his tribe be born
To him he many secret things revealed
Which in some after time should come to pass
Thus virtue was rewarded thus the Lord
Returned mans weak endeavours to be good
Oh he was merciful tender & kind
And manifested himself oft to him.

Behold the ruddy milk maid with her pail
Health blooming cheerful dwells upon her cheek
Sprightly vivacity in all her looks
Is fair displayed no haughty pride is seen
She smiles with a becoming innocence
On all around with every object pleased
Tho poor perhaps more riches she enjoys
Than those who in the splendour of a Court
Of Grand Magnificence & earthly pomp
Are pining under the all baneful arts
Of Luxury and sickness mortal woes
Pride there shrinks back nor dare to shew his face
Simplicity appears in every look
Free from disdainful Arts or City airs
Down on the Grass she sits her lowing charge
Submitive & obedient by her stand
Oh! Innocence how are thy subjects blest
Perhaps while busy o'er her destined work
Some friendless beggar tells his story sad
How he [an honest tradesman] ruined was
And forced thro poverty & scorn of friends
[No longer friends] to follow now that hard
That unbecoming calling in - old age
.See lends an innocent attentive ear
.To all his words, the silent piteous tear
.Steals down her cheek - the sigh the artless sigh
.Comes from her bosom at his sad hard tale
.And oft she thinks how faithless are mankind
.And to relieve his wants throws in her mite
.Like the poor widow in the treasury
.T'was all she could afford tho' small twas more
Than those who out of pompous fortune gave
Four times its value to the poor distressed
For hers was given with a warm good will.
And sincere pity for his fortune hard
Ye proudly mean! say are ye half as blest
As she who struggling under poverty
Enjoys a happy calm contented mind
Wealth will not make us happy - virtue will
And that alone can make us truly blest
Ye scornfull ye who put your trust in Gold
Who think that that will purchase every bliss
Who almost scorn the very ground you tread
Who think that all are mean compared to you
Oh turn your eyes to yonder mournful scene
They are your fellow creatures they even they
Have trod the path of virtue more than you
Behold the mother languishing & sick
Too weak to lift her head see full of pain
And sorrow for their miserable state
The once glad partner of their happier life
The daughters weeping full of kind distress
Her heart just bursting at their numerous woes
Yet busy at her needle striving hard
To earn their scanty fare & strive to get
Some cordial or some medicine to relieve
Their pain with all the tenderness that grief can know
Yet Providence will never them forsake
He'll them sustain he'll arm them for those ills
And when he thinks tis good he'll them remove
He's full of grace & he will sure provide
A glorious resting place for them in heaven
For they like Lazarus shall have their reward
And you ye haughty Dives do you repent
Lest ye meet yours when ye can ne'er escape.45
How lovely are the prospects all around
How full of beauty is the fruitful earth
How fragrant is the gentle balmy air
The feathered choristers at once delight
Us with their songs & seem to bid us be
As thankful & as innocent as they
Ye harmless race I'll join your humble songs
Our God is bounteous & Thee'll praise him still
We all are under his protecting care
And he is merciful to us he made.

How happy are the subjects of content
She like her Maker pours down blessings round
Ye are her peaceful subjects ye are blest
By her nor at your fortunes e'er repine

Nature how ever lovely dost thou seem
How charming to the contemplative mind
Which loves to meditate on thee & thine
But how shall I how shall my infant mind
Attempt to paint thee charming as thou art
If I attempt I lose myself in thee
All bounteous parent shall I then conclude
No still I'll meditate on thee still thou
Shall be the theme the subject of my song
I'll ever dwell on thee fond tender Nurse
Of every blessing which we here enjoy
Innocent lovely free from pride sprung care
Lend me thy volume till I read it thro
Till I have learned it bounteous authoress
Let me nor ee'r forget thee still remind
Me of thy beauties greater far than art
That I may ever dwell with God & thee
See now! the Morning dews are fled the sun
Almost arrived at his Meridian now
My muse look back thy subject mornings gone
Gone past, recall then thou conclude

* Joshua chapter 2nd

1. Aurora, classical goddess of the dawn, had a rose-coloured chariot in which she rode across the sky before the
sun, chasing the darkness away and scattering the morning dew.
2. vernal - spring-like. (Though it is now summer, the revival of plants and flowers with the dawn is like a new
spring.)
3. There is a cross above the letter 'T' in manuscript, reason unknown.
4. the inhabitants around - those who live on the 'rustick' (rural) plain. 'Rustic' is also a term for a peasant or
country dweller.
5. emprov'd - Improved. An odd use of the word. Possibly, though the change in temperature is a welcome
improvement on the bitter cold of winter, the workers now suffer from the scorching heat of the sun instead.
'Shooting and hunting; their barbarity, and 'A ludicrous account of foxhunting' - particularly 401-25 on the hare.
Also 'Winter', 257-61.
7. he - the peasant boy, not the serpent.
8. diffusing quick - spreading fast.
9. a naked Prospect [. . . ] view - the landscape is 'naked' because emptied of people, as they have all sought
shelter.
10. See Thomson, *The Seasons*, 'Summer', 1103-1232 - account of a storm: its brewing (when 'in rueful gaze/The
cattle stand,' while 'man [. . . ] to the crowded cottage hies him fast', 1123-26), thunder and lightning, a digressive
episode on Celadon and Amelia killed by lightning, until 'o'er the world expands/A purer azure. Nature from the
storm/Shines out afresh', 1225-27. Mary draws on some of these elements.
11. cloy'd - tired, satiated.
12. tho a span - despite a short period, or 'span', of earthly existence.
13. meat - food

His annual visit. Half afraid, he first
Against the window beats; then brisk alights
On the warm hearth; then, hopping o'er the floor,
Eyes all the smiling family askance,
And pecks, and starts, and wonders where he is –
Till, more familiar grown, the table-crumbs
Attract his slender feet.

The children's admiration of the robin, and the arrival of a cat, appear to be Mary's imaginative additions.
16. For gentle) - reason for bracket obscure.

17. Mary chooses a biblical story to illustrate gratitude in the past, and the biblical reference - the second chapter of Joshua - is given as a footnote in manuscript, indicated in this line by an asterisk. The story is that of Rahab, who aided the fall of Jericho to the Israelites by sheltering two Israelite spies in her house and helping them to evade the soldiers searching for them. The Israelites showed their gratitude by sparing her and her family when they later sacked the city. Mary adheres closely to the biblical narrative, reproducing its text almost word for word in places, particularly in dialogue, but adds sections depicting Rahab’s views and feelings, various linking passages and other embellishments.

19. A link being made with the topic of the poem - a summer’s morning. Josh 3:15 mentions it being harvest time prior to the Israelites laying siege to Jericho. The next few lines make the point that summer, when Jericho’s prosperity would be best displayed, would be the ideal time to observe its strengths and weaknesses.

21. But she had hid them [...] shall O’ertake them - text almost directly from Josh 2:4-5. ‘I wist not’, ‘I wot not’ - forms of ‘I know not’. The poem then continues to follow the biblical action/description verse by verse.

22. evil Intreat - badly or wrongly treat.

23. the common herd - the ordinary people, the common mass.

24. The view from Rahab’s window commanding ‘a prospect of the country round’ is an imaginative insertion imbued with eighteenth-century ideals of landscape.

25. rills (rivulets or small streams) are purling (bubbling noisily) into larger brooks feeding into the river bottom.

26. gall - torture and goad.

27. Highlighting how Rehab’s action, as treason, is an ungrateful act towards the country which has given her birth, however much it might warrant the gratitude of the Israelites.

28. land - clearly written in manuscript, but probably copyist’s error for ‘Lord’.

29. Gen 40 and 41, particularly 40:23 and 41:1-13. Once out of prison, Pharaoh’s butler forgot Joseph’s kindness to him in interpreting his dream while they were incarcerated together, and did not mention Joseph’s dream-interpreting powers to Pharaoh until two years later. Meanwhile, Joseph languished in prison.

30. The destruction of Jericho and the saving of Rahab and her family are told in Josh 6:21-25.

31. effulgence - radiance.

32. Sol - classical name for the sun.

33. embrowning - literally, to make brown.

34. shepherd young - we soon discover this is the young David.

35. 1 Sam 17:12-14. David’s father Jesse had eight sons, the three eldest being Eliab, Abinadab, and Shammah, all of whom followed King Saul in battle.

36. a son who was with Wisdom crowned - King Solomon.

37. His only son - Jesus Christ, born of the line of King David.

38. Echoing Jn 14:21 in which Christ says, ‘[...] and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.’

39. Thomson, The Seasons, ‘Summer’, 1664-66 - ‘His folded flock secure, the shepherd home/Flies, merry-hearted; and by turns relieves/The ruddy milk-maid of her brimming pail -’.

40. baneful - poisonous, harmful.

41. lowing charge - cattle.

42. That unbecoming calling - beggary.

43. This and the following six lines have a dot in front in manuscript, as shown here - reason unknown.

44. Mk 12:41-44. Jesus, on seeing a poor widow contribute two ‘mites’ (farthings) to the temple treasury, compared her gift favourably with larger amounts donated by the rich, because she gave all she had.

45. Lk 16:19-31. In Jesus’s parable, a warning to wrongdoers, Lazarus the beggar is rewarded in Heaven while the rich man at whose gate he sued unsuccessfully for alms is sent to Hell. The name Dives does not appear in the King James Bible, but as the Latin word for ‘rich man’ it appeared in the Vulgate translation. It became a generic term for ‘rich man’.

46. Spaces are left in manuscript in this and the final line. Metrically this line is long and the final line is short.
H.W.F. was Hannah Wilson Forbes, one of Mary's closest friends, although several years older. (See Appendix 7, 'Individuals Featuring in the Writings of Mary Birkett Card.') Mary writes to thank her for the gift of some paintings that she has done, and praise their quality.

On being Presented with some Paintings By H.W.F.

Those beauteous paintings giv'n by thy hand
A grateful tribute from my command
My Muse shall tell tho numbers oft are feint
The handsome present which thy hands did paint
I know my friends I ne'er can you repay
For all the kindness oft you've done to me
I take thy gift & now this humble lay
Have I too free presumed to offer thee

First I behold a handsome well shap'd tree
On which a bird is fixed fashioned by thee
Below a spider hanging by a thread
Striving to 'scape & seeming full of dread
Each colour is so intermixed between
Each thing well shap'd & regularly neat
What lovely order thro the whole is seen
E'en judgment might pronounce them all complete

Next by thy pencil drawn I see a child
Well dressed each feature lovely countenance mild
Which with a gentle smile thy hand has graced
A little hay rake in her hand is placed
She for diversion rural out of play
Led by thy pencil painted, form'd by thee
Amus'd herself a while with making hay
Tho now as if tired she leans against a tree

Next I behold a handsome flower well known
Natural & lively judgments self will own
Shap'd like a cup surrounded 'tis with blue
Perfectly shaded & to Nature true
Tis not alone for what thy generous heart
Out of benevolence would still bestow
Tis not for that I often would impart
The grateful thanks I for your kindness owe
For all her gifts return her thanks my muse
A grateful freedom Hannah will excuse
Will she presumption? Ah the thought is void
Sure bold presumption merits her disdain
Yet Hannah's kindness will excuse each fault
Will tell me of them and reprove when wrong
Of her shall by theme for sure it ought\(^3\)
And in respect to her \(\text{I'll}\) end my song. M.B.

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On true Beauty

Tis not a fair and snowy skin
Can prove that virtue dwells within
Tis not a piercing eye & bright
That still can point out wrong & Right
Can choose the good, can leave out vice
And still make virtuous truth its choice
The blooming cheek may please the eye
With blushing roses too may vie
Truth's self may seem to dwell within
And yet may lodge some lurking sin
Vain glory, earthly love, or pride
Or gloomy envy, there abide
The snowy skin of fairest white
May please the eye may give delight
Nay Heavenly innocence as fair
You'd think her beauteous self was there
And yet in state of outside shew
Vice in her heart may poisnous[sic] grow
May plant the dire malicious seeds
Of pride of envy hurtful weeds
To whom while she resigns her sway
Destruction marks an easy prey
Pure virtue oft will deign to dwell
With mortals in an humble cell¹
And Innocence bright heavenly guest
Oft visits some unnoticed breast
Those who by pride unnoticed are
May yet contain the heavenly fair²
With virtuous mortals truth will stay
And kindly humble lead the way
Tis there where truth & innocence
Will all their friendly powers dispense
With inoffensive virtues[sic] care
There dwells an all accomplish’d fair³
For Beauty real known to few
Take this receipt⁴ you'll[!] find it true
Then lasting honours you will find
Will ever bless your peaceful Mind
Esteem & Friendship you will know
And pleasure follow where you go
First let in all your dress - your mien
A Modest neatness still be seen
In broils⁵ or quarrels nee[ne'er] engage
Let love be seen instead of rage
In all your acts let truth appear
And innocence be ever near
Let peace on all your steps attend
And let your thoughts to Heav’n ascend,
For Piety have great regard
She ever brings her own reward
Let decency your features guide
And calmness o’er your mind preside
O’er all your ⁶ let plenty reign
And modest charity be seen
When amidst your plenteous store
Careless for the starving Poor
While virtues join, then will be still display’d
A beauteous fair and all accomplished maid.

¹ humble cell - metaphor for an ordinary or physically unattractive body.
² the heavenly fair - ‘true Beauty’ is personified as a ‘fair’, a beautiful maiden.
³ an all accomplish’d fair - see note 2 above. Young women practiced ‘accomplishments’ such as music, drawing
and fancy needlework to increase their attractiveness and marriageability. The point is being made that the
accomplishments of ‘True Beauty’, located in the inner virtues, are more genuine.
⁴ receipt - recipe or prescription.
⁵ broils - quarrels, or skirmishes.
⁶ Space left in manuscript, probably for a word the copyist could not read in the original.
Mary calls this a transcription. It is a biblical narrative, Jesus's well-known parable of the Good Samaritan, transposed into verse. The story of the Good Samaritan actually appears in Luke's Gospel, Chapter 10 (Verses 30-37), not Chapter 11 as stated under the heading of the poem.

The Good Samaritan transcribed

The good man from his journey coming home
In raptur'd thought espied his little dome
Anticipated in his gladden'd mind
What joy 'twould be his family to find
For him, his wife prepares the crackling fire
His eager children oft demand their sire
They run to meet him in the well known way
And for his coming now suspend their play
His wife a supper nice & light prepared
Wonders he stays! now rack'd with num'rous cares
She fears his safety, blames the darksome night
Waits his arrival till the morning light
Now in suspense[sic], they croud[sic] around the fire
And wonder what so long delays their sire
In vain! ye children, to suspend your play
Ye shall not see your sire, 'till tis midday
In vain thou tender wife, so long to wait
Thy much lov'd consort meets a cruel fate
In haste to meet you, he pursued his way
But oh! a dreadful thing prolong'd his stay
He's met by Thieves, the one in haste demands
His purse, another beats him with his hands
A Third more cruel, bruises him with stones
Then leaves him, having almost broke his bones
Now bruised & wounded sore what shall he do
Perish'd with cold; yet home he cannot go
Distress'd sore & full of pain he lay
Nor had he power to rise & go his way
But double anguish reign'd within his breast!
Fear, pain & terror stood in him confess[sic]
His blooming children['s] wonder at his stay
His consorts anguish at his long delay
He hears, he sees, he feels with anxious pain
But all is ineffectual all is pain[vain?]!
Death he could brave, but ah too well he knows
No longer must his children feel repose
Woes, dreaded woes would heap[rear?] their wretched head
While he is resting on his clay cold bed
No longer chearful[ sic ] rouzes[ sic ] up the fire
For he was ever their support entire
No longer does the joking tale relate
For ah! in death he meets another fate
Such melancholy musing fill'd his brain
But - melancholy musings all in vain
It fill'd his tortur'd mind with more distress
And (dreaded thought) he scarce could hope redress
Pitying his woes, now to his anxious breast
Descends bright comfort - ever welcome guest
For as all pain'd & wounded stretch'd he lay
He hears the sound of feet along the way
The dress assured him he would grant redress
For all his trade was to relieve distress
He lifts his wounded head & asks relief
In all the piercing eloquence of grief
For sure a pious Priest would not deny
A starving fellow creature some supply
Sure charity would own her gentle sway
Ah no! the cruel Priest quick crost[ sic ] the way
Unreasonable, could not he afford
A balsam to his wounds! or one glad word
Now all his hopes of charity are crost[ sic ]
He fears, he'll be inevitably lost
For who'd relieve him on that lonesome road
When charity had left her own abode?
Once thought! (nor was the cheat so hard to see
None were so pious or so good as he!
Fond man, twas lucre that he sought alone
In all his acts (not virtue) shone[ ]
A Levite met him in this mournful plight
But pityless[ sic ], he hasten'd out of sight
At last the good Samaritan came by
And on his anguish, cast a pitying eye
Not like the priest disdainful cross'd the way
But rode (compassionate) up to where he lay
He heal'd his wounds & pity on him took
Tho a Levite pass'd him by & priest forsook
Pour'd balsam on his wounds with wine & oil
And bound his sores with kind assiduous toil
Wrapt[ sic ] in warm clothes the flowing blood soon ceast[ sic ]
With tenderness he lift[ ] him on his breast[ beast ]
He brought him to an Inn with anxious care
To heal & comfort him, no cost he'd spare
And on the morrow, when he went away
Gave money to the host & thus did say
"Take care of him & what thou spendest more
And needful spend for I will pay the score"
Lord! thou'rt the true, the good Samaritan
And thou alone can heal the wounded man
Tis thou' st the great Physician thou alone
The wounded, sick & poor wilt help and own
And may I meet thee on my journeying way
Tho Thieves have ransack'd this frail house of clay
Ah! may I follow thee to realms of love
With saints & angels in the Heaven above.

1. pain - clearly written in manuscript, but 'vain' might be more appropriate. Possibly copyist's error.
2. heap - clearly written in manuscript, but 'rear' would make more sense. Again, perhaps copyist's error.
3. clay cold bed - an image of the grave.
4. The traveller wears the garb of a priest, whose business should be to help those in distress.
5. starving - needing succour, not literally desperate for food.
6. balsam - healing ointment.
7. her own abode - i.e. the heart of a priest, who of all people should be charitable.
8. The bracketed text describes the priest, whose hypocrisy, on reflection, was easy to see despite, or perhaps because of, his extreme outward piety.
   fond - foolish, self-deluded.
   lucre - profit or gain.
9. Levite - all Jewish priests were originally supposed to be descendants of the tribe of Levi. However, within the priesthood, Levites came to be subordinate to the Zadokites who took charge of the Temple and the sacrifices, while the Levites were allocated the more menial tasks. In Christ's time, therefore, Levites were a lower clergy.
10. Samaritans - people from Samaria, an area adjoining Judea, were often despised by Jews and considered an inferior race.
11. lift - past tense, meaning 'lifted'.
12. breast - copyist's error. The Biblical account refers to a 'beast' which could have been a horse, mule or donkey.
13. Lk 10:35 - the Samaritan, on leaving, gave 'two pence' to the host of the Inn 'and said unto him, Take care of him: and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee'.
14. This is interesting in relation to Quakerism's rejection of formal priesthood. God/Christ is identified as the true Good Samaritan, for he 'alone can heal'. By implication, priests are unnecessary and not to be trusted as sources of spiritual help.
15. frail house of clay - earthly body.
This piece is located in the manuscript collection with other material written between 1786 and 1788, when Mary was aged eleven to thirteen. It appears a rather strange, mournful dirge, yet it lies firmly within the framework of a certain late eighteenth-century taste.

In 1760, young Scotsman James Macpherson, urged by friends intrigued by his translations of old Gaelic (Scottish and Irish) bardic verse, published Fragments of Ancient Poetry. This was swiftly followed by the epics, Fingal (1762) and Temora (1763), The Works of Ossian, the son of Fingal (1765) and a combined edition, The Poems of Ossian (1773), all purportedly translations from Ossian, a legendary third-century Celtic bard. The poems excited a great wave of enthusiasm, inspiring readers who saw in them 'the supreme expression of sublimity and sensibility in poetry', and later influencing many English Romantic poets and continental writers like Goethe (Stafford, The Sublime Savage, pp.1-2 - publication details below).

Controversy soon ensued as to whether the poems were really translations of Ossian's poetry, or inventions of Macpherson's, with Dr Samuel Johnson asserting the latter. Modern scholarship tends to the view that although features of the poems (their emphasis on the sublime, their sentimentality) are definitely eighteenth-century, they are based on original ballads and legends, surviving orally and in manuscript fragments, which Macpherson adapted for his own age. Two useful texts are Fiona J. Stafford, The Sublime Savage: James Macpherson and the Poems of Ossian (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1988), and Ossian Revisited, ed. by Howard Gaskill (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991). The popularity of the poems resulted in many imitations. Mary's is actually an odd mixture of elements of the 'Ossianic' format and her own internalised religious beliefs and values.

Ossian tells of the Fiana, Celtic warriors who fight evil and champion the weak. The stories of their battle exploits and love affairs often involve murder or suicide, and lovers frequently die of grief. Relishing such themes would be incompatible with Quaker pacifism and acceptance of tragic life events as the will of God, so Mary's hero, the young and innocent Rilla, is instead a 'heavenly philosopher' who exhorts others to greater piety, a 'pattern of meekness & humility'. But he shares with the Ossianic heroes a capacity to empathise and shed tears of pity, generosity and readiness to assist 'the unfortunate' - all characteristics of the eighteenth-century 'man of feeling'. His contemplation of nature as God's handiwork, however, has nothing to do with Ossian - the ancient Ossianic world was a godless one.

Fiona Stafford shows how Macpherson ensured his translations fulfilled public expectations of ancient poetry - simple but emotionally charged language in an interrogatory, exclamatory style, full of concrete natural imagery. Other features of Ossianic poetry she identifies include 'prose paragraphs of varied lengths and rhythms', chant-like refrains, and repetitive phraseology. (See particularly pp.86-93, 103, 109.) The original poems Macpherson accessed, like The Book of the Dean of Lismore, mainly consist of elegies and are permeated by melancholy. Likewise Ossian, now old and blind, mourns the departure of friends and ancestors in a bygone, 'greater age' and the verse is punctuated by cries of despair. Characters are indistinguishable, almost ghost-like, inhabiting a shadowy, distant world. Mary faithfully copies these features, trying to create an atmosphere of pervading gloom and overpowering emotion. Her characters are virtually interchangeable in their exaggerated sensibility, tears are abundant and the landscape replicates speakers' premonitions and sorrows. Just as for Ossian and his characters who only seem to find peace in death, 'life is but as a dream of the night, which passeth away in a moment'. But whereas the Ossianic dead only continue to exist in the memories of those who live after, for Mary the dream that is this existence merely portends the 'real life' of the next world for which we should prepare and look forward with joy - her purpose is to urge resignation.

What did this sort of writing do for its readers? Its pathos was somehow acutely pleasurable. It enabled them, like the characters, to experience what is termed in Ossian 'the joy of grief'. But it was also supposed to be didactic, stimulating benevolence, empathy, reflection and social feeling. (See John Dwyer, 'The Melancholy Savage: Text and Context in the Poems of Ossian', in Ossian Revisited, ed. by Howard Gaskill, pp.164-206.)
The Philosophers Death  
In imitation of old Irish verse

Names Rilla, Rustus, Mara, Ernor

[Arrat] Ah why is the night so gloomy & dark! why is my heart pierced with uncommon terrors these fatal forebodings, ah! why in my breast the Heavens seem disorder'd, the Earth seems full of fear, shall I ascend this steep mountain whose top touch'd the skys, on which the stars seem to lean, which is spangled by the silviry[sic] rays of the moon. Ah no! I will descend to the lowly vale I will enter the cot of Rilla! the delight of swains, the joy the pride of hearts the cherisher of youth & old age & the contemplater of nature! Rilla, the beloved Rilla shall tell me why are these fears, I will lose them all in his breast, for he is my bosom friend, where art thou going oh! Rustus, why are thy eyes bathed in tears, why wringest thou thy hands in agony, ah tell me, come we will go to the cottage of the benevolent Rilla, we will tell all our sorrows to him, he will pity our grief & our cares, for he is ever the friend of the distressed, I was going to Rilla, oh! Rustus thou son of terrors! I was going to communicate my fears unto him, for my mind was bowed down within me & my heart was overwhelm'd with terror, & I knew not for what, I was filled with forebodings of sorrow, but I could not find out the cause, oh! Rustus hast thou been with that friend of the unfortunate, then tell me how he is, doth ought all that son of mercy, oh! tell me keep me not in dread suspence[ sic] for I am full of anguish

Rustus) oh! Arrat thy forebodings are just, I am full of wretchedness & woe, thou shalt not tell thy sorrows to Rilla, Rilla the delight of the swains, the benevolent friend of mercy & want, the heavenly Philosopher is no more; ah! how can I survive when Rilla is no more, the pride of the village is gone to the grave, his eyes sleep in death, no more they shed a pitying tear for the sorrows of the unfortunate, alas! he lies all pale & ghastly extended upon his bed, it is water'd by the tears of the poor his lifeless corpse is bathed with tears of distress, he no longer hears the sound of mercy, no longer smiles with complacent joy, at making all around him blest! that hand is dead & cold & lifeless which has so often strew'd plenty to the poor & whose delight was to wipe away the tears from the eyes of the unfortunate, no longer his peaceful mind is filled with contemplation on the wonders of nature, that mouth is dumb which so often chaunted forth, the praises of his Maker which has so often pointed out his mercies & bounty to us all, & exhorted us to praise; those feet no longer haste to relieve the wants of the indigent, they are cold & stiff. Alas! they are senseless as the clay, beneath our feet, Ah! thou favourite son of Mercy thou art no more! thou weepest oh! Arrat thou weeppest, but thy tears are in vain thy Rilla minds not thy sighs, he sees not thy tears, oh! Arrat tho' we mourn our mourning is vain, but Nature is weak & we have lost a dear friend -

Arrat) oh! Rustus are the doleful tidings true, is Rilla dead, the favourite of the plain. Oh! is that guardian of the Poor! that pattern of meekness & humility the well beloved Rilla oh! is he no more! support me oh! Rustus, sustain me by thine arm, I sink beneath the weight of grief, my soul is o'erpower'd with despair for the son of fortitude is gone where I shall see him no more, oft has
Rilla & I sat at the door of his cottage to behold the setting sun, to behold the rising moon, to contemplate the works of nature; but ah! those happy days are o'er, no more I see him smile with a heavenly delight, no more am I improved by his enlivening conversation oft has he said giving me a look of affection "my dearest, my well belov'd Arrat, behold this rose is the produce of nature, it is a simple flower but I have often wished to be like it, when it dies & its beautiful colours are gone what a delicate odour remains, 'tis acceptable to all, oh! arrat might we but leave the savour of a virtuous reputation & an exemplary character to our inferiours[sic] & worthy of imitation, but above all, the one thing needful[cic] the favor of our God, we need not fear to die, oh! my dear friend, life is but as a dream of the night, which passeth away in a moment, it is then & not until then do we enter into real life how can we e'er possess it while the dream continues it intercepts the heavenly Light & quite excludes the day; seest thou this setting sun; ah might I depart as peaceful as it, how glorious! it sheds its rays of lustre & divine magnificence around, I wish not pomp or grandeur, content is all I ask, it is enough for it is a heavenly portion[7] thus would that son of mercy reason thus would he improve my mind & entertain me with his delightful conversation: but alas! he has left me, Rilla thou cherisher of youth my friend, my well beloved friend, where art thou gone, oh! that I could follow thee, thy soul was spotless as the jessamine[8] which creeps along thy thatch, it was blooming & lovely as the rose, yes Rilla, thy wish is answer'd thou art happy & we must submit, we must bow to this severe stroke of fate, to this rod of correction; thou passed away all calm & peaceful as the setting sun: & the remembrance of thee is more pleasant to my memory than the rose: let us wipe away our tears my dear Rustus! they will not recal[sic] our dear friend we shall soon follow him; may his shade[9] rest unmolested till we join it on the heavenly shore, till we mix with the happy spirits then we will never, never part -

Rustus) oh! Arrat I know that our tears are in vain, but is not Rilla worth a single tear oh! my friend we were but too blest while we possessed the generous rilla - oh! our silver moon which so often beheld him, clad in humility & wisdom came forth of his humble roof to adore & admire the omnipotence of his God, oh! hide thy face in mournful silence & shed the tear of sorrow for Rilla the pious & the good no longer beholds thy beauties; but who is this that ascends from the valley, whose feet pusheth away the dews of the evening & whose face is bathed with tears, it is Mara, the unfortunate Mara, the daughter of misfortune & sorrow, come hither, thou afflicted maiden come hither & mingle thy tears with ours for we are partakers of thy grief - oh! Mara, Rilla is no more & what will become of thee, thou wouldst have been an helpless orphan & a miserable cast-out, had it not been for the generous & benevolent Rilla, it is now thou wilt feel the weight of misfortune indeed.

Mara) Rilla is no more, oh! my friend the generous Rilla is no more, he hath resigned his soul into the hands of his maker, but he has left me to mourn, oh! Rustus is not this a woeful day for me, I was an orphan but Rilla took me in - my parents had left me & I knew them not, I was cast out & had no friends, till that humane friend of the distressed took me, he brought me up in the house with him & carefully provided for me, he was my friend my benefactor & my confidant & now he is no more, oh! is it not trouble indeed to be bereft of him, but he foresaw his death[11] he foresaw & told me of it, "Mara said that son of fortitude, I have seen my end approaching, but I am not afraid oh! Mara I have
spent my life in preparing for that dread event, no longer dread to me I have conquer'd, I have overcome & I can say with satisfaction & Joy - oh! death where is thy sting, oh grave where is thy victory, the sting of death is sin & that sting is taken away as I am happy in myself oh! Mara but I pity thee, I am going to the realms of glory, where thou shalt soon follow me, oh! Rilla said I weeping do not affright us with that mournful tale, in what manner wast thou foretold of thy death what messenger told thee of it, tell me O Rilla oh! that I might go before thee, may I never live to feel the loss of thee, what will become of me? what will become of all thy friends, whose life in[is] wrap[t] up in thine? I will provide for thee O mara, thou shalt never want, but oh! submit with patience to the will of Providence, sure it is thy bounden duty the sun was set, the moon & the stars appeared to enlighten the Earth with their borrowed rays, when with a mind all calm & peaceful I left my Cottage & sat down under the shade of a poplar to contemplate on the beauties of nature, to admire the works of the Almighty the heavens & the Earth, when a deep sleep came over me which I could not resist, a man stood before me clad in shining raiment Rilla said he in a gentle tone prepare for death, I am sent to summons thee hence, the Lord thy God whom thou delight's to serve wisheth for thee come oh! come thy King waiteth for thee, thou art one of the favourites of the Most High & thou shalt be ever blest with him in Heaven oh! when shall I come with eager joy, when shall I meet my dear Lord thou welcome messenger of God, oh! tell me, I will enter his presence with joy & gladness three days shalt thou abide on earth said he, prepare thy house & settle thy affairs against that time, for I will fetch thee then & guide thy spotless soul from Earth to Heaven when he had spoken he vanished & left me much surprised at all his words, Mara I shall surely go, but I shall go in peace: I shall still be blest, so weep not for me, grief stopped my speech, I answer'd only with tears at last I cried Oh! Rilla shalt thou go & shall not Mara weep; oh! Mara said the son of fortitude, I shall be happy & sure thou wilt not envy my bliss, no, I know it will give thee joy, ah! Rilla tho' thy bliss will give me joy, yet it is hard to part with thee, but we must resign to fate for we shall meet again, thus would he reason in hopes that we would be resigned & bear our loss with patience -

Who is this that ascendeth from the valley of tears, with hasty steps, she brusheth away the dews of the evening it is Ernor the weeping mourning Error thou daughter of mourning, how is the unfortunate mother of Rilla I will return to her & strive to soothe her wounded soul -

Error) oh Mara she pines away in silent grief & mourns her dreadful loss, return return oh! Mara & comfort her, it is time to go for see the moon & stars are on their journey round the Earth & Sol is seen no more -

Arrat) oh Error is not this a woful[sic] day, the lovely, the young, the innocent, the just & the benevolent Rilla is now no more, we weep, but our tears cannot recal[sic] him to life - Error I will go with thee to the once happy cot of Rilla, wilt thou go with me of[oh] Rustus to visit the unhappy to visit the desolate widow'd mother of Rilla -

Rustus) yes! I will go with thee, I will accompany you all, ye weeping friends of Rilla, come we will descend this vale, ah! thou nightingale why singest thou among the trees the song of joy, thou knowest not thy loss, sing thou the song of mourning for the death of Rilla - Hast thou not beheld him, sitting on the
moss green seat listing to thy warbling voice, oh! Philomel\textsuperscript{18} he will never behold thee more - those Eyes are closed which so often have gazed on thee - oh! Rilla I shall never see thee more

Ernor) Haste O Rustus gloomy clouds enwrap the welkin sheet\textsuperscript{19} the moon is hid in a dark cloud, nor sends her moon-beams down, the white lustre of the stars seem to fade & I can scarce see the green hills, it will soon be a shower of rain, so haste to the house of the disconsolate, the widow'd mother of Rilla the generous Rilla who made her blest & is now gone, oh! let us try to comfort her

Rustus) I come oh! Ernor I haste but ah! may I not stop to admire the beauty of this rose, it was the favourite of Rilla, oft has he admired it & water'd it with the chry[s]tal drops which come from yonder brook -

Mara) oh! is it not affecting that in every tree or flower or shrub we find something belonging to Rilla, he shall never lose his good name for he is worthy of it, I haste to visit the disconsolate mourner come my friends for already the drops have begun to fall on the Earth.-

1. Rilla, living in a cottage, communing with 'swains' (country rustics) and contemplating nature, dwells within a pastoral idyl that has nothing to do with the age of Ossian or the Celtic heroes.
2. In Ossianic poetry, characters are frequently addressed as 'son of' another character, and often described as overcome with tears:
   Why openest thou afresh the spring of my grief, O Son of Alpin, inquiring how Oscur fell? My eyes are blind with tears, but memory beams on my heart. How can I relate the mournful death of the head of the people! Prince of the warriors, Oscur, my son I shall see thee no more!'.
   (The opening of 'The Death of Oscur', quoted in Stafford, The Sublime Savage, p.89.)
3. chaunted forth - sang out, or recited.
4. favourite of the plain - perhaps punning on 'plain' as 'simple' and stock poetic term for a rural space.
5. Lk 10: 42 - 'But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.' Mary chose to sit and listen to Jesus, while her sister Martha busied herself with supper.
6. This life is seen as a dream preparatory to the 'real life' in the hereafter.
7. it is enough for it Is a heavenly portion - a phrase Mary may have heard at Quaker Meeting.
8. his soul was spotless as the jessamine which creeps along thy thatch - a simile derived from eighteenth-century notions of rural simplicity quite at variance with the ancient world of Ossian.
9. rod of correction - suffering seen as God's way of refining the human soul.
10. shade - ghost or spirit.
11. Rilla had a premonition of his own death, and Arrat at the beginning of the piece had a sense of foreboding.
12. Again, life is seen as a preparation for death.
13. 1 Cor 15: 55. Biblical reference is, of course, a departure from the world of Ossian.
14. borrowed rays - the light of the moon and stars is 'borrowed', because a reflection of the sun's.
15. a man [...] in shining raiment - an angelic figure. In Mt 28:2-3 the angel at Christ's tomb has 'raiment white as snow', in Lk 24:4 there are 'two men [...] in shining garments'. And the man appears in a dream like the angel who visited Joseph to tell him that Mary was with child by 'the Holy Ghost' (Mt 1:20).
16. Three days [...] on earth - reminiscent of the three days between Christ's death and resurrection.
17. Sol - classical name for the sun. Classical reference like this and the one to Philomel (see below) is another departure from the world of Ossian.
18. Philomel - in classical myth, Philomela was turned into a nightingale. Her brother-in-law, Tereus, cut off her tongue so that she could not tell her sister, Procne, that he had raped her. Philomela, however, managed to depict what had happened in a tapestry, whereupon Procne in revenge killed her own son and cut him into pieces, which she offered to Tereus to eat. Just as Tereus was about to kill both Procne and Philomela in retaliation, they were all turned into birds: Philomela into a nightingale, Procne into a swallow, and Tereus into a hoopoe.
19. welkin sheet - the sky. 'Welkin' is a poetic word for the upper air or firmament.
A Prayer

1

Almighty gracious Father Lord of All
Author of Heaven & Earth thou great Supreme
At whose dread nod whole millions rise or fall
Deign to accept my humble suppliant theme

2

Oh! Lord protect my youth from every ill
Teach me to worship thee & thee alone
Oh! let me never disobey thy will
And let me be to truth & virtue prone

3

Thy holy word oh! teach me to revere
Thy holy name to love & to adore
Oh! guide my feet from every dangerous snare
Nor let me build upon the sandy shore

4

Teach me to shun the Proud the sinful road
To flee with haste from every evil way
Oh! let me dwell in Heaven my fit abode
In the bright regions of Eternal day

5

Oh! fill my soul with gratitude to thee
For all the boundless mercies thou hast given
For all thy favours to unworthy me
And for th' redemption of my Soul to Heaven

6

In all my ways do thou be with me still
Do thou protect me, & I'll never fear
Thy powerful nod[rod] can guide me from all ill
Thy blessed son I'll love & still revere
I shall be blest if I obey thy will
Then let thy humble suppliant be thy care

---

1. Mt 7:26-27 - the foolish man who hears Christ's sayings but does not follow them is like a man who builds his house on the sand, unlike the wise man who, according to v. 25, builds his upon firm rock.
This piece calls itself an enigma and rebus combined. Both are puzzles - an enigma is a riddle, a rebus gives clues to the syllables of a word or name.

An Enigma & Rebus Combined

Behold attended by a Glorious train¹
A Queen the gaze & wonder of the plain²
Ye Philosophic tribe behold your friend
Ye watch my motions & my steps attend³
Ye studious poets oft ye seek my aid
And oft at night I visit in the shade
The nightly gazers me will useful deem
For I'm to them a subject & a theme
To count my attendants none can e'er explore
They are numerous as the sands along the shore⁴
In pomp attended & in grandeur crown'd
To all I freely spread my gifts around
Alike the great & meanest of them share
For tho' a Queen, a manly face I bear⁵
Sometimes I hardly shew myself at all
At others I'm beheld throughout the ball
But if you were to sense & nature blind
Join these initials & my name you'll find
A sacred author, sore perplexing things
A proud usurper & a bird that sings⁶
Altho' too plain I stand to you confest[sic]
Yet let me add one word to all the rest
I change my colour (men do also theirs)
I'm not Earth-born (I'm above Earthly cares[])

¹ Glicks train - the stars.
² a Queen - Diana, Roman goddess of the moon, whose attendants are the stars.
³ The phases of the moon were thought to exert an influence on human lives and world events.
⁴ The stars, numerous as grains of sand.
⁵ The Man in the Moon. The lineaments of what seems very much like a face can sometimes appear on the moon, formed by shadows. The myth was that a man was sent to the moon as a punishment for working by collecting wood on the Sabbath. This originated from Num 15:32-36 where the culprit was stoned to death, though the moon is not mentioned in the Bible.
⁶ The initials spell out the word 'moon' if:
   ✴️ A sacred author = Mark or Matthew, gospel authors.
   ✴️ sore perplexing things = (possibly) oxymorons. An oxymoron is essentially a paradox - in writing, a trope or figure which, though sometimes puzzling, unites two contradictory ideas or terms so as to convey the desired meaning more pointedly.
   ✴️ A proud usurper = Oliver Cromwell.
   ✴️ a bird that sings = a nightingale.
The identity of the family forming the subject of this verse is not known.

A Description of a very happy Family

My muse to yonder dome direct thy way
To yonder dome! upheld by virtues sway
Their social comforts, bliss & friendship see
And take a pattern by the virtuous three¹
My muse assist the busy wings of fame²
And all their goodness to the world proclaim
Their goodness justice friendship peace & truth
Go - with your boys & crown their virtuous youth
Go - weave your garlands, all your powerful fill
Blest peace shall hand it (she's their favourite still[])²
Oh! might I place the laurels³ on your head
A[h]! no I'm still by disadvantage led
Unpractic'd I to flatter or to fawn
My infant muse, but yet at early dawn
Rough & unpolish'd - that they will excuse
Nor with disdain my humble lays refuse
Disdain - thou surely never wert their guest
No[,] thou'rt a stranger to their open breast
Such peace, such happiness I always see
Attendant on the truly virtuous three
Say ye who know, why they are truly blest
Why their calm minds so full of peace or rest
Why ask the cause tis plainly seen & known
Content the bright Content is all their own
Virtue (that chiefest good to man below)
Truth, goodness & benevolence they know
Plenty, delightful plenty is their guest
While love & Harmony dwell in their breast
Their kindred souls no jarring discord know
A wish t'relieve distress does from them flow
How happy they who midst a busy world
By discontent or passion ne'er were hurled⁴
Here & hereafter may you e'er be blest
May you (as now you do) enjoy true rest
Their worth their virtuous actions Heaven did crown
And on them pours ten thousand blessings down

¹ pattern - model or example. the virtuous three are the three members of the family being praised so fulsomely.
2. busy wings of fame - fame was often represented as a winged deity.
3. Mary's muse is imagined, with helpers including a figure of 'peace' personified, crowning members of the family with 'garlands' of laurel - emblem of excellence and victory.
4. hurled - thrown (i.e. off course).

The answer to this enigma, or poetic puzzle, is easy - a needle.

**Enigma**

Ye gentle females! now a while attend
Nor scorn to own in me your humble friend
In every station I with you am seen
I grace the beggar & adorn the queen
Without my aid the coxcomb or the beau¹
In all his dress would never make a shew
I join my art to form th' accomplished maid
While in her dress, my use is fair display'd
I am sharp & piercing, oft I stand your friend
And when in need, to you assistance lend
When you the house-wife or the slattern² see
The'are[sic] both distinguished by their use of me
I scorn not with the beggar to be seen
With greatest ladies or the Royal Queen
Many will own thro' me they once have shewn
Nor to one sex am I confined alone
Around the globe my favours I diffuse
Even to the black mechanic³ I'm of use
A general favourite I with great & small
My waist is slender delicate & tall
Ah! pity me while I the tale relate
One single eye is all I'm given by fate
Sure I deserve it, for I often wound
My dearest friends when I with them am found
Cruelty great! I boast my humble birth
Like all my kindred from old Mother Earth.⁴

1. coxcomb/beau - terms for 'dandies' or vain and fashionable men about town.
2. slattern - slovenly, untidy woman as opposed to the industrious housewife.
3. mechanic - worker.
4. Needles are made from metal extracted from the Earth.
The story of Martha and Mary is actually told in Lk 10:38-42, not the eleventh chapter. It was a very well known text, and Martha's choice of 'the one thing needful' would be familiar to most children of Mary's age and background.

Martha & Mary

Luke 11th Chapter

My saviour grant that I with all my heart
Like Mary blest may choose the better part
When thou dear Lord did to the village come
And enter'd into Martha's humble dome
Her worthy sister sat at Jesus' feet
(What bliss 'twould be our Saviour dear to meet)
She heard his word, his precepts she obey'd
And always listen'd to what Jesus said
Martha was cumber'd much with house affairs
Her mind was busied much with worldly cares
Yet she was always glad her Lord to see
And much she loved with Jesus oft to be
To whom she said "Dear Lord dost thou not care
"That Mary hath left me all the work to share
"Bid her assist me & her business mind
"Nor let her always tarry so behind
But Jesus answer'd, "Martha Martha thou
"Art careful & thy mind oft troubled now
There is but one thing needful, one good part
"And Mary it hath chose with all her heart¹
"That chosen part she ever shall possess
"None e'er shall take it from her - 'twill her bless
"Twill be her guard & refuge in distress"

MB

1. Mary adheres closely here to the words as spoken by Christ in the Gospel.
Ode to a Summer Morning

Now morn with countenance serene
Prepare to ope the joyful scene
    The silver moon
    Her course has run
Therefore gives place to the bright sun

2

Awake ye Idlers, wake & see
The lark & linnet on the tree
    But hark the hounds
    The horn resounds
The hare is catch'd, she is full of wounds

3

The ploughmen now renew their toil
To labour with the fruitful soil
    The matin cock
    The tell tale clock
Proclaim the morning just at their back

4

From spray to spray, from bush to bush
The little Blackbird & the t[h]rush
    The[y] tune their throats
    With warbling notes
And echo thro' the woods & groves

5

The little children now resume their play
While parents join in the labours of the day

[The poem ends here.]

1. matin - morning.
THE 1790s

DATED POEMS, AND POEMS

THAT CAN BE ASCRIBED A DATE
Sarah Forbes, the sister of Mary's friend Hannah Wilson Forbes, died, aged thirty-four, on 12 September 1790 (she was born on 6 May 1756). A funeral card dated 'Ninth Mo. 15, 1790.' invited Friends 'to attend her Funeral, from her Brother's House, No. 12, lower Ormondquay; to the Burial-ground at Stephen's-green, this Evening at five o'Clock.' A few days later, Mary (now aged fifteen) wrote this obituary poem.

On S Forbes
9th month 20th. 1790

Why droop my loved, my honor'd friends
Why the sad tear on Hannah's eye
Oh! why these signs of sorrow round
The pangs of grief, the heartfelt sigh

Ask not the cause! 'tis Forbes gone!
Her harmless spirit bid adieu
And to the immortal regions she
To meet her dear Redeemer flew

Mysterious God, shall I a worm
Presume thy wondrous works to trace?
Or dare to ask the reason why
She claspt so soon Deaths cold embrace

For when thy wisdom strikes the blow
'Tis mercy pitying aims the dart
And comfort bearing spirit flies
With balm to sooth[e] the wounded heart

'Twas God, her God, who snatch'd her pure
From Earths terrestrial mouldring[sic] clay
And He was worthy, He alone
To bear her better part away

Think oh my friends altho' your loss
Your deep affliction might allow
Yet she was virtuous she was good
And without doubt she's happy now

Then let the lenient hand of Time
Dispel the clouds your sorrows rise
Bow to your Lords correcting rod
For whom he loves, He doth chastize
Ah me! I've lost a valued friend
Whose virtues mild improved my heart
A heart which still with friendship warm
Claims in your grief a mournful part

Pleased with the music of her tongue
How oft my breast would rapture feel
Hang on her accents as they flew
And blamed the hour which bade me go

Her Soul was innocent & good
And to her Makers will resign'd
Her breast from baleful envy free
And pure & spotless was her mind

Noble, yet gentle was her heart
And bright her virtues lustre shone
For if perfection was on Earth
Perfection she might call her own

When time my latest hour shall bring
My heart shall hold her image still
And hope in humble faith to meet
Her blissful soul on Zions Hill

Oh may her honor'd virtues be
Engraved for ever on my mind
That I like her may meet my fate
With confidence in God resign'd

MB

1. terrestrial mouldring clay - the earthly body, prone to decay.
2. Zions Hill - Mount Zion, the site of the Temple at Jerusalem. A metaphor for heaven.
On 28 December 1790, Mary attained the age of sixteen. Her birthday provides an opportunity to reflect on her spiritual progress and seek God's help in her resolutions for the future. Bidding her soul to 'Look back!' over the past year, querying what sins she might have committed, she attaches special importance to sinning in speech - a 'fault' to which women are considered particularly prone.

Written on the day when I was sixteen

Yes time again hath brought this annual day
And twelve full moons roll'd unobserved away
Another Sun its kindly influence shed
And all the seasons roll'd around my head
And formed an added year - my soul tis gone
Look back! and trembling see, what thou hast done
What crimes committed or what good can boast
What vicious appetites indulged or crost![sic]
If Wisdom most or folly holds thine heart
If vice or virtue keep the chiefest part?
If conscience still exert a rigorous sway
And lop the1 too luxuriant boughs away
And nip the buds of sin what e'er they be
Expand my heart! exalt, yet humble me!
If flows that heart, with universal love?
Honours mankind, & reverence*[sic] God above!
Look back! my soul! all thy past deeds survey
Another birth day thou may'st never see!
Hath ever envy with envenom'd dart
Found easy entrance to this yielding heart?
Hath ever malice formed a part of me
Is my whole frame from baneful discord2 free
Did ever I with jealous eye behold
My neighbours wealth or crave his hoarded gold
Did e'er my breast the godlike transport3 feel
To soothe the wretched! & their miseries heal
Did e'er this bosom heave a wishful sigh
To see another's pomp or grandeur high?
Did e'er my heart enclose detested pride
Or scorn the humble? or the great deride
Did ever passion tempt my soul to sin
Deform'd & foul! it lurks unseen within
Did e'er my hasty tongue from Reason stray
To our weak sex that dreadful fault they lay
Ah, hapless sex! what evils dost thou know
Tho' form'd a blessing, oft a curse below4
For where the tongue usurps its hateful sway
Truth Reason Justice Virtue all give way
Look back my soul! survey thy deeds again
And never let that little member reign
Dread Lord! what wonder strikes my kindling soul
I see successive seasons as they roll
And to my thought this moral truth convey
So thou hast risen & so thou must decay
Yet they shall rise & flourish o'er & o'er,
But when I fall I rise on Earth no more
Then grant me Lord! that I may so employ
Those hours which thro' thy mercy I enjoy
As most to thy own honor will conduce
Thee to obey - thy beings end, and use!
Oh! keep me humble keep me in thy fear
Low lay me at thy feet, and keep me there.
Grant too that innocence may mask my days
And harmless, inoffensive truth, my ways
Spotless & free from guile! Oh! let me be
Correct my heart! and keep it - but for the heal
Chain down each wild unruly thought of mine
And teach me how to lose my will in thine
So shall immortal joys inspire my breast
Resigned to thee - I'll disregard the rest
Rise rise my soul to Purity aspire
For Heaven - nor less than Heaven do I desire
Thence fill'd with gratitude the past I'll trace
And the vast riches of my Saviour's grace:
Then every birth-day shall instruction lend
Nay every day shall see me strive to mend
Improve the Talents God to me hath given
Correct my faults! leave Earth! & climb to Heavn.
Not many suns have shed their burning ray
Since I a shapeless mass of matter lay
Till warmed to life by his supreme command
I took this form obedient to his hand
And tho' but sixteen winters I have known
What then? I'll dare to call my God my own
Let others seek for titles wealth or fame
Their end I pity & despise their aim:
Be mine an humbler path of life to find
A peaceful conscience & a quiet mind
That path to reach which leads to him I love
Even hasty footed time seems scarce to move
And every birth-day with new joys shall come
For every birth-day brings me nearer home.

1. 'the' is written twice in manuscript - repetition omitted here.
2. baneful discord - poisonous conflict or rancour.
3. godlike transport - godlike means 'resembling God', and the movement of empathy toward others could be said to be 'of God'. But there is also, perhaps, an idea here of 'heavenly rapture'.
4. In Genesis, Chapters 2 and 3, Eve, the first woman, was created as a companion and helpmeet for Adam but through her disobedience brought sin and death into the world.

5. Jas 3:5 - 'Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth.' The biblical text then describes the tongue as 'a fire, a world of iniquity' which 'defileth the whole body' and 'is set on fire of hell'. Man can tame all the beasts of the earth, 'But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison' (v. 6-8).

6. thot. - manuscript abbreviation of 'thought'.

7. Mt 25:14-30 - Christ's parable of the talents. The 'talent' (derived from the Greek word 'talanton' - a weight or sum of money) was 'an ancient weight and money of account among Assyrians, Greeks, Romans, etc., of varying value', while, in Latin, 'talentum' means 'inclination of mind' (OED). Christ's parable about the monies left, by a master, in the care of his servants, speaks metaphorically of our duty to make best use of the gifts vouchsafed to us.
The following are dedicatory poems to friends, written to accompany copies of *A Poem on the African Slave Trade*, Mary's contribution to the anti-slave trade campaign, published in 1792. It was thought most useful to reproduce them here, before *A Poem on the African Slave Trade*.

The first is to Mary's friend Hannah Wilson Forbes. (See Appendix 7, 'Individuals Featuring in the Writings of Mary Birkett Card'.) The date in the heading might refer to the date of the anti-slave trade poem rather than the date of this dedication. However, in the manuscript collection, it is placed shortly after *A Poem on the African Slave Trade* and near other 1792 material. It is likely, therefore, that it was written in 1792. In any event, it must have been written between 1792 and the death of Hannah Wilson Forbes in 1799.

**To H W Forbes with the second part of my Poem on the African Slave trade 1792**

Friend of my heart! whom all who know admire  
Fain would the muse for thee attune her lyre\(^1\)  
Fain would she praise the maid she fondly loves  
And her hand dictate\(^2\) what her heart approves  
Would with pleased thought thy matchless graces tell  
And on thy virtues - on thy friendship dwell  
Would sing how late thy well judged fancy shone  
Queen of the feast! - its elegance - thy own\(^3\)  
Where beauty, sweets & order were combined  
Expressive emblem of its author's mind  
But, since to that high theme, she may'nt aspire  
(So scant her portion of poetic fire)  
With candour thou her humble gift receive  
Tho' small the offering, large the heart that gave  
Much wilt thou find to pardon, many a line  
That lacks thy graceful ease, thy judgment fine  
And many a simple thought did she impart  
That had no merit save a feeling heart  
Such as it is with mingled fear she sends  
Remember not to critics - but to friends.

MB

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1. Fain [...] lyre - the lyre was the instrument of the muses and a symbol for the music of poetry. Fain - gladly.
2. dictate - write down, take dictation.
3. Referring to Hannah Wilson Forbes's role as a hostess on a recent occasion. Quakers often entertained on a large scale, particularly at times of Quarterly or Yearly Meetings when many visitors might descend on a household.
The initial letter given for the Christian name of the addressee of the second dedicatory poem is difficult to read in manuscript. It appears to be an 'S', but capital 'L's are written very similarly. If it is 'S', the addressee may have been Susannah Appleby, lifelong companion to Sarah Darby, the sister of Quaker minister Deborah Darby, of Coalbrookdale in Shropshire. (The Darbys led the iron industry in the eighteenth century by successfully smelting iron with coke.) Susannah Appleby, through the Darbys, had contacts with Irish Friends such as the Grubbs who stayed at Coalbrookdale on occasion. (See Rachel Labouchere, Deborah Darby (York: William Sessions, 1993), pp.40, 219.) Other Friends from Ireland sometimes stayed at the Darby home, Sunniside, when in transit on journeys around England. Mary Birkett visited England in 1789 and it is just possible she had some contact with the Darbys or Applebys then.

However, this dedication might have been written some time after the 1792 publication of A Poem on the African Slave Trade. Susannah Appleby became a minister herself in 1791, and often travelled with Deborah Darby. She went on a ministerial visit to Ireland in April 1799 with Robert Fowler, Sarah Stephenson and Mary Lloyd, returning with Mary Lloyd in February 1800. (See Labouchere, Deborah Darby, pp.254, 262.) The usual pattern for such visits was for the party to spend time in Dublin initially, and then travel around Ireland. Hence, Mary could have met Susannah Appleby in the April and given her these lines, with a copy of the anti-slave trade poem, then. It is quite likely that the verse was composed in the spring of 1799 as it is sandwiched, in the manuscript collection, between two 1799 poems: 'To Nathl. Card' (19 January 1799), and 'An Elegy' on the death of Hannah Wilson Reynolds née Forbes (9 May 1799).

To her Friend

S[?] Appleby with verses on the Slave Trade

If e'er these lines thy casual glance receive
And stranger sorrows give thy soul to heave\(^1\)
As thro' thine heart soft pity's movements flow
Which rise to soothe our sable brethrens woe
Then for a moment let thy thoughts descend
And trace in every line an absent friend -

\(^1\) stranger sorrows - sufferings of strangers, i.e. the negro slaves. heave - sob or cry.
A Poem on the African Slave Trade

This poem, enjoining abstention from slave-produced sugar and rum, was well-received on publication in 1792 (according to Part II and its published preface, Part I was received favourably). And it has attracted the interest of several scholars in recent years, Part I being reproduced in the major collection ed. by Kitson and Lee - Slavery, Abolition and Emancipation: Writings in the British Romantic Period (1999). The poem itself - how it engaged with its contemporary audience, how it responds to a request in a poem by the Quaker Thomas Wilkinson, An Appeal to England, on Behalf of the Abused Africans (1789), for women to espouse the slaves' cause, negotiating Wilkinson's formulation of compassionate femininity, and utilises passages from James Thomson's The Seasons (1726-46) - is explored in the introduction to this edition. This headnote offers a brief account of the historical context.

As the niece of George Harrison, a leading abolitionist from the inception of the anti-slavery movement in England, it is not surprising that Mary became interested in the anti-slavery cause. As she grew up, she would have been aware of his activities - the fact that one of her brothers, George Harrison Birkett, was named after him shows the esteem in which he was held by her parents. George Harrison was one of the twenty-three members of the first Quaker committee to look at the slave trade in June 1783, before he and five other Friends (Samuel Hoare, Joseph Woods, John Lloyd, Dr Thomas Knowles and William Dillwyn) formed the first anti-slavery association that July, 'to consider what steps could by them be taken for the Relief and Liberation of the Negro Slaves in the West Indies, and the Discouragement of the Slave Trade on the Coast of Africa'. (Thompson-Clarkson MSS, quoted in Judith Jennings, The Business of Abolishing the British Slave Trade 1783–1807, p.23. See also Clarkson, The History of the Rise, Progress, and Accomplishment of the Abolition of The African Slave-Trade by The British Parliament, I, 124-28.) Harrison then became a founder member of the London Abolition Committee in 1787, working assiduously with Wilberforce, Clarkson et al. toward abolition of the trade, and then slavery itself, being present at the last meeting of the Committee in 1819. A full account of his contribution can be found in Jennings's book, which looks at abolition through the lives of four Quaker abolitionists.

From the end of the 1780s, anti-slavery sentiment swept across the British Isles to become a huge movement in which people of different denominations and political persuasions worked side by side, although dissenters and evangelicals tended to predominate. Though some ultra-conservatives always associated anti-slavery with free-thinking radicalism, theirs was the minority view until the aftermath of the French Revolution made many more people wary of anything tending towards disruption of the established order.

In 1788, Hannah More, a popular evangelical and conservative author, published a lengthy poem entitled Slavery denouncing the trade, which launched a wave of poetry of a similar ilk. This was probably an influence on Mary, as well as Wilkinson's Appeal (1789). But Mary's poem was written in 1792 to heighten public awareness and encourage support for William Wilberforce's campaign at a particular juncture - when he was attempting once again to get an anti-slave trade bill through Parliament. This 1792 campaign was backed by petitions drawn up in a concerted effort from February onwards all across the country. It had some success. In April, the Commons agreed to end the trade itself (though not to abolish existing slavery) in British dominions in four years' time - 1796 - but the issue was postponed by the House of Lords in June. The two parts of Mary's poem were probably written to coincide with the Bill's passage through both houses (see headnote to Part II). The slave trade was not abolished in the British colonies until 1807. (See Mary's address to Hans Hamilton M.P. (1806), p.380 in this volume, persuading him to vote in favour of that year's abolition bill.)

Mary's proposal to boycott slave-produced sugar, and rum in the second part of her poem, also arose very much from within the abolitionist activity of 1792. Abstention had been a tactic for a while, but in January 1792 Thomas Clarkson circulated a pamphlet entitled An Address to the People of Great Britain on the Propriety of Abstaining from West Indian Sugar and Rum. 'If enough people abstained,' he said, 'government could not obtain their revenue unless they gratified the wishes of the people by the Abolition of the Slave Trade.' Other similar publications had been printed in 1791. One of these, An Address to the People of Great
Britain (Respectfully Offered to the People of Ireland) on the Utility of Refraining from the Use of West Indian Sugar and Rum, was reprinted in Dublin in 1792, as was Considerations Addressed to the professors of Christianity of Every Denomination on the Impropriety of Consuming West Indian Sugar and Rum as Produced by the Oppressive Labour of Slaves. These might well have provided some impetus for Mary's poem, but she would also have been aware of abstention practiced among people she knew, as the idea spread rapidly that spring. The Anglo-Irish author Maria Edgeworth, staying in Bristol, wrote to her friend Sophy Ruxton on 9 March 1792, telling her that, 'Twenty-five thousand people in England have absolutely left off eating West India sugar, from the hope that when there is no longer any demand for sugar the slaves will not be so cruelly treated'. (Maria Edgeworth, Chosen Letters, ed. by F. V. Barry (London: Jonathan Cape, 1931), p.53). Meanwhile, Quakers in Ireland had adopted this tactic too. Abraham Shackleton, the Quaker schoolmaster at Ballitore, was one of many Friends who refrained from drinking tea, sweetened with sugar, and refused slave-produced goods (Harrison, Biographical Dictionary of Irish Quakers, p.92).

**Publication**

A Poem on the African Slave Trade. Addressed to her own Sex was published in 1792 in two parts by J. Jones of 111 Grafton Street, Dublin. (Note the address to other women is not included in the title in manuscript.) Part I has an appendix listing other works published by J. Jones, including texts by well-known authors like Pindar, Cowper and Goldsmith, instructive volumes such as the Rev. John Bennett's Strictures on Female Education, and Original Stories from Real Life, with Conversations, calculated to regulate the Affections, and form the Mind to Truth and Goodness, by Mary Wollstonecraft, the feminist author of A Vindication of the Rights of Women (1792). The months of publication for Mary Birkett's poem are not given but Part II must have followed later as its preface states that its composition was prompted by the encouraging reception to the first part. Part I must, indeed, have been popular because it went into two editions. Part I runs to nineteen pages, Part II to twenty-five in print (size 12 x 20 cm). Copies are held at Friends House, London and the British Library (Ref: BL:11633.bb.6.) Both parts are also included in a volume held at Woodbrooke College, Birmingham, simply entitled Tracts (Library Ref: 3 c EA), containing an assortment of mainly eighteenth-century texts, some but not all printed in Dublin. The copy of Part II at Friends House has a handwritten dedication at the top: 'Elizabeth Barrington to C & G Homer 1799'. Elisabeth Barrington was probably Mary's childhood friend, Elizabeth (Betsy) Pike, also the friend of Mary Leadbeater.

The published editions of A Poem on the African Slave Trade have prefaces not contained in the manuscript collection, and carry a quote attributed to Sterne on their title pages: "Disguise thyself as thou wilt, still, slavery, still thou art a bitter cup". Laurence Sterne (1713-1768), born in Ireland, was a clergyman and author of those quintessential, ironically witty, novels of eighteenth-century sensibility - The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy (1760-67) and A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy (1768). Mary's quote is from an episode in the latter, where the narrator, Yorick, tries to convince himself that imprisonment in the Bastille for lacking a passport would not be so terrible - it would afford him the opportunity to think and write. The reality of the loss of freedom is brought home to him, however, when he tries, unsuccessfully, to release a caged starling repeating endlessly, 'I can't get out - I can't get out'. Yorick reflects, 'Disguise thyself as thou wilt, still slavery! said I - still thou art a bitter draught; and though thousands in all ages have been made to drink of thee, thou art no less bitter on that account.' (Penguin Classics edn, ed. by Graham Petrie (London: 1967, repr. 1986), pp.94-97.) Mary's change of the word 'draught' to 'cup' connects the pleasurable, apparently innocent act of sipping a cup of sweet tea with the reality of the 'bitter cup' of suffering this entailed upon slaves - an idea perhaps suggested by Thomson's reflections, in The Seasons, 'Winter', 322-48, on how 'little' those 'Whom pleasure, power and affluence surround' think of others actually suffering at that 'moment', including 'how many drink the cup/Of baleful grief (334-35). (See also Kowaleski-Wallace, Consuming Subjects, p.48 on the 'ambiguities' inherent in Mary's alteration.)

Comparison of the manuscript of Mary Birkett's poem with the published one reveals few differences. They are mainly in punctuation.
Oppression! thou whose hard & cruel chain,
Entails on all thy victims woe & pain;
Who gives with tyrant force & scorpion whip,
The cup of misery to a Negros lip;
Marks with stern frown thy wide unhallow'd reign
And broods with gloomy wing o'er Afric's injured plain!
Thy voice which spreads pale desolation round,
While trembling myriads groan beneath the sound,
Thy voice more rude than Borea's chilling breath
Call thousands forth to feel a living death!
Which in hoarse thunders bids injustice rise!
While oft beneath the stroke the sufferer dies:
Yes! thy infernal voice impels my song,
And o'er my soul its crude ideas throng;
A sorrowing sympathy surrounds my heart,
And mild compassion bleeds in every part
Mov'd at the dire distress my brethren know
My mind in vain participates their woe;
In vain for them I raise the fervent sigh
Ahh! still they bleed!, they languish!, still they die!
How little think the giddy & the gay
While sipping o'er the sweets of charming tea,
How oft with grief they pierce the manly breast,
How oft their lux'ry robs the wretch of rest,
And that to gain the plant we idly waste
Th'extreme of Human mis'ry they must taste!

Yes! tis no lying fable I relate,
Th'extreme of human mis'ry is their fate!
Let sordid traders call it what they will,
Men must be men, possest[sic] with feelings still;
And little boots a white or sable skin,
To prove a fair inhabitant within.

There are oh! scandal to the christian name
Who fierce of blood & lost to sense of shame
Dare lave their hands impious in human gore,
And barter living souls for lust of ore;
More ravenous than the foulest beasts of prey,
They but from natures powerful cravings slay;
More cruel than the thief whose murd'rous knife
At once deprives the trembling wretch of life;
Him poverty perchance first taught to stray
And strongly urged her too prevailing plea;
Yet him the justice of our laws condemn:
Beasts we destroy, but seldom think of them
Strange paradox! we view with shrinking eye
The murd'rs crime, & bid him justly die;
But when our traders snatch a thousand lives,
No pain, no punishment on them derives;
The guilt's diminish'd, as increased its size,
And they are clear, - at least in mortal eyes.

Tell me ye friends of slav'ry's shameful cause
Where shall I find the records, where the laws
Which give to man indubitable power
To sell his brother, & the spoil devour?
And whence do we the infernal doctrine hold
To sell the image of our God
To our first parents when th'almighty's cause
Reveal'd his holy will - his hallow'd laws;
When from his lips, the wondrous accents broke,
And mortals listen'd while the Godhead spoke;
In that mysterious moment did he say? -
"Man shall his fellow, ravage, sell & slay;
"And one unhappy race shall always be
"Slave to anothers pamper'd luxury."

There are, I know who think & more who say
That not so injured - so opprest[ sic ] are they;
That under masters just, they earn their bread,
And plenty crowns the board at which they're fed
Ah! sophist, vain thy subtle reas'nings aim!
Look at the negroes sun burnt; grief worn frame!
Examine well, each limb, each nerve, each bone,
Each artery & then observe thy own;
The beating pulse, the heart that throbs within,
All (save the sable tincture of his skin)
Say, christians, do they not resemble you?
If so, their feelings & sensations too;
One moment now with you his burden rest,
Then tell me, is he happy? is he blest?

Lo! where on Africs shore the sable youth,
Feels each degree of honour, love, & truth;
(Though he ne'er heard the gospels joyful sound,
Nor call'd on Jesus in his natal ground;
Reproach him not, oh! follower of thy Lord,
Who never knew the blessing of his word.
Think on thy own forefathers savage lore,
He keeps his inward guide & dost thou more?
Rear'd in the lap of innocence & ease,
Him simple natures genuine bounties please.
For him no palace rears its costly head
Contented with an humble turf built shed;
On him no fawning lacqueys proudly wait,
In all the pamper'd insolence of state;
No harmless lives his taste to gratify,
Oppress'd with various torture slowly die.
And if his manners suit the savage name,
Uneducated man is every where the same.

There in that plain, when freedom was his guest
And social love glow'd in his faithful breast;
Then when his soul youths joyful feelings knew,
And manhood, ripening manhood, rose to view;
He to his parents eye perhaps appears,
The only staff\textsuperscript{18} of their declining years;
And he with ceaseless love & anxious care,
Does oft for them the hunted food prepare:
Perchance soft passion does his bosom move
And his fond nymph\textsuperscript{19} returns his constant love
Perhaps his offspring hail their honor'd sire,
And each to gain the envied kiss aspire:
On him a pleasing weight of cares attend
As Father, husband, brother, son or friend
Haply the hour when their supply he sought
His soul with every warm affection fraught
As o'er the plain, he chased his wonted prey\textsuperscript{20}
And hope deceitful cheer'd the toilsome way
When homeward now the lifeless prize he brought
Already greets the cot his rapid thought
Him Christian traders see, his path surround
In vain his feet pursue their nimble bound;
He's seized & drag'd\textsuperscript{sic} along, in vain he cries,
Starts, stamps the ground - now groans, now weeps now sighs;
And filled with all the agony of grief
Raves with despair, now supplicates relief
In vain he strives their pity to command
The ruffians hear, but will not understand
Deaf to th'heartrending groan, the plaintive sigh
They view his misery with a Stoics\textsuperscript{21} eye,
And to the vessell haul the wretch along
In chains to mingle with the suffering throng.

Oh thou! whom more than all he loves beside,
Friend of his heart, his chaste & faithful bride!
What was thy anguish on the fatal day
Which bore thy spouse from Afric far away!
In vain for him thou heapest the chearful\textsuperscript{sic} fire
In vain thy little ones demand their sire
In vain thou chid'st his long delay - go mourn,
For never must the youth, thou lov'st return!\textsuperscript{22}

Lo, now the winds embrace the swelling sail
And the full bark\textsuperscript{23} salutes the rising gale,
While now the desolated shore they leave
And for Jamaica cut the briny wave.
While o'er the foaming sea their course they steal
Think what the negroes suffer! - what they feel!
Opprest[ sic] with sickness, close confined they lie
No kind, no sympathizing friend is nigh:
Grim Death, his jaws insatiate shews around, 24
And bleeding mem'ry opes the recent wound. 25
Thrice happy they, who feel his icy hand! 26
No more they dread their tyrants stern command;
No more exposed to insult or to pain,
They drag along the hard & cruel chain;
But their freed souls, approach the throne of grace
To meet the proud oppressor face to face.

Oh, tyrants what will then your anguish be
When God & men shall your injustice see!
And trust me that important day will come
Which fixes your irrevocable doom,
When all your basely murder'd slaves shall rise
And publish all your crimes throughout the skies
Here cease oh Muse! nor dare the secret tell
The dread event, which but with God must dwell

Now turn our eye to Indias sultry shore, 27
And tell oh! tell me, are their sorrows o'er?

The bark arrives with those who yet remain,
They drag to land, the feebly tottering train:
Their squalid look, & meagre form declare
The soul oppressed[ sic] with sickness grief & care.
I pass the complicated scenes of woe
Which these sad vassals of our luxury know
Their sickness, falt'ring, shameful market past,
And now for life the dreadful die is cast.

Grant a mild master kindly treats them well
(Few such there are - & they who know can tell)
Grant that those masters plenteous meals prepares[ prepare]
(Though well 'tis known, their food is scant & bare)
Yet then, even then, can comfort on them wait
Depress'd, degraded to a servile state?
And they once chieftain, in their native land,
Shackled in chains & trembling at command;
Naked exposed to Phoebus"28 piercing beams,
And yoked (as horse or oxen) to the teams;
Dead to remorse, the overseer stands by,
And oft does he the sounding lash apply.
So Pharaoh's task-masters of yore oppressed[ sic]
Old Jacobs seed - & thus the flock distrest.[ sic] 29

Now dead to hope they see resistance vain,
They in their manly breasts, conceal their pain;
A silent grief to furious rage succeeds,
And by resentment stung, - their whole soul bleeds.
Firm in despair, their hands refuse the yoke,
We call them stubborn - & apply the stroke;
Their reeking backs, the dire correction shew,
Yet they unmoved, nor fear nor tremor know
Their strength heroic, claims a nobler name
And shews not theirs, but their oppressors shame.

Say not that if not humbled they rebel;
Tyrant the cause, the guilt with thee must dwell
For when they view the authors of their woe
No wonder, if fierce passion aims the blow!
They all their blasted hopes & comforts see
Condemn'd to linger life in misery.

What son of thine, oh Albion, would bow down,
Would tremble at the upstart planters frown?
What son of thine, oh Albion, thus opprest
Nor feel revenge inflame his haughty breast.

They not the joys of mild religion know,
The ransom'd soul they to a Saviour owe.
For this oh Britain shall I dare to blame
Nor can I with the turk enrol thy name.
The Turk to mah'met would convert his slave
He gives him freedom & his soul would save;
The Spaniards to the mine their vassals send
But first the rites of baptism them attend;
Our Albion when opprest her captives lie
Shews not the way to suffer & to die;
Nor gives the gospel to each erring mind,
Nor points to Jesus merciful & kind.

Ah! negro think not hardly of our God,
Tho’ high o’er thee, affliction lifts her rod;
Ill do his followers ways his goodness prove
Whose laws breathe mercy & whose precepts love
And ill our manners with our maxims suit
These dignify - while those degrade us to the brute

Lysander did I really hear thee say,
Self preservation bids us on them prey,
Or what vast nation could supply the bread
For such encreasing myriads to be fed!

Think’st thou that form’d on this erroneous plan
The world was made - & Gods last, best work - man?
Think’st thou that he who erst seven thousand fill’d
With what a few small loaves & fishes yield
Think’st thou that he’s insufficient to supply
Who hears the tender ravens croaking cry?
"Must we abandon then Camillus cries,
"The wea[ll]th abundant which in Afric lies?
"Shall our famed commerce languish & decay
"And we no more send fleets for slaves away?

No wise Camillus, search her fertile land,
Let the mild rays of commerce there expand;
Her plains abound in ore, in fruits her soil,
And the rich plain, scarce needs the ploughmans toil
Thy Vessels crown'd with olive branches send
And make each injured African thy friend:
So tides of wealth by peace & justice got,
Oh! philanthropic heart! will be thy lot.

Plant there our colonies & to their Soul
Declare the God who form'd this boundless whole
Improve their manners, teach them how to live
To them the useful lore of science give;
So shall with us their praise & glory rest
And we in blessing, be supremely blest;
For 'tis a duty which we surely owe
We to the Romans were, what to us Afric now.

Hibernian fair, who own compassions sway,
Scorn not a younger sisters artless lay;
To you the muse, would raise her daring song
For mercys softest beams to you belong;
To you the sympathetic sigh is known,
And charitys sweet lustre - all your own;
To you gall'd mis'ry seldom pleads in vain,
Oh! let us rise & burst the negros chain!
Yes, sisters, yes, to us the task belongs,
'Tis we increase or mitigate their wrongs.
If we the produce of their toils refuse,
If we no more the blood-stain'd luxury choose
If from our lips we push the plant away
For which the liberties of thousands pay,
Of thousands once as blest, & born as free,
And nursed with care ( tho' not as soft) as we
If in benevolence firm, we this can dare,
And in our brethrens sufferings hold no share
In no small part their long-borne pangs will cease
And we to souls unborn may whisper peace.

Sisters another theme did fancy choose
Far from your view had shrunk my blushing muse
And still from you concealed my trembling form
But here - I must - I dare - I will be warm.

Shall we who dwell in pleasure, peace & ease,
Shall we who but in meekness, mildness please,
Shall we surrounded by each dear delight,
To soothe the heart or gratify the sight,
Say, shall for us, the sable sufferers sigh?
Say, shall for us, so many victims die?
Shall still for us, the sable maid bewail?
Shall still the doating parents fondness fail?
Shall groans for ever ring thro' africs grove,
Of deep distess, or disappointed love?

Oh, how would thorns of care enthral[sic] each breast
How would it rob the passing hours of rest,
If from our arms our nearest kindred torn,
And we for ever doom'd their loss to mourn?

No, let lernes47 gentle daughters prove
The kindling force of sympathetic love,
Now shew their virtues, be humane indeed,
And plead for those, who have no power to plead.48

Say not that small's the sphere in which we move
And our attempts would vain & fruitless prove;
Not so, we hold a most important share,
In all the evils - all the wrongs they bear,
And tho' their woes entire, we cant[can't] remove,
We may the encreasing[sic] miseries which they prove
Push far away the plant for which they die,
And in this one small thing our taste deny;
We must - we ought, 'tis justice points the way
Mercy & charity loudly call - "obey".

Can you refuse to soothe, methinks they cry
The heart of sorrow, or bid cease the sigh?
Can you whom plenty, wealth & peace surround
Who in societys mild joys abound?
Commerce to you does its choice stores impart
With all the gifts of nature & of art;
For you gay Flora49 animates the scene,
And spreads with vast parterres50 the smiling green
Her mingled powers & varied charms unite
And does each sense - not satiate but delight
On you brown Ceres51 sheds her richest powers
Pomona's52 fruits nectarious - all are yours;
For you Hygeia,53 maid of blooming mien,
With joy abounding fills the mirthful scene;
Can you whose hearts, these heaven-crown'd blessings feel;
Refuse one sacrifice their wounds to heal?
A plant of which 'tis luxury gives the use,
Which our sad brethrens slavery does produce!
No, daughters of lerne, you will give
This, self-denying proof, & bid them live!

See where Religions holy banners rise,
And to your view presents immortal skies!
List, for methinks I hear the matron say,
Can you whose hearts confess the hallow'd sway;
Can you before my altar bow the knee,
And yet refuse to set a brother free?
In humble faith you hope for heavens high crown,
Yet press with grief so many spirits down:
"Preserve us, Lord, from evil" can you pray,
Yet wilfully pursue the evil way?
And how can you his blessing think to prove
Whose first best law is universal love?
Man was his fav'rite work - he form'd him free;
His fav'rite work whate'er his colour be
And far more dark the sinful soul within,
Than the poor harmless negros sable skin

"Strange! cries Flavilla, "if so foul the trade,
"Why has wise Heaven, its thunders thus delay'd?"
"And if the traffic of mankind were wrong,
"Would heavens dread Lord, have suffer'd it so long?"
"Sure rather He'd his sore displeasure shew,
"And crush the tyrant 'neath his vengeful blow"

Shalt thou Flavilla, with too curious eye,
In his mysterious causes dare to pry?
Shalt thou, short-sighted mortal wish to know,
Why thus thy Maker orders things below?

Ask why the thief who steals thy purse away,
Still feels the warm reviving light of day?
Ask why the wretch who lifts the murd'ring knife
(Escaped thy search) still breathes the air of life?
Or, ask why he who robs the houseless poor,
In safety yet enjoys his ill got store?
Or why throughout the globes capacious round,
Virtue oft droops where vice is prosp'rous found?

Seek not the hidden ways of God to know
Sure is his justice, tho' 'tis often slow.
Enough for us, his mercy suffers long,
And mans free will may choose or right or wrong;
His sacred judgments are reserved in store,
'Tis ours to chuse the right - & silently adore.

Oh! may that power, whose wondrous wisdom wrought
Myriads of Worlds, with beauteous order fraught
Whose fingers gave to Heavens wide arch its bound
And scatter'd those fair Orbs which glitter round
Who bade the moon to shine each night - each day
The sun to cheer us by his vital ray;
At whose command the rolling thunders rise
And livid lightenings flash thro' blazing skies,
Whose word creative peopled Earth with charms
Whose grace preserves us & whose bounty warms:
May the mild dictates of his love impart
The path of virtue to each wand'ring heart!
Before him flee, the mists of error blind
And truths whole force irradiates all the mind.

So when Aurora
Leads forth the ruddy blaze of opening light,
Burst o'er the horizon with golden fire,
And bids the hovering shades of night expire;
Her footsteps chase the sable clouds away,
And usher in the glorious light of day.

1. One source for Mary's opening address to 'Oppression' with its scorpion whip ('scorpion' used as an adjective to mean 'stinging' or 'biting) Is almost certainly James Thomson's instruction to 'sons of mercy', in The Seasons, 'Winter', 378-80, to 'Drag forth the legal monsters into light, Wrench from their hands Oppression's iron rod'. He was addressing the Jail Committee (1729), which revealed the dreadful conditions in British prisons.

2. unhallow'd - unholy.

3. Afric - poetic name for Africa, used throughout the poem.

4. Borea's - in classical mythology, Boreas was the god of the cold north wind. The placing of the apostrophe before the 's' in manuscript Is probably an error.

5. Thomson, The Seasons, 'Winter', 322-58, passage commencing:

   Ah! little think the gay licentious proud,
   Whom pleasure, power, and affluence surround –
   They, who their thoughtless hours in giddy mirth,
   And wanton, often cruel, riot waste –
   Ah! little think they, while they dance along,
   How many feel, this very moment, death
   And all the sad variety of pain;

   He then enumerates many forms of human suffering, ending by saying that if 'man' considered how others suffered:

   Vice in his high career would stand appalled,
   And heedless rambling Impulse learn to think;
   The conscious heart of Charity would warm,
   And her wide wish Benevolence dilate;
   The social tear would rise, the social sigh;
   And, Into clear perfection, gradual bliss,
   Refining still, the social passions work.

   Such an arousal of 'the social passions' Is, of course, the purpose of Mary's project.

6. tea - could be pronounced 'tay', thereby rhyming with 'gay' in the previous line.

7. boots - avails.

8. lave - bathe, wash.

9. Thomas Wilkinson, in An Appeal to England, on Behalf of the Abused Africans, A Poem (1789), p.18, asks how, if 'The dying thief our lively pity draws' when hung according to the law, we can 'redress withhold' from slaves, who are innocent of any crime, once we know of the wrong done them. Mary develops the Idea of the thief further - even the crimes of a thief who commits murder may have their origin in poverty - and goes on to challenge the laws that condemn him to death yet refuse to punish slavers who kill thousands.

10. Gen 1:26 - 'And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness'.

11. our first parents - Adam and Eve.
12. **sophist** - originally a philosopher, the word came to refer to a person who engages in false reasoning, or sophistry - promoting arguments that appear plausible, even clever, but are ultimately specious.

13. Anti-slavery verse generally countered ideas that black people were a coarser, lower order of humanity, by proclaiming their ability to think, feel and suffer. Wilkinson, for instance, stresses the negro's capacity to feel love and pain (An Appeal, p.9). Mary is unequivocal in asserting the full humanity of the African in terms of sensitivity, and capacity for tender or higher feeling, at every level. The previous year, Charles James Fox had felt it necessary, in the House of Commons, to pose the question: 'Why, might there not be men in Africa as fine feelings as ourselves, of as enlarged understandings, and as manly in their minds as any of us?' (Quoted in Hugh Thomas, The Slave Trade: The History of the Atlantic Slave Trade 1440-1870 (London: Picador, 1997), p.511.)

14. **natal ground** - birth place.

15. Inward guide - Quakers believed that the 'inward guide', the 'inner light or Christ within', exists in all people and could operate upon the soul regardless of an individual's knowledge of the historical Christ. Hence a native African who had never heard of Jesus could still know God in his heart.

16. **him simple [. . .] please** - reflecting the prevalent idea that native peoples, free of the artificiality of civilised Western culture, lived lives more in tune with nature.

17. **staff** - support.

18. **fond nymph** - describing the kidnapped negro's wife as a nymph, a classical demi-goddess of nature, is a deliberate attempt to dispel contemporary images of black people as savages. It is also in keeping with the concept of 'the noble savage' - the idea that native peoples were closer to nature and uncorrupted by 'civilisation'.

19. **wonted prey** - usual prey, i.e. the animals he generally hunted.

20. **Stoic** - unfeeling. The Stoic school of Ancient Greek philosophers advocated indifference to suffering, though this was for a moral purpose - to gain freedom from the indulgence of human appetites in order to concentrate the mind on virtue - and was not meant to encourage callous behaviour towards others.

21. **Thomson, The Seasons, 'Winter', 311-17:**

   In vain for him the officious wife prepares
   The fire fair-blazing and the vestment warm;
   In vain his little children, peeping out
   Into the mingling storm, demand their sire
   With tears of artless innocence. Alas!
   Nor wife nor children more shall he behold,
   Nor friends, nor sacred home.

Mary appropriates Thomson's well-known tableau, considered powerfully affecting, of a country swain's wife and children awaiting their father's return, unaware of his death in a snowstorm. Such an appropriation claims for the African family a capacity for familial affection equivalent to that of an English one, thereby refuting Thomson's depiction elsewhere, in 'Summer', of African savagery:

   [. . .] Love dwells not there, [in Africa]
   The soft regards, the tenderness of life,
   The heart-shed tear, the ineffable delight
   Of sweet humanity: these court the beam
   Of milder climes - (890-94)

22. **bark** - poetic word for ship, used throughout the poem.

23. **Grim Death [. . .] around** - Death is personified as an insatiable monster whose greed is evident all around on board the ship. Slave traders overcrowded the ships, anticipating that a large percentage of the human cargo would die from sickness or grief, but, of course, such overcrowding exacerbated the loss of life.

24. **bleeding mem'ry [. . .] wound** - memory (whether of life in Africa or of being seized and maltreated by the traders) intensifies the slaves' sufferings and sense of the injury done them.

25. **his icy hand** - i.e. the hand of Death.

26. **India's sultry shore** - referring to the West Indies.

27. **Phoebus** - an epithet of Apollo, the classical god of the sun.

28. Referring to the Egyptian Pharaoh's enslavement of the Israelites - the progeny of Jacob.
30. reeking - bloody with fresh wounds.

31. Albion - ancient name for Britain, often used in poetry, probably derived from 'albus', the Latin word for 'white'. The white cliffs of Dover could be seen from the continent.

32. Say not [ .. ] haughty breast (10 lines). See Wilkinson, An Appeal, pp. 18-19, particularly:

Will some advance, severe coercion saves
The sense of duty in the minds of slaves:
Else like a herd of furious wolves they rise;
Peace leaves the islands and the planter dies.
Are then the sons of England grown so meek
As to the blow to turn the smitten cheek?
Did twenty thousand stolen Britons toil,
For Afric' masters on an alien soil,
Despis'd, neglected, punish'd without crimes,
Hopeless, but by revolt, of better times:
Would these not freedom, nor revenge essay?

33. mah'met - abbreviation of Mahomet, or Mohammed, founder of Islam.

34. Mary declares that the British, by making little attempt to convert their slaves to Christianity, treat their slaves even more badly than the Turks or Spaniards do theirs. The Turks, whose empire ran on slavery, and the Spanish who enslaved native Americans to work their South American silver mines, were indeed concerned to convert their slaves to Islam or Catholicism respectively, but many British slaves were, in fact, baptised, sometimes before sailing from Africa. In all these instances, however, conversion was often an empty formality with slaves having little choice in the matter.

35. Wilkinson, An Appeal, p. 15: 'If Christian hands inflict a heavy rod/Will those who feel it seek to know their God?'

36. Lysander - the use of such classical names was a poetic convention. 'Lysander', and the names 'Camillus' and 'Flavilla' used later, may not have been chosen for any other specific connotations. In ancient Greece, Lysander (d. 395 BC) was a commander in the Spartan navy who obtained a great victory over the Athenians in 405 BC, while Marcus Furius Camillus (c. 435-365 BC) was a Roman military and political leader, known as the second founder of Rome, who captured the city of Veil. Both feature in Plutarch's Lives (translated by John Dryden in 1683). Mary probably obtained the name 'Camillus' from Thomson's The Seasons, 'Winter', 509-10 - 'He, whom his thankless country could not lose, / Camillus, only vengeful to her foes'.

37. See Wilkinson, An Appeal, p. 20, where, answering the argument that Africa would become over populated and fall into 'want and woe' without slavery, he says:

Did God create (with awe I trace his name)
This wond'rous world, and man's as wond'rous frame,
Did he proceed on this erroneous plan,
That all goes wrong, or man must murder man?
A thought so impious no one can endure
Who owns a Maker righteous, wise, and pure.
Much-injur'd Afric thy prolific soil
Its millions feeds, and almost without toil:
Increasing millions still thou canst supply
With little labour and oeconomy,
Thy woods restricted, and thy swamps laid dry.

38. erst - once, long ago.

39. According to Mt 14:13-21, Jesus fed five thousand people with a few loaves and two fish, but this did not count the women and children. Mary's figure of seven thousand may be meant to include them. The other gospel accounts of this miracle (see Mk 6:30-44, Lk 9:10-17, Jn 6:1-14) say five thousand were fed.

40. Lk 12:24 - 'Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?'

41. olive branches - symbols of peace.

42. A comparison is made between the contemporary situation and that which pertained in the ancient world, drawn from Wilkinson. In An Appeal, pp. 32-34, commerce will enlighten Africa 'And raise the savage up to social life', so that 'By milder means to us let Afric' owe/What we to Rome, a thousand years ago' (p. 33). Britain was once a Roman colony, its native inhabitants viewed by the Romans as uncivilised barbarians. Just as Rome brought civilisation to Britain, Britain is to 'civilise' Africa. In Mary's adjustment of Wilkinson's text, this becomes a duty Britain owes Africa, rather than a boon for which Africa will be indebted to Britain.
43. Hibernian fair - addressing the women of Ireland. Hibernia was the Latin name for Ireland, corruption of 'Iverna', equivalent of the old Celtic word from which 'Erin' is derived.

44. See Wilkinson, An Appeal, p.29:

Ye British Dames! Whose tender bosoms know
To melt with pity o'er the couch of woe:
How must your hearts commiserate his woes,
Whose lot nor home, nor couch, nor country knows!
These sacred rights he never must regain,
Oh plead for such! you seldom plead in vain.

45. blood-stain'd luxury - i.e. sugar. The plant referred to in the following line is the sugar cane. The idea that drinking tea, produced by the suffering of slaves, was to consume the slave's blood was a powerful weapon in the armoury of anti-slavery literature. See, for instance, Wilkinson, An Appeal, p.17:

Would it not spoil the flavor of thy tea,
Mingled with tears and blood the cup to see?
From blood and tears thy sweeten'd cups are drawn;
Still drink they sweet, these circumstances known?

46. another theme [. . .] muse - if her imagination had chosen another subject (i.e. one other than the injustice of slavery and the need to combat it), Mary would never have felt justified in writing for the public.

47. Iernes - Ierne was another word for Iverna, equivalent of the Celtic word for Ireland.

48. Wilkinson, An Appeal, p.8, referring to the negro having no recourse to power or justice: 'Then sure with virtuous warmth there must be need/To plead for him who has no power to plead'.

49. Flora - Roman goddess of spring and flowers.

50. Parterres - flower beds laid out in level spaces or terraces.

51. Ceres - Roman name for Demeter, goddess of agriculture and the earth. She is 'brown' like the earth, or, perhaps, as the harvest takes place near autumn, autumnal 'brown'.

52. Pomona - Roman goddess of gardens and fruit trees.

53. Hygeia - Greek goddess of health, daughter of Aesculapius, god of health and medicine.

54. From the Lord's Prayer, 'Deliver us from evil' (Mt 6:13).

55. Mt 22:36-40 - Christ, replying to the Pharisee who asked Him 'which is the great commandment in the law?', answered 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind', and, secondly, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself'. See also Mk 12:28-31 and Lk 10:25-28.

56. Thunders - metaphor for retribution or judgement.

57. Traffic of mankind - trade in human beings.


59. "Strangel cries Flavilla, [. . .] silently adore. (24 lines) - Wilkinson also deals with this argument, essentially 'Why does God allow slavery to continue?', by reference to the mysteries of His workings, which humans cannot comprehend and which it is not their business to question. See An Appeal, p.27, where amazement is expressed that God can see 'the labour of [His] hand,Thus foul with lust and blood, and let'st it stand', but 'My finite views in wonder lost remain/The myst'ries of thy mercy to explain. -'

60. Aurora - Roman name for the goddess of the dawn, called Eos by the Ancient Greeks.
The second part of A Poem on the African Slave Trade soon addresses the 'daughters of Ireland', citing their approval of Part I and indicating that Part II was composed, at least partly, in response to their eager requests for another poem on the same theme. One aim is to persuade this mainly Irish, middle to upper-class female readership, who may already have given up sugar in their tea, to make yet another sacrifice - to forgo punch at dinner as it contained rum, another product of West Indian slave labour. This, Mary realises, is a more difficult sacrifice. Although abstaining from West Indian produce was one way in which women could contribute to the anti-slavery movement within what was regarded as their proper sphere, the home, refusing to drink punch on social occasions when male relatives or guests who might scoff or disapprove were present could amount to a public gesture. Yet, hopefully, it might influence the men in turn to take similar action - an idea in accordance with contemporary ideology holding that women could legitimately exert an influence over men in matters of morality or feeling.

At several points the poem also addresses the British peers. It seems, therefore, that Part II was written after 27 April 1792 when the bill calling for gradual abolition by 1796 was passed by the House of Commons, and then passed on to the Lords. Another important aim, then, is to add another voice to those attempting to persuade the peers to pass the bill, and to prick the public conscience. Mary's uncle, George Harrison, also addressed some members of the House of Lords - the bishops - during the debates. He published, anonymously, an Address to the Right Reverend the Prelates of England and Wales on the Subject of the Slave Trade, stressing the sheer volume of abolitionist sentiment and asking them to vote according to 'what men of every religious denomination in this country, are expecting from you'. (See Jennings, Business of Abolishing the British Slave Trade, pp.74-75.)

Such pleas to the peers and bishops were unsuccessful. Rather than pass the bill, on 8 May the Lords insisted on holding a separate investigation. On 5 June, after hearing only a few witnesses, they decided to defer it to the next session, thereby succeeding in halting the whole process for years. Their action was no doubt influenced by growing fears of radicalism, fuelled by events in France. In April, France had declared war on Austria and the French Revolution was moving towards the September massacres and the deposition of Louis XVI.

A Poem on the African Slave Trade
Part 2nd.

Erst, when the muse of pity o'er me stole,¹
And kindled new Ideas in my Soul;
When natures rude² effusions pour'd along
Impell'd by fancy, rais'd th'unpolished song;
Then when Imagination - charming maid,³
In all the rainbow's lively hues array'd,
Bade me her visionary heights explore
And taught my unfleg'd'd pinions⁴ how to soar,
Till my heart throb'd[sic] with her prolific fire,
And social feeling forc'd the untutor'd lyre;⁵
Till with the woes of Afric deep imprest,
I (trembling) held the mirror to each breast;
Tho' long th'alternate powers of hope & fear
Opposed the theme to truth, to virtue dear.

1. Erst
2. rude
3. charming maid
4. unfleg'd'd pinions
5. untutor'd lyre
Daughters of Ireland, you approv'd the song,
And bade the muse her artless task prolong;
You smiled - and still with innate goodness fraught
Pardon'd each fault, & praised each happier thought
Again that muse collects her active powers
Sisters! - the theme - the strain - the muse are yours.

Albion! I love thee, dear paternal plain,
Where arts & science, ease & freedom reign,
Where commerce swells her sails & plies her oars,
And links in one soft cement, distant shores.
I love thee, - yes! while e'er my beating heart
Shall thro' my frame, its vital warmth impart
And I will love thee, 'till the hand of death
Shall close my eyes & stop my fault'ring breath.
That sacred zeal which in my bosom glows
Claims a strong interest in thy weal or woes.
Oft when the passing hours of childhood ran,
How was I pleased thy glorious acts to scan!
Oft too, with transport, would I learn thy fame
And boast the lustre of the English name.
But when I see thy hands in gore embu'd,
Thy gloomy annals stain'd in guiltless blood;
Thy stately ships the sea-green wave divide,
Fraught with foul crimes, in glaring scarlet dyed
These - when with Irelands justice I compare,
Her clemency distinguish'd - nobly rare;
I blush to see the lustre of each deed,
Tarnish'd - and virtuous Irelands glorious meed.

For Ireland, when her sister kingdoms rose,
And heap'd on Afric Miserys piercing woes;
When link'd in vice; they plough'd the faithless mains
With hearts impure - and souls intent on gain;
Then firm in innocence - supremely good
In virtues awful dignity - she stood
Stood as a rock, which boisterous waves assail,
Unmoved by every loud & threatning[sic] gale,
The all seducing lure of gold - she dared,
And when she weigh'd the crime, she spurn'd the base reward
No - never were her peaceful vessels mann'd
To ravage helpless Africs guiltless land.
Albion, thou lovest freedom! why, oh why!
Condemn thy brethren thus to pine & die?
Yet boast that thou this darling right to gain,
Wouldst spill the flood that flowed in every vein
While Irelands gen'rous sons, as just, as brave,
Preserve their freedom, nor create one slave
And still disdain to rove thro' trackless seas,
By Hell-born fraud, to purchase wealth & ease.
Thy daughters! too lerne, mild & fair,
Oft with the houseless wretch their mercy share,
Oft with soft pity, feel their bosoms glow,
Before the silent eloquence of woe.
But with what transports will their hearts abound
When Albions laws, shall scatter freedom round.

Freedom! thy name, which gladdens every plain,
Throbs in my heart & thrills thro' every vein,
For soon (blest hope) on Africs mourning shore
Thy dawning Sun shall rise to set no more;
And soon will every virtuous British Peer,
Rise with one voice & send thee smiling there.
Ev'n now the muse anticipates the day
When struck with awe, posterity shall say,
"Where are the scenes our Fathers stain'd with blood
And sold the living image of their god."
"Where now the masts - where erst their impious ken
'Defil'd the name of christian - and - of men"
Tis yours, ye powers, who hold a nations trust,
To shine as Stars on Earth - and dare be just.
Tis yours the God-like transport - to bestow,
T'assuage distress, to heal the wounds of woe;
To ease gall'd misery of its furrow'd load,
And point the path to virtue & to God:
On you does Albion gaze with anxious eye,
And views the all unravelling moment nigh,
When every vote decisive fate shall give,
Sanction the trade, or bid your brethren live.
May then - I must - I will the thought impart,
The warm effusion of a feeling heart.
An heart, which grandeur never taught to sigh,
Which far from observations critic eye,
Far from the dazzling ken of trophied fame,
Nor sought - nor found - nor wish'd to find - a name
An heart - around whose fibres - Nature threw
Sympathys seeds & watch'd them how they grew.
Thus have I learnt to melt at mis'rys tale,
And thus the woes of Afric to bewail.
And this impels me boldly to impart
The warm effusions of a feeling heart.

May then those powers, who guard a nations trust
To virtue firm, benevolently just,
Inspired with awe, the fateful judgment weigh,
And hear alike the rich & poor man's pleal
May no mean bias warp each generous breast,
By all their brethrens bleeding wrongs imprest,[sic]
But may the just, the grand decision be
What their immortal souls will never fear to see
Ah! think e'er yet the final day is past,
How would you act - the present hour your last!
Think, when arraign'd before the bar of Heav'n
What vote you'll most sincerely wish to have given!
You will reflect too - that with jealous eyes,
All Europe views your shame or glory rise.
You must reflect that - your decisive nod,
Or plants the olive - or oppressions rod,
That France has kindled now the gen'r'ous flame
And your grand precedent will raise her aim
Englighten[sic] every philanthropic soul,
Or bid dire slavery ravage - sans controul.
You will reflect the hellish traffic o'er
Commerce might reign, on Africs peaceful shore
That link'd in friendships bonds you more would gain
Than ever avarice with her serpent train.
This weigh'd - may He, whose fingers point the course
That binds the fiery comets raging force
Illuminate all your minds - and to your heart
The gracious dictates of his love impart.

Commerce thou complicated gift which heaven
In wrath, or mercy to mankind hath given;
Thou Janus, who two faces always wears
One, fraught with smiles & one with wrinkled cares
Parent of luxury! and nurse of trade,
Who gave to polish'd vice its darker shade.
Thou varied Power! whose potent frown can make
Th' affrighted mariners cold heart-strings ake.[sic]
To thee what tides of wealth does Albion owe!
The laurel wreath, which crown[s] her conquering brow
To thee - that now supreme in regal sway
Her Sister Isles salute her - Queen of Sea,
To thee that in her lap each India pours
Its silken'd softness & its treasur'd stores
To thee that link'd in traffic's wealthiest chain,
She sucks the fattest produce of each plain.
To thee that urged by Powers despotic scourge,
For free-born men does Albions fetters forge.
By thee what perfidies, what frauds arise?
By thee, the groves of Afric echo sighs
Still with unequal hand thy favours flow,
And some thou load'st with wealth - & some with woe

Lol where thy stately ships majestic ride,
And o'er the whitening billows smoothly glide;
Pity such forms, so beauteous & so fair,
Whose flowing streamers kiss the yielding air;
Who eager born before the fav'ring[sic] wind
Skim with light haste - nor leave a trace behind,
While the tired sailors on the decks repose,
And lose in sleep-Lethian all their woes;
And o'er the waves the gilded sun beams play
Or thro' the shrouds reflect a feeble ray:
Pity such hellish deeds should those employ
To rob, to slay, to ravage, and destroy;
To snatch their brethren from a pleasant home
And drag them rudely to a living tomb;
Where foul oppression does their peace destroy
That e'en hope sickens at the thought of joy.

Where are thy thunders? - Heav'n - thy lightnings breath:
Oh! whelm the tyrants in a vengeful death;
Bid thy waves roar - thy storms tremendous rise
And angry flashes dart from low'ring skies.

But cease thou muse, for in my soul there flows
A sound more sweet than Zephyr to the rose,
A sound which breathes an od'rous fragrance round
And makes th'exulting heart with joy rebound;
Blest is the voice - 'tis Liberty - 'tis life -
'Tis Irelands - Albion's hope - her Senates strife;
For soon, transporting thought! that strife will cease
And - it must be - to Afric whisper peace!
Fired at the theme, each bold idea wings,
And unrestrain'd the muse of fancy sings:
Expands her daring pinions wide, ascends,
And dares defy grim Slaverys selfish friends:
In vain cool reason claims her sovereign sway,
She spurns the feeble claim & bounds away;
She views - or thinks she views - when grief nor woe
The overseers stern frown - and sterner blow,
The sable matron's tear, the heartfelt sigh,
The reeking back - dire horror - suppliant cry;
When all the ills which rend the negro's soul
Shall disappear - and freedom crown the whole.
Oh! with what transport, with what rapturous fear
Will they the great, the Heaven sent blessing hear
How will the varied passions of their Soul
With bliss too high for speech, their acts controul?[sic]
The swimming tears! big throb! the speaking eye!
And all the unutterable extacy![sic]
Even now methinks the melting scene I see,
And every passion, struggling to get free;
His feet they kiss who did the news impart
Embrace his knees & clasp him to their heart:
Lost in a flood of rapture - all they view
Seems but a dream - they scarce can think it true.

Oh! Britons - to your philanthropic breast
Has fancy ne'er this God-like scene addrest,[sic]
Given to the high wrought piece each varying hue
Then told you - you alone could make it true?
Oh! if your bosoms knew the boundless joy
Which would your every faculty employ
You would not forfeit such a heartfelt glow
For all the wealth that slavery can bestow;
Think not the scene in shades too high I paint
Ah no! to cloathe[sic] my thought the power of speech is faint
For did not Truth himself the precept leave
'Tis far more blest to give than to receive.31

Now view we calmer joys - those transports past
(For not the greatest bliss on earth can last)
View now - while fancy kindles at the sight
Each rapture mellow'd at the soft delight
Each wild effusion which their hearts will prove
Lost in a flow of gratitude & love:
View them to peace - to liberty restored,
And all the sweets their Afric can afford;
When british learning shall its light impart
Dispel the chaos of the negros heart;
Diffuse fair knowledge - scientific lore,
And to the rights of men their souls restore;32
When Gospel truths shall dart an heavenly ray
And slaves enfranchised own a Saviours sway;
When we shall point the narrow path & shew
That path by precept & example too;
When Christian traders are by justice sway'd
And rapine foul gives place to peaceful trade;
When Albion shall supreme delight bestow
And with supreme delight, feel her own bosom glow;
Thus mutual good, conferring & conferr'd,
Will prove that, "Virtue is its own reward".33

So in some finish'd piece of music - wrought
By master-hands & to perfection brought,
The varying parts in graceful order roll,
And each contributes to th'harmonious whole;
Lol for in fancys vain illusive glass
The muse can trace each image - as they pass
Oh! would that muse the lively power possest[sic]
To hold the mirror to the thinking breast
That every heart its justice should confess
As the rough chisel can the stone impress;
Oh! that with fire & energy divine
The truths I feel might glow in every line.][sic]

Lo! where to Afric now our fleets are brought
With the full stores of commerce richly fraught
Where the stern keels the murmuring waves divide
Which hoarse rebounding lash the well built side
Now fill'd with hope her craggy cliffs they gain
And now safe moor'd they form a woody plain34
Lo! where th'inhabitants surround the strand
Eager to view the welcome vessels land:
No more with shrieks of terror & dismay
They see them anchor in the wonted bay;
No more with heartfelt horror & affright
Their blood runs colder at the hateful sight;
But with rejoicing soul their nimble feet
Skim with light bounds their generous friends to greet
For now the sons of Albion come no more
To load with woes the desolated shore;
No more oppressions sanction'd scourges rise
To burst soft love & natures hallow'd ties,
To rend the agonizing heart - to shew
That men call'd christians - can be monsters too!
That they who own a Saviours gentle sway,
And at his altars prostrate homage pay;
Who hear (at home) [H]is name with reverent awe
Abroad - can trample on his every law;
Can load with woe a brothers sinking soul
And bid the seas of Anguish o'er him roll;
No more sits gloomy horror brooding round
But arts, industry, peace & wealth abound
And (every former injury forgot)
The sable tribes desert the low roof'd cot;
With lively haste the whiten'd beach they climb
White by the snowy hand of hoary Time
And in the genuine language of the heart
Their confidence & gratitude impart.

A[h] say not you whose avarice urged the deed
Who with unblushing front for slavery plead;
Say not their savage breast & vagrant soul
No gentle arts can soften & controul,[sic]
That vain the beams benev'lence would impart
To thaw the hardness of their rugged heart;
That sooner might the suns prolific ray
Or freeze the wax or melt the stubborn clay
That sooner may th'hyena fawning lie
Or Smooth'd the rocks whose summit[s] brave the sky
Or endless bloom surround the mounts bleak side
Than tamed a soul for which a Saviour died,
Sophistl38 in vain thy tongue its reasoning pours:
Tho graced with oratorys sweetest flowers;
Tho Orpheus-like thy eloquence could move
The listening stones, or charm the whispering grove
Yet vain thy aim injustice to defend,
And with th'unerring laws of God contend;
For truth will shine with undiminish'd blaze
In spite of mans base arts to cloud its rays;
Think'st thou that He, who did all beings form
With reasons spark, forgot their hearts to warm
Or that its vital ray his laws design'd
For our fair skins - for them gross error blind?
No; He whose wisdom guides this massy ball,40
Gives a large portion of his love to - all,
And all by Nature rude & wild were born
Who range the woods - or Courts or Camps adorn
'Tis education gives the polish'd gloss
Refines the metal from the worthless dross:
Prunes, with a careful hand the opening shoot
And tends, with anxious care the promised fruit,
The mind of man - like unextracted ore,
Much dregs contains - but solid virtue more:
'Tis education clears those dregs away,
And gilds the virtues with a tenfold ray;
Improves wild natures nursling - gives the soul
The seal which stamps a value on the whole.
And as the marble in the quarry lies,
Its hidden worth concealed from human eyes,
Useless its huge unwieldy bulk remains
Nor ought of just proportion'd grace retains;
But when the forming hand of strength or art
Shall to its form, united force impart;
When all the workmens varying arts applied
And to new symmetry the parts divide;
The sculptors dignity, the pencils ease,
In harmonizing beauty join to please;
The fair & polish'd numbers gradual rise
'Till the whole piece perfected, meets our eyes;
Just so the negro, can his sable frame
Th'internal value of his soul proclaim?
Ingulph'd[sic] in misery - with pain depress'd,
These harrow up the feelings of his breast;
Tom from his friends, bereaved of every joy,
Which might his mental faculties employ,
Degraded & dishonor'd - where ah! where
Shall sense & reasons blooming flowers appear?
Where would the eloquence of Grattan shine?
Where Sheridans address? where Pitt divine?
If o'er their heads, did slaverys mandates roll
And freeze the genuine current of their soul.
For only those who know it - may impart
How grief can mar the feelings of the heart,
Check every noble thought - & warm desire
And bid poor genius blasted hope expire.
How keen the stings of pamper'd pride annoy,
With venom'd point, mean merits modest joy;
Till of his makers,[Maker's] fairest gifts bereft,
A rude & senseless lump is only left.
So have I seen the ductile wax imprest[sic]
Till all the original stand confess,[sic]
But when exposed to Phoebus scorching ray,
The powerless image faintly melts away;
Or as a plant which 'neath the gardeners hand
In rising beauty, does its leaves expand,
When lo! the pinching blasts of winter rise
And chill the withering stalk - it fades & dies.
Cease then, ye pleaders, in so bad a cause,
Who only speak as sordid interest draws.
Cease with a thread-bare cloak your crimes to hide
For God will of his works be justified.
But woe! to thee proud wretch, by Satan led,
Who on thy makers laws does rudely tread,
Who violates the rights which nature gave
And dooms thy fellows to an early grave.
Know there's a power who will avenge the wrong
Tho' yet his love - redeeming suffers long
Know there's a time when truth distinct & clear
Shall onward roll & shake thy heart with fear
When all the stings of conscience brought to light
Shall rise with tenfold horror - to thy sight
When all the secret pangs of deep remorse
Shall stand before thee with redoubled force
Shall stand & tell thee in that awful hour
How oft they warn'd - how oft thou spurn'dst[sic] their power

Oh! keep [[(while yet thou mays't) these thoughts in view
Think - and reflection shall declare them true.
Repent while yet repentance may be given,
Nor longer dare the vengeful ire of heaven.
And He, whose mercy would our crimes forgive
May make his grace burst forth & bid thee live!

In those blest days when liberty shall reign
For it must be - on injured Africs plain,
When curst[sic] oppressions chains shall wound no more
Nor human flesh be sold for filthy ore;
In heart-felt language, how will they reveal,
The warm, the grateful sentiments they feel!
Oh! you methinks they cry, whose bosoms know
The dear delight to soothe the pangs of woe!
Who oft to want your liberal hands extend
And fearless rose th'afflicted negro's friend
Who with unwearied calls & ceaseless cries,
Have forced your Senate in the cause to rise.
And thou that Senates boast - thy nations pride,
 Freedoms firm friends and pitys generous guide,
Great Pitt! whom ties of av'rice ne'er could bind
Nor warp the noble bias of thy mind!
And you ye daughters of the sister isles
Who blest in charitys benignant smiles
Who cheer th'afflicted - wipe the tearful eye
And bid the heart of sorrow cease to sigh;
With hearts unknowing, innocent & gay
You took the plant for which we dearly pay
But when you knew the price - you push'd it far away
Ye friends of liberty & peace - to you
What thanks, what rapturous gratitude are due


No words can paint the feelings of our soul
No language can our speechless thoughts controul[
But He who knows the goodness of your heart
Which - like Himself - would joy to all impart
He saw your generous motive - he will shed
His choicest blessings o'er each virtuous head
Oh! may his grace preserve, his wisdom guard
His shield protect you & his love reward.

Such! sisters such! will be the negro's thought
His breast with every warm affection fraught.
Nor small the glory which to you belongs,
Whose gentle bosoms mourn'd for all their wrongs
Wept for their woes & burn'd with honest shame
To know them sanction'd by an English name.
Who saw - while slavery sicken'd at the sight,
The Sun of freedom rise with dawning light
O'er dark oppression dart his glorious ray;
You saw - & hailed with joy his rising sway!
Fain would the muse on high-raised pinions soar
And to your virtues point one effort more
T' improve your plan, your God-like labours crown
Which heaven-born justice will applaud & own;
Rise sisters! be your generous task complete,
And with just scorn rude follys giggle meet.

Lol where around the mirth-inspiring board
With either India's choicest produce stored;
Where the pleased guests salute the sparkling glass
And wit & wine in swift succession pass;
There haply oft the saturate bowl* may flow
With sweets impregnate drawn from bitterest woe
Rich juice extracted from the reeking whip,
And snatch'd untasted from a brothers lip.
Ah! Sisters you on whose resistless tongue
The sweetest flowers of eloquence are hung,
Who ever facile at compassions call
Alike the fav'rites[ic] and the friends of all
This can you see, nor urge your peaceful sway,
To push the dear bought beverage far away!
Say not - no power of yours so far extends,
These are your brothers, husbands, sons or friends,
Whose precepts or whose law you erst obey'd,
And reverence due concomitantly paid;
And whom - as God & natures voice proclaimed
To please your wish, to soothe & calm your aim;
Will these reject your small - your just request
When urged with meekness - yet with warmth exprest?[sic]
Have you no influence? you whose bosoms feel
Pitys soft glow - & freedoms honest zeal!
Or dread you Epicurean jests to meet,
With laughter loud, unmeaning roar replete;
- In every age are sons of Belial found
  But their shafts pointless on themselves rebound.
  O'er virtues efforts throw a lucent ray,
  And their own impotence of mind display.
  Be theirs - the secret pangs of guilt to know,
  The stings of conscience - & repentant woe.
  Remorse which pleasures specious cups conceal,
  And griefs which but a Saviour's hand can heal
  But ours - with faith the narrow path to climb
  To mourn the sinner, yet abhor the crime.
  With heavens lov'd attribute - our gentle guide
  And if we err - we err on mercys side.

Our wants - our weakness - every secret sigh,
Our kind Creator views with pitying eye;
And if our efforts rise in virtues cause
He sees those efforts, not disdains applause.
- To Him - (who every act & thought will prove
In the large scale of universal love;
Who by this rule will favour or condemn
("What ye from men desire - do ye to them")
The good man's offering of a pious thought
The poor man's prayer, with resignation fraught
The philanthropic breast - whose social glow,
Participates its fellows weal or woe.
To him - of more transcendant worth appear,
To all the trophies of triumphant war.
So - when with seeming chance, our wishes glide
With unseen hand, does he o'er all preside,
Touches the secret spring which moves the soul,
Observes its sequence - & ordains the whole.

Blest be the man - & still revered his name,
Whose breast first felt the spark of kindling flame
Who did each deep recess of guilt unfold,
And dared the tyrants vengeance - nobly bold.
Explored our cruelties - our traffic curst,
By sin created - & by habit nurst.
Bid with firm voice, his blind compatriots rise
And throw the vial of darkness from thine eyes,
Who shew'd with heaven-taught finger, how to scan
The path of rectitude 'tween man & man;
'Till others caught the sympathetic flame
And did the woes of afric loud proclaim;
Raised for themselves a monumental crown;
A sacred trophy of a just renown:
And in the sight of heaven, more glory won,
Than Caesar famed or Philips martial son.
For in those realms, to guilt, to fear unknown,
Virtue may hold pre-eminence alone.
For she - when yon bright moons refulgent host
'Mid natures gen'ral ruin, shall be lost,
Will from that wreck, unfading lustre bring,
And rise the hand-maid of our holy King;
Securely soar - with animated powers
And bloom immortal - in celestial bowers,
So when (ere summer opes her perfum’d vest)
The fostering earth receives her little guest,
With care paternal hides its tender form,
Safe from the piercing rigours of the storm;
But when their elemental rage is o’er,
And awful tempests shake the earth no more;
When Sol darts forward with prolific ray
And vernal flowers salute his rising sway,
The nurtur’d seed, disdains his limits scant
Uprears its head - shoots forth a lovely plant;
’Till in each grace matured, it blossoms fair
And sheds delicious fragrance thro’ the air.

*Punch

1. Erst - some time ago.
   the muse of pity - Mary attributes the initial inspiration for the first part of A Poem on the African Slave Trade to
   one of the muses who stirred her feelings of sympathy, thus making creation possible. The muse of tragedy was
   Melpomene, and, according to Aristotle’s definition, tragedy arouses emotion, usually, by concentrating on the fate
   of one individual. It is interesting in this regard that Part I of A Poem on the African Slave Trade focuses
   particularly on the fate of an individual African in order to awaken feelings of empathy in the reader.
2. rude - untaught, unsophisticated.
3. Imagination is perceived as being of a higher order than mere fancy. Fancy begins the song, but Imagination is
   necessary to develop its theme.
4. unfledg’d pinions - immature, or undeveloped, wings. See also Wilkinson, An Appeal, p.7 - ‘My troubled soul on
   anxious pinions goes/To injur’d men, and hovers o’er their woes’.
5. social feeling ] untutor’d lyre; - Mary claims that concern for others has compelled the composition of verse,
   despite her lack of formal training. The lyre was the instrument of the muses.
6. cement - bonding, unifying principle.
7. weal - well-being.
8. I blush [ ... ] meed - all England’s deeds, however noble, are blemished by participation in slavery, while Ireland’s
   refusal to take part makes her worthy of praise. meed - praise or reward.
9. faithless main - treacherous sea.
10. darling - dear, much loved.
11. lerne - another word for Iverna, equivalent of the Celtic word for Ireland.
12. Gen 1:26 - ‘And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: ’
13. ken - ‘range of knowledge or sight (OED). May also ink with ‘masts’, in its meaning of ‘range of sight’, perhaps
   alluding to the view of the scenes of slavery seen from atop the masthead.
14. ye powers, who hold a nations trust - the powers of government, here the peers of the realm.
15. God-like transport - godlike means ‘resembling God’. The idea here is of ‘heavenly rapture’.
16. gall’d - particularly appropriate adjective describing the slaves both as subjects - embittered, harbouring feelings
   of rancour or desire for revenge, and objects - to gall is to injure or humiliate.
17. laurel - symbolic of distinction or victory. The emblem with which, in ancient times, a victor was crowned.
18. Wilkinson, An Appeal, p.29: Ye British Dames! Whose tender bosoms know/To melt with pity o’er the couch of
   woe.
19. olive - symbol of peace.
20. The French National Assembly 'condemned slavery in principle' in 1791. The abolitionist movement in France was led by the Société des Amis des Noirs. In August 1792, the French government ruled that any slave was emancipated as soon as he or she set foot on French soil. (Thomas, The Slave Trade, pp. 495, 519-23.)

21. sans contrôl - French, 'without control'.

22. serpent - used as adjective, meaning 'poisonous'.

23. Janus - god of the year, and doors and gateways, after whom January is named. He had two faces, one looking forward to the future and one looking back.

24. each India - the East and West Indies.

25. sleep-Lethian - Lethe was one of the rivers in Hades, the Greek underworld. Drinking its waters made the dead forget their past, prior to their being reincarnated.

26. shrouds - sails. As shrouds are cloths in which the dead are wrapped, an appropriate term for the sails of a slave ship on which many are destined to die (crew as well as slaves) or be carried to a living death.

27. whirl - overwhelm.

28. Zephyr - gentle wind or breeze. Zephyrus was the classical personification, or god, of the west wind.

29. reeking - bloody with fresh wounds.

30. God-like - godlike means 'resembling God'. Here, perhaps, heavenly, divine, wonderful.

31. Acts 20:35 - 'I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

32. rights of men - Mary's choice of this phrase would have been significant for her readers in the light of the recent publication of Thomas Paine's radical Rights of Man (Part I was published in 1791, Part II in 1792), though, speaking of souls, she stresses spiritual rather than earthly equality. See also Wilkinson, An Appeal, pp. 21 for his use of the phrase.

33. "Virtue is its own reward" - Cicero, De Finibus, Book II, Sec. 73.

34. a woody plain - the masts of the ships massed in the bay resemble a wood of trees.

35. The beach, its sand washed white by the tide over many years, is envisaged as whitened by Time, personified as a hoary (aged, white-haired) figure.

36. vagrant - wayward.

37. Thomson, The Seasons, 'Summer', 920-21, casts the hyena as the most savage of Africa's wild creatures: 'And, scorning all the taming arts of man/The keen hyena, fellest of the fell -'.

38. Sophist - originally a philosopher, the word came to refer to a person who engages in false reasoning, or sophistry - promoting arguments that appear plausible, even clever, but are ultimately specious.

39. Orpheus-like - in classical mythology Orpheus, reputedly a pre-Homeric poet, was able to charm people and animals with his music on the lyre. His playing persuaded Pluto, the god of the underworld, to release Orpheus's wife, Eurydice, provided the poet never looked back on the journey out of Hades. Orpheus could not stop himself turning to look at the beautiful Eurydice before they emerged, and she sank back never to return.

40. this massy ball - the earth.

41. Courts or Camps - stock expression for the monarch's service, or state ministries, and the military.

42. fair & polish'd numbers - elegant, refined verses.

43. harrow up - cut up or damage. A recognition that capacity for feeling is stunted by excessive suffering.

44. Henry Grattan, the great Irish parliamentarian whose government ran from 1782 until the Act of Union with Britain in 1801, Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751-1816), politician and playwright, and William Pitt the Elder (1708-1778), chief minister in the British government mainly during the 1750s and 60s, were all great orators. Grattan's most famous speech was his movement of the Declaration of Independence in 1788, Sheridan's greatest speeches were made during the course of the Warren Hastings case in 1787/88. 'Pitt could refer to William Pitt the Younger, Prime Minister of England 1783-1801 and therefore, like Grattan and Sheridan, Mary's contemporary. He was also known for his eloquence. However, it was his father, Pitt the Elder, who had a reputation for brilliant oratory.

45. ductile - soft and pliable.

46. Phoebus - name for Apollo, god of the sun.

47. ire - anger.

48. Almost certainly addressing William Wilberforce MP, leader of the abolition campaign, whose determination and perseverance resulted in the House of Commons, earlier in 1792, agreeing to abolish the slave trade by 1796.

49. Here definitely addressing William Pitt the Younger, then the Prime Minister of Britain.

50. daughters of the sister isles - women of Ireland.

51. Fain - gladly.

52. God-like labours - works akin to God's, having the attributes of God, but also, perhaps, 'heroic efforts'.

53. board - table.

54. either India's choicest produce - goods imported from either the East or West Indies.
55. Rich juice [..] brother’s lip. - the rum, sugar and spices that go to make punch (the 'rich juice') have only
been obtained through the cruelty of slavery, epitomised by 'the reeking whip', i.e. a whip covered with blood. The
slaves never get to taste the produce of their labour.

56. resistless - persuasive, unable to be resisted.

57. facile at compassion's call - easily moved by compassion.

58. you erst obey'd - you formerly obeyed, or were accustomed to obey.

59. Epicurean - Epicurus (341-270 BC) advocated the cultivation of virtue and a state of equanimity through the
avoidance of pain. Though 'Epicurean' came to mean pursuing pleasure for its own sake, the meaning here is
also that the Epicurean would scoff at self-denial as a valid means of securing a beneficial result.

60. sons of Belial - people who embody the spirit of evil, who have abandoned God. Deut 13.13 - 'Certain men, the
children of Belial, are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go
and serve other gods, which ye have not known.' Belial - In Hebrew 'destruction'; personification of evil; name of a
fallen angel in Milton's Paradise Lost. Belial came to be associated with sophistry, or false reasoning - see
Wilkinson, An Appeal, p.25 for reference to 'Belial's sophistry'.

61. lucent - translucent, shining.

62. Mt 7:12 - 'Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is
the Law and the Prophets.'

63. Probably William Wilberforce (1759-1833) whose life was devoted to the abolition cause.

64. Philip's martial son - Alexander the Great, son of King Philip II of Macedonia.

65. when yon [..] holy King; - at 'natures gen'ral ruin', the end of the material world on the last day or Day of
Judgement, the 'bright moons refugent host' (the stars) will be destroyed, whereas the lustre of virtue will last
forever.

66. Sol - classical personification of the sun.

67. vernal - spring.
Mary's sister Susanna Birkett died on 26 May 1792, aged five, having suffered from a wasting illness for seven months. This elegy was written on what would have been her sixth birthday, a little over three weeks later. It is sad to think that in the months Mary was writing and publishing her anti-slavery poem, which must have been a source of some pleasure and pride for her parents, her little sister was dying slowly of a 'lingering' sickness.

To the Memory of her beloved sister
6mo. 19th  Susanna Birkett  1792

How still how solemn is the face of night
Scarce modest Cynthia¹ sheds her pensive light
Dimmed by dark clouds which obstruct her ray
In mazy dance the lengthing[sic] shadows play
Bend with each branch that nods to drink the wave²
Moise o'er the stream, or in its bosom lave³
With folded wings the boisterous winds repose⁴
Hush'd in[is] each breeze & oft the water flows
Few scatter'd orbs o'er Heavens wide arch appear
Nor aught of sound assails the listening ear
All hail ye soothing scene of pensive hours
When memory wakes to life her dormant powers
Bids fancy o'er the sorrowing mind prevail
And fond remembrance tell the well known tale
Here will I wander by the moons pale ray
Where no rude footsteps brush the dews away⁵
Meet place for grief, where no intruding eye
Checks the hearts anguish & the long drawn sigh
Here shall my bosom vent its bleeding woe
For thee sweet susan, here my tears shall flow
And oft while twilight shades the distant lea⁶
My much loved sister will I think of thee
Oft mid the gloom shall fond idea⁷ trace
The opening beauties of a blooming face
Those mild expressive eyes which did impart
The beamy softness of thy gentle heart
Those cheeks of health, whose animated gloom[?glow]⁸
Bid fair for life, yet fed the worm below
Those lips whose sweetness, our attention won
Whose accent finished what their smiles begun
Those smiles of innocence which well exprest[sic]
The dawning virtues of thy guiltless breast
But oh! those smiles will never please again
Nor thy fair form thy wonted grace retain
Closed are those eyes beneath the sleep of death
Pale are those rosy cheeks & stopt[sic] that breath
Ceased is that voice and its prattling o'er
And lost that beauty to attract no more
Beauty what art thou, vain & transient flower
Queen of a span9 & Empress of an hour
Sweet rose that opens on lifes fairest morn
Cheers its dull hours & does its paths adorn
Sheds o'er the lamp of life a softer ray
Blooms but 'til noon, then droops & fades away
Poor envied thing, for which so many sigh
How short thy reign triumphant but to die
Sweet Susan still to thee my mind returns
Keeps o'er my memory & thy sufferings mourns
Dwells on the pangs, which so resigned thou bore
Seven lingering months, till nature could no more10
Sees thy pale form, no longer fair & gay
But much emaciated, sinking to decay
For nought of art11 can heal a soul opprest[sic]
When the slow death rankles in the breast
Urges with silent step its secret sway
Till as a vapour life consumes away
Methinks I see thee join the little throng
And with sweet [ ]12 the nimble sports prolong
In active play, thy sprightly efforts try
Mirth in thy face & laughter in thine eye
For thou when gladness fill'd the sportive plain
Wert still the liveliest of the lively train
But ah! those hours are past, those scenes are o'er
And Susan sleeps to wake for us no more
Oh! thou loved parent of her mortal part
Whose eyes evince the anguish of her heart
Who doom'd so oft thy childrens fate to mourn
And pour the sighs of sorrow o'er their urn13
While young in life & prattling on thy knee
Each lisping accent struggling to be free
Too innocent the pangs of guilt to know
Too young, the ills which throng this world of woe
Just when fair reason shew'd the dawning ray
And promised in their minds a golden day
Then with sure aim the barbed shaft of death
Transpierced14 their hearts & stop[sic] their faultering[sic] breath
Six times it flew, so Providence decreed
And bade six times thy wounded bosom bleed15
Yet shall not thou at his behests repine
For he who thus afflicts thee is divine
And when his justice strikes the needful blow
His mercy bids the balm of comfort flow
Then cease our griefs & let reflection prove
A lamp to shew our souls our Makers love
And when Idea on their features dwells
And all their graces, all their sweetness tells
Then shall reflection Saint[-]like point to where
Six angel forms array'd in light appear
To you dear parents, shall her voice address
And thus the language of her soul express
Arise no longer mourn the silent dead
But to where Zion rears her sacred head
Where far above this transient vale of tears
The City of the holy One appears
Lo where around the happy spirits throng
And to Jehovah raise the grateful song
Where to his glory every harp is strung
While sounds of praise rise from their tongue
Where in the full fruition of delight
They in the silken bonds of peace unite
And where reposing in a Saviour's love
They feel his mercy & his goodness prove
Mid those beatific forms your children see
From Earth & pain from sin & sorrow free
Would ye recall to these scenes below
From bliss made perfect to a world of woe
No rather hope to join their souls above
And share the wonders of a Saviour's love

Mary Birkett

1. Cynthia - one of the names for Artemis or Diana, goddess of the moon, derived from Mount Cynthus, her birthplace.
2. Probably referring to weeping willows, trees emblematic of mourning, at the water's edge.
3. 'To moise' is a verb which can mean 'to increase'. 'To lave' is 'to wash' or 'to bathe'. Mary is describing the movement of the shadows of the trees, sometimes spreading over and sometimes seeming to dip into the water.
4. In Greek/Roman mythology, the winds were personified as winged beings.
5. Where [... to] away - literally, where no footsteps have broken the surface of the dew on the grass. Conventional expression for a quiet, rural space or garden, a place of solitude.
6. lea - open space of meadow or grassland.
7. fond idea - imagination, tender with memories.
8. gloorn - is written in manuscript, but this may be a copyist's error as 'glow' fits the sense and rhymes with 'below' in the following line.
9. span - period of time.
10. till nature could no more - i.e. till 'nature', mind and body, could no longer fight the disease or bear the suffering entailed.
11. art - human endeavour or skill.
12. Space Is left in manuscript, probably omitting the name of Susanna's playmate.
13. urn - used figuratively. Burial, not cremation, was the usual practice and the Birkett children were buried in the Friends' burial ground.
14. transpierced - pierced through.
15. Susanna was the fourth child of William and Sarah Birkett to die since their move to Dublin in 1784. Edward, Hannah and Sarah died within weeks of one another in 1787. (Mary wrote a poem on each death.) Two others died earlier in England.
16. where Zion rears her sacred head - heaven. Mount Zion was site of the temple at Jerusalem.
17. Jehovah - name for God derived from the Hebrew Yahweh.
18. Word illegible in manuscript.
19. beatific forms - 'to beatify' means to make blessed or happy. The deceased Birkett children, now transformed in Heaven, are both.
Mary often wrote poems eulogising the homes and family life of her friends. Written for the family of her friend Hannah Wilson Forbes, this one is dedicated to their house, Forbes Lodge. It is not yet known where this was, but the Forbes had one address at 12 Lower Ormond Quay in Dublin and, from poetry later in the collection, it is clear they moved residence to a house at a place called Summerhill. This was probably Summerhill in Dublin, an area being developed at this time, though there is a small village of that name some miles north-west of Dublin. 12 Lower Ormond Quay remained their business premises.

**Inscription for Forbes Lodge**

*7th month 1792*

Stranger if thine erring feet
Lead thee to this blest retreat
If its elegance & grace
Never yet thine eye could trace
If its joys - unknown to thee
List\(^1\) a while & learn of me
Know that here remote from care
Dwell content & virtue fair
Placid truth with brow serene
Sporting mirth with smiling mien
Hospitality and joy
Pleasure pure without alloy.
Stranger - (for I know thee not])
Haply\(^2\) vice has been thy lot
Haply thee the world has shewn
Joys which virtues scorn to own
Wondering then I hear thee say
How can such as these be gay?
Where is folly's gay resort?
Where the midnight revels sport?
Where is fashions brilliant train?
Where the bacchanalian fane\(^3\)
Know that in the midnight round
Heart-felt ease is seldom found
That the taper\(^4\) burning bright
May extinguish pleasures light
That the bliss ye boast to find
Often leaves a sting behind.
They, who in this mansion dwell
Can the joys of virtue tell
Peace expands their social breast
To be good, is to be blest
Their is elegance refin'd
Their, the philanthropic mind
Friendship, generous, undisguis'd
Truth & sense by candour priz'd
Sparkling wit & flowing thought
Language with good nature fraught
Benevolence that would impart
The joys they feel to every heart
And charity whose social flow
Delights to soothe the sufferers woe.
Stranger, if thy curious eye
Shall admire the prospect nigh
Wander o'er this calm retreat
O'er the garden, blooming sweet
Know, that these will soon decay
All on earth must fade away
But the virtues of their soul
Time nor death can ne'er controul[sic]
They - when these lovely scenes are o'er
When ev'n this mansion charms no more
Shall rise as plants which scent the air
And bloom in Paradise - more fair

MB

1. List - listen.
2. Haply - perhaps.
3. bacchanalian fane - temple to Bacchus, Roman name for Dionysus, Greek god of wine. 'Fane' is a poetic word for temple.
4. taper - wax candle, more expensive than tallow.
Richard Shackleton (1728-1792) was the son of Abraham Shackleton of Ballitore, and was educated at his father's school there, which was popular with non-Quaker as well as Quaker families. One of Richard's schoolfriends was the famous statesman and author Edmund Burke (1729-1797), with whom he maintained a lifelong correspondence. The friendship between the two men is mentioned in this poem.

Burke became secretary to Lord Rockingham, and had a varied political career as a Member of Parliament (for Wendover, Bristol, Malton) and, in the 1780s, as a Privy Councillor and Paymaster. He was active in campaigns for free trade, Catholic emancipation, greater freedom for the American colonies and the Irish Parliament, among other causes. His most well-known literary works are A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful (1756-57), and Reflections on the Revolution in France (1790). The latter bewailed the overthrow of tradition inherent in the French Revolution and prompted Thomas Paine to produce the counter argument in his Rights of Man (1791-92), sparking debate all over Europe.

Correspondence between Burke and Richard Shackleton was preserved by Richard's daughter, the Quaker author Mary Leadbeater, in The Leadbeater Papers, Vol. II (1862). (See Appendix 7, 'Individuals Featuring in the Writings of Mary Birkett Card'.) In later life, Burke revisited Ballitore and the Shackletons stayed at Beaconsfield, the Burkes' home in England.

Richard eventually took over the school, passing it in turn to his son, another Abraham. This Abraham Shackleton stopped teaching the classics, as he believed they encouraged aggression, and lost many pupils, especially non-Quakers for whom the classics were vital for university. He was a key figure in the deist controversy that divided Irish Friends and was separated from the Society in 1801. (See Mary Birkett Card's 'Progress of Infidelity' narrative, in Vol. I, Prose, p.21, where she recounts her own experience and rejection of what she felt were deist tendencies.)

---

On the Death of our sincerely lamented
9 mo  Friend Rich'd. Shackleton  1792

Tis done - from Heaven the awful mandate came
And call'd the spirit from the quivering frame
Dissolved the bonds of Earth & bore away
His saint-like soul to realms of purer day
Left his pale corse1 with kindred dust to rest
And points a solemn truth to every breast
Sad truth! that oft hath pierced the heart with woe
That oft hath made the tears of anguish flow
That while it blasts fair hopes deceitful bud
Leads us to seek a sure support - in God
Oh! ye who oft have heard his reasoning powers
When his sound judgment op'd his weighty stores
Or when mild counsel would his lips impart
Whose tongue declared the anguish of his heart
Or who have seen him by just zeal inspired
When all the christian & the man admired
How will ye grieve to know his fatal doom
Snatch'd from his pious labours - to the tomb
Lost to society, to those he lov'd
To all & deeply will his loss be prov'd
For, was his useful life in virtue past
And pious acts employ'd him to the last
In him the poor a steady friend possest[ sic]
Whose liberal care oft soothe'd the sorrowing breast
Large was the talent by his maker given
And well applied to serve mankind & heaven
Not in a napkin hid, but widely shed
And still encreased[ sic] its lustre as it spread²
Keen was his wit & polish'd was his mind
With truth, grace, sense & elegance refin'd
Well was he versed in Scripture's sacred page
In fam'd historic lore & knowledge sage
Had drank of Helicon's sweet flowing stream³
And knew the muses song, the poets dream
Div'd[? delv'd] the vast depths of philosophic lore
And drain'd from each pursuit an added store
Thence (like the widows oil) tho' pour'd around
It lessen'd not, but more abundant found⁴
Large was the sphere by Providence assign'd
And well adapted to his boundless mind
From his rich stores instruction to impart
And point fair virtue to the ductile⁵ heart
Sound were his precepts & his doctrine true
He was their teacher, & their pattern too
His conduct gain'd their love & filial awe
His truth was sacred & his word their law
But now with heartfelt sorrow will they mourn
And weep the tears of grief around his urn⁶
Thou Burke, wilt pay the tribute of thy love
To him, whose friendship thou so late didst prove
Whose care matured the virtues of thy youth
And form'd thy mind to honor & to truth
He was thy friend, & when thy judgment grew
Thou reverenced him who led that judgment true
Alas! no more his presence glads thy sight
No more his wit inspires thee with delight
Not all his talents all his worth could save
Snatch'd from his friends & brethren to the grave
Yet died he firm in the faith - a righteous end
And knew his Lord & Saviour for his Friend
Who in the act of worship call'd him hence
From Earth to Heaven, from works to recompence
To join the Host of Angels & to prove
The wond'rous riches of his Makers love.

MB
1. corpse - corpse.

2. Lk 19:11-27 - Christ's parable concerning the onus on each individual to ensure they use the talents God has given them to the full. A nobleman entrusted a pound to each of his ten servants in his absence. On his return, two servants had invested the money so it increased in value, but 'another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin' (v.20). Because this servant had not made the best use of his money, the pound was taken from him and given to the one who had made the greatest amount by wise investment. See also the parable of the talents - Mt 25:14-30.

3. Helicon was a Boeotian mountain sacred to the muses, from which two streams - the Aganippe and the Hippocrene - flowed. Richard Shackleton wrote some verse.

4. 2 Kgs 4:2-7 - tells how a widow went to the prophet Elisha when her husband died and creditors were attempting to take her two sons as bondsmen. All she had was a pot of oil. Elisha told her to borrow as many vessels as she could from her neighbours and pour the oil into them. The supply of oil proved endless, filling all the containers available, so that she was able to sell enough to pay her debts and earn an income. A similar story is told of the prophet Elijah in 1 Kgs 17:9-16. At Zarephath, he sought bread from a widow, but was told she had only 'an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse' and was gathering sticks to make a fire to cook it. When she made a cake first for the prophet, as he bid her, and then for herself and her son, she found the tiny amount sufficient for many days, fulfilling the Lord's saying, 'The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail'.

5. ductile - pliable, therefore soft and receptive.

6. urn - used figuratively. Burial, not cremation, was the usual practice.
J. Lancashire has not been identified, but see notes to poems Mary composed on his previous visit to Dublin in 1787, when he gave her a pocket book (pp. 43-45 in this volume).

To J Lancashire on his arrival in Dublin
11th mo. 3rd. 1792

Again returned to Ireland's shore
From Albions\(^1\) social plain
And may we greet thee here once more
Nor are our wishes vain

2

Attentive friends around thee throng
With joy & glad surprise
Mid them the muses humble song
(A Willing gift) would rise

3

Would thank thee for this visit kind
And speak thee welcome here
Well is the simple boon design'd\(^2\)
And tho' not large, sincere

4

Full oft was each returning year
In hope fallacious past
Nor, till we least expected, were
We gratified at last

5

This points to me the useful lore
To wait with patience still
For oft when fruitless hope is o'er
Our Maker works his will

6

Lol now three suns have run their race
Along the azure sky
Since (daily opening some new grace)
Fair Dublin met thine eye
Years, when to come how long they seem
They magnify to view
Once past, they dwindle to a dream
But Ah! that dream is true

And every hour that's spent below
Each moment vainly past
Will make us tremble when we know
The dread account at last

Oh! may it be the aim & end
Of our sojourning here
To make the great I AM^3 our Friend
And dwell in faith & fear

Then may we without terror trace
The scenes we cant[sic] recall
Confess our sins, implore his grace
And be resign'd thro' all

For many a changing scene hath life
And many a trying hour
And oft is flesh with grace at strife
For mastership & power

Be ours to enter the straight gate^4
To conquer thro' the Lamb
To walk whatever be our fate
Devoid of guile or blame

Then when the powers of sin assail
Our God will hear our cry
His arm Almighty shall prevail
And crown the victory.
1. Albion - name for England, derived from the Latin 'albus' - white. The white cliffs of Dover could be seen from the continent.

2. the simple boon - Mary's poem.

3. the great I AM - name for God. See Ex 3:14 where God speaks to Moses from the burning bush - 'And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.'

4. Mt 7:14 - 'Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.'

 Apparently, J. Lancashire was not happy with the above - it was too brief. So Mary felt compelled to rectify matters by writing a few more verses less than a fortnight later.

To J - L 11mo 14th 1792

My valued friend, how couldst thou say
The lines I writ\(^1\) were few?
That small the tribute I would pay
To friendship more was due

2

Sure not alone the copious line
True friendship can impart
Grace, ease & elegance may shine
Yet ne'er approach the heart

3

True friendship - if I judge aright
Words only cant[sic] declare
Nor are they always requisite
To prove the heart sincere

4

Then blame me not, for I do feel
A friendship far more true
Than lengthen'd numbers\(^2\) can reveal
Or flowing language shew
Yet, as each joy has its alloy
   Each pleasure has its pain
I deeply mourn thy transcient[sic] stay
   But hope to meet again

Thus oft by anxious cares opprest[sic]
   We pass our time below
And when sharp sorrow wound the breast
   Does comfort swiftly flow

Oh! may we view each chequer'd3 path
   With truths unerring eye
And feel it as our firmest faith
   On Jesus to rely
How shall the muse her serious thoughts express
Or how to thee her artless lays address
Yet meet not censure for presumptious pride
That points out others faults, its own to hide
Not so - for only would my pen convey
Important truths, these not my words obey
And tho' I all authority disclaim
The hints a friend would offer - never blame
Just let this mandate every act controul\[sic\]
To love the Lord thy God with all thy soul\[sic\]
Observe with all thy might his sacred law
Nor ever name Him but with reverent awe
Be firm in mental prayer, in thanks, in praise
And glorify the Lord in all thy ways;
Let every thought be hallow'd\[sic\] such as he
Who knows the secret of thine heart can see
Be this - the basis of thy hopes - & this
Will make thy cup o'erflow with heavenly bliss\[sic\]
Will keep thy conscience from guile & lead
To cheerfulness, to gaiety indeed
Far be the thought that virtue source of joy
Can ought of pleasure or of peace destroy
When from that spring the richest comforts rise
That ever mortals taste, beneath the skies
It chases the dark clouds of guilt away
And pours upon the soul a flood of day:
Religion thus implanted will impart
Its choicest blessings to thy upright heart
Will rivet thy affection, make thee pay
Honour to those whom God hath said "Obey"
Will give thee too industry to possess
For Satans greatest friend is - Idleness
Will guide thro' the slippery paths of youth
Try, purge, & crown thee, in the realms of truth
Be humble in thy self be nothing still\[sic\]
With firm dependance\[sic\] on thy Makers will
And whether joys or trials he impart
Still pray unceasing for - a thankful heart
Enough - thy parents will direct thy youth
And form thy judgment by the laws of Truth.

MB
1. Mt 22:37 - 'Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.' Christ's reply to the Pharisee who asked Him 'which is the great commandment in the law?' (v.36). See also Mk 12:30 and Lk 10:25-28.

2. hallow'd - here, 'pure' rather than 'holy' or 'sacred'.

3. Ps 23:5 - 'Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.'

4. Without punctuation this line is not readily understood. It could read, 'Be humble in thy self, be nothing, still' or 'Be humble, in thy self be nothing, still.'
Summer Hill was where Mary's close friends Hannah Wilson Forbes and her family moved from the centre of Dublin. This was probably Summerhill in Dublin, a street now in the city but then still a suburb. Mary herself was later to live there, at 16 Summerhill, after her marriage in 1801. The view of Dublin and its bay, described in the poem, is in keeping with a near contemporary account describing how the circular road encompassing the city:

commands, from various points, the most delightful views of the adjacent country, of the Wicklow mountains, and of the bay, which, with its bold shores, the hills of Dalkey, the peninsula of Howth, the islands of Ireland's eye and Lambay, and enlivened with the pleasing motion of ships under sail, appears from the high ground near Summer-hill, extremely interesting.

(Warburton, Whitelaw, Walsh, A History of the City of Dublin (1818), I, 449-50.)

It is worth mentioning, however, that there is also a village called Summerhill a few miles northwest of Dublin. Summerhill House, one of the most patatial mansions in Ireland, was the home of Lord Langford and the Empress of Austria stayed there in the nineteenth century, but it was burned down during the Civil War in 1922. Nothing of it now remains except the monumental gateway, but from a hill in the grounds one can just see Dublin Bay in the distance.

Mary visited the Forbes at Summer Hill over Christmas and New Year, 1792-93. Hannah's brother James had recently married Elizabeth Watson and brought her to Dublin from her family's rural home at Summerville, Clonmel, near Waterford. Elizabeth's sister, Deborah (Debby) Watson was to become one of Mary's most intimate friends.

Written by Moonlight at Summer Hill
12th mo 29th. 1792

Fair Empress of the Stars! whose silver ray
Sheds a mild lustre o'er the varied space
Gives to a silent world a softer day
And bids reflection all thy beauties trace

Prompted by thee bright Orb! my wandering eye
Shall dwell delighted on the lovely scene
Watch thee majestic move along the sky
And view with awe the clouds that roll between

Wide o'er the bay does thy soft influence spread
And lightly dance thy beams from wave to wave
On yon majestic barks¹ do radiance shed
Sport in the sails or on the surface lave²

Lo! where blue Howth³ uprears its dusky sides
And fair Clontarf⁴ its rural form extends
There rests thy light or o'er the waters glides
Shines on the hill or with the stream descends
There Dublin's high & spacious roofs appear
And there the humble peasants clay built cot
Thou smilest on all & all thy mantle share
Nor the great flatter'd, nor the poor forgot.

1. *barks* - ships,
2. *lave* - bathe or wash. Conveys the effect of moonbeams playing, or dipping, on the surface of the water.
3. *Howth* - name of the mount at the tip of a promontory just outside Dublin to the north-east.
4. *Clontarf* - suburb of Dublin leading to Howth, still 'rural' in Mary's day.

The following lines were written to congratulate Eliza (Elizabeth, daughter of Solomon and Mary Watson of Clonmel, Waterford), then aged only sixteen, on her recent marriage, on 4 October 1792, to James Forbes, twenty-nine year old elder brother of Hannah Wilson Forbes. This was his second marriage. His first wife, Mary Goffe, one of the twenty-one or twenty-two children (accounts differ) of Jacob and Eliza Goffe of Horetown House in Co. Wexford, had died in 1785 only a year after their wedding. James and Elizabeth were to spend much longer together, in a marriage that produced ten children. The first, Mary, was born in 1793. Eliza Forbes died in 1814.

12mo 30th To Eliza Forbes 1792

Sweet Eliza fair and young
May thy days glide smooth along
May the bonds of marriage be
Silken cords of love to thee
Still may favouring Hymen\(^1\) shed
His choicest blessings on thy head
Soft may flow the stream of life
Free from sorrow, free from strife
Smooth unruffled as a glass
May thy hours harmonious pass
And every bliss by love posses\[sic]\nOn thee & on thy bridegroom rest.

1. *Hymen* - androgynous god of marriage in classical mythology.
In this playful piece, Mary conducts a conversation with her muse, seeking her assistance in the composition of a poem that will make an appropriate New Year present for the Forbes family.

**A New Years offering to her**
**1mo. 1st Friends Forbes 1793**

Arise oh! muse if aught of thee
Hath e'er inspired thy votary
If ever when thy lyre thou strung
I strove to imitate thy song
Vouchsafe me now a gift; - to send
A new years offering to each friend
When thus the shrinking muse "Ah why"
"To me for presents thus apply"
"We Heliconian maids are poor"
"We've noble minds but little store"
"Us Plutus seldom deigns to bless"
"And tho' Parnassus we possess"
"Which poets say in fruits abound"
"Yet barren will the mount be found"
"Nor corn nor wine does it produce"
"Nor common food for vulgar use"
"Scarce Pegasus who o'er it rides"
"Crops the dry stalk, how lean his sides"
"The laurel only grows around"
"With which our favourite bards are crown'd"
And we who on the summit dwell
"Who wander o'er the moss-grown cell"
"Tho' pure the balmy air we breathe"
"With Zephyrs wafted from beneath"
"Yet ah how little do we know"
"To hoard up wealth, like those below"
Ah me! they'll think me so ungrateful
And sure ingratitude is hateful.
"Not so thou to thy friends impart"
"The thoughts which occupy thy heart"
"Till - but in vain would I inspire"
"True friendship does no muse require"
"She sings her own sweet song, adieu"
Then with light bound away she flew
I list - friendship calls - & I obey
She dictates all that I must say,
Accept the strain, my charming friends
And think not me - but friendship sends
Blest family by concord led
Who hath on you her blessings shed
By kindred as by love allied
Whom strife or jarring ne'er divide
O'er whom tho' furious discord shakes
Her fatal rod of poisonous snakes
Still on herself the lash rebounds
And virtues shield returns the sounds
Oh! may you ever join'd by love
As now the bliss of union prove
May no foul fiend our natures foe
The seeds of enmity e'er strew
No serpent in whatever form
Create in you contentions storm
But thus united may you live
With all the blessings love can give
Oft may you see this annual day
Return & peaceful pass away
Yea oft, full oft, with pleasure fraught
Nor ever bring one jarring thought
To thy my kind, my honor'd friend
May Heaven increasing blessings send
Still may thy years renewed be
Thy childrens children long to see
In truth & virtue rising fair
And soothe & soften all thy care
Fulness of days may thou possess
And cheerful health those days to bless
But above all may God above
For ever shield thee by his love
Shower down his favours & unite
Thy soul to him with full delight.

1. Several of the muses were represented holding a lyre, and to string the lyre was a metaphor for the composition of poetry or song. The muse most associated with this instrument was Erato, whose province was love poetry.
2. Heliconian maids - the muses were said to live on Mount Helicon, a mountain in Boeotia, which became sacred to them and the site of their temple.
3. Plutus - son of Demeter, Greek goddess of the earth and agriculture. He was the god of wealth.
4. Parnassus - another site sacred to the muses. Mount Parnassus is in Delphi. It has two peaks - one was sacred to Dionysus, the other to Apollo. The connection with Dionysus, god of wine, whose head is usually shown crowned with grapes, may account for Mount Parnassus abounding in fruit.
5. Pegasus - much cherished by the muses, he was the winged horse of the Greek hero Perseus. The fountain on Mount Helicon, the Hippocrene, was supposed to have burst forth when Pegasus struck his hoof on the mountain.
6. The laurel, with which successful poets were crowned, was associated with the muses who provided the inspiration for poetry.
7. moss-grown cell - simple, single-roomed dwelling or hermitage, here perhaps a cave. OED cites 1764, R. Lloyd, 'Ode Oblivion', 'Thou who delightest still to dwell/By some hoar and moss-grown cell'.
8. Zephyrs - gentle winds or breezes. Zephyrus was the classical personification, or god, of the west wind.
9. Here the poet replies to the muse's refusal to grant her request. Speech marks two lines later indicate when
the muse once more starts to speak.
10. Speech marks should be omitted at the start of this line as it is the poet not the muse who first speaks. The line
should be punctuated thus:
   She sings her own sweet song, "adieu",
11. list - listen.
12. jarring - quarrelling.
13. the bliss of union - probably referring to the recent union of Eliza Watson and James Forbes in marriage.
14. To AF) ... - addressing Anne Forbes, mother of James and Hannah Wilson Forbes.

This poem is undated, but it is included here as its manuscript position and title makes it virtually certain that it was written during the same visit to Summer Hill as the three previous poems, and the one following.

Morning at Summer Hill

How lovely is the morn, yon rising sun
Majestic bids his beams come forth & shed
Their purest influence on the world around
At his approach, Creation wakes, the birds
First tune their morning carol, rise & sing
Forth come the herds, the neighing colt inspired
With the full vigour of uncurb'd delight
Sports round the field, small thoughts of future woe
Of burthens hard oppressive, grievous tasks
Of the keen lash which marks the aching sides
Of pinching hunger or of piercing cold
Weigh down his thoughts, ah me he little knows
Th'accumulated ills, which man, his master
Has now in store for him, sport on poor beast
And be thy pleasures sweet thy joys unmixed
These & these only are thy golden days
Once past, the iron age begins, alas!
What varied woe[s] await thee, knewest thou these
And fancy views at once the gather'd heap
'Twould make thee tremble ['twould embitter all
Thy hours of sportive mirth, calm thy young heart
And make the[e] wish for instant dissolution
See nature all revived shakes off at once
The leaden power of sleep - man only man
Of all the works of God ungrateful sleeps
Still are his eyelids sealed - oh! shameful thought
Lock'd in the arms of Somnus still he lies
On the soft couch, tho nature bid him rise
Declare ye sages who have deeply search'd
T[h]'unmeasurable shore of wisdom - ye
Whose midnight taper\(^3\) oft hath shone before you
Immersed in studious thought, say why does man
Waste thus his precious time, one hour of which
Whole millions can't recall yet every hour
Nay every moment spent in vain, must be
Account for - strange infatuation thus
To rest devoid of sense, inanimate
Yet court the dull delusion, satisfied
Just to do nothing - when the voice of God
Of nature & of conscience, bids fulfil
His many duties.\(^4\)

1. burthens - archaic form of 'burdens'.
2. Somnus - classical god, and personification, of sleep, also known as Hypnos.
3. taper - wax candle, more expensive than tallow.
4. Compare Mary's reflections on man's lethargy with the following passage in Thomson, The Seasons, 'Summer', 67-74:

   Falsely luxurious, will not man awake,
   And, springing from the bed of sloth, enjoy
   The cool, the fragrant, and the silent hour,
   To meditation due and sacred song?
   Is there aught in sleep can charm the wise?
   To lie in dead oblivion, losing half
   The fleeting moments of too short a life -
   Total extinction of the enlightened soul!
The following, written on leaving Summer Hill, is dedicated to Hannah Wilson Forbes and her mother Anne.

To Anne & H W Forbes

My honour'd friends! with deep regret I view
The hour approach that severs me from you
But it must be! & I must bid - farewell
To all the social joys of Summer Hill
To all the charms which from your converse flow
And all the bliss your presence can bestow
Patience inspire my still reluctant heart
From all these pleasures teach me how to part
I cannot - no for ever would I stay
But hark! a voice that summons me away
Pardon the rising sigh, the falling tear
Grief must have way, I will not now forbear
Sweet tranquil moments! ye are gone indeed
And Saturn stretch'd his wings with double speed
Blest hours of confidence! how quickly fled
Which o'er my soul their soothing influence shed
How short the time when pleasure owns her sway
While pain with iron fetters clogs the day
Even while I write, it lingers o'er my head
And moments never to return are fled
Adieu my friends & may you ever know
The choicest blessings virtue can bestow

Summer Hill 1mo 16th 1793

1. The line means that the time over Christmas and New Year has flown by extra fast. Saturn was originally the Roman god of agriculture and his festival, celebrated in December when the crops had been sown, is the origin of many Christmas customs, such as presents and candles, and was traditionally a time of freedom from restraint. Mary's use of Saturn as a motif is interesting in relation to Quakers' attitude to Christmas, a festival they did not celebrate owing to its pagan origin. Saturn was supposedly based on an early king of Rome, responsible for introducing agriculture and civilisation. The Saturnian age was thought of nostalgically as a Golden Age. Hence Mary is, perhaps, also casting her stay with the Forbes as a golden, special time, never to be repeated.
This next poem is, likewise, dedicated to members of the Forbes family (Anne, her
daughter Hannah Wilson Forbes, and Eliza - her son James's new bride), but also to Deborah
(Debby) Watson, Eliza’s elder sister. Debby, born October 1772, would have been twenty
years old. Debby and Eliza were the daughters of Solomon and Mary Watson of Summerville
at Clonmel, near Waterford. The Watsons had interests in banking. John, William and
Solomon Watson, possibly Debby and Eliza’s brothers, were to become partners in Watsons’
Bank at Clonmel by 1800, but the bank folded circa 1820 (Harrison, Biographical Dictionary of
Irish Quakers, p.101). The Watsons originally came to Ireland as planters in the seventeenth
century.

In the poem, Mary remembers the happy times spent with the Forbes some three months
earlier, in the New Year. One of her pleasures was to read aloud to the family after tea in the
evening and now, as she cannot be there in person, she decides to write them a story, a poetic
narrative in which they are the characters, instead. It seems to be modelled, at least in part,
on a pastoral episode in Thomson’s The Seasons, (‘Autumn’, 177-310) - the love affair
between the beautiful, modest Lavinia, reared in rural seclusion, and the swain, Palemon.

To Anne, H-W & E Forbes & D Watson
-------- 3rd. month 21st 1793 --------

Now while pale Hesper shines with borrow’d light
And clothes in silver grey, the face of night;
While Sol descending, bids the world adieu,
And mocks the utmost grasp of human view,
Sinks midst a maze of Glory, to the west,
And finds in Thetis’ lap, his wonted rest:
While courtly dames for balls & routs prepare
Adjust their ornaments & curl their hair
And meaner Cits, who bask in fortunes sun
With eager haste to plays & concerts run
In gaudy robes, conceal their want of worth
And give to ill got pride, the place of birth
While country rustics, lull’d to calm repose
Which from the source of healthful labour flows
Taste balmy sleeps invigorating power
But lose th’enjoyment of the social hour.
You each extreme avoiding, steer between
And keep (as Sages teach) the golden mean
Nor guilt, nor folly, on your quiet prey
On downy wing your moments steal away
But most these hours serenely peaceful glide
When friend[ly] converse cheers the illum’d[sic] fireside
When mutual intercourse, its charms imparts
And cements the soft link which holds your hearts
By love fraternal, each to each inclined
Move in one sphere & feel one kindred mind
Taste all the pleasures Heaven allows on Earth
To youth, health, innocence, & matchless worth
Even now my Friends I in idea view
Your charming circle, pleased to be with you
Even now I share your smiles with fancied joy
Gaze on your works, your books, your each employ
And while I see such peace around me shed
I wonder where my trivial griefs are fled
Lol now illusion, gives my inward eye
The tranquil scene & does your place supply
Not as when truth presents you to my sight
But as I view you in the dream of night
And (for my hopes would with my wish agree)
If e'er you cast a thought on absent me
Let the gay power, whose varied robes unite
The rainbows colours, bring me to your sight
Suppose me there, the grateful beverage o'er
The pencil now resumes its forming power
Beneath your hands, what charming scenes display'd
In all the elegance of light & Shade
Tis yours to bid the Dryads on you wait
And haply mine, to read or to relate
To cull from ancient lore th'historic tale
But here the magic powers of fancy fail
Then will I write & to your partial ear
A tale convey, which you with kindness hear
The facts are recent - & the story true
And all the characters are known to you.
Where Dublin rears her form in towering pride
And murmuring Liffy rolls her healthful tide
Beside where flows the stream in oozy bed
A spacious mansion lifts its ancient head
Whose worthy inmates handed down to fame
Unblemished honour, & a spotless name
Who more by truth, than even by fortune blest
Had fix'd the stamp of virtue on their breast
Such was the meed which Heaven all bounteous gave
In life almost adored, lamented in the grave
A relict yet remain'd - beloved, revered,
Who only by licentious vice was feared
Who all the worth united in her breast
That all her ancestors had e'er possesst
A son whose soul was generous, just & free
A daughter charming in the graces three
Whose polish'd manners, cultivated mind
Transcendant sense, & elegance refined
Join'd to a form of natures fairest mould
And conscious innocence that crown'd the whole
Charm'd all who saw & every bosom fired
But thou who knew her longest, most admir'd
Thus shone Lucillia, pardon me sweet maid
If 'neath a borrow'd name, thy own I shade
For well I know thy meekness more delights
To shun, than meet the praise thy worth excites
These soothed the virtuous matrons lengthening fears
And smoothed her passage thro' this vale of tears
For she had felt afflictions wormwood powers
And death hath rob'd[ sic] her of her fairest flowers
Her children justly famed for mental charms
Snatched in their bloom from her maternal arms
Forth from his quiver, the grim tyrant drew
His keenest arrows, on her house it flew
There spent its rage, there death his forces proved
And doubly pierced her heart in those she loved
Great was the trial & her anguish sore
The Mother felt it, but the Christian bore
Reason & Religion join'd her griefs to calm
And hoary time infused his lenient balm
Truth shew'd the straight & narrow path to Heaven
And peace & comfort to her mind was given
Here Fancy might indulge a boundless flight
Thro' worlds of Ether, realms of heathen night
Here might great Homer wake his muse of fire
And here new laurels for his brow acquire
Illusion too might touch the trembling string
And of her ancient Gods & Heros sing
How they to crown such wondrous worth decreed
And gave to virtue, virtues glorious meed
How every Goddess with peculiar care
United, to create a lovely Fair
In whom the various gifts of each might shine
Minervas sense & Venus' charms divine
How the sly urchin Cupid aim'd a dart
Which pierced Amintor's unsuspecting heart
How loved Eliza own'd a mutual flame
And favouring Hymen, made their wish the same
But I that tell the plain truths unvarnish'd tale
Rove with more pleasure thro' the muses vale
To others leave Parnassus' dangerous height
"Haste to the tale" methinks I hear you say
Tis done - my charming friends & I obey.

Far from the din of City or of court
Where pomp & splendour, want & vice resort
And safe secluded in the peaceful shade
That lodged her beauties, bloom'd the peerless maid
She rose beneath her parents anxious care
And did their love paternal fondly share
Graceful she moved, amidst her sister train
Herself the loveliest of the rural plain
But (better far than elegance of form)
Her opening mind display'd each mental charm
Mild grace, majestic virtue stood confest[ sic]
The smiling inmates of her gentle breast
Good nature, sweetness, sense & truth display'd
And innocence fair daughter of the shade
No pride, no airs affected, had control[sic]
To taint the snowy whiteness of her soul
But undisguised each warm affection rose
Pure as the limpid brook that smoothly flows
Thus was she formed & health with rosy hue
Crown'd every grace with lustre ever new
Thus did her happy moments glide away
Joy - was the harbinger of every day
Say muse, if thou canst tell what chance or fate
Led young Amintor to her calm retreat
What power impell'd him in that dome to find
Elizas sweetness & a kindred mind
Th'attractive force of beauty there to prove
Which held him captive in the bonds of love
But well I wean, no proud or prudish fair
With feigned reserve or bold affected stare
Could touch his feelings or his passions warm
No! 'twas simplicitys resistless charm.
Thus pleased & pleasing flew the hours along
Till duty call'd him to the Citys throng
His tender parent heard with aspect mild
The artless story of her darling child
And heard approving conscious that the fair
Whom he admired, must well deserve his care
With warmer joy, the honest joy of youth
This loved Lucilia heard his tale of truth
Dear was her brother, to her gentle heart
Where baleful envy never claim'd a part
No jealous fears were in her bosom raised
She lov'd even now the nymph he justly praised
"Blest is the charming maid, she fondly cried
"That shall with us my brothers heart divide
"With us his warmest, best affections share
"Enhance each bliss & soften all his care
"Blest is our parent, who in her shall find
"The willing tribute of a duteous mind
"In ours shall feel her happiness increase
"Her earlier years renew'd & crown'd with peace
"And doubly blest Amintor thus to gain
"The loveliest fair one of the rural train
"For me I long with open arms t'embrace
"A sister so replete in every grace
"A sister worthy of my whole regard
"Since thou to all her sex hast her prefer'd
"Whom tho' I love, but for thy sake alone
"Yet will I learn to love her for her own
She said & straight retired with anxious thought
Her brother saw her worth & prized her as he ought
Lo! now the steeds are to the chariot bound
They neigh, the pavement echos back the sound
The harness glitters to the morning sun
The restless coursers, hasten to be gone
And now to Somerville their steps they bend
His love'd Lucilia does his paths attend
Swift & more swift the rolling axles move
But swifter still the eager wish of love

Now, near the tedious journeys end they draw
And now the villa, wish'd for sight! they view
Quick throb'd Amintors breast, his heart beat high
And keen impatience glow'd in either eye
Hopes, doubts & fears, by turns increased his fear
But all were vanish'd when he met the fair
Say muse what transport fill'd Lucilias breast
When crown'd with charms Eliza stood confest[sic]
Her own sweet counterpart! her kindred mind!
And fav'ring[sic] nature, each to each inclined:
Joy did Elizas gentle bosom move
And every hour increased their mutual love
Soon young Amintor claim'd her willing hand
And festive mirth did every heart expand
But soon was Somerville no longer gay
He bore to town, his lovely prize away
And there was one who joined this happy throng
Whose mental charms would grace a poets song
Whose polish'd mind superior sense display'd
And gave new lustre to the rural shade
Heav'n blest her with good tempers equal sway
In native innocence her heart was gay
And each accomplish'd art, our sex's pride
Was hers - her pencil with Lucilias vied
And when historic lore inspired her tongue
Unnumber'd graces on her accents hung
But when she pour'd the melody of sound
How did she charm the listening ears around
Talents & taste were hers for ever new
Nay more - an heart where flowers of friendship grew
Thus formed – Miranda join'd Elizas side
(Her sister grace, by each dear tie allied)
For her she left the villas varied charms
Her youthful friends, her tender parents arms
With her, affections rarest bliss to prove
And bind more fast the sacred chain of love
"But where's the wedding feast methinks you say
"The joys attendant & the concourse gay?
Pardon my timid view she mounts no higher
And waves descriptions, for they mostly tire
Those scenes are past & pleasures calm & pure
Resume their wonted seat & dwell secure.
On the broad summit of a neighbouring hill
Where waving woods, th'extended prospect fill
Where Dublins vast capacious bay is seen
Her stately buildings, Hills & valleys green
And distant clouds in glorious order roll
O'ertop the mountains & surrounds the whole
Array'd in blooming verdure, there appears
The season smiling gay whose name it bears
There 'midst delights by vulgar minds unfelt
The worthy matron & Lucilia dwelt
Changed is their mansion, but their minds the same
And there admiring friends & kindred came

For new created beauties, daily rise
Forth from Lucilias hand to charm our eyes
Her fingers vie with natures forming powers
And Flora feels a rival in her flowers
Her heart expands, Philanthropic her Soul
Does in the stream of true affection roll
And does her venerable parent know
The bliss that such a daughter can bestow
There oft Amintor & his charming bride
Who cleaves all duteous to her mothers side
(As Ruth who once such piety posses[sic])
And felt such warmth inspire her filial breast
And there Miranda gentle maid unite
Enlarge the circle & bring new delight
Pay, of respect & love the homage due
Homage, which Heaven approving smiles to view
Cull the rich stores of converse, wit & sense
And drive the spiteful daemon,sic] rancour thence
Whilst in their cares, does their fond parent feel
The balm of comfort, all her wounds to heal
And Saturn hoary monarch there appears
To bring increase of joys, with length of years

So when the careful farmer, to the soil Has given the produce of his annual toil
With fear, with dread, he views th'impending blast
The threat'ning storms, the low'ring clouds o'ercast
And if perchance, a ripening blade should fall
He feels with anguish, for he feels for all
When lol the winds are hush'd, the copious rain
Distils rich fruitfulness, thro' all the plain
Calm are the smiling heavens - bright sun-beams rise
And golden harvests, glad his anxious eyes
He sees each wish fulfilled, his labours blast
And hours of trouble, crown'd with days of rest
I close - may you forgive the feeble song
To worth like yours, far sweeter strains belong.

MB
1. Hesper - abbreviated form of Hesperus, a name for the planet Venus, also known as the evening star. Though often called a star, Venus is a planet and has no light of its own — hence, like the moon, its light is a reflection of the sun's and therefore 'borrow'd'.

2. Describing Sol - the sun - sinking below the horizon as if to his 'wonted' or accustomed rest in the lap of Thetis - the sea. Thetis was a sea nymph and, by her husband Peleus, the mother of the Greek hero Achilles.

3. routs - revels or loud festivities.

4. Cits - short form of 'citizens', became a nickname for city-dwellers, usually tradespeople or those who made their money from commerce.

5. the golden mean - 'the avoidance of excess in either direction' (OED), hence the sensible, or balanced, middle way.

6. In idea - In imagination. Mary goes on to picture her friends engaged in their various activities or interests and feels herself to be with them in spirit.

7. the gay power [...] rainbows colours - fancy or imagination. See, for instance, Alexander Pope, The Dunciad (1742-43) IV. 631-32: 'Before her, Fancy's gilded clouds decay/And all its varying Rain-bows die away.' In Part II of her Poem on the African Slave Trade (1792), Mary speaks of imagination, rather than fancy, as being 'in all the rainbow's lovely hues array'd' (line 5).

8. the grateful beverage - tea, which constitutes a welcome, or pleasing (grateful) refreshment. It was usual for the tea to be served before settling to the evening's leisure activities, such as drawing or painting, while a member of the party read aloud. We learn a few lines later that it was Mary's task 'to read or to relate' from history or the classics.

9. Dryads - tree nymphs. Mary's friend would perhaps have been drawing a natural scene, and, figuratively, awaiting assistance from the Dryads to help form her images according to nature. A paintbrush could also be called a 'pencil'.

10. haply - perhaps.

11. As she cannot be with her friends in person to relate a story, Mary chooses instead to write them one. She then narrates, in an oblique but flattering way, the story of events within her friends' families and the romance between James Forbes and Eliza Watson.

12. Dublin was known as the city of towers owing to the grandeur of its buildings.

13. Liffy - River Liffy, Dublin.

14. The Dublin residence of the Forbes family. The funeral card for James Forbes who died in 1783, probably Hannah Wilson Forbes's father, gives his address as 12 Ormond Quay, while the card for her sister Sarah Forbes's funeral in 1790 says the cortege will leave from her brother's house, again 12 Ormond Quay. Presumably the house passed to James Forbes junior on his father's death.

15. The family's 'meed', or reward for virtue, was for its members to be respected in life, and lamented in the grave.

16. relict - elderly widow. This was Anne Forbes whose husband, James Forbes the elder, had died in 1783. Mary says she 'united' the 'worth' of her 'ancestors'. Anne was the daughter of Joshua and Anne Strangman. The Strangmans were a powerful family of merchants who could trace their ancestry back to the time of the Norman Conquest. Strangman, Courtney and Ridgway was a shipping partnership, mainly engaged in the provisions trade. When Anne's first cousin Joshua Strangman died in 1812 in Dublin, an obituary described him as 'one of the most distinguished merchants of Ireland'. There 'were estimated to be as many as 10,000 people at his funeral and most shops had their windows shut during the Interment' (Harrison, Biographical Dictionary, pp.95-96).

17. A son [...] - James Forbes the younger.

18. A daughter [...] - Hannah Wilson Forbes. The three graces were Thalia, Euphrosyne, and Aglaia, the daughters of Zeus. They were deities of gracefulness, beauty and joy.

19. Lucillia - a classical pseudonym chosen for Hannah Wilson Forbes, perhaps derived from Lucina, the classical goddess of light.

20. For she [...] fairest flowers - Anne Forbes had lost several children. Timothy died in infancy, but others, more unusually, had died as young adults: Joshua in 1786 aged twenty-nine, Sarah in 1790 aged thirty-four (Mary wrote a poem on her death) and Anne very recently on 29 November 1792, just before Mary's stay, aged thirty-nine. afflictions wormwood powers - mortification induced by suffering.

21. And hoary time [...] balm - the passage of time has ameliorated suffering. hoary time - poetical convention personifying time as an aged, white-haired figure.

22. Mt 7:14 - 'Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.'
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23. Ether - either the pure, clear sky above the clouds, or the substance presumed to fill the space between material objects.

24. Homer - ancient Greek poet (circa 1050-850 BC), to whom the authorship of the epics The Iliad and The Odyssey are attributed. Mary is taking her story into the realm of the mock-epic. Whereas an epic tells a lengthy tale of the great deeds of gods or heroes worthy of renown, the mock epic appropriates epic devices for a story about more trivial matters, usually for comic purposes. Mary is claiming, for amusement, that the deeds and lives of her friends are subjects worthy of Homer and could earn him fresh laurels for his prowess.

25. the trembling string - i.e. of the lyre.

26. a lovely Fair - a beautiful maiden. This is Eliza Watson who, as a new daughter-in-law, will reward Anne Forbes for her patience and resignation and help to compensate for the loss of some of her own children.

27. Minerva was the Roman goddess of wisdom and Venus of beauty and love.

28. Cupid, the child of Venus, was a small, mischievous boy equipped with bow and arrows. His darts were responsible for people falling in love. Amintor (pseudonym chosen for James Forbes) has been so smitten. Amintor is the name of the hero in a play by Beaumont and Fletcher, The Maid's Tragedy (1619), which was revised by Edmund Waller (1606-1687) to give it a happy ending in which Amintor wins his bride, Aspatia. A more likely source, however, is the poem by David Mallett entitled 'Amyntor and Theodora' which was published in 1780 in Vol. 73 of the popular 109 volume pocket edition series of The Poets of Great Britain by John Bell.

29. Hymen - the god of marriage in classical mythology.

30. Parnassus - Mount Parnassus, sacred to the muses. Mary assigns herself to the lowly vale, not the high peaks, of poetic inspiration.

31. Eliza grew up in the rural peace of Summerville at Clonmel.

32. wean - attest, assert.

33. proud or prudish fair - a fair was a beautiful young woman, but 'prudish' was an epithet reserved for one who maintained a distant manner, often holding men in disdain, or pretending to do so.

34. resistless charm - i.e. charm that cannot be resisted.

35. nymph - a demi-goddess of nature, therefore a beautiful young woman.

36. coursers - swift horses.

37. to town - to Dublin.

38. one who joined this happy throng - Eliza's sister Deborah Watson. The next few lines praise Debby for excelling in feminine accomplishments such as drawing and singing, but the reference to 'historic lore' shows academic achievement was also prized.

39. Miranda - the pseudonym chosen for Debby Watson. The name of Prospero's daughter in Shakespeare's The Tempest, who, as she and her father were marooned on an island, grew up apart from society and was educated to a high standard by him.

40. Her sister grace - characterising Miranda (Debby) and Eliza as two of the three graces, beautiful and graceful daughters of Zeus who conferred happiness. The graces, allied by their gifts and as sisters, were also invoked as goddesses of friendship.

41. waves - i.e. waves away.

42. The season [...] name it bears - Summerhill. The view of Dublin bay described in the previous few lines replicates in some key features that described in 'Written by Moonlight at Summer Hill', p.181 above. The reference 'changed is their mansion' three lines later confirms that the Forbes family had moved residence. Their new abode was probably in the Dublin area of Summerhill, then still a suburb, although there is also a village of Summerhill some miles outside Dublin.

43. Flora - Roman goddess of spring and flowers. Lucillia (Hannah Wilson Forbes) may be arranging or making artificial flowers, another popular feminine accomplishment, or this could refer to her painting.

44. As Ruth [...] possest - comparing Eliza's close relationship with Anne Forbes to that of the Biblical Ruth and her mother-in-law, Naomi. See particularly Ruth 1:16 where Ruth says, 'Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God'.

45. Saturn - see note 1 to 'To Anne & H W Forbes', p.187 above. Saturn, as one of the most ancient of gods, is envisaged as 'hoary' or white and aged, and yet also the harbinger of festive joy.

46. The image of the farmer was perhaps suggested by the mention of Saturn, the god of agriculture, above.
By April, Mary Birkett and Debby Watson, so near to one another in age - Debby was twenty and Mary now eighteen - had formed an intimate friendship. Here Mary tries to persuade Debby to extend her stay in Dublin and delay her return to Summerville at Clonmel, playfully upbraiding her for wishing to leave her new friends at Summerhill so soon, while paying her the compliment that a girl as modest as she will naturally want to return to the country, far from 'the public gaze'.

4 mo. 22nd ---- To D= Watson ---- 1793

Sweet maid! suspend thy haste nor yet
The pleasures that surround thee quit
Ah! leave not Dublins peopled plain
Where joys for ever varying reign
Her spacious streets, her buildings high
Where art & wealth & splendour vie
But dearer to the feeling mind
Can Debby leave her friends behind
Can she who owns the happy power
To charm the mild, the social hour
Who friendships lambent flame imparts
And claims an empire in our hearts
Can she without regret forsake
The friends her virtues love to make
No - base the thought, the gentle maid
Would seek the calm, the rural shade
Her merit shuns the public gaze
Her modest wishes shrink from praise
She loves the peaceful haunts of life
Averse to folly, guilt or strife
So blooms, the lily of the vale
Diffusing fragrance with the gale
There all its beauties rise to sight
Where not a breath can taint its white
So shrinks the feeling plant from harm
When curious hands surround its form
But in calm shades it rises fair
And loves to bloom & flourish there

Oh! thou whose virtues make thee dear
Forgive the sympathetic tear
Those virtues to the muse are known
Who loves thee for thy worth alone
Who sees with grief th'approaching day
That tears thee from thy friends away
Yes she - nor only she will grieve
For thee th'unbidden sigh shall heave
Thy own Eliza oft will find
A vacuum in her lovely mind
Not all her lords endearing care
Shall e'er efface thy image there
Our Hannah whose capacious breast
Is of each mental grace possess'd
Whose mind replete in every charm
Gives added lustre to her form
For thee a sad regret shall prove
Thy kindred worth excites her love
For she the flower of Summerhill
Admires the maid of Somerville
And I whose highest wish to view
My name amongst the chosen few
Shall feel the pangs which still attend
Our parting with a valued friend.

Oft at mild evenings social hour
When converse reasserts her power
How shall we see the charm display'd
Which Debby in our hearts has made
And every object will unite
To bring thee to our mental sight
Each warm effusion, shall get free
And we will talk & think of thee
Our friendship shall remain the same
And time add fuel to the flame
For thee - may pleasure on thee wait
And peace attend in every state
May Heaven its choicest blessings shed
And pour its gifts around thy head
Oh! in thy cup of life may fall
No drops of wormwood or of gall
May virtue handmaid fair of truth
Protect thee thro' the paths of youth
Guide thee thro' nature's slippery road
To Heaven, to Jesus & to God.

Adieu & sometimes think of me
For oft my mind shall dwell with thee

MB

1. lambent - gently and softly radiant.
2. the feeling plant - the mimosa, often known as the sensitive plant because it shrinks from the touch.
3. not all her lords endearing care [...] thy image there - not even the loving attentions of Eliza's new husband, James Forbes, will make her forget her sister.
4. drops of wormwood or of gall - cliché for suffering or sadness, of biblical origin. See, for example, Lam 3:19 - 'Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall'. Gall is bile or bitterness, and wormwood a plant with bitter leaves.
Following Debby Watson's return to Summerville in April 1793, Mary sent her a copy of 'Rowe's Letters' with this accompanying poem. The 'Letters' would have been those of Elizabeth Rowe who 'eschewed the directly erotic by combining romantic and religious sentiment in her popular elegiac series of letters, *Friendship in Death* (1728)', and who became 'the lady writer whose example it was decorous to follow'. She was a 'Dissenting poet' in a 'pious retiring tradition'. (Janet Todd, *The Sign of Angellica: Women, Writing and Fiction, 1660-1800* (London: Virago, 1989), pp.50, 127.) Hence she was an exemplary model for girls of Mary and Debby's Quaker background. But she could be amusing as well as pious. She also published *Letters Moral and Entertaining in Prose and Verse* which was added to *Friendship in Death* in a combined edition in 1733. These works ran into numerous editions throughout the rest of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Guardians of friendship,¹ pure & hallow'd flame
Oh! hear & in its temple, place our name
Be there inscribed the union of our soul
Sacred to virtue & to your controul[sic]
Oh! let not absence e'er effectual prove
To steal from Debby's heart her Mary's love
But be it yours, thrice honor'd shades² to spread
Unfading wreaths of myrtle round her head³
Oft may you bring my image to her view
Cement the bond & make it firm & true
And as in youth, our best affections grow
May ours still flourish with unceasing glow
To her - ye powers, this little tribute bear
May its blest author, her attention share
And when her eye shall glance o'er every line
With added lustre may her virtues shine
And as tis hers each pleasing charm to know
Be ours th'exalted pity of Rowe
In us may all her dignity combine
Her heart of friendship & her love divine
So shall our union spurn the bounds of time
And with our spirits to the gates of mercy climb

M Birkett

Dublin 5th mo 4th 1793

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1. guardians of friendship - possibly the three graces, often depicted with arms entwined symbolising friendship, as well as grace and beauty.
2. thrice honor'd shades - i.e. the shades (spirits) of the 'guardians of friendship'.
3. The myrtle, an evergreen, symbolised constancy. It was sacred to Venus, the goddess of love.
In 'The tears of Friendship', Mary, acutely missing the companionship of Hannah Wilson Forbes and Debby Watson, appeals to the spirit of friendship to tell her why its joys must always be succeeded by pain and loss, but receives no answer. Walking alone in Marlay Park near Dublin, she imagines she sees Hannah and Debby, whom she continues to style 'Lucilia' and 'Miranda' - but their forms, mere illusions, vanish. Religion, a figure in flowing white robes, replaces them and gives her the answers that Friendship was unable to provide.

--- The tears of Friendship ---
------ 6th mo 19th. 1793 ------

Friendship, sweet soother of the hearts stern woe
Source of the purest bliss that man can know
Of pleasures, to ignoble souls denied
Of joys to virtue & to heaven allied
Oh sent in mercy from the realms above
To form the gentle bands of social love
To bid the sullen rage of discord cease
And plant[plant] the seed of unity & peace
Say, power celestial am I doom'd to prove
The woes of parting from the friends I love?
Say, must thy warmth which thrills thro' every vein
Crown of my life! & meed of all my pain
Chill'd by cold absence unrelenting smart
And torn those links which twine around my heart
In pleasures goblet must I ever find
Large draughts of agony remain behind!
Must I each hour of social bliss forget
Or if remembering but with sad regret?
Shall recollection point th'unerring dart
And pierce the lone recesses of my heart
Oh! speak[!] for tumults in my bosom roll
And speechless anguish agitates my soul
This said with pensive steps I left the plain
And clumb'd the mount near Marlay's fair demesne
Its moss green summit gain'd, a roving glance
At once beheld the grand, the vast expanse
Embowering groves display'd a cool retreat
To screen the traveller from the noonday heat
Green meadows, fruitful valleys, mansions fair
And flocks which fatten'd 'neath the shepherds care
Here craggy mountains, rudely pompous rose
And there the winding stream of Liffey flows
Here in proud majesty her vessels ride
And o'er the sea green surface smoothly glide
There rise the towers of Dublin - to my thought
At once unnumber'd scenes my memory brought
There did my downcast eye unwearied \(^4\) rest
And felt an anguish not to be exprest\(\text{[sic]}\)
A thousand ideas throng my anxious mind
Of pleasures past! of sorrows yet behind,
In fancies high wrought colouring\(^5\) - \(\text{lo! I see}\)
The friends who more than all are dear to me
Illusion paints their lov'd, their well known forms
Replete in Beauty, grace & mental charms
To my minds eye Lucilia stands confest\(\text{[sic]}\)
In all the dignity of virtue drest\(\text{[sic]}\)
Her mien portrays the image of her mind
Enchanting sweetness, worth & sense refined
Expression sparkles in her look benign
And every movement marks a soul divine
Lo on her arm reclining comes the fair
Who does with her my warm affection share
Miranda gentle as the evening ray
When Sol's\(^6\) effulgent radiance glides away
Unskilled to wear the mark of polished guile
She scorns dissembling or the well feign'd smile
Her tongue (where mercies voice melodious dwells)
Her thoughts, the feelings of her bosom tells,
But 'tis her friends who know her value best
She loves, & clasps them to her throbbing breast
Sweet pair how blest am I your worth to know
And all the charms which from your converse flow
For as the sun which gilds each object near
So shines the lustre of your virtues clear.
I haste to meet you, to declare my bliss,
You shun me - ah! 'twas fancied happiness
Oh! stay you dear illusions, leave me not
With you is every heartfelt woe forgot
My grief subsides my tumults sink to rest
And peace reanimates my lonely breast
As when a storm terrific rolls its force
And hurls the vessel from its distant course
The trembling sailors find their efforts vain
To hush the winds or calm the troubled main
'Till Phoebus\(^7\) rising with unclouded light
Dispels the gloomy horrors of the night
Bursts o'er the horizon, cloathed\(\text{[sic]}\) in golden fire
And to their caverns, bids the winds retire \(^8\)
Ah! how they vanish! how they glide along
Like the faint echos of Mirandas song\(^9\)
They're gone! & each delusive hope's destroyed
My heart feels all a chasm! an aching void
Now, heave ye sighs! ye tears incessant flow!
And vent the piercing agony of woe:
Distracting idea! scarce the murmuring sound
Was utter'd - solemn stillness reign'd around
The pliant moss no footsteps rudely crush'd
Or climb'd the craggy rocks, for all was hush'd
When lo! a form celestial met my sight
Of dazzling glory, exquisitely bright!
White was her flowing robe, her air was grace
And Heavens own lustre beam'd thro' her sweet face
No poet feigned his Goddess half so fair
Yet was she thoughtful & her brow severe
No leering laughter did her eyes display
Her aspect serious, rather grave than gay
With accents soft as harmony she said
(I bowed in silence humbling & dismay'd)
"And who art thou! presumptuous girl whose tho't
"Is with harsh murmurs of impatience fraught
"Wouldst thou the joys of friendship only know
"And leave untouch'd the wholesome dregs of woe
"Wouldst thou from mans appointed lot be free
"Are heavenly joys reserved on earth for thee
"All transient bliss has its attendant pain
"And he whose hope rests there, but hopes in vain
"Shall friends possess thy undivided heart
"Nor God thy great Creator claim a part
"What! hast thou no resource, no comfort left
"If of their loved society bereft
"Nor feels thy soul an ardent wish to prove
"Th'unpurchased manna of celestial love
"Obl fix not here thy views! but mount them higher
"To Realms where absense ne'er intrudes aspire
"Frail are the friendships which on life depend
"But be it thine to seek a better friend
"A Friend, who when these changing scenes are o'er
"When pleasures syren tongue shall charm no more
"When these terrestrial glories shall decay
"And Kingdoms, like a vapour, fade away
"Will place thee in the seats of bliss above
"Nor Hells broad gates shall part thee from his love
She cease'd & smiling 'midst a blaze of light
Which shone effulgent, vanish'd from my sight
'Twas then I found Religion was her name
And felt a latent spark of her pure flame
I saw that she alone could give me rest
And ease the woes which agitate my breast
Could o'er my mind diffuse a soft relief
And cool the transports of too violent grief
Plant of firm faith, the animating glow
And lead the soul, where streams of comfort flow
I felt her influence glide o'er all my frame
And purify even friendships hallow'd flame
Resolved no more to murmur at my woes
But bear my griefs resign'd, I humbly rose
Joined the companions of this rural day
And with a thankful heart, I homewards bent my way
1. meed of all my pain - reward for all my pain.

2. absence - this is possessive (i.e. the meaning is 'cold absence's unrelenting smart'). The apostrophe and additional 's' are omitted because the word ends phonetically in a sibilant. This also enables the line to scan correctly. Although we do not omit the apostrophe today, we do form the possessive of some names ending in a sibilant by use of an apostrophe without the 's', for example, the possessive of Moses is Moses'.

3. Marlay's fair demesne - Marley Park is situated between Edmondstown and Ballinteer, south of the River Liffey in Dublin. The spelling 'Marlay' survives in Marlay Grange near the park. In Mary's day this was the home of David de La Touche, head of the banking house of this famous family of Huguenot origins, and one time Governor of the Bank of Ireland. His daughter Elizabeth was a renowned beauty who once acted with David Garrick in the grounds at Marlay. It was not unusual at this time for private country estates to be accessible to the public. At the end of the eighteenth century the surrounding area would still have been countryside, and Mary goes on to describe the view of the country round Dublin, the ships sailing along the Liffey and the city itself.

4. unwearied - manuscript difficult to read, manuscript spelling may be 'unweiried'.

5. fancy's high wrought colouring - the fanciful workings of the imagination.


7. Phoebus - epithet for Apollo, god of the sun.

8. And [...] winds retire - in the Aeneid, Virgil tells how the winds were locked in caves in the mountainside by Jupiter (Zeus), the King of the Gods, to stop them wreaking havoc, and there controlled by Aeolus, god of the winds. Mary would probably have been familiar with Dryden's translation of the Aeneid (1697).

9. faint echos of Miranda's song - the echoes in Mary's mind of Debby's voice, remaining after her image has disappeared.

10. no poet feigned his Goddess half so fair - the word 'poet' is assumed to be correct as it fits the sense here, although it is written badly in manuscript, appearing more like 'port'. To 'feign' can mean to invent as well as pretend, so the meaning is that no poet ever created such a beautiful female figure in verse.

11. tho't - abbreviation of 'thought'.

12. unpurchased manna of celestial love - when the Israelites were starving in the wilderness, God fed them with manna - a seed-like food that floated down freely from heaven.

13. pleasures syren tongue - the deadly lure of pleasure. In Greek myth, sirens were creatures, part bird and part woman, who lived on an island from where, by their bewitching song, they lured sea travellers to their deaths.
This next poem was written to Eliza Forbes, née Watson, and another Watson sister - Sarah (born 1 July 1774, after Debby but before Eliza, so just nineteen years old at this time), who has not been mentioned before. Eliza is returning to Summerville at Clonmel, probably for her first visit home since her marriage to James Forbes and her move to Dublin, accompanied by Sarah. The purpose of the poem is partly to bid them farewell, but also to take the opportunity to send a message to Debby, already at Summerville, assuring her of the constancy of Mary's affection.

Sarah Watson married Robert Roberts the following year (1794). The Roberts families had major shipping businesses in Youghal and Cork.

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One moment now your haste suspend
And take the blessing of a friend
For grief does in her bosom dwell
To say that dismal word Farewell
Oft has it pierced my bleeding heart
And made the tear of anguish start
Yet once again I'm doom'd to know
The sorrows which from absence flow
First Debby left the social train
And I her loss deplored in vain.
Next Hannah left the cheerful hill
And caused a chasm - which none can fill
Now, you depart & with you go
The pleasures I no longer know
Hard fate! but I will learn to bear!
Friendships sweet rose has thorns of care
And they whose joys on Earth are fix'd
Will find those joys with anguish mix'd
Go then - my friends - & may you prove
The bliss of harmony & love
Soon may you reach the rural plain
And meet your kindred soon again
There may you all the transports know
Which from a blest reunion flow
The throb of joy, the hearts light bound
The pleasures in remembrance found
The ties of earlier years renew
And make the bond of friendship true.

Oh! when in each fraternal arm
You fold my Debby's gentle form
(Your sister grace & formed to please
In native innocence & ease)
Oh! then my anxious wish impart
And bear this message from my heart
Unpolish'd tho' the lines appear
The muse that dictates is sincere
Tell her th' affection which I feel
Is more than language can reveal
That undiminish'd in my breast
Her friendship is an hallow'd guest
Oh! say that memory true & kind
Oft brings her image to my mind
And paints in every glowing tint
The moments we've together spent
That with regret the past I view
And long our friendship to renew
Yet mine are joys unknown before
To read her letters o'er & o'er
To mark the - moving of her hand
Where friendship does her thoughts expand
Oh! say that 'tis the chiefest joy
Which can my lonely hours employ
And - but no longer will I tire
Your patient ear with each desire
For Debby may explore the rest
By that which actuates her breast
So may you blest & blessing know
The charms which from affection flow
May health & peace attend you still
May Heaven my ardent wish fulfil
And safely send you soon again
To form the sprightly social train

MB

1. the cheerful hill - Summerhill, Dublin.
2. fraternal - brotherly, here describing sibling relationship generally and so including sisters.
3. Mary is comparing the three sisters to the graces - the three goddesses of grace, beauty and joy, daughters of Zeus.
4. blest and blessing - i.e. being blessed and blessing others.
Less than two weeks after the departure of Eliza Forbes and Sarah Watson for Summerville, Mary wrote this missive to their sister Debby once again mourning the loss of her company and that of Hannah Wilson Forbes who, we now learn, has sailed for England - 'Albion'. Hannah's gentle reminder before setting sail - that Debby will return to Dublin in the winter - offers Mary some solace.

The reasons for Hannah's trip to England are not given. She eventually married Thomas Reynolds (1761-1819) of Wallington in Surrey in 1798. No further dated poems mention her until the elegy composed on her death after childbirth in 1799, but she did not stay in England all that time. The elegy confirms her presence later at a ministerial family visit in Dublin made by Deborah Darby and Rebecca Young, almost certainly 1797. It also mentions Hannah's involvement with Mary in the foundation of a school, which must have taken place during the late 1790s. A poem entitled 'Eugenio and Laura' has a postscript dated 'Summerhill 12 Mo 1794', so Mary continued to be a visitor at the Forbes home.

An Epistle to D= Watson 7mo 16th 1793

From scenes where Folly hold[s] her midnight court
Where luxury revels in unhallow'd sport
Where pleasures throng to charm the giddy heart
Pleasures! in which my feelings take no part
From the harsh music of incessant din,
I turn in search of purer peace within
Far other than the Citys noisy throng
The voice of friendship & the muses song
This with warm transport gives my soul to glow
That claims my heart & bids sweet comforts flow
Both - form my all of bliss & both combine
To dignify this poor, dim lamp of mine
Both - make the joys of seraphs known below
And scatter roses oer this vale of woe
Both - too were mine - yes friendship all thy power
To charm the silent & the social hour
The heart[-]expanding throb & swimming eye
Th'attractive impulse of soft sympathy
The mutual confidence, the thought refined
Comprized in Heavens best gift - a kindred mind
A mind to soothe & soften every care
Enhance each bliss & every transport share
These are thy joys oh! friendship, but thy pain
What hand may dictate or what tongue explain
Ah! me that pain is mine, shall mortals know
Supremest bliss! nor taste the cup of woe
For only they whose warm & generous soul
Submit[s] to friendship & to truths controul[sic]
Can tell the anguish by such minds confest[sic]
Torn from a lov'd associates faithful breast
That anguish deeply does my bosom know
Twice has it bled with agonizing woe
Twice felt a vacuum o'er each sense pervade
And nature mourn'd the chasms which absence made
When thou sweet maid our social circle left
Of half of its comfort was my heart bereft
Yet while with Hannah's wonted presence blest
I felt not all my loss & hoped the best
In Hannahs mind each living grace is seen
The charms of Pallas & the Paphian Queen
Yet so chastiz'd[sic] by virtues heavenly fire
That none can envy her, tho' all admire
In her, no female foibles, can we trace
Yet who so feminine in every grace
Ahl who possessing such a noble mind
Such true humility, such sense refined
Sweetness that like a magnet, draws our love
Which every interview4 does more improve
And if in aught unknowing she is found
Tis of the lustre which she scatters round5
Blest art thou Albion! & thy land how blest
With such a charming, such a lovely guest
Dear native plain! where my first breath I drew
I love thee doubly, for she loves thee too,
Endear'd to me, is all that she holds dear
I share her pleasures & her dangers fear
Oh! say ye powers of friendship, how my heart
Was pierced with anguish, when obliged to part
Say, when the barks6 majestic side she sought
What various passions in my bosom wrought
Vain hopes & fears alternate moved my heart
But grief predominating ruled the rest
She saw, soft accents did her thoughts explain
"Were Debby here, thou woulds[t] be blest again
She comes in winter" - with life giving power
The sentence fell; as sun beams midst a shower
Ahl who like Hannah knows to cheer the soul
Command the passions & the soul contro[u]l[scic]
No other word could joy or comfort give
But - this revived my hopes & bade them live:
Lov'd Debby, shall I then behold thy form
Where sense & sweetness dignify & charm
Hear the soft sounds of gentle sympathy
And catch the spar[k]ling lustre of thine eye
Yes! when from us brown Ceres shall depart7
Debby will come to glad her Marys heart
Hail!! then tho[u] monarch of th'inverted year8
Welcome thy frosts, thy snows, thy rigours drear
Welcome ye lowering clouds & battering rain
Since she & friendship comes with you again.
No more will I repine, the flowers are gone
Cold freezing blasts succeed a summers sun
No more the rose & lily shed perfume
No more the peach displays its tempting bloom
No more the juicy pear, our sense invites
Yet Debby's voice is sweeter far than they
And if no gardens scent the ambient air
Nor mossy bank a cool repose prepare
Yet blest in friendship shall our moments glide
And social converse cheer the illum'd fire side
Then welcome hoary Winter pleasures bland
Await thy coming, joys a numerous band
With anxious hope I see thy bleak return
For I shall smile, tho' natures beauties mourn
And (as afore) when battering rain descends
Shall taste sweet converse with my charming friends
Again renew the sprightly social scene
Nor thought of these lone hours shall intervene
Again shall fairy footed mirth abound
Unstudied wit, & sallies gay be found
Concord shall reign & thou faint drooping lyre
Feel sprightlier thoughts, thy trembling strings inspire
Adieu sweet girl, may joys like these be thine
But let thy undiminish'd love - be mine

1. unhallow'd sport - unholy, i.e. immoral entertainments.
2. the muse's song - poetry.
3. Pallas - a name for Athene, Greek goddess of wisdom. the Paphian Queen - Aphrodite the Greek goddess of love who, according to legend, was born from the sea near Paphos on Cyprus. A 'Paphian' was also a term for acourtesan or high-class prostitute. Mary was, perhaps, aware of this. There is a wariness of the association of Aphrodite with wantonness in the next line, where the goddess's charms, in Hannah, are 'chastiz'd' - purified or disciplined - by virtue. Then again, three lines later, it is stated categorically that, in Hannah, no 'female foibles' can be traced. The word 'foible', at this time, could denote a moral failing as much as a minor fault or weakness.
4. interview - meeting, conversation.
5. And if [ . . . ] round - if Hannah lacks any knowledge, it is only of the power of her own charms.
6. barks - ship's.
7. when from us brown Ceres shall depart - when autumn is over. Ceres, here in autumnal brown, was the Roman name for Demeter, goddess of the earth, agriculture and harvest. According to the ancient myth, she retired in winter in sadness at the loss of her daughter, Persephone, who was compelled to spend half the year with her husband, Pluto, in his underworld kingdom - spring came when Persephone returned again to her mother.
8. monarch of the inverted year - Saturn, god of the year, possibly based on an ancient Roman king. His festival, the Saturnalia celebrated in mid-winter, was a time of licence when the usual order of things was inverted - slaves exchanged places with masters for instance - but 'the inverted year' is also autumn and winter, when the earth rotates away from the sun.
9. the ambient air - the surrounding air.
10. hoary Winter - conventional personification of winter as 'hoary' - literally white haired with age, hence snowy or frosty.
11. (as afore) - as before, i.e. during the time they spent together in the previous winter.
12. thou faint drooping lyre - addressing poetic inspiration, which will be revitalised on Debby's return. (The lyre was the instrument of the muses.)
The title of these lines indicates they were originally written for Debby Watson, but later sent as a dedicatory poem to ‘L Goff, with a copy of Mary’s ‘Soliloquy supposed to be written by Marie Antoniette[sic] . . .’, reproduced here immediately below this verse.

‘L Goff was probably Lydia Goff, one of the twenty-one or twenty-two children (accounts differ) of Jacob and Elizabeth Goffe of Horeton House in County Wexford - land originally given to their ancestor, Major-General William Goffe, for his services to Oliver Cromwell. The surname is sometimes spelt 'Goff', though 'Goffe' with the 'e' is more usual in contemporary accounts. By the time Elizabeth Goffe died, she had forty-five grandchildren and twenty-nine great-grandchildren. A girl named Lydia was the couple's eleventh child, born 11 July 1772, which would make her twenty-one years old in 1793 and thus the contemporary of Mary and her circle of female friends. Another Goffe sister, Mary, was the first wife of James Forbes, Hannah Wilson Forbes's brother, but died only a year after the marriage. He then married Debby Watson's sister, Eliza, in 1792 (see 'To Eliza Forbes', p.182 above).

The Goffs' youngest child was Dinah Wilson Goff who has left an account of how her family was affected during the Irish Rebellion of 1798 in 'Divine Protection', Chapter IV of JMR [Jane Marion Richardson, formerly Wakefield], Six Generations in Ireland 1655-1890 (1893).

Written for D- W. address’d to L Goff
With the Soliloquy &c[etc]

Dear Girl receive this tribute of my love
And when o'er every line thine eye shall rove
May soft remembrance charm the lonely hour
And memory thaw cold absence icy power
The hand of friendship penn'd them first for me
And now the Goddess guides my quill for thee
Thus double force these artless numbers claim
A sure memento of our lasting flame.

M Birkett

1. absence icy power - this is possessive (i.e. the meaning is 'absence's icy power'). The apostrophe and additional 's' are omitted because the word ends phonetically in a sibilant and is soon followed by another sibilant in 'icy'. This also enables the line to scan correctly. (Note that today, although we do not omit the apostrophe, the possessive of some names ending in a sibilant is formed by use of an apostrophe without the 's', e.g. the possessive of Moses is Moses'.)

2. artless numbers - simple, unaffected verses.
This poem is Mary's expression of the dissolving of hope, of the collapse of the promise many felt the French Revolution held for a new dawn of justice in human society, into what she terms 'the raging tumult of rebellious hate'. She chooses to concentrate on the tragic situation of Marie Antoinette, the widow of the guillotined King Louis XVI - a theme, treated by several poets, which exerted a powerful hold over the public imagination. Mary envisions her imprisoned with her young son, the Dauphin, knowing that death might come to either of them at any moment by the assassin's knife, poison or some other method unimagined. Marie Antoinette voices her fears in a soliloquy - a form whereby a character delivers an extended utterance as if speaking to him/herself. Thomas Campbell's 'Verses on Marie Antoinette', published in a Glasgow newspaper c. 1793 when he was about sixteen years of age, also deploy this technique, the Queen delivering a soliloquy on the way to the guillotine. See The Poetical Works of Thomas Campbell [1777-1844] (London: Frederick Warne, [n.d.]; repr. from earlier edns), pp.186-87. See also Esther Milne Day, 'Evening. An Elegy. Finished on reading the melancholy Separation of the Dauphin from the Queen of France' in Poems and other Fugitive Pieces by Eliza (Edinburgh and London: W. Bulmer, 1796), where the Queen, appearing as a 'phantom' to the poem's speaker beside a 'limpid brook', and then viewed in her imprisonment, 'raves' distractedly.

Mary, now aged eighteen, was responding to events as they were unfolding, so the poem needs to be set in its immediate historical context. The date given in the heading of the poem is 15 August 1793. After it took over from the Legislative Assembly as the government of France in the previous September, the new National Convention had immediately declared a Republic and arraigned the imprisoned King and Queen on charges of treason. The capture of the royal pair, in an attack on the Tuileries Palace, had in part been precipitated by discovery of Marie Antoinette's negotiations with her relations, the Austrian royal family, seeking their active intervention. The king, now addressed simply as Monsieur Capet, was tried in January 1793 and executed by guillotine on the 21st, his wife, son and daughters being allowed to spend nearly two hours with him the previous day. During that year, what became known as 'The Terror' - highly repressive measures and the mass execution of aristocrats, counter-revolutionaries and other victims - gathered momentum from the spring to reach its height in September. Marie Antoinette, now dubbed simply the 'Widow Capet', remained in prison until her trial by the Revolutionary Tribunal on 14 October when she was inevitably found guilty. She was sent to the guillotine on 16 October. The couple's son, now Louis XVII, continued in prison until his death, rumoured to be from poison, in June 1795 - although there was some doubt about his death as several pretenders later claimed to be him.

Mary sets the scene of her poem as 'the Abbaye' and imagines the Queen and the young Dauphin imprisoned together there. The Abbaye, a former monastic building situated in the Rue Sainte-Marguerite in Paris, was one of the maisons de santé - fifteen prisons reserved mainly for richer prisoners. The scene of some of the worst atrocities in the prison massacres of September 1792, when many of its inmates were murdered, it was also one of the first to receive victims of the Terror in 1793. It was soon bulging, by July holding almost 300 prisoners. Loathed as much as the Bastille by many, it became one of the most well-known places of incarceration. Charlotte Corday, the murderess of Marat, and Madame Roland were imprisoned there but not Marie Antoinette. The Queen, in fact, was removed from the Temple, where she had been imprisoned with her husband and then since his death, to the prison of the Conciergerie on 2 August. The Conciergerie, in the same building as the Palais de Justice where the Revolutionary Tribunal held its trials, was the last stop before the guillotine. There, Marie Antionette was kept in virtual isolation, separated from her children. (Thomas Campbell in his 'Verses' emphasises her 'lone captivity'). Her isolation became more intense after she tried to escape in September, when she was removed to solitary confinement in the prison pharmacy. One of her major torments was her separation from the Dauphin and the way in which, during her trial in October, the eight year old boy was persuaded to collude in fabricated charges of incest against his mother.
One influence on the poem, bearing on the way it works to arouse sympathy in the reader for Marie Antoinette, is likely to have been Edmund Burke's widely read *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790). Burke's *Reflections* were an attack on the radical ideas of the Revolution and a warning of what it might lead to at a time when many people in England still regarded it hopefully as an overthrow of despotism which could usher in a new and better era for France. Burke, deeply conservative in many respects, viewed any overturning of traditional hierarchies, property ownership and institutions as tending to produce anarchy by undermining the continuity on which he felt society was based. To reach his audience, he constructed a picture of the tragic situation of the French Queen, painting her downfall in highly emotional terms calculated to appeal to the sensibility of his readers. Mary was an admirer of Burke - see her poem on the death of his friend Richard Shackleton who, she felt, helped to form Burke's mind 'to honor & to truth' (p. 172 in this volume) - and this 'Soliloquy' may have been inspired in part by Burke's depiction of the Queen. It carries echoes of his traditional sensibility and reveals a reverence for royalty coupled with a view of the revolutionaries as anarchic: monarchy is 'sacred' and feels 'the rude grasp of impious hands', the revolutionaries' 'ire' is 'lawless' (the fifth stanza of Campbell's 'Verses' also mentions 'oppression's lawless doom').

Burke's *Reflections* prompted a wave of replies from radicals in defence of the Revolution and its ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity, the most famous being Tom Paine's *Rights of Man* (1791-92) which ruthlessly exposed many of the flaws in Burke's arguments. (A text that, according to her 'Progress of Infidelity' narrative (see Vol. 1, Prose, p.21), Mary read but later rejected.) Unfortunately, by the end of 1793 the 'Terror' seemed, probably for the majority in Britain at least, to have proved Burke's dire predictions correct.


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**Soliloquy supposed to be written by Marie Antoinette[sic] just before her separation from the Dauphin.**

Scene the Abbaye 8th mo 15th 1793

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Sleep on sweet boy & may'st thou never know
Thy Fathers anquish or thy Mothers woe
Sleep on unconscious of the frowns of fate!
The raging tumult of rebellious hate!
The storms of faction, thundering o'er thy head
Impel'd by madness & by murder led!
Ah! little knowest thou with what piercing smart
They rend thy hapless mothers bleeding heart!
Lock'd in soft slumbers fascinating bands
Thou feel'st not the rude grasp of impious hands
Nor starts with horror from a gloomy rest
Oh! privilidge[sic] of innocence, how blest
Not thus I feel the gentle dews of sleep
I groan with agony, I rave, I weep!
Still, still rebellion shews his iron fangs,
And plants in every pore a thousand pangs
Terrific are my dreams, a reeking sword
The headless body of my murder'd Lord!
Still swim before my sight! in vain I turn
No voice can soothe, or bid me cease to mourn!
If chang'd the scene! what hollow shrieks arise
Streets, piled with human slaughter meet my eyes
Each hour, each moment, numbers yield their breath
And close their sufferings in the Jaws of Death;
Oh! Heavens! what sounds my frantic soul appall
Tis me they curse! tis me they blame for all
What have I done! ye ruffians! could my crimes
Thus stamp your infamy to latest times?
Say, will my guilt wash out each bloody deed
Or will my errors, for your murders plead?
Ahh tis too true, dark sins have stain'd my breast
But who is free from falling? not the best
For sins, remorse shall on my quiet prey
And just repentance mark each gloomy day
But, could they thus provoke your lawless ire?
Or prompt you thus to slay your King, your Sire?
Could they to havoc foul, your hands impel
Turn men to fiends! & loose the dogs of Hell!
Alas! in vain my tears incessant flow!
In vain the piercing agony of woe!
In vain! they cant recall my Lord to life
Nor give lost comfort to his wretched wife
Nor quell seditions loud tumultous roar
Nor to his injur'd rights my son restore
Oh! my lov'd boy, thy dignity is fled
No fawning courtiers, now surround thy bed
Watch o'er thy soft repose with jealous eyes
How chang'd! neglected here my son & sovereign lies
Not thus unnoticed pass'd the natal day
Then - all was joy! was pleasure bland & gay!
Then - smiled a grateful kingdom! blest to see
Another Louis rise, my boy in thee
Then spread rejoicings o'er this happy land
And gladness did each loyal breast expand
Exulting thousands hail'd th'auspicious morn
When to this realm, a future King was born
"Long live our prince" was echo'd from each tongue
And thro' the air loud acclamations rung.
But now, Oh! do I see this day, yet live!
Insulting Pity is the best they give!
Ev'n they who feel a sympathetic glow
Whose eyes betray compassion for our woe
Dare shew no favour, for their lives they fear
And turn aside, to wipe the falling tear
Oh! Heaven on me hath pour'd its vengeful cup
Hath drain'd the bitter dregs & I have drank them up
If grief could kill, this heart had long since burst
For I of every grief, have known the worst!
The highest pinnacle of power I proved
A mighty Queen - nay more a wife belov'd
Mine was a happy Mothers pleasing care
A blooming race of children, rising fair
None dared dispute my high imperial will
But all were proud my wishes to fulfil.
Now! every joyful scene is lost to me
My soul recoils the awful change to see!
Dash'd from the precipice of regal sway
A captive here, I waste each lingering day
Not Scotias Queen endured such racking thought
When to the block, her beauteous head was brought
As when from me, my hearts best friend was torn
When to the guillotine my Lord was borne
Despair & frenzy swam before my sight!
And all was horror, all was wild affright!
With him I more than felt the stroke of death
Oh! had my soul for him resign'd its breath
Then he had lived, returning peace to spread
Nor Englands Charles has giv'n the example dread
Robbed of my honours, grudg'd my daily food
For scanty covering for these limbs I sued!
Of Friends, of wealth, of each fond tie bereft!
Yet not of all, since my sweet babes are left
Yes! they are left, sweet pledge of happier days
And keen eye'd memory oft the past pourtrays
Yet even this comfort may be soon denied
By those who mock my hopes, my woes deride
Superior force our sad embrace may part
The last, worst pang! that rends a Mothers heart
Uncertain is my fate, the murderous knife
Unseen may pierce the hidden sluice of life
Or baneful juice may every power decay
Creep thro' each vein & suck its strength away
And I could die! for Deaths worst sting is past!
But ah! my helpless children bind me fast!
He wakes sweet boy, he only wakes to woe
- Hist, hear I not a mingled voice below
To this dark chamber, swift loud footsteps bend
My limbs all tremble, & new ills portend
They enter! Hal they force my son away
Hold - ruffians! here his hapless Mother slay
Deprive me not of all - oh! leave my son!
He supplicates you, force him not[.] they've gone[.]
Distraction seizes on my burning brain
I rave - I shriek - oh! mercy tis in vain
Oh! whither shall I turn! where shall I fly!
My heart is burst in twain! I faint! I die!
Do I yet live? or is it frenzy all?
Where - where's my son! my son in vain I call
Oh! have they drag'd him to untimely death
Return barbarians rob me too of breath
They heed not, lol they mock my frantic rage
Father of mercy, thou my pangs assuage
Thou - Thou alone canst mitigate my doom
Speak Lord! & send me to the silent tomb
Be calm my burning brain - I'll weep no more
Our God is merciful - His ways adore;
For some wise purpose he hard suffer'd this16
And He can drown my woes in streams of bliss.

MB

1. reeking sword - a sword covered with blood.
2. my murder'd Lord - Louis XVI, guillotined in January. A phrase used also by Milne Day in ‘Evening. An Elegy. Finished on reading the melancholy Separation of the Dauphin from the Queen of France’ - ‘Can ye my murder’d lord, my child restore?’
3. The behaviour of Marie Antoinette, particularly her extravagance, was popularly held to have been at least partially responsible for her husband’s downfall, and she was much derided. Mary goes on to have Marie Antoinette query whether her ‘crimes’ or ‘errors’ can possibly justify murder and the shedding of blood. She has sinned, but no one is free from sin. Milne Day’s Marie Antoinette, rather similarly, asserts that all her ‘woes’ must surely atone for any ‘errors’, and we all have faults.
4. stamp - justify, as when stamping a document or receipt ratifies it.
5. ire - anger.
6. the natal day - i.e. the day the Dauphin was born.
7. bland - innocent, harmless.
8. nor Scotias Queen [. . . ] was brought - Mary Queen of Scots was beheaded at the order of Elizabeth I in 1587. Racking thought - tortured thought.
9. Englands Charles - King Charles I of England was beheaded by order of Oliver Cromwell in 1649.
10. pledge - token. 'Pledge' meaning 'child as a token of mutual love' (OED).
11. sluice - floodgate, here of life's blood.
12. baneful juice - poison.
13. But ahh [. . . ] bind me fastl - only the necessity to care for her young children holds her to life.
14. Hist - (Be) quiet, le. in order to listen. An injunction Marie Antoinette addresses to herself as much as to her infant son.
15. Milne Day has a similar scene to that which ensues here, depicting Marie Antoinette ‘starting convulsive at each dread alarm’ and urging her reader to ‘see’ the gaoler enter and tear the Dauphin away from his mother.
16. he hard suffer’d this - perhaps copyist's error, and the line should read 'he hard suffer'd thus'. The sense of the line is that Christ suffered like this, for a 'wise purpose', to bring salvation.
Quakers called Sunday 'first day', having rejected the usual names for the days of the week because they had pagan origins. Though every day was regarded as holy, 'first day' was still set apart as a day of worship and rest from labour.

A first day Evening Meditation 9mo 16th 1793

Far hence be fancys light encroaching train
And lost in silence every thought profane
Be hush'd ideas vain, promiscuous throng
To hours like these far other guests belong
But let my soul her needful strength acquire
And sacred strains, let hallow'd themes inspire
Then let her eye with humble reverence scan
The wondrous ways of Providence to man
His mercies! circumscribed by time nor place
His condescending care, His saving grace
His watchful jealous love, which claims our heart
And purifies from sin, the inward part.
Look round my soul & in each object see
How works that love, benevolent & free
How every plant displays the hand divine
How in each flower, his varied bounties shine
Trace animated natures living scale
And view what wonders in the deep prevail
Where in moist caves concealed from human eye
Rich gems & coral groves unnoticed lie
Observe how motion actuates the whole
And every wave in just gradation2 roll
Thence upward dart thy awe bent eye & trace
Those Orbs reflected fair in Oceans face
Led by their modest Queen,3 whose silver light
Sheds a faint lustre o'er the hours of night
Till when our Sun appears in splendid ray
Drinks up the dews & forms the newborn day
Around whose sphere unnumber'd sons4 arise
And shine invisible to our dim eyes
Perform their swift career & fill their place
In the vast regions of created space
And all appear as part of one great plan
By which th' Eternal mover finish'd man
Man! last of all his works & most approved
Crown of His other works & best beloved
Form'd of the dust, so vile, so mean he rose
Yet with Jehovahs breath, his bosom glows5
Thrice happy man, high favor'd of thy God
Thrice happy ransom'd with a Saviours blood
Here stop & contemplate, let faith take wing
The high wrought theme what mortal tongue can sing
On harps angelic let the numbers⁶ flow
And seraphs waft the sounds to realms below
In realms below responsive voices join
And echo to the spheres the song divine⁷
Yeal every living thing shall find a tongue
To glorify that wisdom whence it sprung
Still shall the hearts best homage be addrest[sic]
In one grand Sabbath of Eternal rest

MB

1. fancys light encroaching train - light, frivolous thoughts or workings of the imagination which inhibit concentration on the spiritual, intruding on the Inner Light.
2. in just gradation - even, equidistant from one another.
3. their modest Queen - the moon, personified as Queen of the Orbs - the stars and spheres.
4. unnumber'd suns - the stars, invisible in daylight to the naked eye.
5. By which ... his bosom glows - 'th' Eternal mover' is a term for God as creator and guiding force of the universe. According to Genesis, God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. Man was created on the sixth day and was thus, as Mary puts it, 'the last of all his works'. Gen 2:7 describes how God 'formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul'. Later, cursing Adam and Eve for eating the forbidden fruit, God condemns them to labour and die, 'for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return' (Gen 3:19). Jehovah is a name for God derived from the Hebrew Yahweh.
6. numbers - verses.
7. On harps angelic ... the song divine - resonant of the 'music of the spheres', the idea that the heavenly bodies, or angels among them, make musical sounds. Here, however, it is those in the 'realms below' (human beings) who echo the divine song. The ancient, and later the Christian, idea was that humans were rendered incapable of hearing this music by being trapped, either in the body (Platonism) or sin (Christianity).
The North Strand, a main road in Dublin leading to Fairview and Clontarf, was the site of the Royal Charter School. Founded in 1733 under a charter of George II 'for the purpose of instructing "the children of the popish and other poor natives in the English tongue"', charter schools were detested by the Catholic population. Run on funds from grants and subscriptions, by 'The Incorporated Society', the original aim was to provide elementary education for the poor from several denominations. But, after 1776, only Catholics were admitted to receive an education with a Protestant ethos, the unavowed aim being to convert them, though this decision was revoked in 1803. (Wakefield, An Account of Ireland Statistical and Political, II, pp.410-11.) Catholic schools were banned under the Penal Laws, so charter schools were one of the few options open to poor Catholics (the rich could afford private tuition). Nevertheless, they rarely sent their children unless they were unable to maintain them in any other way. Charter school pupils were boarded, clothed, and taught a trade. Conditions were often squalid, however, with poor food and hygiene.

The Royal Charter School, Strand Street, was founded in 1749 and closed in 1831. In 1794, a committee recommended establishing an infirmary there, owing to 'its proximity to the sea, sea-bathing being seen as a medical rather than recreational activity'. Sick children, particularly if chronically ill, were sent there from other charter schools. By 1808, there was 'a separate warm bath and fever house (for thirty-eight boys and fifteen girls)' with its own staff. Charter school children were schooled for about two hours every day, and worked the rest of the time. The Strand Street children worked in textiles (spinning and weaving) and carpet manufacture. In the 1780s and 90s most of the schools became single-sex. Strand Street seems to have been an exception. (See Kenneth Milne, The Irish Charter Schools 1730-1830 (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), particularly pp.61,90,230.)

Mary casts the following two poems in the voices of the girls of Strand Street. The first both thanks the school's benefactors and asks them to continue their support. The second thanks God, who has led His 'followers' to take up the cause of the girls' education. The poems make it clear that the purpose of this education is to encourage religion and save the children from the vices that poverty might lead to. Assuming the voices of the children concerned was a common device in poems encouraging support for charity schools. It was usually combined with obsequious expressions of gratitude to the benefactors, for example:

Thus may our lips and lives express
The sense we have of love divine;
And, with our latest breath, we'll bless
Those generous friends who make us thine.

And:

May we revere each tender Friend,
Who strives, with pious care,
To snatch us from the ills that tend,
Our safety to ensnare.

Oh! ye whose generous bosom feel
Soft mercys mild seraphic\textsuperscript{1} glow
Who (like your Saviour) love to heal
The wounds of misery want & woe

2

Let warm benev\textsuperscript{2}lence[\textit{sic}] move your soul
And gracious Heaven the debt will own!
Vice shall recede at your controll[\textit{sic}]
And virtue mount the mental throne

3

Oh! bid the mists of error flee
And truths bright rays our minds illume
Snatch us from guilt & penury
And let Religion rise - & bloom

4

Oh! think when at the last dread day
A just reward's by all received
Think that you hear your saviour say
"Naked ye clothed me, poor relieved"\textsuperscript{2}

5

For us whom now your bounties teach
His laws to fear his name t'adore
For you our prayers to Heaven shall reach
And Jesus still regards the poor

\begin{enumerate}
\item seraphic - like seraphs, 'one of the highest order of the ninefold celestial hierarchy gifted especially with love and associated with light, ardour, and purity' \textit{(OED)}.
\item Mt 25:36 - 'Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.' Jesus speaking of the Last Judgement when He will invite the just who have relieved the sufferings of others to enter the Kingdom of Heaven because 'inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me' \textit{(verse 40)}.
\end{enumerate}
To thee Oh! Lord, our God, our King
The homage of our hearts we bring
To thee our grateful voice we raise
We bless thy name! thy goodness praise
Thou while we stray'd in error blind
While vice & darkness ruled our mind
Didst by thy own Eternal light
Dispel the mists of guilt & night
Unclothed we wander'd poor, untaught
And none to thee our footsteps brought
Immersed in ignorance & Sin
Oh! what a chaos ruled within
Till thou in mercy, love divine
To us thy followers didst incline
By them our Souls to thee are led
Oh! scatter blessings on their head
For thou hast said thou'lt bless the store
That pays thy tribute to the poor

1. Perhaps referring once again, obliquely, to Mt 25:31-40. See note 1 to preceding poem.
'A L Card', called 'Anna' within this poem, was probably an Anna Ligon Card. Mary was related to the Card family. When she sought to marry Nathaniel Card, the issue of consanguinity would have to be resolved by their Monthly Meeting first - Nathaniel is described in the minutes as her cousin. According to the Card Family Bible, Nathaniel's great-grandfather, also called Nathaniel, married Rebecca Ligon. Thereafter, some descendants were surnamed Ligon Card. And 'Anna' is a variant of 'Ann', a popular family name. Nathaniel (Mary's future husband) had a sister Ann, as did his grandfather. Unfortunately, the dates of their deaths are not given in the Family Bible - only that both died young - so this Anna L. Card cannot be identified with certainty. However, as she and Mary seem to have enjoyed each other's company, it is probable she was of a similar age, and lived in Dublin. In all likelihood, she was Mary's future sister-in-law.

To The Memory of A L Card

Oh! my loved Anna! must my drooping lay
This last sad tribute to thy memory pay!
Must I indeed thy recent loss deplore
And are those hours of peaceful converse o'er
Yes! the soft link which bound our hearts is torn
And sadly weeps her friend o'er Annas Urn
Be hush'd my Soul, be calm my troubled breast
No sighs, no sorrow wounds her glorious rest
Where undisturb'd her harmless spirit shares
The bliss our Lord for those he loves prepares
Oft in the lonely hour, when o'er my soul
A pensive train of loved ideas rollll
Of pleasures withering as they sweetly bloom'd
Of blasted friendship & of joys entombed
Then oft her image to my sight is given
And her mild language lifts my heart to Heaven
To endless bliss our ardent souls aspire
And Earth seem vanish'd! as a scrowl[sic] on fire2
Oh! with what transport would my cup run o'er3
When her loved lips would paths of peace explore
Declare the mercies of her Lord & King
Whence rose her hopes, whence now her glories spring
Tell, how things outward scarce were worth desire
And how her spirit did to God inspire[sic]4
That streams of comfort to her mind did flow
Which none but they who feel can ever know
Oh! may my hope, thou dear departed shade5
Be firm as thine & bloom when health shall fade
A rock immovable whose base is sure6
Safe in the temple, in the storm secure
Fix'd in that center, where no theives[sic] among7
Nor time, nor rust corrup[t]s, nor moths destroy
Then shall I meet thee in the realms of peace
Where doubt is lost & all our sorrows cease

4th mo 10th 1794 MB

1. **Anna's Urn** - figurative only. Anna would have been buried not cremated, in keeping with custom.
2. **scrawl on fire** - i.e. a scroll of paper being consumed by fire. A conventional simile.
3. Ps 23:5 - '[... ] thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.'
4. **Inspire** - probably copyist's error for 'aspire'.
5. **shade** - ghost or spirit.
6. Lk 6:48 - Christ's likening of the man who hears His sayings to 'a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it; for it was founded upon a rock.' Also Mt 7:24-25.
7. **among** - probably copyist's error for 'annoy'.

Applying, for at least one critic, the lines above on Anna's death did not quite fulfill the expected criteria for a poem mourning the loss of a loved one - it was considered too short. Mary replies, justifying her initial brevity and any shortcomings in her verse by reference to her own grief while, in composing this longer poem, rectifying her mistake. She also manages to flatter her critic by praising his/her supposedly superior poetic powers on the same subject.

---

**Answer to an address sent to me on the occasion of the foregoing lines**

Yes! justly did the loss we bore
Deserve a longer strain
Nor could a thousand stanzas more
My Anna's worth explain

2

Those virtues which thy graceful quill
Does elegant portray[sic]
Shone thro' her life conspicuous still
In one unclouded ray
The duty of a christian true
She knew & practised well
And in the map of Canaan too
Her knowledge did excel

She shun'd the pomp of gay parade
Where virtue lies entomb'd
But in the calm & silent shade
Her modest merit bloom'd

In natures field a flower she rose
Whose fragrance ne'er can fail
Her purity & Sweetness shews
A lily of the vale -

Ah! think not thou the muse that feels
Can swell the copious line
Such sorrow o'er the bosom steals
And 'whelms2 an heart like mine

Small losses oft, like gentle showers
Make many a bloom expand
But when the dashing torrent pours
It drowns the fruitful land

Thus I whose aching heart is fraught
With grief I cant[can't] express
Can scarcely clothe a single thought
In language' sable dress3

And trust me where we feel the most
We seek the least to shine
A soul in floods of anguish lost
Scarce courts th'harmonious line
But why need my faint muse rehearse 
The beauties of her mind 
When in thy gentle flowing verse 
Her counterpart we find

Yes! justice to her memory dear 
Thy muse hath pictured well 
And from mine eye the rising tear 
Involuntary fell.

In every line her mind I trace 
Her graces fair & good 
And full before my weeping face 
My annas image stood.

I saw her spirit pure ascend 
Her Saviours bliss to share 
Yet felt thy strains my bosom rend 
And sigh'd to leave her there

Then blame me not that short the lays 
I to her memory paid 
For in our minds her matchless praise 
Shall bloom & never fade -

5th mo 1st 1794 MB.

1. map of Canaan - possibly a metaphor for the spiritual path. In the Bible, Canaan was the land promised by God to the people of Israel.
2. 'whelms - contraction of 'overwhelms'.
3. language'sable dress - language appropriate for mourning, visualised as 'black' like clothes worn when in mourning. The 's' is omitted from the end of language' to avoid the awkwardness of two sibilants running together.
In the summer of 1794, Mary visited England. Arriving at Park Gate, near Chester, on 8 May, she travelled to London and attended Meeting there. It was at this time that she began her spiritual journal (see the first two entries, dated 8 and 18 May 1794, in the first volume of this thesis). In London she visited her maternal uncle, George Harrison, and his family.

George Harrison was a dedicated anti-slave trade campaigner from the birth of the British abolition movement in 1783 - a contribution recently explored by Judith Jennings in her study, *The Business of Abolishing the British Slave Trade 1783-1807* (1997), to which I am indebted for biographical information. (See the headnote to Mary's *Poem on the African Slave Trade*, p.139 in this volume. Also, introduction to this thesis (Chapter 1, Biographical Outline) for a sketch of George Harrison's early life and career.) By 1794, he was a leading Friend in London and a respected figure. The business interests and property he inherited from his father-in-law, William Cookworthy, who died in 1760, had been supplemented by his own success. The family had become wealthy and had moved to Bullhead Passage, St John's Wood, in London by 1790. This was perhaps where Mary stayed.

She must surely have been interested in how the abolition campaign was progressing - it was only two years since she had published her anti-slave trade poem. It is likely that she was disappointed, as the movement was in some disarray. Wilberforce had brought in another bill to stop the trade between England and other countries, but this was refused consideration by the House of Lords on 2 May. The Lords were still conducting their own investigation. The London Abolition Committee, of which her uncle was a leading member, had suspended its meetings in April and, on 6 May, it adjourned, owing to this bleak parliamentary situation. Apart from a brief discussion in July, the Committee was not to meet for another eight months, although it would resume activity the following year. (Jennings, pp.84-85.)

George Harrison enjoyed contacts within the literary world as much as that of business. Beside his anti-slavery writing, he was a prolific author on reformist, economic, religious and philosophical issues. He also took an active role in the Quaker organisation in London. After appointment as cashier of Yearly Meeting in 1784, he continued in offices of similar standing, becoming, in Quaker parlance, 'a weighty Friend'. In 1800 he was to be one of 'a dozen Friends chosen personally to present a Quaker address to King George III "on the occasion of his providential escape from an attempt on his life"'. From Jennings's account, he emerges as a tolerant, urbane and thoughtful man who did not hesitate to 'speak out' when he felt truth or justice to be at stake, even within the Society of Friends itself. (Jennings, pp.15, 94, 129.)

While with the Harrisons in June, Mary wrote these next four poems. George's daughter, Lydia, born in 1779, would have been about fifteen years old, a few years younger than Mary - just of an age for the two girls to enjoy seeing the sights of London together. Three of the poems are addressed to her. The first one, however, is addressed to a cousin, 'T. Harrison', a student at Queen's College.
Several Harrisons from the Westmoreland and Cumberland areas appear on the list of students for Queen's College, Oxford during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Among them is Thomas Harrison, son of John Harrison of Stavely, Westmoreland, gentleman. Thomas matriculated on 7 April 1794, aged seventeen, and gained his BA in 1798 (Alumni Oxonienses: The Members of the University of Oxford, 1715-1886: Their Parentage, Birthplace, and Year of Birth, With a Record of their Degrees, ed. by J. Foster (Oxford and London: James Parker, 1891), p.618). Attendance at Oxford was unusual for Quaker boys, barred from the universities by virtue of being dissenters and the Quaker refusal to swear oaths. If they received any higher education at all, it was likely to be at one of the dissenting academies, such as the one at Warrington George Harrison attended.

The poem is a plea from Mary and three other girls (one may have been her cousin Lydia) for T. Harrison to leave his studies for a while and join them in enjoying 'the pleasures of London'.

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London 6th mo 1st 1794

A Petition

To my Cousin T. Harrison

Queens College

Attend now we pray our united petition
And bring a relief from our anxious condition
Let kindness bear rule uncontroul'd[sic] in thy breast
And grant our desires by becoming our guest
Yield for once to our sex, for we join to assail
And one man against four, has small chance to prevail
For that ancient dominion so proudly you boast
Mid the tumult of voices is frequently lost
And tho' o'er us, empire you think to retain
When our force is collected you lord it in vain
Then yield with good grace no denial we'll take
Away with resistance - our hopes are at stake
Leave the duties of College & grave learn'd books
For the pleasures of London & gay smiling looks
A truce of conversing so long with the dead
Come mix with the living - they too may be read
Tho' the mind may be furnished with Plato's good rules¹
Is social affection confined to your schools?
There kindness & friendship & knowledge shake hands
So thy head may improve, while thy bosom expands
What was rust in the classics be polish'd & bright
And thy virtues will shine with more dignified light
The soul thus refresh'd will with ardour more keen
To pursue each lov'd study, forsake the gay scene
Then weigh & consider the pleas we have found
This once grant our prayer & in duty we are bound etc.²

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Plato's good rules - the Greek philosopher Plato (427-348 BC) set forth his philosophy in *The Dialogues*, which explore ideas through discussion with Socrates. Plato's 'Theory of Ideas' asserted that mental and physical entities in this world of the senses - the material world - exist in the immaterial world of ultimate reality (therefore a more real world than this one) as what he termed 'forms' - ideal principles or essences of things which are eternal and absolute. The highest 'form' or 'idea' was Good - goodness or pure virtue, attained through knowledge of it.

In duty we are bound etc - in a letter, a standard form of complimentary close.

Mary was undoubtedly enjoying the amusements London and the companionship of her young cousins had to offer. She was also keen to take the opportunities her visit afforded for learning and self-improvement by cultivating the company of 'each hoary sire' - possibly 'weighty Friends' occupying respected positions within the Society and, in all probability, the heads of families with whom she stayed or had contact, such as George Harrison. In fact he, as much as his daughter Lydia, may have been the intended audience for this poem.

London 6th mo 4th 1794
An evening Thought address'd
to her much admired
cousin L Harrison

'Mid these gay scenes - when pleasures changeful form
Allures the weak & keeps their passions warm
Where the soft music of her syren tongue
Attracts even the aged & captivates the young
Oft from the circle should the heart retire
And glean improvement from each hoary sire
Drain the rich stores of piety & sense
And cull the choicest flowers of knowledge thence
Oft should the mind take physic & when cloy'd
With sweets which feasted on are unenjoy'd
With maddening nectar, which dire folly brings
When reason lies enthrall'd & clog'd[sic] her wings
Then seek the languid soul the silent gloom
Sick of its joys, encircled by a tomb
Tis wise, 'tis prudent every hope to weigh
Nor chase reflection till a future day
But search the base on which those hopes rely
And where in time of trouble we may fly
That when Death robs us of the joys of time
To endless bliss our souls may soar sublime
Nor we like foolish virgins waste those days
In slothful langour indolence & ease
Which God had for a nobler use design'd
To purify our hearts, improve our mind
Give glory to his name! & benefit mankind

1. syren tongue - persuasive voice. In Greek myth, sirens were creatures, part bird and part woman, who lived on an island from where, by their bewitching song, they lured sea travellers to their deaths.
2. physic - medicine.
3. sweets which feasted on are unenjoy'd - pleasures and the good things of life which, if over-indulged in, lose their savour.
4. Mt 25:1-13 - Christ's parable of the wise and foolish virgins who went to meet their bridegroom. The foolish ones took no oil for their lamps, which went out by the time of the bridegroom's arrival at midnight. The wise ones bought more oil in advance. Hence we must be prepared, for we 'know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh' (v.13). The choice of this parable is self-referential. Mary, Lydia and their companions must shun indolence and prepare themselves for worthwhile lives and a place in heaven - metaphorically, obtaining oil for their lamps.

The 'J S' who undertook this journey from Esher to London has so far proved unidentifiable. Whoever he was, his antics provided a source of mirth based on a derogatory stereotype of the Irish, obviously as prevalent then as it is today. The person addressed is, once again, Lydia Harrison.

London 6th mo 7th 1794
J_ S_ Journey from Esher to London

Say Lydia, whence this wayward fate
That Erins sons pursues?¹
That when they'd ought accomplish straight
A backward way they choose

Is it that deep in pondering thought
Their absent mind betrays 'em?
Or is it that by custom taught
Inherent still it sways 'em!

Or is it that their vacant head
For thinking wont[won't] find leisure
By which of these was S led
When journeying here from Esher?

By which when mounted on his steed
His London friends to visit
The path appeared so plain indeed
A Paddy² scarce could miss it
Strange o'er his mind what ideas crost[sic]
    To London drawing nearer
When lol he met a finger post³
    Which quickly told his error!

Amazed the path reversed he found
    The words he scarce could credit!
In vain for London turned he round
    The thickening foliage hid it

A kindly driver passing near
    Our Irish friend accosting
Your back is turned to London sir!
    "You're down the Country posting"!⁴

Strange that a man of S_ sense
    Should into error tumble
For loss of time, still more than pence
    Did surely make him grumble

He sigh'd then turn'd his errant⁵ course
    To measure back his pace
When lol upon a milk white horse
    He spied a well known face

"Sir you have widely missed your way"
    The messenger loud cried
"To Esher back return I pray
    "I am sent to be your guide"

"Oh! tell me now thou friendly man
    "Some other way to London
"For if my sad mistake they scan
    "I surely shall be undone"

"Impossible"! the man replied
    "No other path is free
"But straight thro' Esher you must ride
    "Before you London see,"

Then sore afraid he was to pass
    The place where he set out at
For fear the friends should make a farce
    And his droll journey scout at⁶

Too soon the dreaded place was near
    Ah! me what ills await him!
The tale had caught the masters ear
    Who hasten'd out to meet him
His muscles visible[visibly?] expand
While Sh glowed with shame
"And is it thus in Erins land
"You compass what you aim?

"Are these your Bulls - no more I doubt
"The record fame has given
"But stop. I'll tell our friend the rout
"Thy wandering steed was driven"

But now J.'s patience put to test
With what so dire befell him
Tow'rd London swift he spur'd[sic] his beast
His friend withdrew to tell 'em

Now join with me my Lydia dear
This luckless chance to pity
And when for my own fate I fear
Let's sing this mournful ditty.

1. Erins sons - Erin is an ancient Gaelic name for Ireland.
2. Paddy - common nickname for an Irishman derived from Padraig, Irish for Patrick.
3. finger post - signpost at a crossroads or junction.
4. down the Country posting - heading towards the country, not the town.
5. errant - erring.
6. scout at - laugh at or ridicule.
7. compass - encompass, achieve.
8. Bulls - 'A self-contradictory proposition; in modern use, an expression containing a manifest contradiction in terms or involving a ludicrous inconsistency unperceived by the speaker. Now often with epithet Irish; but the word had been long in use before it came to be associated with Irishmen' (OED). The expression was in use early in the eighteenth century, but did not become specifically associated with the Irish character until later. The first written discussion in connection with Ireland appears to be an Essay on Irish Bulls, by the novelist Maria Edgeworth and her father Richard Lovell Edgeworth (1802), in which they defend the Irish as being no more guilty of perpetrating bulls than other nationalities. Sydney Smith, reviewing this essay, wrote:

'[..] a bull is an apparent congruity, and real incongruity of ideas, suddenly discovered. And if this account of bulls be just, they are (as might have been supposed) the very reverse of wit; for as wit discovers real relations, that are not apparent, bulls admit apparent relations that are not real. The pleasure arising from wit proceeds from our surprise at suddenly discovering two things to be similar, in which we suspected no similarity. The pleasure arising from bulls proceeds from our discovering two things to be dissimilar, in which a resemblance might have been suspected. The same doctrine will apply to wit, and to bulls in action. Practical wit discovers connection or relation between actions, in which duller understandings discover none, and practical bulls originate from an apparent relation between two actions, which more correct understandings immediately perceive to have no relation at all.


Thus, although a bull was usually a contradictory or incongruous verbal expression, it could also be used of an action as Mary does here - 'J- S-' was attempting one thing while, unconsciously, achieving the opposite.
After a month in London it was time to bid 'adieu' to cousin Lydia, and set off to visit other relatives and Friends. In this parting poem, Mary also bids farewell to London - the heart of the rapidly growing British Empire, hub of commerce, science and the arts.

London 6th mo 10th 1794
To Lydia Harrison

Sweet girl adieu my bosom's pain
No power of language may explain
Nor can it half my anguish tell
To say that dismal word farewell!
Oft has it pierced my bleeding heart
And made the tear of sorrow start!
Yet, yet again its woe I prove
And part with thee I fondly love.
   Oh! Lydia not a rose is found
But thorns intrusive gather round
And nought of pleasure can I feel
But anguish o'er my heart will steal
Steal - as a canker mid the flower
And cast a gloom o'er many an hour
Till each gay prospect fair & bright
Fades! silent - as the evening light
Ahh! cease thou muse the pensive strain
May nothing cause my Lydia pain
But may she pass thro' every scene
With nought of grief to intervene
   London adieu the circling hours
Have bade me leave thy far famed towers
Thy charming walks, thy buildings fine
Each noble structures grand design
Thy busy streets where trade presides
Thy crowded marts which commerce guides
   Parent of arts in thee we see
Creations whole Epitome!
Each nations choicest produce rides
Securely wafted o'er thy tides!
The treasures of each distant shore
Into thy lap, the islands pour!
All pleased with thee, confess thy sway
The young, the old, the grave, the gay
What tho no more my wondering eye
Thy endless beauties may descry
Trace science where her nerves are strung
Nor draw instruction from each tongue
Explore the magic of genius bright
Where all her paths are brought to light
Yet oft, full oft on Erins land
My pensive mind shall reach thy strand
Retrace in idea every scene
And grieve to find the space between
Yes Lydia on affections wing
Shall memory oft thy presence bring
Thy fair & gentle form shall rise
Conspicuous to my mental eyes
Oft shall I see thy heart expand
Beneath a parents forming hand
Thy virtues dawning into day
Improved by them, their bloom display
And every bud of knowledge true
A cultured flower will meet my view
Dear to my heart each hour shall be
Which thus I fondly spent with thee
My hovering soul thy love will share
And oft to Heaven present this prayer
That He who o’er his children reigns
Whose word the universe maintains
May deign my fervent wish to hear
The best of Fathers! long to spare
To train your opening mind aright
And every gem to polish bright
Watchful each secret spring to trace
And bend its course to truth & grace
And from his own exhaustless store
True wisdom o’er your minds to pour
Long spare him gracious Lord to know
The blessings which around him flow
His faithful consort lov’d & kind
His offspring virtuously inclined
From every heart & every tongue
The praise he merits grant him long
Again sweet girl my tumbling quill
Must form that dreaded word farewell
Each hour is past each scene is o’er
And time is fled to return no more
Yet dear - yea ever dear to me
Shall London & its inmates be

MB

1. descry - 'see' and also perhaps 'describe', 'sing the praises of.'
2. where her nerves are strung - London is perceived as the central point from which science and knowledge branch out.
3. Erins land - Erin is an ancient Gaelic word for Ireland.
4. thy strand - your shore, i.e. the port of London.
5. minds - plural because the poem has switched its address from Lydia alone to the whole Harrison family.
6. him - George Harrison, Lydia's father.
7. his faithful consort - George Harrison's wife, Susanna, née Cookworthy.
Mary next travelled north to Halton. This was probably Halton, near Runcorn in Cheshire, as a note at the bottom of the poem reads, 'Warrington 6th. mo: 26th. 1794'. Warrington is only a few miles from Halton. This would also have been en route north to Kendal where she wrote an acrostic to a James or E. S. Bolton in July - see below. There was a Quaker community at the village of Norton, near Halton. Mary's maternal aunt, Hannah, married Thomas Bolton of Warrington, who died in 1789 (Mary wrote a poem on his death), and his father, Benjamin Bolton, was a Warrington corn and flour dealer who originally hailed from Norton. So it is very likely that Mary went to visit Bolton relatives or other Friends there.

The poem refers to Halton's owners, its lawns and beautiful grounds. The entry for Halton in Bagshaw's Directory states that in Cromwell's time 'the honour, fee, manor, and castle of Halton were put up for sale, and purchased by Henry Brooke, Esq., of Norton, but reverted to the Crown at the Restoration. Halton Park having been granted in fee-farm to Sir John Savage, has descended with Rock Savage and other estates to the Earl of Cholmondeley, who holds the honour of Halton by lease under the Crown'. Halton Castle, built in the Norman era, was in ruins by the Civil War but 'the views from Halton are most beautiful' with the River Mersey winding its way in the distance. See Samuel Bagshaw, History, Gazetteer, and Directory of the County Palatine of Chester (Sheffield: printed for the Author, 1850).

There was also Norton Priory nearby. The Brooke family purchased it after the dissolution of the monasteries and erected a Tudor house. Replacing this with a classical Georgian one in the mid-eighteenth century, they then landscaped the gardens, creating views or 'prospects' and a 'natural' effect. There was a temple, a mock Chinese bridge and extensive woods, while the millpond was turned into a boating lake. The house itself was substantially altered again in 1790, probably by James Wyatt. Mary may have visited the grounds, as country families who had improved their estates were often happy for visitors to admire them. Unfortunately, the house was demolished in the 1920s, but there is a museum on site for the medieval priory excavations conducted since the 1970s. Sources: H. F. Starkey, Old Runcorn (Halton: Halton Borough Council, Mail Book Publishing, 1990), particularly p.39, Guidebook to Norton Priory, and J. Patrick Greene, Norton Priory (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

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Arise! Oh Muse, let Halton's charms inspire,  
And wake to Harmony the rustic lyre¹  
Trace every verdant scene - nor blush to tell  
How much their warblers thy rude notes excel²  
How much creation's vast and varied store  
Surpass thy pen, or pencil's mimic power  
Yes! or th'unstudied song or labour'd strain  
To paint thy charms oh Nature are in vain.  

Yet oft delights the pensive Muse to rove,  
O'er hill, or dale or dark embowering grove  
To seek at Noontide heat the cooler shade  
Or tread with curious eye the flowery mead  
Thence, from th'effects the first great Cause to trace  
Whose wonderous[sic] wisdom stampt[sic] the world with grace  
How sweet (when Sols³ too fervid ray declines  
And Luna,⁴ (clad in modest silver) shines
When swarms of busy life are lull'd to sleep
And o'er the ear but distant murmurs creep
How sweet thro' Halton's charming scenes to move
And tread contemplative each leafy grove
With raptur'd thought each blooming grace t'explore
While with expanding wing our minds may soar
With Faith's bright eye to visit worlds unseen
Pierce Heaven's blue arch & traverse realms serene
Here distant far from Wars terrific doom
Th'attentive eye may trace each opening bloom
May watch each flower its varied sweets unfold
And the nice progress of its growth behold
Or seated in the calm & silent grove
O'er Wisdom's page may feel the heart improve
May search - as wandering each sequester'd wood -
Those truths, in solitude best understood
For oft in solitude that lore is given
Which soothes the breast & lifts the soul to Heaven
Peace to thy shades, fair Halton! blest retreat!
From want & care; from misery & deceit
Long may thy sacred trees aspiring rise
And just Memento! point to us the skies!
Long be their waving boughs a safe abode
To every sweet Musician of the wood
Long may their fruits the generous owners cheer
And all their joys renew'd each smiling year
May Ceres' gifts profusely pour'd be found
And rich Pomona grace the fertile ground
Yea tuneful Pan the hallow'd spot shall mark
And crown the motto's twin'd around each bark
The birds shall chant their soft melodious lay
And little footsteps hop from spray to spray
The lowing kine their milky burthen yield
And fleecy flocks long graze the spacious field
While in this dome its worthy inmates find
The Heaven sent blessing of a quiet mind.
Halton adieu! yet oft on hovering wing
Thy charming scenes shall fond remembrance bring
On Erins land my musing mind shall trace
Thy native sweets, thy elegance and grace
And there when Winter's gloomy horrors rise
Thy smiling lawns shall cheer my mental eyes
For oft with rapture shall those eyes explore
Each path my feet must press perhaps no more
Each hour - so swiftly fled - on my lov'd natal shore.

Warrington 6th. mo: 26th. 1794.

1. the rustic lyre - power to write poetry praising the rural scene. The lyre was sacred to the muses.
2. How much [.] rude notes excel - the singing of the birds at Halton is superior to the 'rude' or unpolished music of Mary's muse. She goes on to say that the scale and variety of created nature, likewise, is beyond her muse's imitative power.


4. Luna - personification of the moon.

5. England had declared war on France in February 1793.

6. Ceres' gifts [.] be found - Ceres was the Roman name for Demeter, Greek goddess of the earth, agriculture and fertility.

7. Pomona - Roman goddess of fruit trees.

8. tuneful Pan - Pan, the goat-like Graeco-Roman god of shepherds and flocks, played beautiful music on a flute made from reeds.

9. kine - cattle; burthen - archaic form of 'burden'.

10. Erins land - Erin is an ancient Gaelic name for Ireland.

11. my lov'd natal shore - England, the country of Mary's birth.

The first letter of each line of this acrostic, running downwards, spells out either 'I am E S Bolton', or, as 'I' and 'J' were interchangeable in Latin, 'James Bolton'. This would have been one of Mary's Bolton cousins in the North of England. An Edwin Bolton appears in the Lancashire rolls, relationship to Mary unknown. His wife was called Sarah and they had a son, Thomas.

To __________ an Acrostick

In youths gay spring when Reason opes her stores
And Science o'er the mind her treasures pours
Mans heart receives the stamp of right & wrong
Each virtue ripens or each vice grows strong
Such thy eventful time but soon 'twill die.

Beware! nor let thine hours unheeded fly
Once past - believe me they return no more
Lifes gay and sprightly morn, is quickly o'er.
Then fix with ardent faith thy stedfast[sic] eye
On that sure hope which will each change defy
Nor in thy breast let truth uncherished lie.

Kendal 7mo.13th.1794
'Sun-rise' is simply dated '1794' at the end of the poem, and so there is no way of knowing for certain where it fits into the chronological order for that year. But its evocation of the dawn, of the new day taking shape, its increasing warmth causing buds to open and release their perfume, accompanied by birdsong and the hum of insects, surely belongs to the summer or early autumn. It has been decided, therefore, to reproduce it here, before 'Eugenio and Laura', which carries a postscript dated at the end of the year, in December.

Sun-rise

Tis Morn! the earliest blush of rising day
Hath ting'd with crimson glow the twilight grey
Enwrap'd[ sic] in shades obscure, each object lies
A shapeless embrio1 meets my wondring[ sic] eyes

With subtle force the piercing atoms2 glide
Brace all the nerves, and in each pore preside
Explore the seat of Health's enlivening glow
And bid the life-warm current briskly flow

My breath salute[s] the pure refreshing Gale,
And strength I with the morning breeze inhale

Lo! now the gloom dissolves - & o'er the skies
Rich colours, led by just gradations3 rise;
Bright streaks of purple first with livid ray
Burst o'er the horizon & foretel[ sic] the day.
But soon the Eastward glows with golden fires
And Night, envelop'd with thick fogs, retires;
Clear Azure now succeeds to sober grey,
For down the steep of Heaven the Orb of Day4
Rolls onward! Nature smiles at his advance
In his mild beams unnumbered atoms dance
Lock'd in their humid caves the winds retire5
And with faint breath the quivering gales expire

The vital heat imbibes the dense cold dews
Each scene unfolding wears its loveliest hues
Lost in amazes the gradual work I trace
And all is Order Harmony and grace!

Late, Chaos-like,7 gross vapours cloath'd[ sic] the Earth
But now a new creation rises forth!
The little songsters hop from spray to spray
And in soft warblings hail the newborn day

A brighter glow the splendid Heav'ns assume
And kindly warmth expands each opening bloom
Rich odors[ sic] scent the health inspiring air
And Earth & Skyes[ sic] the genial influence share

All Nature wakes to life - the insect train
Buzz oer each leaf & swarm thro'out the plain
The neighing steed the bands of sleep hath broke
And sports unco[n]scious of his future yoke.
With glesome hearts the cattle scud around
And their light coursings beat th[']enamell'd ground
Now throng the lab'ring[sic] hinds - their toil renews
Each to the field his devious way pursues,
In vain for them these scenes with charms are fraught
No glories seem t'impress their vacant thought
Impell'd by sordid need! while man their Lord
Claims the proud priveledge[sic] wealth & ease afford
To waste in slothful rest the choicest hours
When Sol exhales rich fragrance from the flowers
When purest radiance gilds the Heav'ns Sublime
And Earth unfolds of every sweet the prime
1794.

1. embrio - embryo.
2. atoms - a word long in use for a tiny particle or the smallest unit imaginable, from the Greek atomos - indivisible.
   Also, tiny specks of dust seen by the naked eye in sunshine, particularly in a hazy atmosphere, were known colloquially as 'atoms' - it is certainly in this sense that Mary uses the word later in this poem. However, it is just possible that she heard the word used with a meaning nearer its modern sense, because it was a Quaker of this period, John Dalton (1766-1844), who formulated the atomic theory of matter. This was the concept that all matter is made up of minute particles of distinct elements which cannot be divided by chemical processes and that each kind of atom has a specific weight. From 1781 until 1793, Dalton taught with his brother at their school in Kendal, where Mary's mother grew up. Although Mary's grandparents had died by then (Sarah Harrison in 1770, Edward Harrison in 1780), Mary herself visited Kendal, probably in 1789 (see 'Written In the Ruins of Kendal Castle', p.66). In such a small Quaker community, most Friends would have heard of Dalton's work. He would have worshipped at the meeting house, and he lectured locally. In 1793 he published Meteorological Observations and Essays which was mainly concerned with atmospheric gases. It was his work on gases that led to his atomic theory and publication of A New System of Chemical Philosophy (1808-1810).

3. Just gradations - even steps or stages.
4. steep of Heaven - conventional poetic expression for the slope of the sky; Orb of Day - the sun.
5. Lock'd [. . .] winds retire - in the Aeneid, Virgil tells how the winds were locked in caves in the mountainside by Jupiter (Zeus), the King of the Gods, to stop them wreaking havoc, and there controlled by Aeolus, god of the winds. Mary would probably have been familiar with Dryden's translation of the Aeneid (1697).
6. amaze - archaic use of the word as a noun, meaning 'amazement'.
7. Chaos-like - God was thought to have created the world out of Chaos, the elemental disorder of the universe.
   Similarly, daybreak, by dispersing the darkness of night and mists of early dawn, imposes order and creates a new world.
8. coursings - to course is to run or race; enamell'd ground - referring to the grass or meadow. It was a poetic convention to describe lawns and greens, or fields and meadows, as 'enamell'd', meaning smooth, as if polished, and in beautiful, variegated colours.
9. lab'ring hinds - farm labourers.
10. devious way - meandering, or mazy path.
11. Impell'd by sordid need! - compelled by mercenary necessity, i.e. to earn a living; man their Lord - the farmhands' employer, the landowner, who rests while they labour for him. Also, possibly, the rural workers, forced to concentrate on obtaining a subsistence, and, by their labour, having to keep others in idleness, necessarily have man for their Lord, not God.
13. sweet - a good and pleasurable thing. The sense of the last line is that, at dawn, the earth yields its finest pleasures.
As in 'To Anne, H-W & E Forbes & D Watson' ('3rd month 21st 1793'), Mary here uses pseudonyms for people she knew, but their identity is not indicated, either in the title or the poem itself. They appear to be members of families of some consequence in the North of England. One character, 'Alfred', seems to have been a wealthy West Indies merchant based in Liverpool. The deceased 'patriarch' of one of the two families central to the story was certainly not a Quaker - he fell 'with honor on the martial field' and was therefore no pacifist.

The poem was never finished. At the end is a postscript explaining why - Mary expresses misgivings about the value of writing in this way. The postscript is dated 'Summerhill 12 Mo 1794' and so it seems that the postscript, at least, was drafted at the home of the Forbes at Summerhill in Ireland in December. But this may not be the case with the poem itself which features people that Mary could have met on her visit to England the previous summer. The poem, or sections of it, might have been written then.

The lengthy narrative weaves around the meeting and marriage of 'Eugenio' and 'Laura'. These names may not carry any specific significance, but it is worth noting that 'Laura' was the name the Italian humanist, Petrarch (1304-1374), chose for the woman to whom he addressed his great love poems. 'Eugenio' may have been suggested by 'Eugenius', a minor character in Laurence Sterne's novels of sensibility, The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy (1760-67) and A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy (1768). A friend of Yorick, the first person narrator in A Sentimental Journey, he occasionally offers Yorick advice and, in Tristram Shandy, composes the famous epitaph on Yorick's gravestone, 'Alas poor Yorick'. Mary prefaced A Poem on the African Slave Trade, on publication, with a quote from an episode in A Sentimental Journey, and Eugenius features in a witty exchange in this episode. (See Penguin Classics edn, ed. by Graham Petrie (London: 1967, repr. 1986), pp.94-95.)

Again, as in 'To Anne, H-W & E Forbes & D Watson', Mary takes a few elements from the love story of Palemon and Lavinia in Thomson's The Seasons ('Autumn', 177-310), reworking them into this 'actual life' narrative about her friends. Laura's mother, Lydia, like Lavinia's mother in Thomson's tale, is a widow who has seen 'better days' - the loss of husband and fortune has resulted in her retiring from the world to rear her child/children apart from society. (Although, unlike Lavinia's mother, Lydia is not poor - she has a 'competence'.) Brought up in seclusion, Laura, like Lavinia 'unconscious of her power' (227), is innocent - 'In guile unpractis'd'. And Alfred's benevolence toward Lydia echoes Palemon's generosity toward Lavinia's mother.

Eugenio & Laura.

In that mild clime,¹ where Natures bounteous hand Pours varied blessings o'er a fruitful land Where her brave sons in liberal arts excell Where Science blooms & knowledge loves to dwell Where oft the nine² attune th'harmonious lay And Heav'n born truth illumes with genuine ray There Industry her Palm triumphant³ rears And smiling plenty crowns her fostering cares For these Oh, Albion o'er thy plains preside And Wealth & Commerce o'er thy Billows⁴ glide On the broad verge of his Paternal wood Eugenio's ample Mansion long had stood Its site commanding far the Prospect gay
Till Heav'n's blue arch obstructs the visual ray
Its form as towering o'er the Vale below
It rose conspicuous more for use than shew
To neatness grace & elegance inclined
Seemed a fit Emblem of its Owners mind
Oft did its spacious portals wide extend
To admit the willing feet of many a friend
Frequent the stranger would the path explore
And the pleased Beggar hail'd the gracious door
For true Politeness welcom'd all who came;
And Slander shrunk before Eugenio's name!
In vain would Envy point th'envenom'd tooth
Her poison withered at the voice of Truth
Blest meed of Virtue's mild & sacred sway
And the just tribute we to Merit pay!
That bids the bold licentious tongue "be Still"
And claims obeisance from the friends of Ill.

Thrice yon bright Orb his annual circuit ran
Since legal doom pronounced Eugenio Man
And thrice did Winter desolate the land
Since Laura blest him with her willing hand
In Love's sweet bands did each fond heart unite
And long fruition but increased delight.
He, unsuspecting; noble; generous, gay;
She, fair and blooming as the rose in May
In Classic ground his studious mind had rov'd
And hers in soft accomplished grace improv'd
Each form'd for each appeared no jarring thot.
For all was concord; with good-humour fraught.
And they had lov'd from childhoods early dawn
Together bounding o'er th'enamelled Lawn
In sportive youth; their ripening passion grew
And fav'ring Hymen crown'd a flame so true
Scarce had the good old Sire with anxious pride
Beheld his son to Laura's charms allied;
When Fate impell'd him to that dreary bourn
From whence no traveller can e'er return.

Sole Laura's Mother now remained to share
The pleasing fruit of many an anxious care
And each with warm attentive duty strove
To sooth her years & to requite her love.

Born of a noble House whose ancient name
Stands long recorded on the Trump of Fame
(For there in brazen characters are shewn
Heroes to these bright periods handed down)
And blest with Him who most her heart prefer'd
She liv'd by all beloved by all rever'd!
But soon did he her Lord his trophies yield
And fell! with honor on the martial field
True to his shade: her faithful soul cou'd bear
No second form t'erase his Image there
Whose praise (when time had soften'd grieves stern power[)])
Was still the favourite Theme of many an hour
Oft of his manly truth she'd fondly boast
Then sigh to think how much in him she lost
One infant pledge of either Sex remain'd
To virtue these her bright example train'd
To form their minds became her fixt[sic] employ
Source of true pleasure! and untainted joy!
Small was her wealth: (for younger sons I'm told
But seldom find their Coffers heap'd with gold[])
And tho' allied to many a pompous name
She little more than competence could claim)
Remote from Gay Bon ton's incessant round
And lost for ever lost! to le Beau Monde
(Not long they mist[missed] her in the whirl of Pride
Where each new face the transcient charm suppli'd)
She in Oblivion's calm & silent shade
The watchful Duties of a parent paid.
Near that same Villa chanc'd she to retire;
Where dwelt Eugenio & his honor'd Sire:
Who with her children join'd in active play
To future near connexions pav'd the way
For when the hours of studious toil were o'er,
His willing feet would haste to Laura's door
Where oft in nimble sports or gambols gay
The harmless trio pass'd the time of play.

Blest days of innocence! when harrowing cares
Fly the young breast and wait for riper years
When youth unpierc'd with grief with hope elate
Basks in the Sun of joy nor dreads his future fate
But when the morn of infancy declined
New doubts and fears perplex the Matrons mind
In vain she strove to pierce with anxious eye
The gloomy veil of dark futurity.
Thoughts roll'd on thoughts - o'er ideas[, ideas prest[sic]
As waves on waves in Neptunes sea green breast
Her roof might shield her blooming girl from harm
And calm retirement nurture every charm,
For her she wished to shun the tinsel glare,
Which oft allures to vice the heedless Fair.
And round her heart domestic bliss to entwine
The proper sphere where all her sex may shine
But here her cares begun - her lovely boy
The fond Memento of each faded joy
Now grew to active youth - Health's roseate glow
Flush'd his warm veins & grac'd his manly brow
His restless bosom spurn'd inglorious ease
And ardent burn'd to range thro' trackless seas
Far distant - men and manners to explore
And traverse realms where Heroes trod before
In vain his mother would her grief reurge[re-urge]
And paint the horrors of the faithless surge
Oft to his sage Preceptor sought in vain
The roving tenor of his soul 't'restrain
No art could dissipate th'aerial scheme
Or banish from his thoughts the fav'rite[sic] theme
Strangel how Dame Nature actuates the mind
And shapes her errant[28] course thro' all mankind
In various souls with varying force pervades
And leads to Courts or Camps or laurell'd shades
Strange! that tho' differing wide their mental frame
His Tutor and Eugenio's were - the same
For each kind Parent wish[']d by private rules
To teach them all the lore of Classic schools
For fearful of the change they might endure
And drink of Science there from streams impure
Mix'd in one common mass the ductile breast
Might with the stamp of vice be soon imprest[sic]
While absence in the Academic Grove
Might haply alienate their filial love
Thus in opinion join'd they sought & found
A sage who long had rang'd in classic ground
Whose mind gave lustre to his hoary hairs
Whose grave deportment graced his lengthen'd yrs[sic]
Meek, learn'd, benevolent, whose expanding thought
Flow'd in mild language with instruction fraught
And who by knowing well life's dang'rous bay
Could warn his pupils where the quicksands lay
Such was Alphonso in his actions just
To whom they delegate th'important trust
And he with watchful zeal attentive strove
To cultivate their minds and win their love
Soon as the stipulated time expired
He to his own domestic spot retir'd
Where duteous care his num'rous offspring pay
Gild the dim lamp of life & smooth his calm decay
When the fond mother found persuasion vain
Her sons eccentric genius[32] to restrain
When all her efforts still abortive proved
Nor prayers nor tears his roving thots. remov'd
Her hand the dictates of her head obeyed
And soon to Alfred were the lines convey'd
Alfred, the friend of Lydia's better days
Enjoy'd the sweets of opulence & ease!
Beside where Mersey rolls her Briny tide
His spacious Dome display'd its costly pride
There erst the charms of Luxury explor'd
And choicest viands graced his shining board
A menial train[37] observant to his call
Cringe at his presence & surround his hall
Where loud rattans announce each purse proud guest
With gaudy suite in sumptuous liversies drest
For wealth with magic wand & sceptre gay
Ne'er fails to allure the insects of the day
And Pleasure Goddess of the gaping throng
Attracts more surely than the syrens song
Him Fortune long had mark'd her favorite child
Crown'd his high hopes and on his labors smil'd
With precious freights his lofty barks she stor'd:
And in his lap the gold of India pour'd
For him mild breezes swell'd the expanding sails
Borne o'er th'Atlantic by her fav'ring[sp inst] gales;
Oft his tall barks thro' Oceans Empire glide;
Nod their gay prows and lave each bending side
And oft in triumph midst a crouded[sp inst] bay
His splendid prizes wave their trophies gay.

Alas! from many an heart a[heart-ache] many a woe
The blazing pomp that flatters pride must flow
And many a tear its course unnoticed steals
E'er callous luxury prepares her meals.
Yet not a foe to Pity - Alfred's heart
Would to the needy of his wealth impart;
And oft when want assail'd a former friend
A willing tribute would his hand extend
From Education sprang each erring thought
And use; - not gentle Nature, was in fault
For Nature form'd him generous social kind
But Custom hateful Custom warp'd his mind
He Lydia's virtues knew - & still rever'd
Whilst her late Lord his grateful homage shar'd
For he (e'er Fortune thus her favors strow'd)
To Alfred many a secret gift bestow'd
And still thro' passing years was left imprest[sp inst]
The cherish'd gratitude of Alfred's breast
When from the admiring world she first withdrew,
His offer'd aid evinced his friendship true
Long e'er he left the toilsome oar of gain,
He sought t'oblige her - & he sought in vain
But now the scene was changed & Lydia's mind
Beheld in him, the man she wished to find:
Full of this hope her trembling hand obey'd
And soon to Alfred were the lines convey'd
Swift as her letter caught his casual glance
Obscure ideas o'er his mem'ry[sp inst] dance
E'er long - remembrance with unerring truth
Display'd the Patron of his rising youth
Deeds long forgot his mental view imprest[sp inst]
And flushed with gratitude his throbbing breast

As when Aurora mounts her car on high
Faint, glimmering streaks foretel[sp inst] her presence nigh
Confusion o'er each scene, extends her sway;
And all is Chaos to the visual ray.
But soon by just gradations from the sight
Slow vanish all the hovering shades of night
Each long lost object rises to the view!
Each hidden form receives its wonted hue!
At length a flood of light mellifluous pours
Renews each grace & Harmony restores.
So Alfred's soul did Memorys[memories] sure receive
And warring passions in his bosom heave:
He rose - gave forth each due command - & they
Who heard his words, those due commands obey -
Four high-fed steeds were to the chariot brac'd
And their sleek sides the glittering harness grac'd
While either Valet joins to form his train
And at his beck their wonted post maintain
In haste he bade the haunts of trade, adieu
And a wide Campagne50 soon salutes his view
There many a verdant lawn his eyes explore
Eer his tir'd coursers51 neigh'd at Laura's door
The Matron rose with mingled joy & fear
To meet her guest, and hail his presence there
Her anxious heart with warm effusions glow'd
And o'er her cheeks the lucid tribute52 flow'd
Awhile twas silence all - for Alfred's soul
Felt the soft force of Sympathy's controul[sic]
Their eyes alone their mental feelings spoke
Till Lydia thus the solemn pause had broke
"When last oh Alfred! I thy form beheld
"Far other thoughts my raptur'd bosom fill'd
"Not thus with these tumultuous cares opprest[sic]
"But in a kind & faithful partner blest
"Ah me, that time is fled! those hours are o'er
"And his lov'd image soothes[sic] my hopes no more
"No more the music of his voice I hear
"Nor his mild accents vibrate on my ear
"No more his children share his fond embrace
"Nor learn to copy his majestic grace
"No more a fathers precepts teach their youth
"The path of wisdom, & the Law of Truth.-
"Pardon me Alfred if a woe like mine
"Would on the lap of sympathy recline;
"And if forgetful of thy friendly care
"With useless plaints53 I wound thy listening ear
"For like a wounded bird I seek for rest
"In vain! the cause is lodged within my breast".-
Here ceased her voice: & soon with eager haste
Her duteous servants form a choice repast;
Rich viands, fruitage cul'd with nicest care54
And sparkling wines, they for their guest prepare
Keen hunger pour'd his healthful sauce around
Good nature grac'd the Board & plenty crown'd
Twas o'er - each hospitable rite55 fulfill'd
Domestic cares to friendly converse yield
And the mild intercourse they still pursue,
Till Sable Night, her closing curtain drew,
To her did Alfred each event relate
And her heart joy'd to hear his prosperous fate
Then she in meek harmonious sounds exprest[sic]
The cause why heaved with woe her anxious breast
And Alfred promised that her son should share
His warm protection and his watchful care
His soothing language calm'd her troubled mind
On his pledg'd honor, her fond hopes reclined
And to his charge she her lov'd Boy consign'd
  But oh! what tumults rent his sister's soul
From her blue eyes what liquid torrents roll!
Each past endearment, rose at once to view,
And check'd her voice that faultering cry'd adieu
Now Night retir'd with all her hovering train
And Sol, slow, rising, gilt the Orient Plain
Alfred in haste the couch of rest forsook;
And from sweet sleep the drowsy boy awoke:
Then for their prompt return he bade prepare
Another parting interview, to spare:
But vain the thought! t' evade a mother's sight
She rose to meet them e'er the Morning light
And as they crost the Hall with silent pace
She clasp'd her offspring in a last embrace
Yet soon new fortitude her mien assum'd
For Hope's enlivening ray, her heart illum'd
Convinced that all was order'd for the best
She strove to soothe her boding mind to rest.
Yet the swift circling wheels her eyes pursue
'Till all was vanished from her aching view
She wept - Affection oped the galling wound
And in her breast a dreary chasm she found
With filial tenderness her Laura strove,
To heal the sorrows of Maternal Love.
Pleased with her cares, the storm of grief subsides
And o'er her soul the balm of comfort glides
From time to time his lines her fears control
And Alfred's steady friendship crown'd the whole
Meanwhile Eugenio (whose expanding mind
Soft Sympathy's endearing link entwin'd
Who little less than they did oft deplore
The pleas'd companion of each mirthful hour)
Still felt attractive impulse guide his feet
With magic force to Lydias calm retreat
In vain his reason, with his passion strove
His heart was captiv'd in the bonds of love.
For Laura sighed he - & the blooming maid
With mutual flame his artless truth repaid
In guile unpractis'd, neither knew or sought
To gloss with fraudulent words each latent thought
For undisguis'd, their warm affection rose;
Pure as the limpid brook that smoothly flows
  While either Parent view'd with calm delight
Their children's wishes with their own unite
And when Old Time the rising flame matured
The marriage knot their willing hands secur'd
Mysterious knot! which tho' the simplest form
Yet not the wisest can dissolve its charm
Which tho' a few short words affix the chain
No Power on Earth can liberty regain:
Sweet Bondage! more desired than Freedoms range
Whose fetters clog not - till too late to change
Scarce did bland Hymen link the youthful pair
And mirths loud voice a milder cadence wear
When joy was banish'd - filial griefs arise
And Laura closed her new-made Parents eyes
With mingled tears they greet his honor'd shade
And each the tribute of affection paid:
For where soft union gives the heart to glow
The faithful partner feels no separate woe:
If keen affliction aim a piercing wound,
In either breast the envenom'd dart is found
And when the star of Pleasure rises bright
Its beam reflected yields a richer light:
Thus when Eugenio heav'd th'unconscious sigh
The tear attracted fell from Laura's eye;
And when his mind a peaceful tenor knew
With nimble force her active spirits flew.
Unknown to them the follies of the great
Save what perchance their casual guests relate
Or tales which spring from many a fruitful head
By Envy foster'd & by Slander spread:
Or warm effusions of poetic fire
Which not the Muse - but want, doth oft inspire
It chanc'd, on morn when Sols prolific heat
Prompts the dull Cits to taste each rural sweet
That fair Amanda sick of ennui
Bent tow'rds Eugenio's vale her languid way
She, near of kin to Laura wish'd to know
The simple joys which from contentment flow
Oft had she heard that in each other blest
No vice, or folly stain'd their tranquil breast
That Peace & Concord dwelt beneath their roof
And Truth's bright target awed each fiend aloof
Scarce cou'd her reason judge how pleasure shone
Where cards & routs & revels were unknown
Where Dissipation urg'd no wild career;
And one dull sameness rul'd the varying year
Sad proof where Idol Fashion warps the mind
To plain, sound, sense, the mortal eye is blind
With heart sincere, - unknowing of deceit,
Eugenio hied his courtly guest to meet:
While gentler Laura with peculiar care
Arranged her household; & did all prepare
No haste confus'd, her mild commands await
Decorum reign'd, & order kept her seat:
Then (while "the graces" every act attend;)
Who affable, returned her kind address;
And equal joy their accents soft express,
Not so grave Lydia, whose maternal breast
Was oft with anxious doubts & fears imprest[sic]
For noxious69 as the Fever's breath - she knew
The baneful70 force of ill Example flew
And dreaded much lest in the social hour
In vain might innocence oppose its power
If folly ne'er beguil'd her Laura's soul
No sly temptation urg'd th'unseen control[sic]
And if the Virtues bloom'd around her heart
No vice alluring aim'd the unconscious dart
Thus reason'd she - But whose all curious eyes
Pierce the thick vail[sic] & learn what Heav'n denies
Not all our wisdom, all our wit - can shew
The future periods of our weal71 or woel
Sick of her fears, resolv'd to hope the best;
She left to Providence, to guide the rest:
Check'd the vain tumults which her bosom heav'd
And with a smile of peace - her niece72 receiv'd
Whose form reviv'd in Lydia's thoughtful mind
Ideas - to Oblivion long consigned
Scenes of her youth to faithful memory sprung
And many a kind enquiry urg'd her tongue
As oft Amanda formed the prompt replies
Her bosom heav'd with retrospective sighs
Yet joy, alternate, thro' the gloom would break
And transient smiles illume her matron cheek

Soon, dull punctilio's formal reign was o'er73
And converse free assum'd its social pow'r[sic]
Reserve was banish'd - as the shades of night
When morning ushers in the orb of Light
Swift on light wing the circling hours retired
While polish'd wit the rural scene inspir'd
For form'd to captivate - their lively guest
Alluring grace & brilliant charms possesst[sic]
Her form capricious Nature ne'er design'd
The living portrait of her vacant mind;74
Her eyes - what hapless lover cou'd[sic] endure
Prepar'd for mischief & of conquest sure
Her pouting lips thro' whose vermilion glow
The wanton song or murmuring cadence flow
All, all to steal th'unguarded heart unite
Attract the ear, & fix th'inconstant sight.
Entranc'd by flattery's bewitching draught
To please and dazzle claim'd her ardent thought
While to th'uncheck'd assaults of Vice a prey,
Her soul's uncultivated tenure lay:75
There dissipation light th' temperate fire;
And blazing folly wav'd the trophies76 dire:
There envy flourish'd - canker of the mind
And Pride to every selfish error blind
There Avarice long its hideous form conceal'd
And to soft Mercy's claim, her bosom steel'd
Yet wit & fancy gave her thoughts to glow
And in smooth sounds her polished accents flow
Oft in the dance the envied prize she bore
When light as air, her slipper prest[sic] the floor
Still, as her hand, the trembling chords assays77
Each sound is rapture, & each voice is praise
At her command tumultuous passions roll;
And Joy & Phrenzy[frenzy] animate the Soul
Skilled in goodbreeding's ever graceful ease
But ah! too conscious of her power to please
Thus graced Amanda sought the rural scene
By grateful change, to dissipate the spleen78
And o'er each vice, its secret sway disclose
In Laura's heart the seeds of Friendship rose
Unus'd to curb the warm & gen'rous thought
By virtue nurtured & by nature taught.
E'en good Eugenio, felt th'attractive power
Which gilds with ray benign the social hour;
Not so Amanda - tho her words declar'd
That sympathy's congenial flame she shar'd

[At this point in the narrative, the poem breaks off abruptly and the following paragraph is then written:]

If it is positively declared that we shall be accountable for each idle word, how much more for every idle line? Inasmuch as that unmeaning or idle words, when they have pass'd thro' our lips, evaporate and are perhaps never recalled to remembrance - but writing conveys an indelible mark which is much more difficult to be effaced than the sound which but reaches the ear - The eye presents to the memory a succession of ideas which are generally treasur'd up - 'till some occasional circumstance recalls them, and then they frequently revive with added poignancy. Now whether upon a serious perusal, I can safely exculpate the above little effervescence of a light and roving fancy, from the charge of an idle range of thought, which ought rather to be subdued than encouraged I doubt it and if so, I rather resign the pen than continue what was only intended to amuse a leisure hour and what if persisted in may bring me under the imputation of adding another hour to the many which have imperceptibly stolen away, in useless occupations or in indolent langour - alike unproductive of real and solid benefit to the possessor.

Summerhill M. B.
12th mo: 1794

1. in that mild clime - England. There follows a panegyrical eulogising the virtues of 'Albion' (ancient name for Britain, probably derived from 'albus', the Latin word for 'white' - the white cliffs of Dover could be seen from the continent).
2. the nine - the muses were nine in number.
3. Palm triumphant - palm leaves are symbolic of victory and excellence.
4. oer thy Billows - over your waves. This was a time of rapid growth for the British Empire, and its power at sea.
5. Till Heav'n's [...] the visual ray - to the horizon, as far as the eye can see.
6. more for use than show - usefulness or functionality versus ostentation was a concern in much late eighteenth-century poetry (see, for example, Goldsmith's description of the schoolmaster's house in The Deserted Village (1770) which contains 'pictures placed for ornament and use,' line 231).
7. meed - reward.
8. Thrice yon bright Orb [...] Eugenio Man - three years have passed since Eugenio came of age at twenty-one.
9. In Classic ground [...] grace improv'd - reflecting gender differences in education: boys studied the classics, girls learned feminine 'accomplishments' to render them more marriageable.
10. jarring thot. - discordant thought.
11. Hymen - in classical mythology, the god of marriage.
12. Shakespeare, Hamlet, III. 1. 78-80 - Hamlet speaks of 'the dread of something after death/The undiscovered country from whose bourn/No traveller returns'.
13. Trump of Fame - conventional figure of fame as trumpet.
14. And fell! [...] his Image there - Laura's father died on the battlefield. Her mother, remaining true to his shade (spirit or ghost), could allow no other man to take his place and wipe out her memory of him.
15. one infant pledge of either Sex - i.e. Laura and her brother. The word 'pledge' is used figuratively to mean a 'child as a token of mutual love' (OED).
16. fixt employ - permanent or constant occupation.
17. competence - an income just sufficient to live on. Laura's father was not the eldest son and so did not inherit the family estates. Younger sons often sought careers in the army, as here, or the church.
18. French expressions are used for fashionable high society: Bon ton, the height of fashion, literally 'good taste', and le Beau Monde, the fashionable world, 'the beautiful world'.
19. Oblivion's calm & silent shade - retirement from society.
20. estate - elated.
21. Neptunes sea green breast - the ocean. Neptune was the Roman name for the god of the sea, called Poseidon by the Greeks.
22. tinsel glare - hollow attraction, i.e. of fashionable society, which may tempt a 'heedless Fair' (a careless or foolish young woman) out of her 'proper sphere' of domesticity.
23. fond memento of each faded joy - once again, the child is a token of the love (now faded because only a memory) between his parents. See note 15 above.
24. roseate - pink or rose-coloured.
25. faithless surge - treacherous wave.
26. oft to his [...] trestrain - the boy's mother asked his teacher, or 'Preceptor', to dissuade him from travelling and curb his 'roving tenor' (prevailing tendency to wander).
27. aerial scheme - dream, aerial - literally 'of the air', 'high-flown'.
28. errant - perhaps carrying several meanings: wandering, adventurous (as in 'knight errant') and erring (mistaken or turning aside from the correct path).
29. Courts or Camps - stock expression for the monarch's service, or state ministries, and the military - hence public life, laurel'd shades - more retired occupation, with its own 'laurels' or rewards for effort.
30. His Tutor and Eugenio's [...] filial love (9 lines) - Laura's brother and Eugenio shared the same tutor. Their parents wished them to be taught privately at home, because, while wanting them to have a classical education, they feared that attendance at boarding school might contaminate them (through false 'Science' or knowledge and introduction to vice), and distance them from their parents. ductile - soft and pliable, therefore susceptible. the Academic Grove - a term derived from the olive grove in Athens, known as The Academy, where Plato taught philosophy to his students. haply - perhaps.
31. hoary hairs - hairs grey or white with age.
32. eccentric genius - odd or wayward spirit.
33. roving thots. - 'thots.' is manuscript abbreviation of 'thoughts'. The young man's thoughts are of roving, travelling.
34. Thomson, The Seasons, 'Autumn', 249-50, Palemon speaking of the withdrawal from the world of Lavinia and her mother - 'Far from those scenes which knew their better days, /His aged widow and his daughter live'. Lydia, the name Mary first gives here for Laura's mother, may well have been her real name. Alfred may also have been the real name of her friend from her more comfortable past or, as the name of a famous English king, it could have been chosen to flatter this man who, it appears from the rest of the poem, was a British magnate of sorts.
35. where Mersey rolls her Briny tide - Liverpool, on the River Mersey.
36. There [...] board (2 lines) - formerly (erst), the finest food (choicest viands) had been served at Alfred's table (board).
37. menial train - entourage of servants.
Where loud rattans [...], liveries drest—'rattan' was a loud, echoing sound. Here, 'loud rattans'—perhaps made by a musical instrument—herald the arrival of purse-proud (arrogantly wealthy) guests with their servants in ostentatious livery.

Insects of the day—worthless hangers-on. An insect was a word used for an insignificant or despicable person (OED). (The OED also quotes Chalmers, Posthumous Works (1798): 'It is not for us, the frail insects of a day [...], to oppose the feeble powers of our reason to the wonders of Omnipotence'. The term 'insects of a day', as used by Chalmers, emphasises the insignificance of all humanity, and the brevity of human life.)

'Insects of the day', as used by Chalmers, emphasises the insignificance of all humanity, and the brevity of human life.

Syrens' song—In Greek myth, sirens were creatures, part bird and part woman, who lived on an island from where, by their bewitching song, they lured sea travellers to their deaths.

"Him Fortune [...], gales (6 lines)—Fortune is personified as a goddess, rewarding Alfred's endeavours by loading his tall ships (lofty barks) with West Indian produce (the gold of India) and sending favourable weather to speed them on their trans-Atlantic journeys.

Lave—Wash.

Trophies—probably referring to banners flying from Alfred's ships.

The point is being made that consumers of luxury goods often do not know, or care, that others may have suffered to obtain these goods. Thinking particularly, perhaps, of slavery.

Strow'd—variant spelling of 'strew'd'.

Toilsome oar of gain—metaphor for the work of accumulating wealth, an appropriate image given Alfred's shipping interests. (The hard labour of ancient galley slaves is the source of the expression 'chained to the oar'.)

Aurora mounts her car on high—in classical mythology, the goddess Aurora brought the dawn as she traversed the sky in her chariot.

Just gradations—Even stages.

Mellifluous—figuratively, 'sweetly flowing', 'sweet as honey (OED). Usually used to describe eloquent language, but here to create an evocative image of golden light pouring over the world.

Campagne—French for 'open country'.

Courser—Fast horses.

Lucid tribute—Tears.

Plaints—sorrowful complaints or appeals.

Fruitage cul'd with nicest care—fruit and vegetables (the fruit of the earth) selected with the finest care.

Hospitalite rite—Ritual or duty due to hospitality.

Sol—Orient Plain—the sun lights up the eastern horizon. Sol—classical personification of the sun.

Boding mind—Mind full of foreboding, fearful of future trouble.

His lines her fears control—his letters reassure her.

Deplore—I.e. deplore the loss of.

Captiv'd—made captive.

Old Time the rising flame matured—time, personified (as Old Father Time?), ripens their love.

Her new-made Parents eyes—I.e. her new father-in-law's eyes.

Tenor—Direction or leaning. The notion of movement is picked up in the next line, when Laura's reciprocating feelings, or spirits, fly to join Eugenio's.

Or warm effusions [...], doth oft inspire—Reference to poetry being produced for gain.

Cits—short form of 'citizens', became a nickname for city-dwellers, usually tradespeople or those who made their money from commerce.

And Truth's [...], fiend aloof—Eugenio and Laura's home is seen as a 'target' or centre suffused with Truth or virtue, therefore repelling evil.

Hied—Hurried.

"The graces"—the three daughters of Zeus, king of the gods. They were goddesses of grace, beauty and joy.

Noxious—Harmful, unwholesome.

Baneful—Poisonous.

Weal—Well-being.

Her niece—Amanda.

Soon [...] was o'er—Soon formal pleasantries were over. 'Punctilio' was a word for empty etiquette.

Her form [...], vacant mind;—Nature is 'capricious' because it has given Amanda an attractive outward form that belies her inner shortcomings.

Her soul's uncultivated tenure—Amanda's soul is visualised as space she holds but does not tend, so it falls prey to Vice.

By grateful change, to dissipate the spleen—the spleen was a self-indulgent mood of peevishness or depression, to which women were believed to be particularly prone. Grateful—pleasing.
The next two poems were written at Mount Prospect in August, the second giving the year as 1795. They were probably produced during the same visit. Mount Prospect is the name of a hamlet near Rathangan, in County Kildare. According to Mary's document about the Irish Rebellion, Joshua and Hannah Wilson lived there. They were threatened by rebels who would have killed Joshua but for his wife's intervention in standing between him and the gun - see Vol. 1, Prose, pp.160-67 (164-65). Joshua was the uncle of Dinah Wilson Goff, who wrote up her family's recollections of the 1798 rebellion. She tells us that events in Ireland made the Wilsons leave their home, where they had lived for forty years, for England, never to return. They moved to Taplow Hill near London, where George III paid them a visit to glean information on the rebellion and the Queen sought Hannah's advice when one of the princesses was ill. (See Goff, 'Divine Protection', in JMR [Jane Marion Richardson, formerly Wakefield], Six Generations in Ireland (1893), pp.113-14).

However, in these poems, Mount Prospect is the name of the house belonging to the uncle and aunt of Hannah Pettigrew, Mary's friend to whom the second poem is dedicated, rather than a hamlet or village. This is easily resolved. A Mount Prospect House still stands at Mount Prospect. For some years a stud farm has operated there, and the Georgian house, once almost derelict, has recently been completely restored. It is somewhat smaller than it was in Mary's day as the top floor was dismantled when the building was reroofed earlier this century. But some remains of the features she describes can still be traced. The gardens are partly terraced, one of the cottage-like extensions at either end of the house could once have been the 'moss arched shed' she mentions, many trees once existed in an upper garden near the house (possibly the grove she refers to) and, not too long ago, there was an orchard, though this is now gone.

There is some uncertainty about the identity of Hannah Pettigrew. The Pettigrews were a family of Dublin Quaker merchants, connected with banking families like the Dawsons and the Fades, but there is little mention of them in the Quaker birth, death and marriage registers. However, Hannah, the wife of Joshua Wilson of Mount Prospect, was a daughter of Joshua Strangman, of the merchant family that formed the Strangman, Courtney and Ridgway shipping partnership. Of his other daughters, Anne married James Forbes (these were the parents of Mary Birkett's close friend, Hannah Wilson Forbes) and Elizabeth married Robert Pettigrew in 1750. Hannah Pettigrew may have been a child of this marriage and therefore the niece of both Joshua and Hannah Wilson and James and Anne Forbes. Interestingly, her full name, or her initials - 'HP', are found beside notes made on the Forbes genealogical lists, in Webb's Pedigrees at Dublin Friends Historical Library, as if she were the source of the information given. Examples are a note of the bridesmen and bridesmaids present at the wedding of Hannah Wilson Forbes's sister Anne to Samuel Russell, and mention of a Charles Forbes of Cork marrying an Elizabeth Pettigrew in 1784, and their going to Jamaica. Some of this 'HP' information appears as late as 1819, giving the date of death of Hannah Wilson Forbes's brother, James.

Subsidiary Note
Complex Family Trees - The 'Pettigrew Fragments'

Listed in the card index at Dublin Friends Historical Library as 'Pettigrew fragments' are some genealogical lists on scraps of paper, partially destroyed by fire. They show complex, and rather bewildering, links between the Strangman, Forbes and Pettigrew (or Petticrew) families. Apparently a Hannah, born 1693, daughter of John Hoope of Hoope Hill, Lurgan and his wife Ruth, née Webb, married John Petticrew in 1715. Her father married again after her mother's death and had two sons. One, James Hoope, married a Katherine Forbes, c. 1741-2. Katherine was aunt to Mary Birkett's friend Hannah Wilson Forbes. Meanwhile, John and Hannah Petticrew had three children, according to the lists. Their daughter Anne (1724-1814) married a Mellick(? Samuel Strangman (date of marriage undecipherable), while their son Robert (1732-1787) married an Elizabeth Strangman in 1750 (the latter couple being the probable parents of Mary Birkett's friend Hannah Pettigrew, possibly named Hannah after her grandmother). The Strangman 'pedigrees' compiled by T. Webb show that Samuel was the
brother of wealthy merchant, Joshua Strangman, while Elizabeth was his daughter. So we have a
Pettigrew sister and brother marrying a Strangman uncle and niece, respectively. Family relationships
must have been terribly complicated! Some of the information in the fragments is initialled 'HP', though
the handwriting looks modern. The fragments may have been gathered and copied from earlier records
compiled by Mary's friend, Hannah Pettigrew. Another poem of Mary's, written in 1808, also mentions
her - see p.413 in this volume.

Mount Prospect 8th mo 22nd

Be tuned my harp! thou quivering lyre be strung
Mount Prospect wakes to sound the muses song
Yes! shall the muse obeisant to its call
In wild-wood accents¹ give her notes to fall
Rapt in the theme whose more than magic powers
From fancys garden culls the choicest flowers
Captives² each sense, gives each warm heart to glow
Till like yon smooth canal³ our tranquil ideas flow
Wide o'er the plain & robed in virgin white⁴
Mount Prospect oft attracts the passing sight
Whose form high towering o'er th'enameled plain
Seems a proud monarch midst his menial train⁵
Low at the door whose portals oft extend
Prest[sic] by willing feet of many a friend
A mimic Eden⁶ courts the florists eye.
Where midst the leaves young zephyrs⁷ learn to sigh
Where richest flowers their blooming tints display
And warbling songsters hop from spray to spray
There clumps of fir in various forms are seen
To guard the great gate & protect the green
To point in language mute the gravel'd way
Whence upward oft untired my footsteps stray
The summit gain'd in natures wonders drest[sic]
A charming temple⁸ allures my limbs to rest
Where shells the hand of elegance display
And on their polish'd fronts reflect the day
Where stones & fossils fix the attracted sight
And all the rainbows glittering hues unite
Where too embosom'd in an artless case
A few choice authors this calm grotto grace
Whose modest merits unobtrusive rest
Till the eye drinks their thoughts & pours them o'er the breast
Awhile I sip their sweets, their beauteous taste
And my mind shares the intellectual feast
Not long I screen me from the blaze of noon
My friend light tripping checks my musing soon
With cheerful voice she calls me to the grove
Where many a Songster chirps his tale of love
There arm in arm with devious step we tread
Near the green margin of each flowery bed
Explore each path, each winding maze pervade
Midst trees whose foliage, lend a grateful shade
Whose wing'd inhabitants aloft in air
Their Mighty Makers wondrous praise declare
At length we rest beneath a moss arched shed
Where mimic rocks hang tottering o'er our head
Where the blue seats invite our longer stay
And canes of India stand in nice array
There Contemplation heavenly maid resorts
Shuns the loud din of Cities, Camps or Courts
Pours o'er the mind, true wisdoms heartfelt flow
And bids in Solitude her accents flow
Yes I have seen her as I chanced to stray
When sober eve was clad in mantle grey
Steal from the crowd & Seek the lonely cell
And in the grove of Prospect love to dwell
Ascend we now the terrace, there the mind
A theme capacious as her thought, may find
O'er distant hills & fruitful valleys range
And mark the varying seasons as they change
Glance o'er the hills, which mellowing harvest browns
O'er scatter'd villages & neighbouring towns
Till the tired eye recalls its last desire
For charms may satiate, Beautys self will tire
And even in vain those short lived pleasures stay
Time mocks our grasp! & steals them all away
Not so the joys which flow from truths sublime
They triumph o'er the ravages of time
Stamp on the Soul the pledge of lasting peace
And bloom when these revolving seasons cease
All else must yield to fate - some future day
Even Prospects dome must moulder & decay
Not all its Beauties, all its charms can save
Thrones, Crowns & Empires, meet the silent grave
And sure if taste, confers immortal fame
A lasting monument that dome may claim
Where natures stores collected meet the eyes
And a rich museums glowing wonders rise
Where health & peace & elegance unite
To feast the fancy & attract the Sight
Long may it flourish, long may blooming fair
Reward its kind & generous owners care
Long may its fruits their annual vintage pour
And golden harvests, yield a plenteous store
Long may their kine a milky burthen yield
And a rich carpet cloathe the verdant field
Long in Heavens gifts & in each other blest
Till like a Summers Eve, they glide to Endless rest

MB
1. wild-wood accents - the song or voice of uncultivated nature. An old word for woodland (weald) came be confused with 'wild' meaning 'untamed'. Hence 'wild-wood'.

2. Captives - makes captive, captivates.

3. yon smooth canal - a branch of the Grand Canal, built in the eighteenth century to transport goods to and from Dublin, runs through Mount Prospect at Rathangan.

4. robed in virginal white - Mount Prospect House is still rendered white today.

5. menial train - entourage of followers or servants.

6. a mimic Eden - a garden so beautiful that it resembles the garden of Eden.

7. zephyrs - gentle winds or breezes. Zephyrus was the classical personification, or god, of the west wind.

8. A charming temple - Mary goes on to describe a 'temple', or 'grotto', which contained a small library. It was colourful, as it was lined with shells and fossils, mosaic-like, of different hues. Such structures, sometimes called shell houses or summerhouses, were very fashionable. Nothing remains of the one at Mount Prospect, but other examples survive, for instance, the shell house in Bushy Park, Dublin with its Gothic doors and windows. Though vandalised, the shell mosaics on the inside walls can still be seen in their intricate spiral patterns. A seventeenth-century one on an infinitely grander scale can be seen at Woburn Abbey in Bedfordshire. Designed by Inigo Jones, it is a grotto or loggia attached to the main house, originally open at the front so family and guests could breathe the fresh air. The walls and ceiling are inlaid with ormer shells, and the stonework intricately carved into patterns of seaweed and stalactites. Such grottoes often faced north, as the strong rays of the sun were considered harmful.

9. with devious step - walking in a meandering fashion.

10. grateful - pleasing.

11. moss arched shed - a 'shed' was a shelter, not a garden shed for storing tools. The roof would have been covered in moss. William and Dorothy Wordsworth made a 'Moss-hut' in the garden of Dove Cottage at Grasmere, and spent much time there in the summer. More 'folly-like', mock caves partially covered over with turf or moss were popular, and this structure at Mount Prospect may have been something similar. It has 'mimic' or imitation rocks hanging overhead, and contains blue seating. It is not quite clear what 'canes of India' means. Cane (stems of reeds or palms) could come from India (bamboo cane, rattan) or the West Indies, also known as India or the Indies at this time (sugar cane). Both can be used to make wickerwork furniture, or to form a decorative display.

12. Cities, Camps or Courts - stock expression for forms of public life: city life and commerce, the military, and the monarch's court, service or ministries of state.

13. kine - cattle; burthen - archaic form of 'burden'.

On 31 August 1795, Mary bid 'farewell' to Hannah Pettigrew (see headnote to poem above) and the joys of Mount Prospect.

To H Pettigrew

Hannah let the muse impart
The feelings of a grateful heart
For grief does in her bosom dwell
To say that dismal word farewell
To leave these sweetly smiling plains
Where innocence unenvied reigns
Where guiltless pleasures still we find
Which never leave a Sting behind
For other than the Citys throng
The joys which court the muses song
Yes! oft shall memory true & kind
Present Mount Prospect to my mind
And oft in fancy shall I trace
Its native elegance & grace
The grove in whose sequester'd maze
My willing feet delighted strays
The moss roof'd bower,¹ the shady grove
Where many a warbler chaunts² its love
The terrace where our wandering Sight
May rove unwearied with delight
The cask³ too, where as ancients tell
A surly sage was wont to dwell
The orchard in whose ample bound
Pomona⁴ pours her fruits around
The meadows tip'd[sic] with golden grain
Whose fatness courts the labouring swain⁵
The shell house where the lucid ray
A thousand lovely tints display⁶
The drawing room whose every grace
My mental eye shall often trace
But most your forms shall bless my Sight
And shorten many a winters night
When wind & rain in tempests roll
And midnight thunders chill the Soul!
Yes! oft with rapture will I dwell
On Virtues which I love so well
On little Anna's Smiling face
Where Nature opens every grace
Thy Uncles kindness too shall rest
The cherish'd inmate of my breast
And oft his honor'd spouse shall rise
And all her goodness meet my eyes
May Heaven its choicest gifts impart
And every blessing cheer their heart
Oh! may that Power with gracious ear
His humble suppliant deign to hear
With comfort crown thy peaceful life
Remote from guile, remote from strife
And fix Content - Seraphic⁷ guest
The Constant inmate of thy breast
May these be yours, my hope shall be
That sometimes you will think of me

Mount Prospect 8mo 31st 1795

1. moss roof'd bower - see note 11 to poem entitled, 'Mount Prospect 8th Mo 22nd' immediately above.
2. chaunts - sings or chants.
3. cask - probably meaning outer shell or case. This might refer to the ruins of a tower, once part of Offaly Castle (demolished in the 1950s), not far from the house.

4. Pomona - Roman goddess of fruit trees.

5. Whose fatness courts the labouring swain - the corn, grown fat and ripe, seems to offer itself, ready for harvesting, to the country labourer.

6. The shell house [...] tints display - see note 8 to poem entitled 'Mount Prospect 8th Mo 22nd', immediately above.

7. seraphic - like seraphs, 'one of the highest order of the ninefold celestial hierarchy gifted especially with love and associated with light, ardour, and purity' (OED).

This poem bears a date of 14 August, but no year is given. It is situated in the manuscript collection with poems written on the visit to England in 1794, immediately after 'To Lydia Harrison' (see p.229 above). The 'loved girl' addressed, then, could be Lydia. However, Mary left London in June of that year to stay with relatives in the north, at Kendal and Warrington. It is unlikely she returned to London afterwards, far more likely that she embarked for Ireland from Liverpool as she had done in 1789 (see 'Liverpool [-] To the Memory of an Uncle', p.68 in this volume).

She did visit England again in 1797, however. There is just one entry in her spiritual autobiography from that time, written at Hampstead, and dated 31 August (see Vol.1, Prose, p.17). It is quite probable, then, that this poem was also composed in August 1797.

To ------ London 8th mo 14th

Soft breathes the vernal gale,1 the eye of day
Pours a rich lustre o'er the enamell'd green
Haste my loved girl & we'll together stray
Where no rude foot shall press the hallowed scene2

There will we musing mark each opening grove
The varied blessings so profusely given
Mid natures sweets the forming hand will trace
And lift our grateful hearts from Earth to Heaven

1. vernal gale - spring breeze.
2. Where no [...] hallowed scene - conventional imagery for a place of solitude, literally where no offending footsteps shall disturb a place so 'hallowed' or 'sacred'.

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No dated poetry exists from 1796, and this is the only poem dated 1797, although the verses immediately above, written in London, may also belong to that year. As most of Mary's poems are expressive of her own experience, or relate to life events and relationships, it is probable that this one, too, arose from a particular occasion when pain was 'involuntarily' caused to a friend. A year earlier, in a journal entry dated '11th Mo 19th 1796', she had spoken of being 'forsaken', 'when the friend of my heart upbraideth me as the cruel cause of her extreme anxiety'.

On causing anguish to a friend

Is there an anguish whose electric shock
Reverberates back from Soul to Soul? -
Whose chilling weight unnerves the human frame
And clogs the vital spring - whose ruthless venom
Infus'd in every pore, disseminates
Empoisoning as it glows, and gathering round
Dense vapours? is there such a grief as this
Can Death's cold hand create it? No its pain
Transcends ev'n the grim Monarch's!¹ it conveys
A sting most exquisitely keen -
Say, hast thou felt it? Tis the poignant woe
Of causing anguish to the friend you love
Involuntarily causing - Cease my pen
Not all the characters which language boasts
Can ever trace that suffering - ¹

Dublin 12 mo:23d 1797

¹: the grim Monarch's! - i.e. Death's.
This is the first of the few poems that Mary dedicated to her husband Nathaniel Card, here still her future husband as they did not marry until 13 March 1801. They may well have known each other from childhood, as Nathaniel was her cousin. But he was not born a Quaker, being ‘convinced’, according to information given in the Card Family Bible, ‘about the 23rd year of his age’. Born on 13 October 1776, he was almost two years younger than Mary and so would have been twenty-two years old when this poem was addressed to him.

Without knowing the context, which must to some extent reside in Mary and Nathaniel’s relationship at this point, it is difficult to fathom the poem’s meaning with precision. But it would seem to refer to the condition of the Quaker church at a time when there was much dissension within it between deists or liberals and the more orthodox, and when many individuals were abandoning their membership of the Society because of this. Other members were being lost through disownment for misdemeanours or ‘marrying out’. In such a reading, ‘th’Imperial Virgin’ in this text is the Quaker Church, ‘Her faithless lovers’ those who are abandoning or destroying her. Nathaniel, on the other hand, was either soon to become, or in the process of becoming, a Friend - a process in which Mary was perhaps instrumental.

To Nathl. Card

Dublin 1mo. 19th. 1799

Why hangs my harp on Jordan’s flowery side
As soft & slow, its hallow’d waters glide?
Why bound in silence every sacred voice
Whose Iov’d vibrations bade our souls rejoice
Why droops the hand which mark’d even Canaan’s Shore
All cold and nerveless & delights no more?
Why cease the feet our longing eyes to grace
Which run with joy and fear the willing race
Ah wouldst thou know? then lift thy wond’ring eyes
Where low in dust th’Imperial Virgin lies
Robb’d of her lustre of her crown bereft
Dimm’d her fine gold nor even her treasure left
Chas’d the mild radiance of her dove-like eye
While shades of night, around her mantling lie
And many a sigh that does in tumult roll
Bespeaks the anguish of her mourning soul
Lost too that smile whose Iov’d & potent charm
Would oft the tigers fiercest rage disarm
For erst when Israel own’d her heav’n born sway
Forth went the healing balm & all on earth obey
The harmless serpent learnt to wound no more
And the tam’d Lion ceas’d his awful roar
No hawk terrific fear’d the tuneful grove
For all was union harmony and love.
But now how chang’d the scene since proud & vain
Her faithless Lovers rose (an impious train)
Snatch'd the bright meed\(^7\) which'd grac'd her beauteous brow  
And fill'd with envy laid her honors lowl  
Then - weep ye Heavens, thou earth thy sackcloth\(^8\) wear  
Hurl'd from her sacred throne the mourning fair\(^9\)  
Loud heaves the heart which shares her secret woe  
Each groan of anguish - sad reverse\(^10\) to know  
For now no more extends her wide domain  
(Save where a few their ancient love retain)  
No more her sceptre holds th'unrivall\[^i\]d sway,  
Monarchs bow down & distant isles obeyl  
No more she bids sweet melody rebound  
Nor every harp give forth its rapturous sound  
While "peace on earth good will to Man\[^i\]"\(^{11}\) she sung  
And the soft strain was pour'd from every tongue  
No more th'aspiring youths around her wait  
But her vain rivals mock her humbled state  
"Rise from the dust"; they oft reproachful cry -  
"Assert thy power & reign o'er earth & sky  
"Avenge thee of the proud imperious foe  
"Nor let his puny efforts lay thee low"\(^{12}\)  
Ah cease your vague reproofs the hour is nigh  
When far away these hovering shades will fly  
When Lyan[?]\(^{13}\) from her lowly sea shall rise  
And chase the tears of sorrow from our eyes\(^{14}\)  
Shall rise - renew'd in loveliness & power  
To meet her souls belov'd - to meet & part no more  
Oh when he comes who sole creates her joy  
No tongue shall vex her nor no cares annoy  
No weapon form'd against her shall endure  
Safe in His presence - in his arm secure  
Hasten O Lord this bright & glorious hour,  
That all may own thy goodness & thy power ---

2. Canaan's Shore - the holy or promised land, to which the hand no longer guides the way.  
3. Amos 5:2 - 'The Virgin of Israel is fallen; she shall no more rise: she is forsaken upon her land; there is none to raise her up.' Amos preached against the injustice of the Israelites, their oppression of the poor, faithlessness and insincerity despite apparent religious devotion. Justice and true worship, he asserted, are more pleasing to God than festivals and sacrifices. He goes on to say, after this particular quote, that those who cheat others of their rights are doomed to destruction, unless they come to the Lord and live.  
4. chas'd - i.e. chased away.  
5. mantling - covering, as with a cloak or mantle.  
6. For erst [...] heav'n born sway - formerly, when Israel owned the rule of the 'Virgin'. This happy condition is then depicted in the next five lines, drawing on images from Isaiah of the new Jerusalem, or Kingdom of God. For example, Is 65:25 - 'The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy In all my holy mountain, saith the Lord.' See also Is 11:6-9.  
7. the bright meed - probably a crown of laurel, the 'meed' or reward for victory.  
8. sackcloth - traditional garb of mourning.  
9. the mourning fair - the sorrowing beauty, i.e. the Imperial Virgin.  
10. sad reverse - i.e. each sad reverse (of fortune).
11. Lk 2:14 - 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.' The words of the angels, spoken to the shepherds at Christ's birth.

12. "Rise from the dust" [..] lay thee low" (4 lines) - reminiscent of the jeering of those at the crucifixion who urged Christ, if He was indeed Son of God and King of Israel, to come down from the cross (Mt 27:39-44, Mk 15:29-32, Lk 23:35-37).

13. Lyan - possibly a misswriting of 'Syon'. 'L's and 'S's in manuscript are sometimes written similarly. Sion, or Zion, the mount on which the temple of Jerusalem stood, was a word often used to denote the church or the people of God. The church here is then traditionally configured as the beloved, or bride, of God or Christ.

14. Rev 21:4 - 'And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, [..]', at the coming of the new heaven and the new earth.
Mary’s beloved friend from childhood, Hannah Wilson Forbes, married Thomas Reynolds (1761-1819) of Wallington in Surrey on 13 April 1798. The Reynolds family was involved in clothmaking and colouring. Thomas was the son of Foster Reynolds, a linen bleacher of Carshalton in Surrey, and his wife, Eliza. Tragically, Hannah died on 9 May 1799 only a month after giving birth to a child, Thomas Forbes Reynolds, on 8 April. The poem’s title announces that Hannah was aged about thirty-one years on her death. In fact, born on 30 July 1768, she was less than three months away from her thirty-first birthday.

Sadly, considering the strength of Hannah’s Quaker witness, her son, Thomas Forbes Reynolds, did not remain a Friend — he married outside the Society and was consequently disowned in May 1822. As an aside, it is interesting to note that he and his intended bride probably eloped, as Webb’s Pedigrees record that the one son of Hannah and Thomas Reynolds married Fanny Daniel at Gretna Green in 1821.

(Information drawn from entries for Hannah Reynolds, née Wilson, and Thomas Reynolds in Dictionary of Quaker Biography and Webb’s Pedigrees, Friends Historical Library, Dublin.)

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Elegy ---
Occasioned by the deeply lamented death
of my long-lov’d & truly amiable friend
H W Reynolds,
who departed this transitory life
5th. mo: 9th. 1799.
and who doubtless is entered into that
endless Rest prepared for all the
sincerely dedicated Followers of our
Blessed Lord, and Saviour,
Jesus Christ ---
Aged about 31 years. married near 13 months.

Oh thou whose wisdom guides the shaft of death
Which rends the heart & steals the quivering breath
Whose Name my Hannah's fervent soul ador'd
And deeply prostrate trembled at thy word
How hath she long'd to see thy glory shine
That all whom thou hast form'd might still be thine
How hath she long'd to comfort all who mourn
To bid the sinner to his God return
To strengthen many an heart whose coward fear
Would seek for Heav'n yet shun the conflict here
Oh when thy mandate Gracious Lord was known
Which gave free access to thy sacred throne
When thy blest spirit bade her accents flow
And taught her breast with hallow’d flame to glow
How did she raise the sweet and sacred song
While heavenly music dwelt upon her tongue
How did she lift the voice of suppliant pray'r
And for her brethren pour forth many a tear
Entreat that Aliens to thy secret[ sic] laws
Might come to know & spread thy blessed cause
Ah me! her sainted spirit hastes away
To realms of pure and everlasting day
Joins the rapt choir[ sic] her grateful song to pour
And make more perfect what was sweet before
   Ah me! what anguish clothes my suppliant soul
As o'er my mind past hours of friendship roll
When my vast loss in one great chasm I see
And think of all her tender care for me
   Oh! I have heard her lift her voice on high
And call on him who form'd our sacred tie[ sic]
To pour his choicest blessings on my head
And feed my hungring[ sic] soul with living bread[ sic]
"Guard her" she cried 
   "& all her paths defend
"And bless in life and death bless my dear friend[ sic]"
As with a pen of brass thy words imprest[ sic]
Thou much lov'd shade, thy weeping Marys breast
There long thy sweet memorial shall remain
And thy sage counsel soothe my soul again
There let thy virtues let thy worth repose
For in my heart thy great example glows
Thy noble thought from low suspicion free
And meekly pitying those who injured thee
Thy universal love which long[ sic]d to trace,
Thy makers image full on every face!
Thy faithful candour truth & love sincere
Which blam'd our faults yet would our weakness bear
Thy tender feeling for the houseless poor[ sic]
Who sought incessant (nor in vain) thy door
Oft hast thou led me to the haunts of woe
Where want and misery caus'd our tears to flow
Nor would thy generous hand withhold relief
While thy melodious accents cheer'd their grief
Thou bade their vague unchristian murmurs cease
And taught the way to gain Immortal peace!
Yes, I have heard thee many a woe beguile
And force even pale fac'd poverty to smile
Full well thou knew to succour and to bless
To heal the wounded mind & soothe the distress
And many a naked cold & shivering form
Thy kind industrious hand would clothe & warm
Another Dorcas[ sic] still thy works we view
In morn & eve thy needle swiftly flew
While the rich treasures of thy cultur'd mind
Pour'd on our ear in Eloquence refin'd
Ah who like thee possess'd such matchless powers
To instruct and mend, yet charm the passing hours
To tell our faults yet more our love unite
And mingle just correction with delight
Oh! how my secret soul deplores thee gone
Long fast cemented were our hearts in one
Thou early gone! a blest reward to share
And I full many a conflict left to bear
Thy journey o'er - thy toilsome labor done
With slow & painful steps I travel on
Thou - raised on high - thy Lord and King to see
While I in dust and ashes mourn for theel
   Father forgive these tears! tis Natures groan
My inmost soul resigns to thee thy own
And mid this wreck of joy - of pleasures gone
My humbled spirit cries "thy will be done" -
   Ah when I tread where Science learns to bloom
And opening knowledge spreads a sweet perfume
Where fostering care enriches Natures flowers
And many a child expands its mental pow'rs
Where dawning truth may light her sacred fire
Which clouds of darkness to their caves retire
How swift does thought its first commencment see
And fix thou dear benevolent friend on thee
Twas thine to weed & prune the mind of youth
And fix the seeds of Piety and Truth -
   To train the infant soul for heav'n & raise
An hedge to guard it thro' Lifes thorny maze
Yet ah! thy new born babe shall never share
His darling mother's fond protecting care
Thy energy of soul shall never see
Nor - dear resemblance - learn to copy theel
Nor may thy tender love its balm impart
To soothe thy faithful partners bleeding heart
Nor may thy doting parent cease to mourn
The link which bound her fast to earth is torn
No longer here those filial virtues bloom
Which cheer'd her passage to the silent tomb
No more thy lov'd relations joy to see
The staff of all their rising hopes in thee
No more thy ready hand our wants attend
Prompt to oblige & swift to please a friend
Oh! might we learn more calm resign'd to be
And singly dedicate our all like thee
Bear as thou bore with faith & patience still
Thy Great Creators just & holy will
Nor doubt his priviledge[sic] to claim his own
But meekly yield him up the precious loan
Then Oh! my long lov'd friend when Time is o'er
Then we shall meet & meet to part no more.

* In a supplication when performing the family visit in company with D Derby & R Young in the winter of 1798.
2. mandate - command, here the inner command to minister. Speaking in ministry was considered an awesome charge laid upon the Individual. It was believed that ministry should arise spontaneously from divine inspiration and not of the minister's own volition or self-will - thus the spirit of God 'bade' Hannah speak and 'taught her breast [...] to glow'.

3. secret - clearly written in manuscript but possibly copyist's error for 'sacred', which would seem more appropriate here. If 'secret', it describes religious knowledge currently concealed from those 'alien' to it.

4. rapt choir - angelic chorus. The addition of Hannah's voice perfects their song.

5. our sacred tie - the tie of friendship between Hannah and Mary.

6. living bread - spiritual sustenance.

7. Asterisk here refers us to a note appended to the poem in manuscript. See note 16 below.

8. shade - ghost or spirit.

9. houseless poor - stock poetic term for the homeless. Mary also refers twelve lines later to 'many a naked cold & shivering form'. See Oliver Goldsmith The Deserted Village, 325-26 - 'turn thine eyes/Where the poor, houseless, shivering female lies.' Shakespeare has King Lear address 'houseless poverty' in the storm on the heath, continuing: 'Poor naked wretches, [...] // How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides/huddled form'. See Oliver Goldsmith The Deserted Village, 325-26 - 'turn thine eyes/Where the poor, houseless, shivering female lies.' Shakespeare has King Lear address 'houseless poverty' in the storm on the heath, continuing: 'Poor naked wretches, [...] // How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides/huddled form'.

10. Dorcas - Acts 9:36-43 tells of Tabitha (Dorcas, meaning 'a deer' in Greek) of Joppa who spent all her time helping the poor and needy. She died, but was raised to life by the apostle Peter. When he was first guided to her room, he was shown all the shirts and coats she had made. Later, Dorcas societies were ladies' associations connected with the church, set up to make clothes for the poor. Hence a 'dorcas basket' - a container of sewing materials for charitable needwork.

11. Long fast cemented [...] in one - Mary and Hannah had been intimate friends from at least 1787 when Mary first dedicated a poem to her.

12. Mt 6.10, Lk 11.2 - the Lord's Prayer.

13. Ah when I tread [...] thorny maze (12 lines) - may be referring to a school that Hannah Wilson Forbes was involved in, and possibly instrumental in founding, in which Mary continued to work after Hannah's marriage and subsequent death. (See To... on the School and Repository, p.439 in this volume, and journal entries for '4th Mo 4th 1805', '5th Mo 23rd 1805' (where Mary says 'The School the precious legacy of dear HWF seems to prosper beneath mine hand'), and '5th Mo 31st 1805', in Vol. I, Prose. Also 'Progress of Infidelity' narrative, pp.21-28, note 10.) It could have been the General Daily Free School in St Catherine's Parish, Dublin, founded by Quakers for the children of poor Catholics, or a separate institution set up by Hannah Wilson Forbes. science - knowledge.

14. Hannah's mother, Anne Forbes, died only two years later, on 3 May 1801 (Webb's Pedigrees).

15. staff - support.

16. This note is appended to the poem in manuscript. The Quaker minister Deborah Darby, of the family of ironmasters at Coalbrookdale in Shropshire, and her companion, Rebecca Young, travelled in the ministry in Ireland between 18 September 1797 and 26 February 1798. They commenced in Northern Ireland but reached Dublin by 9 November. There they attended Meetings on the 12th November (Meath Street), the 19th (two Meetings), the 26th (Meath Street and Sycamore Alley, where Mary worshipped), and 4th December (Deborah reported the evening Meeting at Sycamore Alley as being 'large and solid'). In the week commencing 12th November they visited thirty-two families 'in which strength was afforded', and they conducted more family visits in the week commencing 19th November. After speaking at a weekday Meeting with William Savery, another well-known minister, on 6 December, Deborah attended other Meetings in Dublin during following days. They then left to travel widely in Southern Ireland, not returning until 25 February when they attended Meath Street once more and felt that 'the Clouds were gathering and that the trials of the faithful would yet Increase'. This was, of course, the year that Friends were to experience conflict and distress in the deist controversy that divided the Society, and, nationally, during the Irish Rebellion. (Details of Journey of Deborah Darby and Rebecca Young taken from Labouchere, Deborah Darby, pp.236-42.) It is likely that the Birketts were among the families visited between 12th and 26th November 1797 (the date given in Mary's appended note, 'the winter of 1798', might cover the winter 1797-8), and that Hannah Wilson Forbes accompanied Deborah Darby and Rebecca Young. The aim of family visits was to encourage spiritual growth, and they provided a more intimate and personal form of what Quakers now call 'worship-sharing' than could be achieved in Meeting. The minister would often counsel the family, or its members, and 'speaking to states' - ministry which, arising almost telepathically, spoke directly to the needs of particular individuals - often occurred. Those present also prayed aloud for one another, which is what Hannah appears to have done for Mary on this occasion.
UNDATED POEMS

CONSIDERED TO HAVE BEEN WRITTEN

IN THE 1790s
In late eighteenth-century Ireland, groups of 'young men about town' who adopted certain dandified forms of dress - for instance, be-ribboned hair - were known as Cherokees, after the Native American tribe of that name. Cherokee Indian warriors, of course, often wore elaborate feather headdresses and bodypaint. These Irish Cherokees, however, were most noted for their heavy drinking and riotous or loutish behaviour, one of their least endearing habits being to harass young women in public places. Hence Mary's poem is acutely ironic. One wonders how Mary's friend Hannah Wilson Forbes depicted these Cherokees in her painting.

In the manuscript collection, the poem is situated with material dated 1792.

Inscription for a Painting of the Cherokees done by H - W - F

Ireland! lol thy noble youth
Guardians of thy sacred truth
O'er thy nation - these preside
These thy sober councils guide
Not Philips son o'erpower'd with wine
Who thought his origin divine1
Did e'er such scenes of havoc pass
Or like thy heroes - war with - glass.2
Long may Ireland flourish fair
Led by such examples rare
Such encouragers of trade
Patterns - to the poor display'd
Youth & beauty formed to please
Ireland! boast thy - Cherokees

MB

1. Phillips son - Alexander the Great (356-323 BC), son of Philip II of Macedonia. Alexander was renowned for heavy drinking, with his warriors and companions. He declared himself a divinity, it is said, after being informed by the oracle of Zeus Ammon at Siwah that he was the son of this god.

2. Or like [. .] glass - possibly punning on 'glass': a drinking-vessel and the painting, reflecting the Cherokees as in a 'glass' or mirror. For a similar use of the word 'glass' in relation to a painting, see 'To H W Forbes 1787', p.37 in this volume.
These two word puzzles are situated, in manuscript, adjacent to poems dated 1792 and 1793 respectively. For ease of reference, they are placed together here.

The first is an enigma, or riddle.

An Enigma

Three glasses of punch & a beautiful plant
What misers too often to mendicants grant
A teacup of porcelain, a maid of threescore
What bachelors seek for, what gluttons devour
A knife, a sea horse & the name of a play
Are express'd by a liquid in use every day
A liquid of value! which seldom is prized
Yet those who ne'er use it are mostly despised

A charade is a game in which the players must discover a word from clues which can be either written or acted, and can represent separate syllables or an entire word.

A Charade

My first for med'cine used & found
In some lands only to abound
From distant countries oft is brought
And may longevity promote
My second is a colour gay
But what that colour - you must say
My tout's[?]¹ the misers constant care
To have - & me the ruin'd heir
With aching heart - & sorrow sad
Sincerely wishes that he had -

¹. my tout's - probably 'my all's'. 'Tout' is French for 'all' - hence the last four lines of the verse may refer to the entire word to be discovered rather than a syllable.
These verses may have been written to accompany a gift Mary had fashioned for her friend Debby Watson, but it is possible that the poem itself is the 'gift of love/which for her my hands have wrought'. This may also be true of the poem following, dedicated to Hannah Wilson Forbes.

To D W

Friendship bright celestial guest
Soother of each anxious care
Fly to Debby's gentle breast
Fly & place thy temple there

Thither bring this gift of love
Which for her my hands have wrought
Let it a memento prove
Oft to fix her absent thought

MB

For H W F

Dear Girl this little tribute take
And prize it for the givers sake
Oh! may her friendship ever rest
The cherish'd inmate of thy breast
To Him who wished for it

When mirth & festivity lead the gay hours
   And the moments roll merrily on
When the pleasures of wine shew their lethargic powers
   And time clasps his light wings & is gone

Tis then that the mind unaccustom'd to grief
   Surrounds[ed?] with dangers appears
Tis then that forgetting that time is a thief
   It gives to the future its cares

For what are the joys that from luxury flow
   Says Solomon "Vanity all"¹
And what are the pleasures that wine can bestow
   But bubbles that burst as they fall

And what are th'enjoyments we wish so to gain
   We taste them & lol they are gone
And nothing of all we possess will remain
   But Virtue & Virtue alone

'Tis the Pilot² that guides us thro' life's stormy sea
   Tis thro' friends³ that will never betray
'Tis the refuge to which we in sorrow may flee
   And inspires all around to be gay

I mean not a lesson - so pardon a muse
   That never design'd to offend
She was asked for a strain which she could not refuse
   And to him who desired it does send

MB

1. Ecc 1:2 - 'Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.' A refrain throughout Ecclesiastes, the first verse of which announces it is 'the words of the Preacher, the son of David, King of Jerusalem' - i.e. King Solomon.
2. the Pilot - i.e. Virtue, as guide.
3. thro friends - possibly copyist's error. The line should probably read, 'Tis the friend that will never betray.' See Thomson, The Seasons, 'Winter', 1039-41:

[. . .] Virtue sole survives -
   Immortal, never-failing friend of man,
His guide to happiness on high.
To At Supper

Ah! beware of the full flowing Glass
Which in circling rotation will speedily pass
Which when taken discreetly has power for to bless
But degrades all the faculties drank to excess

To ........

Ah! flattery like the Syrens Song¹
Lulls the pleased ears & captures us in wrong
In me if any merit thou surveys
Not me but Him who made me claims the praise

1. the Syrens Song - in Greek myth, sirens were creatures, part bird and part woman, who lived on an island from where, by their bewitching song, they lured sea travellers to their deaths.

On Sleep

Sweet Sleep! whose power can soothe the sorrowing breast
And lulls the anguish of the heart to rest
Descend propitious, here exert thy sway
Embrac'd by thee - my thoughts dissolve away.
Motto for a drawing of H-W-F

In vain shall folly with insidious art  
Spread all her charms to win the fair ones heart  
While prudence fortifies her Soul within  
And bids her spurn the transient[ sic ] glare of Sin

On Wit

Wit! dangerous power, so envied! so admired!  
Whose brilliant charms so oft destructive prove  
To thy possessor - who like a keen sword  
With double edge, wounds whom it meets, thou meteor  
Whose fiery glare attracts, we gaze, we watch¹  
Admire, but seldom love - thou diamond  
That sharply cuts - yet still remains unhurt  
We wish - but dread thee - knowing that all used  
Thy force returns with added strength & wounds  
Thy weak possessor - tho' when rightly used  
Thy shining gifts - are gifts indeed - as when  
They delicately lash the glare of vice  
Strip folly of her bold allurements - hold  
The faithful mirror up to affectation  
Shew pride in all its littleness - or nip  
The unfolding buds of habits nameless race²  
Then glows thy lustre with redoubled grace  
And only then - for when thy charming powers  
To bodily infirmities descend  
Or ridicule th'abortive child of nature³  
Then art thou mean indeed - then thy sharp arrow  
Strung in the bow of malice - by the hand  
Of keen ill nature - quick retorts & springs  
With vigour - to its owners envious breast  
So Heaven ordains - when misapplied its gifts  
A sure - a certain - punishment succeeds
This amusing recipe, or prescription, to aid recovery from disappointment in love resembles other such poems. See, for instance, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, 'Song', or 'A Receit to Cure the Vapours' (1748), which wittily urges a grieving widow to overcome her melancholy by seeking the society of another 'pretty Fellow' as soon as possible. (Available in Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: Essays and Poems and Simplicity, A Comedy, ed. by Robert Halsband and Isobel Grundy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977; repr. 1993), pp.257-58.) Mary Birkett's tone, as one would expect, though comic, is much less frivolous and cynical than Montagu's. Nevertheless, the ending is so similar that one cannot help thinking she had read it:

Prithee hear him ev'ry Morning
At least an hour or two,
Once again at Nights returning,
I believe the Dose will do.

A Recipe to cure Love

For you unhappy Nymphs & Swains¹
Who caught in loves tyrannic chains
On whom hath disappointment shed
Her baneful² drops around your head
Roused to revenge! you wish to chide
The urchin³ & confound his pride
For you I write - to soothe your sorrow
Begin - nor waver till tomorrow
Of resolution take two pound
For very needful twill be found
Next one pound of consideration
On each advantage of your station
To half a pound of just reflection
You surely can have no objection:
Of self conceit,⁴ three ounces fill,
You wont[won't] find this a bitter pill.
Discretion too is necessary
Without it will your plan miscarry
Of absence mingle a large share
As much as ever you can bear
Five drachms⁵ of patience must be found
And a large sprig of thyme\(^6\) strew'd round
With these ingredients join'd must be
Some cheerful, gay society
The quota cannot be too great
But you must suit it to your state
Take every day a dose or two
And I'll engage the draught will do.

MB

1. Nymphs and Swains - young women and men (a conventional phrase in pastoral literature). Nymphs - minor female deities of the natural world, Swains - rustics or shepherds.
2. baneful - poisonous.
3. The urchin - Cupid, the god of love represented as a mischievous little boy, responsible for making people fall in love.
4. self-conceit - meaning self-esteem rather than an over-high opinion of oneself.
5. drachms - a drachm was an apothecaries', or chemists', measure (sixty minims or one eighth of a fluid ounce) or weight (sixty grains or one eighth of an ounce).
6. Thyme has an antiseptic quality.
Quakers, with their testimony to simplicity, and rejection of anything smacking of superstition or paganism (not celebrating Christmas or Easter, for instance), would not usually have taken part in activities to mark Halloween. Despite such strictures, however, this magical night and its associated rituals rooted in folk custom appealed to Mary as a theme. Unsurprisingly, as Halloween was celebrated with particular emphasis in Scotland, these were subjects treated by Robert Burns ('Halloween', 1785) and, in a form similar to Burns, also in Scottish dialect, by Janet Little. See ‘Halloween’ in The Poetical Works of Janet Little, The Scotch Milkmaid (Air: John and Peter Wilson, 1792). Like these poets, Mary describes the traditional rituals performed by young people seeking to know what the future holds in store regarding love and marriage. But, while ‘lads and lasses’ join in the lively games Burns and Little describe, Mary’s Halloween gathering is one of ‘village maids’ alone.

The diction of her poem and its invisible spirits (particularly ‘air light sylphs’) presiding over activities, attending young maidens, and indulging in mischief, echo aspects of Alexander Pope’s mock-epic, The Rape of the Lock (1712-1714). Pope’s heroine, Belinda, has a ‘guardian sylph’ named Ariel whose task is to protect her honour and, like other sprites tending young women, ensure her dress receives proper attention. In mock epic, the characteristics of epic poetry (lengthy narrative, heroic couplets, elevated style) are used to tell a story of the commonplace to comic effect. In her light-hearted poem, Mary deploys some of these features - classical reference, for example - to portray the customs followed by village girls endeavouring to discover the true feelings of their lovers.

All hallows Eve

Now slides down Heaven's blue vault the source of light
And Cynthia1 ushers in this wondrous night
Strange Night! when as travellers tell the tale
No potent charms nor magic spells can fail2
For every vagrant spirit assumes new powers
And little fairies rule the mirthful hours
Swift thro’ the air light sylphs3 unconscious glide
Breathe o'er the potions & unseen preside
Inspire new games, the lovesick maid to cheer
And whisper secrets in her listening ear
Thus old Tradition hand[s] the record down
And annual custom stamps its high renown
What village maid, but must delight receive
When grave October leads forth Hallows Eve4
Which tho' still consecrate to pious rites
Promotes new pleasure & to mirth invites
Soon glows the room with artificial light
Closed are the sheets,5 to hide the gloom of night
The blazing fire emits a cheerful beam
And on the polish'd hearth red sparkles gleam
The circle form'd, each soon assumes a place
And hope sits smiling on each youthful face
Lol now ripe apples crown the spacious board
And choicest filberts, for this evening stored6
Good cheer which prompts to mirth's effusive smile
Drives care, & does each interval beguile
With nimble fingers each a spell prepares
T'explore the secrets of succeeding years
To read the dark mysterious doom of fate
The joys which court them or the woes which threat
All mark th'eventful signs & ponder well
What their good genius does (invoked) foretell
If Hymen wills their lot a wedded wife
Or if they spinners are decreed for life
If want shall strew her thorns or wealth her flowers
Or if misfortune o'er them sternly lowers
If true to promised faith, the absent prove
Or if his bosom feel no constant love
These points discuss joy lifts his wand on high
And mirth & pleasure dance in every eye
Save when to vex some proud or prudish fair
An angry sprite dissolves her hopes in air
Crushes in embryo, each fantastic bliss
And archly mocks, her ill disguised distress
A stately air does her whole form assume
And a forced smile betrays her inward gloom
Yet still she cries, she disregards th'event
For there's no truth in the experiment
But soon the storm subsides within her breast
And in new sports she mingles with the rest
Lo! on the burning bars are now display'd
(Emblem of hearts on Hymen's altar laid)
Nuts side by side in equal order ranged
To evince their love, if wavering or unchanged
If wavering, soon a light uncertain glare
Just hovers round, then vanishes in air!
But if the inconstant seek with specious art
Fraudful to lure an unsuspecting heart
If 'neath the open brow or smooth disguise
Some lurking snare or baneful secret lies
Then when the touchstone fires approach their prey
It shuns the test, loud cracks & jumps away
Not so when either glows with mutual flame
The same their wishes & their hopes the same
When with soft transport does each bosom glow
And theirs the raptures which from union flow
Then purest fires around their emblems play
And in one flame commutual both consume away.
Now rise they curious from the social fire
What yet remains unknown would all enquire
All fain would peep 'neath fates mysterious veil
And learn what Heaven in mercy would conceal
For this strange wits they form, quaint methods bring
Some try the virtues of the wedding ring
Whose mystic powers in gentle sounds convey
What time each votary Hymen's rites shall pay
While others jocund, to light sports advance
Raise the loud laugh or form the sprightly dance
Attune to harmony the vocal lay
Or banish lassitude in active play
Glide round the room on many a mischief bent
Or puzzling strains enigmatic invent
Or sally forth their future name to hear
While oft harsh nicknames grate the listening ear
These & unnumber'd antic tricks beside
Till midnight mounts her throne, the time divide
Then when the clocks the hour of parting tell
E'er yet they bid the cheerful dome farewell
Eight hands, a potent spell in silence form
The visionary God of dreams to charm
Which when with care beneath the pillow laid
Her destined Bridegroom, sees each sleeping maid
Then all retire new oracles to receive
And crown in Sleep, the joys of Hallows Eve

1. Cynthia - name for Artemis or Diana, goddess of the moon, derived from her birthplace, Mount Cynthus.
2. No potent charms [. . .] can fail - traditionally, spells cast on All Hallows Eve will be successful.
3. sylphs - spirits of the air. As they are invisible, people are 'unconscious' of their presence.
4. grave October leads forth Hallows Eve because Halloween is the last day of October. It was 'consecrate to pious rites' as a day of fasting and vigil prior to the feast of All Saints Day on 1 November.
5. sheets - shutters.
6. Filberts (nuts from cultivated hazel trees, which ripen around St Philibert's Day on 20 August) and autumn apples were traditional Halloween fare.
7. Spells for fortune-telling were customary at Halloween, and varied from region to region. Here, the nature of the spell is not explained, but see note 21 below.
8. their good genious - opposed spirits or angels (one good, one evil) were supposed to attend each person (OED).
9. Hymen - the god of marriage in classical mythology.
10. lowers - alternative form/spelling of 'lowers', meaning 'frowns' or 'scowls'.
11. the absent - i.e. the maid's lover.
12. proud or prudish fair - a 'fair' was a beautiful young woman, but 'prudish' was an epithet reserved for one who, though perhaps just as concerned with her attire as a fashionably dressed 'belle', wore plainer clothes and maintained a distant manner, often holding men in disdain.
13. sprite - elf or fairy.
14. she disregards th'event [. . .] experiment - she ignores the result, i.e. of the game or spell, claiming it has no validity.
15. This custom features in the poems by Burns and Little. Burns explains in a footnote: 'Burning the nuts is a favourite charm. They name the lad and lass to each particular nut, as they lay them in the fire; and according as they burn quietly together, or start from beside one another, the course and issue of the Courtship will be'. See Robert Burns, 'Halloween' (1785) in Burns: Poems and Songs, ed. by James Kinsley (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp.122-30 (p.124). Hence Mary calls the flames 'touchstone fires' (a touchstone was a rock of schist or jasper used for testing gold alloy). In northern England where Mary originated, Halloween was called 'Nut Crack Night'. There, as in Scotland, 'a youth and a maiden would put a nut each on the fire and thinking of the loved one repeat these lines: 'If he loves me pop and fly, if he hates me lie and die' (Jean Harrowven, Origins of Festivals and Feasts (Whitstable, Kent: Pryor, 1996), p. 88).
16. baneful - harmful.
17. commutual - mingled together.
18. fain - gladly.
19. wits - stratagems.

20. What time each votary [...] shall pay - the girls are thought of as votaries, or worshippers, at the shrine of Hymen, seeking to know when they will be wed. Their method, involving a wedding ring, is not explained.

21. Eight hands, [...] sleeping maid - it was believed that if a girl put a 'spell' under her pillow, usually a sprig of a certain plant such as sage, rosemary or yew, sometimes with other items, her future husband would appear in her dreams. In Derbyshire, for instance, the 'spell' was rosemary and a crooked sixpence. (Harrowven, Origins of Festivals and Feasts, p.87.)

22. oracles - revelations.
The male subject of this satire, with a ready propensity to censure others, particularly women, is given the pseudonym 'Fabricious'. Fabricius (full name Gaius Fabricius Luscinus), Consul of Rome in 282 and 278 BC, was 'a typical example of ancient Roman honesty, simplicity, and frugality. As censor in 275 he was distinguished for the severity with which he endeavoured to repress the growing tendency to luxury' (Oxford Companion to English Literature). He appears in Virgil's Aeneid, Dryden's translation (1697):

[...] Who can see,
Without esteem for virtuous Poverty,
Severe Fabritius, or can cease t'admire
The Ploughman Consul in his Coarse Attire!


James Thomson describes him as 'Fabricius, scorn of all conquering gold,' (The Seasons (1726-46), 'Winter', 511). There is no doubt, then, that Mary chose this name intentionally - Fabricious's severity, intolerance and lack of compassion are the key factors. And she strikes another satirical note in that, far from being indifferent to 'gold' like the Roman consul, her contemporary 'Fabricious' is a miser.

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Fabricious's speech is usually indicated by speech marks at the start of each line spoken by him in the poem, although this practice is not consistently adhered to.

A Satire

Fabricious full of his dear self behold
Generous of talk, but sparing of his gold
How fond he is of himself, his words how wise
Where wanted least, uncourteous he'll advice[sic]1
How wondrous steady is his stubborn mind
He censures all[,] sure thats because he's kind
Nor think thy virtues saves thee from his tongue
He'll hide thy virtues, but expose where wrong
"Man is of noble workmanship he'll say
"And woman, worthless woman must obey
Stop Friend - nor censure all our sex so free
For we're as noble workmanship as thee
"Thy Stoic2 heart I never could revere
Which for misfortune Scorns to drop a tear
"A tear! shall manly firmness stoop to cry
"No let the wretches perish, let them die
"["Nor of my firmness, you so lightly deem
"]For those who do are unworthy my esteem
- I do not wish in thy esteem to raise
I know I ne'er was worthy of thy praise
Why should I wish, what I shall never gain
"Sure all the female sex are full of stain"
Therefore a Batchelor may'st thou ever be
Since "worthless woman" - is not - worthy thee
Why do I wonder that his railing tongue
Exposes us to all, calls us wrong?
Since while to us another he'll defame
Perhaps to those he's snatching our good name
Thy sex & ours as "fools & Idiots" be
But hold - a perfect masterpiece in thee
To children in particular a foe
A friend sincere & kind to none below
And oft - too oft - he'll sit whole nights & tell
His neighbours faults - he knows them all so well
But know Fabricious, tho' thy stubborn mind
A perfect hater is of woman kind
Altho' thy neighbours faults are very great
And even the best are subject to thy hate
Altho' thou still may right & perfect be
Is it a heavenly principle in thee?
To rail against thy friends, blame all thou sees
If just thy humour they dont chance to please
Is that the Example great Fabricious shews
To censure all, to laugh at others woes
And all our frailties to the world expose
Nor do I think it harm nor do I fear
To say "to misery I could drop a tear"
I know thou thinks 'tis but a soft weak heart
That pity to another would impart
Fabricious's spirit could not stoop so low
To listen to the piercing tale of woe
Or even to think the best of womankind
E'er worthy of his great his manly mind
- Yet tho' we poor degenerate creatures be
We will not deign e'er to be worthy thee
We'll neither fear thy tongue not yet thy rod
And only wish to gain the favor of Our God.

MB

1. advice - pronounced 'advise'.
2. Stoics, in the ancient world, attempted to cultivate indifference to suffering, and sublimate the emotions, as a means of achieving an inner freedom and attaining supreme virtue.
3. railing - mocking, ridiculing.
4. snatching - taking away.
Lockets containing a piece of one's hair, or that of a loved one, were frequently given as tokens of remembrance or friendship. This verse was written to accompany Mary's gift of a locket containing, it would seem, some of her own hair to Hannah Wilson Forbes.

The imagined 'speaker' of the poem is Mary's lock of hair, which once lay against her forehead but now yearns to find a new resting place close to Hannah's heart.

To H. W. Forbes,
with a Locket of her Hair

Sweet Girl! oh may thy look benign,
Glance o'er this humble form of mine!
For lo! the pledge of love, I haste,
To bid thee sometimes trace the past
On Mary's brow, I wont to rest,
Oh! deign to place me near thy breast;
I covet no conspicuous spot,
By all - but thee - unknown - forgot!
In brilliant hues, let others shine;
To feel thy genial warmth be mine.

1. *wont to* - was used to, accustomed to.
The title to this poem is somewhat enigmatic. Is the 'Response' purely to an internal prompting - a desire to record the joys of spiritual communion found in silent waiting which surpass any sensual or intellectual pleasures, or even those found in friendship or communion with others? Or was the poem perhaps written in 'response' to remarks made by another in conversation, or to a particular text?

Response

Yes! not the highest joys of sense or mind
Can fill th'immortal soul - her ardent thirst
Unsatisfied with all that Earth can give
Grasps far beyond this sublunary sphere\(^1\)
Sweet is the softening link which friendship holds
And dear that mild that soul vibrating bond
Which links to man his fellow man & draws
Their hearts in unison! but sweeter far
The tie which holds us all to Christ & far
More dear the rapturous joy which waits the soul
Attentive on its God! not all the bliss
Which worlds could give to this are worth a name
Then when full Harmony - (not such as where
Surrounding myriads hymn Eternal praise\(^2\)
But such as man even here was born to taste)
Salutes the silent Spirit! all is concord
And all soft unison! Prostrate the soul
Adores Redeeming Mercy! while its Lord
Delights to bless the humble contrite heart.
Ah me! why take the quill to touch this theme
A theme which they who feel alone can know
To those who feel it not, its inward peace
Seems as the tale of sensibility\(^3\)
The bliss of friendship or the feast of mind
They credit neither. - Dull & rugged\(^4\) hearts
Which only he who made can soften, may
His ray divine attract them - & for us
Who feel its power oh! may we feel its use
To cleanse to raise & dignify the soul -

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1. Grasps far beyond this sublunary sphere - reaches far beyond this earth. sublunary - earthly, literally 'under the moon'.
2. where surrounding myriads hymn Eternal praise - Heaven, where myriads (tens of thousands) of angels sing constantly in praise of God.
3. as the tale of sensibility - the eighteenth-century cultivation of 'sensibility', a capacity for heightened feeling in compassion for others and in aesthetic taste, was increasingly coming to be viewed negatively, by some, as a form of self-indulgence in excessive or pretended feeling.
4. rugged - rough, uncultivated.
This is the first of several poems addressed to Debby Watson that consider Nature, or natural forms, as emblematic of spiritual meanings. Here, the 'pure', gently but constantly 'bubbling well', a natural rather than a man-made feature as it has a flowing stream, emblematizes the 'joys' attained in tranquillity that prove eternal, because they arise from an ever-expanding source. In its emphasis on 'simplicity' and 'truth' (two key Quaker concepts),* and on openness - a receptivity active in its exploration of Truth ('Be it ours to explore in the mind') yet quiescent in listening for the inner voice ('Be it ours to lie open and free') - it is highly representative of these poems. See: 'To D: Watson' (p.282), 'Summerville' (p.284), 'A Contemplative view of Nature' (p.286), 'To the Moon' (p.292), 'To D. Watson' (p.297). Like 'To D: Watson' and 'A Contemplative View of Nature', it was probably written at Summerville, the home of Debby and her family, at Clonmel, near Waterford. A 'murmuring brook' is mentioned in 'Summerville'.

* See headnote to 'To a Friend', p.294.

To Debby Watson, standing beside a beautiful well

Lov'd Debby this soft bubbling well,
That springs up so constant so pure;
In my bosom an emblem doth tell,
Of pleasures that ever endure.

May thy spirit thus tranquil, serene,
Be unmov'd by the torrents of life
And fragrant & fresh as the green
Be thy pleasures untainted with strife

May thy heart as transparent - as clear,
In simplicity still be array'd;
And truth that no covering need wear
Yet delights most to dwell in the shade

Ah: see, my dear girl as we stand,
How the still flowing waters remove
And still as the sources expand
How its stream does vehemently rove

Ah dear girl! it is thus that our joys
Flow along in the current of time
And not all the appearance of ease
Can abate of its movement sublime

Oh then be it ours to enjoy
The moments which rapidly flow
In pleasures that time can't annoy
And which no vexation may know
Be it ours to explore in the mind
All the embryo[ sic] of Judgment & Truth
The seeds of Religion to find
Which will ripen in age as in youth

Be it ours to lie open & free
As the face of this beautiful well
That what e'er in the centre may be,
The voice of monition 2 may tell!

Thus in spite of the current of time,
Our joys shall increase as they flow;
And in age more mature & sublime
No change, no disorder shall know!

1. *embryo*: early stage, yet to be unfolded. As the elementary form of a plant contained in the seed, also links with 'seeds of Religion' in the following line.

2. *voice of monition*: inner guide. The Inward Monitor was a Quaker term for the presence of God as guiding principle within the soul or self - we need to be open to its leadings.

Mary, the addressee of this verse, remains unidentified.

[Untitled]

Lovely Mary blooming flower,
Learn to prize the passing hour!
Soon shall all thy charms expand,
May they crown the forming hand. 1
Led by innocence and truth
Rever'd in age, belov'd in youth,
Thus thy blessings shall endure,
In every change of life secure!

1. *crown the forming hand*: honour God, as her creator.
I will sing of the mercies of God,
   Of his goodness and love to my soul;
I will bow to his chastizing rod,
   For Mercy presides o'er the whole!

Tho' sorrows encompass'd me round,
   And I on an ocean was tossed,[sic].
Yet Mercy in God doth abound
   He suffered me not to be lost.

Creation assist me to praise
   A father, so tender, so dear,
Ye cattle, that quietly graze,
   Ye birds join your melody clear!

But what is your melody clear,
   Compar'd to the sound of that voice
Which causeth the mountains to fear,
   The valleys to sing and rejoice?

Thou sun in the firmament bright,
   Praise that being who bade thee to shine
But darkness itself is thy light,
   Compar'd to his glory divine!

Ah! me, while thus faintly I sing,
   All Nature his Bounties proclaim;
To his Altar an offering doth bring,
   And she sounds forth his wonderful name.
The beauty of the earth, of Nature fresh and still on the morning after a turbulent storm, prompts a desire to walk out with Debby Watson and share its joys. More importantly, it allows reflection on how human hearts and souls can grow under the guidance and influence of God who, like a gardener, tends us patiently and provides the nourishment necessary for our growth. The requirement laid upon us is that we accept His 'redeeming grace'.

To D: Watson ---

Haste my lovd girl the morning air is balm
Hush'd are the winds' rude voices - all is calm
The fructile1 showers have ceased their wealth to pour,
And all the terrors of a storm are o'er:
Oh how I long with thee my friend to rove
O'er flowery lawns green fields or shady grove
With thee to mark each boon of parent earth,
The embrio plant emerging into birth,2
And from the polish'dd mirror of the mind
Reflected fair my every thought to find
With thee to mark how every sap-ful[stic] tree
Displays its blossoms e'er the fruit we see,
And e'er the precious gift of heaven will rise
The blooming flower, the charming verdure dies3
With thee to mark the wise engrafting hand4
Which as with power does excellence command
How all things teach us when in peace impress'd
Our maker's Image fills our yielding breast
When soft and ductile as th'implanted clay5
Our hearts expand to his prolific ray
Nor prejudices, barren stones remain
To mar the produce of his Gospel rain6
When planted - & he never fails to wait
The moment happiest suited to our state
And fresh and green in natures wild we grow,
Nor aught beyond this mortal coil we know
Then comes redeeming grace th'ingrafted birth7
Which stamps at once our usefulness & worth
Yet long we rest, e'er budding verdure shew
If life or death in full dominion flow -
If death - and vain each effort of his love
Patient he waits a better time to prove
Till spring again reanimate the tree
And Grace redeeming offers mercy free:
If life - then with what care his tender hand
Prunes each luxuriance - bids each bough expand
Inclines each twig in loveliest form to bend -
Guards from all ills, & cares with joys doth blend
Now comes the time the all important time
(Alike the progress in each varying clime)
When the good gardener views the promised store
And peeps beneath the leaves for something more
Ah Debby words are leaves the fruit, the fruit,
Alone can flourish nourish'd from the root.6
Happy the blooming flowrets9 meet his eye
Tis his to guard them from a northern sky:
Yet all his care and all his pains are vain,
If not in solid substance they remain:
If proud of beauty ruinous as fair
They stretch their little forms and rise in air
Then when rude thunders shake the spheres10 around
Their charms abortive snap & press the ground
But if beneath the coarse enshrining brown11
They safe retire unenvious of renown
There find a shelter in the friendly shade,
Alike in storms or drought rest undismay'd
Then when the ripening Sun due warmth supplies
And all its beauties all its fragrance rise
And softening rains a kindly moisture shoot
To cheer the branches - feed the thirsty root:
Due warmth - yes, when to life our beings rose
Our mighty masters promis'd blessing flows
He spares no gift - no sun-shine, nor no show'r
Fruitful or barren, still doth mercies pour
And if in vain th'engrafting pruning hand
Charg'd with our own eternal loss we stand -
If wanting depth of root we prompt decay,
Or if too soon our opening fruits display
Alike he's [sic] is clear,12 'tis our's alone to efface
He quits us not 'till we repel his grace.

1. fructile - encouraging production of fruit.
2. The embrio [..] into birth - see note 1 of 'To Debby Watson, standing beside a beautiful well', pp.279-80 above.
3. the charming verdure - i.e. the blossoms or flowers which die and fall before a tree bears fruit.
4. wise engrafting hand - the gardener engrafts a section of one tree onto another to obtain the desired fruit.
   Similarly, we learn later in the poem, God implants His grace in human hearts.
5. ductile as th'implanted clay - encompassing the idea of clay impressed with a pattern or design, as in a seal, for example, as well as soil planted with seed. ductile - yielding.
6. Gospel rain - a frequently used metaphor in Quaker tracts and journals for the gospel message.
7. the ingrafted birth - see note 4 above.
8. words are leaves [..] - the leaves of a plant stand as a metaphor for words, which are signs merely - spiritual fruit can only thrive if nourished from a sound root within. A probable source for the image is Alexander Pope, An Essay on Criticism (1711), 309-10: 'Words are like Leaves; and where they most abound, Much Fruit of Sense beneath is rarely found'. See also Mt 21:19 - Jesus, hungry, seeing a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away.
9. flowrets - flowerets, or flowers.
10. spheres - the heavens.
11. coarse enshrining brown - the earth, which covers and protects the seed until summer arrives.
12. he's is clear - probably copyists error. Should read 'He [i.e. God] is clear'.
Summerville at Clonmel, near Waterford, was the home of Debby Watson and her family. This poem's concerns with the natural world as emblematic of the relationship between the human and divine are similar to other poems to Debby Watson probably written around the same time, also possibly at Summerville. (See particularly 'To Debby Watson, standing beside a beautiful well' and 'To D: Watson' above, and ensuing poem 'A Contemplative View of Nature'.) It is also, within the text, addressed to Debby, the 'lov'd girl'.

**Summerville ---**

Sick of the City's din - the noise of arms
And Traffic's toilsome tumult tir'd I turn
To gentler scenes - & seek a calm retreat
In thy soft shades all peaceful Summerville!
Ah me! not all the charms which art bestows
On Pageant pomp can dare to vie with thee:
Not all the splendour of a brilliant Court
Can rival nature - whether rising mount
Or fragrant mead salute our visual ray,
'Tis rapture all - in thee, sweet Summerville
The Muses woo to taste their charms & all
The soften'd flame Imagination boasts
Unites to gild the lay, the bleating flocks,
Which as they crop the verdant pasture, seem
In silent gratitude to speak his praise
Who call'd them forth to being loud & sweet
The wing'd musicians hail the wonted lay
And celebrate his praises - every shrub
Which pours its fragrance on the balmy air
Diffusing health and joy springs at his word
And every loftier tree which rears its form
Majestic, deep and strong, declares the hand
Which bade it emblematic, rise & say,
That thus so deeply-rooted & so firm
To brave the storm of life & so unmov'd
With each assault that Truth is sure to meet
And yet so kind to spread the waving branch
And lodge the fairy footed train - should man
Creation's crown & glory stand - an oak
Fast rooted in Religions sacred soil
Oh Summerville, if aught of outward scene
Of hill & dale, of mead or shady bow'r
Fair friendships lone recess, if murmuring brook
Or verdant mountain eminently high,
Can minister to peace, then might thy charms
Unrival'd sooth us to repose, but no -
Not even thy charms cou'd[sic] heal an aching mind
Alas! even they how transient! Oh lov'd girl
Be thine to seek more permanent delight,
And from these dear enjoyments oft to rise
In quest of those more lasting - may thy mind
A gentle inmate of the bower of bliss,
There take large draughts insatiate: they alone
Who seek with ardent and expectant love,
The joys of Heaven shall taste them, & these groves
These blest retreats from all unquiet woe
May prove as letters in our infant schools,
The footstool of all science - they shall point
Thy artless mind to never-ending shores,
Where the rose blooms without a thorn & where
Soft extacy entails no sting! Ah me!
May these delights be ours! ---

1. *arms* - soldiery. Possibly referring to military exercises in Dublin. In the years running up to the 1798 rebellion in Ireland, the military was kept in readiness.
2. *wing'd musicians* - poetic expression for birds.
3. *fairy footed train* - another poetic expression for birds.
4. *friendships lone recess* - possibly 'the Greenwood shade' referred to in 'A Contemplative view of Nature', p.286-91 (p.287); *murmuring brook* - possibly the well in 'To Debby Watson, standing beside a beautiful well', p.279, and the stream in 'A Contemplative View of Nature'; *verdant mountain* - the mountains are called upon in 'To D. W written at Summerville, p.291.
5. *insatiate* - without being satiated.
6. *Just as learning the alphabet, and thus to read and write, provides the basis for science (academic knowledge), so the natural world, and the joy taken in it, prepares the mind to receive spiritual knowledge.*
A Contemplative View of Nature

The complexity of this poem, also probably written at Summerville, and its intertextuality (it draws on texts by major eighteenth-century poets, Goldsmith and Pope, and appears to criticise the philosophy of John Locke), necessitates some explanation of its ideas in relation to these other texts.

Urging her friend Debby to hasten with her 'to the greenwood shade', Mary quotes from Oliver Goldsmith's famous poem, *The Deserted Village* (1770), to stress the opportunity for reciprocity - for sharing ideas and feelings - afforded by the wood's seclusion. This also highlights the intimacy of the girls' relationship - the 'greenwood shade', like Goldsmith's seats under the hawthorn bush, seems designed for lovers. The emphasis that follows, however, is on friendship as a tutor, schooling the heart in sympathy, an idea leading on to an image of Nature as a particular kind of teacher - a book to be read in which each natural form is emblematic of a spiritual dimension. This Book of Nature is seen as a way through to God, its author (line 18). Here Mary echoes lines from Pope's *Essay on Man* (1733-34) and the same concept (of Nature as a route to its First Cause) is found in his *Dunciad* (1742-43) (see note 5 below). Mary says this path is 'rarely trod' and that it 'masks' God. To follow the path is, by implication, to penetrate the mask, and this is done by reading, or interpreting, its signs, and by a surrender to feeling, to an appreciation of each aspect of the natural world, to the extent that conscious thought and sense are absorbed and the self experiences a unity with Nature in a space beyond language (lines 19-24). Such mystical knowledge and experience, grounded in feeling, is seen as the only true source of 'irradiate [revealing] light' which cannot be obtained through 'the joys of wit and sense' (reason, the intellect or senses).

A major theme is the elevation of feeling over reason as a means to spiritual insight and moral growth. When Mary specifically asks Debby not to speak '[... ] of the moral sage/[... ]/Who but of reason or of duty tells/How virtue instinct - man the brute excels' (lines 73-76), the 'sage' in mind is almost certainly John Locke (1632-1704). In *An Essay concerning Human Understanding* (1690), and other writings, Locke asserts the primacy of reason as the 'faculty' that separates man from 'beasts' or 'brutes' (see note 17 below). Morality and religious belief arise out of obedience to what he calls 'the law of reason', or 'nature', which enjoins duties upon us, clearly discernable when we use 'the light of reason'. As John Yolton explains, for Locke reason is a 'natural' faculty, dormant until developed through education, but once developed, this 'light of reason' is capable of recognising truths, including moral and religious ones, which Locke believed were universally self-evident. It thus constitutes a form of 'natural revelation'. Through it we 'know', by the need for a First Cause, that there is a God and can ascertain His rules for living. For Locke, 'Reason is the voice of God in man' (John W. Yolton, *Locke: An Introduction* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), p.35). The variance between this purely logical approach and the Quaker concept of 'the Inner Light', the voice of God within each person, as the felt, individual and experiential source of spiritual verification and moral guidance, is clear. Locke attacks religious 'enthusiasm', 'which, laying by reason, would set up revelation without it; whereby in effect it takes away both reason and revelation, and substitutes in the room of it the ungrounded fancies of a man's own brain' (John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (London: Ward, Lock, [n.d.]), IV. XIX. 3). And he is wary of those who claim 'immediate intercourse with the Deity, and frequent communications from the Divine Spirit' (Essay, IV. XIX. 5). The Quakers of his day would have been a prime example. Locke's empirical outlook meant that he believed all knowledge to come through reason and sense experience, seeing truth as something only to be discovered through evidence (*Essay, IV. XIX. 1*).

Whereas Locke emphasises the gulf separating men from 'beasts' by extolling human reason and, through his empiricism, man's dominion over nature, Pope, in *An Essay on Man*, sees him as a creature, 'In doubt to deem himself a God, or Beast', whose rationality is suspect, 'reas'ning but to err' (Epist. II. 8-10). Man must learn humbly to accept his own frailties and his natural place in the order of creation - 'Know then thyself, presume not God to scan' (Epist. II. 1) - and diminish his 'self-love'. He is 'to find his happiness [... ] not in expansion and conquest but in the contraction that opens out in turn as love rather than possession, admitting all creatures into the spreading circle of one's love'. (The Restoration and the Eighteenth
Century, ed. by Martin Price, p.345.) Mary resembles Pope in this emphasis on love. In this poem, she regards the revelation and morality arrived at by philosophers like Locke as merely an outer covering, 'the bark', concealing the 'sap' that alone can really nourish us - 'love divine', rooted in the 'life divine' (lines 77-84). Love therefore, not reason, is from where 'every moral virtue takes its rise', and these virtues are but an outward sign of root in the divine life (90-91). Truths and, subverting the language of empirical evidence, their supporting 'corollaries', also flow from this source (87-88). Revelation is obtained only through a personal response, here initially to Nature, which, unlike eloquent words, is devoid of artifice and speaks directly to the heart (33-34).

A Contemplative view of Nature

Soft is the breath of morn, the air serene,
And days bright orb illumes the verdant scene,
Come Debby, haste we to the greenwood shade
"For talking age & whispering lovers made".1
There let the full communication flow,
And there let friendship teach our hearts to glow
Our tongues loquacious form the lengthening tale
And all the force of sympathy prevail.
Haste thee, dear girl, for much I long to look
How each young pupil learns in Nature's book
How each fair form2 analogous doth rise,
And point our mounting spirits to the skies;
And not a plant a blade a shrub appears
But sacred emblem some just semblance3 wears:
Ah! Debby, not the joys of wit and sense
Can to our mind irradiate light4 dispense
Tis but alone that path so rarely trod
Which masks in Nature's volume Nature's God;5
Feels the full force of every gracious boon
In nights pale hovering - or the blaze of noon
Charms every thought & does each sense absorb
And bids us move harmonious like yon orb
Ah! me, no language clothes my ardent mind
Lost in the throng which memory ne'er defined
'Tis but the soft responsive voice of soul,
That meets its fellow voice & animates the whole
This can alone our ardent hearts express
And cloath[sic] our ideas in unborrow'd dress6
Histl7 - for the wing'd musicians pour the lay
And hop with fairy foot from spray to spray
Or perch on verdant bough to chaunt8 the song
Which echoes soft these wedded trees9 among
All Nature smiles; for Nature void of art
Speaks the unvarnished language of the heart
No grace of fiction charms the listening ear
Tis truth for ah the Lord of Truth is here
Breaths not the air - his goodness pure & free
For what so pure, so calm, so good as he?
Bend not the yielding branches still to shew
The blest obedience we delight to owe
Flows not the stream with rich salubrious draught
To mark the place with Shiloh's water fraught? 10
And as its peaceful current flows along
To preach the graces Jordan's stream among!
See Debby, all things teach us, all conspire
To fill our breasts with Zion's hallow'd fire -12
Say can we walk amidst the verdant shade
Nor bless the wise & gracious hand that made
Or can we like the Ox that crops his food,
And drinks the stream not know that God is good
No - all things loudly preach; the falling shower
(That bids us seek a shelter from its power)
Gives to the earth its softning[sic] moisture first,
And bids each embrio seed prolific burst
Thence o'er the soil it peeps its tender form
Shrinks from the fury of a passing storm;
But when does Sol his healing influence shed
Its leaves expand, its ripening stalks are fed
So we dear girl - Repentance oft doth shower
Its healing drops & floods of anguish pour
Yet in the inmost garden of the mind
The seed is nourished and to growth inclined
Now on the soil its rising head is found,
But its root deepens far beneath the ground
Just then if ought of storm or boisterous gale
(And these most surely will its form assail)
It shrinks retreating sighs for inward rest
And finds its safety in the Mothers breast!
But when the sun of righteousness divine
Does with mild lustre o'er the trembler shine
Then wide expands it to the breath of heaven
And joy & strength & nourishment are given
Tell me not, Debby, of the moral sage
Who gilds with graceful sounds the instructive page
Who but of reason or of duty tells,
How virtue instinct - man the brute excels
Tis but the bark these moralists reveal'd
The sap, the juicy sap is all conceal'd
Tis love divine, each vigorous branch extends
Lifts with the gale and with the gale descends
Or vain the puny efforts men display
To spread the verdant foliage rich & gay
Trust me dear girl, that where the virtues shine
The root, the living root, is life divine:
Else would the bloom luxuriant quickly fade
And soon its charms be wither'd and decay'd
Thence from their source unnumber'd truths will flow
And vast corollaries\(^{18}\) all their lustre shew;
Thence full of sap our every act appears
And gives its ripening fruit to ripening years
Thence every moral virtue takes its rise
And while it charms us points us to the skies\(^{19}\)
Then bloom the branches eminently gay
Then leafy honours crown the bending spray:
All from the root proceeds - the sap divine
Stands with the stem & with the boughs recline
Thence honour, meekness, temperence\([sic]\) duty spring
And love in melting accents learns to sing
Ah Debby these fair fruits can never grow,
Where the deep basis stands not firm below,
Where many a sigh, where long & patient toil
Sought not the bosom of the parent soil
Crept with slow movement o'er the moisten'd ground
And safe from storms a long asylum found
Trace we this haughty weed\([,\)]\(^{20}\) it seems to say,
High o'er the groveling train I flourish gay
Proud of my hasty growth - while these remain
In idle nothingness - I grace the plain!
Ah cease! for immature thy branches grow,
No depth of root - no vigorous strength they know
Soon shall that sun which wakes the flowers to birth
Dry parch and waste thee on thy parent earth
Tis thus it blooms amidst the heart's fair field
Nor strength nor sweetness health nor beauty yield
Tis thus tho' env'yd oft its towering lot
It falls at last unpitied, soon forgot:
For nought but love divine can aid impart,
To guard from heat or storm the ductile\(^{21}\) heart
To feed & nourish as its beauties bloom,
And shed - thro' realms of bliss an endless
sweet perfume ---

1. Oliver Goldsmith, *The Deserted Village* (1770), 13-14 - 'The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade./For talking age and whispering lovers made.' This spot is, perhaps, the 'shady bow'r/Fair friendships lone recess' referred to in 'Summerville', poem immediately above.
2. each fair form - i.e. in Nature, here each tree.
3. just semblance - exact resemblance.

Let others creep by timid steps, and slow,
On plain Experience lay foundations low,
By common sense to common knowledge bred,
And last, to Nature's Cause thro' Nature led.
See also 'To a Friend', note 3, pp.294-96 in this volume. The expressions 'Nature's volume' and Nature's God are also found in James Thomson's The Seasons, 'Summer': 192-93 - 'To me be Nature's volume broad displayed/And to peruse its all-instructing page,' and 555 - where spirits unseen urge 'Of Nature sing with us, and Nature's God'.

6. unborrow'd dress - i.e. our own experience, not the learning of others.
7. Histi - an injunction to silence, so the song of birds, the 'wing'd musicians', can be heard.
8. chaunt - sing.
9. wedded trees - 'wedded' because their branches are intertwined. Possibly the 'verdant trees [. . .] Whose boughs twine in union to form a thick shade' in 'To D.W., standing beside a beautiful well', p.279 above. Shiloh's water - Shiloh was the sacred site in Canaan, west of the River Jordan, where Joshua and Eleazar divided the Promised Land by lot among the seven tribes of Israel still landless (Josh 18). The Ark of the Covenant was kept there in the tabernacle.
11. the graces Jordan's stream among - referring to the gifts of God's grace, baptism being one. The River Jordan in Israel was the site of Christ's baptism by John. For Quakers, who do not practice outward sacraments, baptism is an inward grace of spiritual renewal. The stream's current is emblematic of this process. This genuine grace from God contrasts with the artificiality of the man-made 'grace of fiction' referred to nine lines previously.
12. Zion's hallow'd fire - sacred fire, or zeal, for the Kingdom of God. Mount Zion in Jerusalem was the hill on which the Temple stood.
13. embrio seed - see note 1 to 'To Debby Watson standing beside a beautiful well', pp.279-80 above.
15. the Mothers breast - the breast of Mother Earth.
16. Mal 4:2 - speaking of the Day of Judgement, 'But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings'. A metaphor often used for Christ, punning on 'Son' (of God).
17. the moral sage [. . .] brute excels - almost certainly referring to the philosophy of John Locke. Locke states, 'the word 'reason' [. . .] stands for a faculty in man; that faculty whereby man is supposed to be distinguished from beasts, and wherein it is evident he much surpasses them.' (Essay IV. XVII. 1.) Describing Locke's theories on moral education, John Yolton says:

To guide one's self by the law of nature and reason is not merely to live an orderly and virtuous life: it is to have the very essence of humanity. To turn the child 'loose to an unrestrict'd Liberty, before he has Reason to guide him, is not the allowing him the privilege of his Nature, to be free; but to thrust him out amongst Brutes, and abandon him to a state as wretched, and as much beneath that of a Man, as theirs' (Two 'Treatises of Government, Second Treatise: 63). Education literally humanizes the child by bringing him to reason and virtue, the defining marks of man. (Yolton, Locke: An Introduction, p.37.)

It is interesting to compare attitudes to repentance. Locke, in The Reasonableness of Christianity (1695), 'explains that repentance "does not consist in one single act of sorrow" but in obeying "the law of Christ, the remainder of our lives"' (p.105, In Yolton, p.81). Mary visualises repentance as 'watering' the 'seed' within, prompting 'anguish' yet 'healing' (lines 59-62). The image is not one of rigid obedience to a law, but of patient reception and response.
18. corollaries - supporting or additional truths.
19. Moral virtues, like the 'fair forms' in nature at the beginning of the poem, 'point us to the skies', being emblems, or manifestations, of something greater - their root is in the 'life divine' and virtuous actions arise out of the 'sap' of divine love.
20. haughty weed - perhaps a metaphor for rationalistic philosophies which, by asserting that religious truth can be reached solely through human reason, are guilty of pride. In such a reading, the weed grows quickly because it is easier to think logically in this way than to wait patiently for the action of divine love. The next few lines predict that the weed will soon be laid waste by the sun (seen note 16 above) and 'forgot', indicating that such man-made philosophies are but transient, their 'grace' or attractiveness only temporary. (See also note 11 above on 'grace of fiction' and 'the graces'.) In The Dunciad, Pope satirises, again through the words of the 'gloomy Clerk' serving the Goddess of Dulness, the reductionism and arrogance in attaching greatest primacy to Reason so that we become, 'Of nought so certain as our Reason still,/Of nought so doubtful as of Soul and Will' (IV. 481-82). Mary's 'haughty weed' (105) rather resembles the clerk who mocks those who 'creep by timid steps, and slow,' to learn through 'Nature' of 'Nature's Cause' (IV. 465-68).
21. ductile - yielding, tractable.
In bidding a 'reluctant adieu' to the place where she and Debby Watson have walked together, a special place where the trees' 'boughs twine in union to form a thick shade' (perhaps the trees described as 'wedded' in 'A Contemplative View of Nature' above), Mary seeks its aid in assuring Debby of the depth and constancy of her love.

Summerville
To D.W

As pensive and silent together we stray
Unmoved by each scene or the charms of the day
And boding[?] reluctant adieu to the place
Where the bliss of thy friendship I long to retrace;
I call to the mountains - the vallies[sic] - the mead
To bear in remembrance the hours that are fled
And yon verdant trees whose thick foliage display'd
Whose boughs twine in union to form a thick shade
Whose leaves so diffuse so resplendently gay
Allure the sweet warblers to visit each spray
Sure ne'er can you fail to present to her view
The hours we have rambled, secluded by you
And Oh! ye musicians that chaunt2 in the grove
If Debby's affection unkindly shall rove
Then deign to remind her how often we'd stand
Our arms haply link'd & a book in our hand
To listen to you as you warbled your love
And to catch the soft echo which ran thro' the grove
Ye flow'rs whose luxuriance we oft have admir'd
And pluck'd of your fragrance in beauty attir'd
Oh tell her if ever her friendship shall range
That my heartfelt attachment can ne'er know a change
But in vain, oh ye roses to you I apply
Your fragrance shall languish yr. beauty shall die
Then be silent, ye flowers, lest my Debby shd. say
That like you my affections will quickly decay
Ye mountains capacious on you I repose
Ye resemble the love in my bosom that glows
Do you to her mind the analogy give
That the half-drooping form of her friend may revive
And then when again I your scenes shall command
With pleasure redoubled my views will expand.

1. boding - written in manuscript, but probably a copyist's error. 'Bidding' fits the sense.
2. chaunt - chant or sing.
This poem has been placed here because it is likely that it was written on return from a stay at Summerville (see the second verse) and so follows the previous poem.

To the Moon

Fair Empress of the night, whose silver ray
Sheds a mild lustre o'er the face of night
Gives to a silent world a softer day
   And stills each murmur in thy pensive light.¹

Here as o'er Summerville thy peaceful orb
   Illumes the lawn & sinks the distant scene,
In softest radience[ sic] does each tint absorb
   And sheds thy lustre o'er th'enamel[ I]'d green

Oh Queen of Peace (for sure thy modest ray
   Dispels each dark & charms each gloomy thought)
Be mine to wander on the devious way,²
   Led by thine orb with sage instruction frau't[ sic]³

Ah might I humbly imitate thy worth
   Thy steadfast movement in the sphere divine⁴
Thy unassuming brightness beaming forth
   And be thy pure, thy spotless clearness mine

And be this lore impress'd upon my soul
   That as thy wane so shall thy fulness rise
That when afflictions waves shall o'er me roll,
   With Hope deep anchor'd I may mark the skies

Thence drain instruction from thy silver ray,
   And hope for calmer moments brighter hours
When in the grand, unclouded blaze of day
   My mind renew'd shall feel her active powers
Thus Cynthia, thou shalt teach me; thy sweet face
    Shall pour instruction on the opening mind
Thus will I learn the hand divine to trace,
    And in his works the mighty master find -

1. pensive light - moonlight was considered conducive to contemplative thought.
2. devious way - expression for the meandering course of life, full of snares or pitfalls.
3. frau't - abbreviation of 'fraught', meaning 'stored'.
4. the sphere divine - the sky, or heavens.
5. Cynthia - name for Artemis or Diana, goddess of the moon, derived from the name of her legendary birthplace, Mount Cynthus.
Here Mary responds to some 'lines' written by 'a Friend' which have opened up 'new truths' to her. This may have been a fellow Quaker, perhaps an author or minister, rather than purely a personal friend, as Mary refers to their 'toils' as an 'instrument' in the cause of 'Truth', a concept of key significance for Quakers. It was important to witness to 'Truth', the actuality of the Spirit, by acting and living in one's faith. Here, 'Truth' is visualised shining from its 'throne', 'The spirit purified', effectively lighting up the world in which we live. The poem goes on to address Simplicity, another concept (in Quaker parlance, a 'testimony') that Friends embraced and attempted to witness to by a way of life devoid of luxury or unnecessary complexity.

Simplicity is depicted as both originating in Truth and leading towards it. Beside expressing these Quaker concepts, the poem critiques religious creeds based on the blind acceptance of dogma set forth by an established priesthood. Such 'implicit faith' is a fiction (i.e. not faith at all), even 'unbelief', because it 'blindly throws a mantle o'er its eyes, and pins its robe to priest-craft', relying on a set of tenets proposed by others rather than personal insight or experience.

(The term 'implicit faith' appears in a section of The Dunciad, by Alexander Pope, that satirises philosophies seeking to replace traditional belief in a theistic God with more mechanistic views of the world based on human reason, including deism. See note 3 below.)

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To a Friend

As o'er thy lines mine eyes admiring glance
New truths unfold and each energetic strain
Stamps on my mind its justice & its worth
Oh Truth! I love thee beaming from thy throne
(The spirit purified) thou shinest thou gild'st
Our frozen hemisphere, where aught of thee
Fast lock'd in cold embrace of unbelief
Or rather (fictions name) implicit faith,3
Which blindly throws a mantle o'er its eyes,
And pins its robe to priest-craft art thou not
Like embryo beauties in the hidden seed,
Bound down in miry fetters?4 scarce a ray
From heav'n's fair dome can pierce thy lone recess
Oh for a key t'unloose these brazen doors,
To burst the barriers of this dreary tomb,
And give thee room to vegetate - to bloom -
Oh for a guide to lead my devious foot
Where rests thy gracious throne: nor vain I call,
For Providence and Nature amply join
To point simplicity, the Guide the Key!
Simplicity! what art thou? whence thy rise?
Methinks I've heard of thee - the world hath said
That fools and idiots nurse thee - but his tongue
Which never falsified, pronounced thee good!8
Then will I set my heart to search thy lore
A willing pupil - thou shalt lead to truth,
In all thy vast explorings - thou the stream
Which issues forth from Truth's unfailing source
Ah now I know thee - art thou not the voice
Which bids us stop our wild career? or rather
Thou like the friendly eye-lid guards the sight
Which else exposed to every passing breath
Would drop in tears of sorrow - thou the needle
Which with unerring truth still clearly points
To the grand centre: - dearest loveliest flower
In Nature's garden! may thy charms be mine
Thy scent delicious whose pure fragrance gives
A vast disrelish to the fumes of art.

And oh! my friend, on whose capacious mind
Irradiating Truths have beam'd, still guided by
The strong attraction - may'st thou safely tread
Where never foot of man explor'd - a wild
Where weeds and noxious plants their noxious bane
In undisturbed tranquility, diffuse;
Yes let them all be rent away; the stones
And every hard relentless mass removed
That so the soil thus fitted by the plough
And many a furrow from th'industrious hand
(Mark'd in unerring wisdom) may receive
The seed of life - & not alone receive,
But yielding space to vegetate its fruit
In time appointed may reward thy toils,
Yes for the toils of all the instruments
Shall meet an ample crown for tho' on earth
But bonds and darkness may await our mind
Yet in the sweet approving smile of Truth
We rest as on an anchor - and the Hosts
Oppress our progress, like a raging sea
Yet he who bounds the tides can (when he please)
When our exhausted frame and sinking hands
Cry - "why hast thou forsaken me" - just then
His voice immortal calms the gloomy air
And as he breaths sweet peace his mandate flows
Thus far - no farther - thy proud waves may roll!
Secure of this - will brave the rage of man
His sullen arm may lift th'impending stroke
But Providence averts the blow - His voice
May pour its loud loquacious brood of threats
But even the air shall dissipate them. Why
Oh why should we distrust our God? his arm
Omnipotent, can never fail! His word
A strong munition - yea a safe defence
In every cloudy day -

1. energetic - displaying energy and vigour.
2. gild'st - the verb 'to gild', meaning to decorate with gold, hence to adorn or beautify, is here used to convey ideas of irradiation, colour and warmth.
Implicit faith - see Alexander Pope, *The Dunciad* (1742-43), IV. 463-64, where the 'gloomy Clerk' serving the Goddess of Dulness is one who 'daums implicit faith, and holy lies / Prompt to impose and fond to dogmatize'. Pope was satirising freethinkers who decried unthinking acceptance of belief systems based on authority and saw religious dogma as a set of lies perpetrated by priests, but were equally dogmatic in their rejection of formal religion and propensity to force their own rational systems on others.

Mary's familiarity with this section of *The Dunciad* is also indicated in 'A Contemplative view of Nature' (see p. 286 in this volume). She shared Pope's lack of sympathy with solely rationalistic interpretations of the world. However, Pope was a Catholic, and in his *Dunciad* the scholars of Dulness are falsely 'set free' from 'Priest-craft' (IV. 499). Mary, on the other hand, as a Quaker, is highly critical of attachment to 'priestcraft'.

Pope's *Dunciad* may have suggested other ideas, or images. Mary's personification of Truth, like Pope's Goddess of Dulness (IV. 17-20), shines from a throne. Also see note 5 below.

4. like ambrio beauties [. . .] miry fetters - Truth is compared to future blooms present in embryonic form in the seeds of plants, even when covered under the earth.

5. thy lone recess - at the end of *The Dunciad*, when the Goddess of Dulness triumphs and chaos darkens the world causing the demise of Religion and Morality, Pope urges we 'See skulking Truth to her old Cavern fled / Mountains of Casuistry heap'd o'er her head!' (IV. 641-42). This 'alludes to the saying of Democritus, that truth lay at the bottom of a deep well.' (Pope/Warburton notes quoted in *The Restoration and the Eighteenth Century*, ed. by Martin Price, p. 412.)

6. brazen - made of brass.

7. devious - wayward, deviating from the right path.

8. the world hath said [. . .] pronounced thee good! - contrasting one meaning of 'simplicity' as 'stupidity', cultivated by 'fools and idiots', with 'simplicity' as a positive value. The 'tongue which never falsified' is Christ's. His advice not to worry about food or clothes, but to trust in God and be concerned for His Kingdom, may be relevant (Lk 12:22-31, Mt 6:25-34).

9. needle - i.e. the needle of a compass.

10. fumes of art - artifice or artificiality, seen as poisonous.

11. noxious bane - harmful poison.

12. Hosts - armies, i.e. of enemies.

13. he who bounds the tides - God, whose power controls the tides of the sea. Biblical instances include God's division of the Red Sea to allow the Israelites to escape the pursuing Egyptians (Ex. 14:21-31), Christ walking on water (Mt 14:22-32, Mk 6:45-52, Jn 6:15-21) and calming the storm (Mk 4:35-41, Mt 8:23-27, Lk 8:22-25).

14. Mt 27:46 - Christ's words on the cross.

15. His voice - i.e. man's, not God's.

16. munition - weapon, in a protective sense.
To D. Watson

Abroad in the fields as in rapture I stray,
And inhale the sweet fragrance around,
Thy voice my lov'd girl, spreads with roses the way
And my heart thrills with joy at the sound

Methinks as we dwell on the scenes richly fraught
Which nature majestic has given
They detach us from all & our high swelling thought
With ecstacy rises to Heaven

Oh friendship what bliss can be purer than thine
Which earths baser pleasures ne'er know
When united in sentiment thus we entwine
And the heart pours its genuine flow

No guise no formality bids us to hide
What friendship bade us reveal
And in spite of pale envy or malice or pride
No feeling of love will conceal

And in the clear mirror the mirror of mind
We each speck shall reciprocal trace
And aiding each other our errors to find
We shall grow at the footstool of Grace

We leave it to others most gravely to close
The free flowing folds of the heart
Be it ours every movement unfain'd[unfeigned] to disclose
And our faults as our worth to impart

Thus Debby as gliding thro' life's mazy way
All the blessings of friendship we'll prove
Expand all our boughs to the beams of the day
And time shall but ripen our love ---

1. Mt 7:3-5 – 'And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye [. . .] first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.' Mote - a dot or speck.
To D.W & J.H
on a late occasion.

Low as in dust my humbled spirit bends
Most dearly I salute you much lov'd friends
And here as Jordans hallow'd waters\(^1\) roll
With force resistless\(^2\) o'er a willing soul
That soul the heavenly bond of union finds
And thrills with Joy to meet her kindred minds
Trust me, my friends (or rather trust that pow'r
Whose love incessant guards you every hour)
That when the lamb of God\(^3\) appears to view
Th'unwearied enemy\(^4\) is busy too:
Oft as a form of light his sly disguise
Eludes the search of our incautious eyes
But where his wily arts are subtly spread
The power of Truth's in brightest radience\(\text{-sic}\) shed
To this alone in every danger fly
Safe from the ravening wolf, the vultures eye\(^5\)
For sure my friends the touchstone\(^6\) & the test
Lie in the temple of a Christians breast:
Be then your care each word each act to weigh
In the just balance of the Sanctuary\(^7\)
And there (let mortals dare to call it vain!)
The worth & value of each thought is seen
Here rest your firm dependance\(\text{-sic}\): here abide
And you shall know your monarch & your guide

---

2. force resistless - i.e. a force that cannot be resisted.
3. lamb of God - John the Baptist hailed Jesus as 'the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world' (Jn 1:29).
4. Th'unwearied enemy - Satan.
5. Job 28:7 - 'There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen.'
6. touchstone - stone of schist or Jasper used to test gold alloy, therefore meaning criterion or test.
7. balance of the Sanctuary - literally, the scales on which donations given for the upkeep of the Hebrew sanctuary, or temple, were weighed. Offerings were given for various reasons, such as atonement for sins committed. Mary refers to the inner sanctum, the temple of the heart.
As here my friends I trace the pensive day
Which calm and silent bids me haste away
Th'oerwhelming\[sic\] tide of eddying thought gets free
Ah be remembrance dear & sometimes think of me
For sure your yielding spirits daily prove
The sweet renewings of redeeming love
Who feel him nearer than the vital air
Breath in his mercy bloom beneath his care
And as the lamb that gambols oer the mead
Joy in his sunshine in his presence feed
Oft as soft silence charms your tranquil soul
And Truth resistless\[1\] bids its torrent roll
When light impetuous fills the visual ray
Pervades your hearts & chases doubt away
Then let your heav'n directed views expand
See the white harvest court the reapers hand
And as you feel its sad neglected state,
Let prayers accepted rise to Zion's gate:\[2\]
Ah what avail the toilsome joys of earth
Its varnished pleasures or its tinsel'd\[3\] worth
Its soft abodes of Dalliance pav'd with woe
Which but too late its hapless victims know
When thus too poor too low to grace the wise
Oppress'd unnotic'd our Immanuel\[4\] lies
His lamb[-]-like nature scorn'd his voice supprest\[sic\]
Amidst the tumults of a worldlings breast
Oh can we feel his living power arise
Nor raise to Heav'n our supplicating eyes
Forbid the thought - when Israel's seeds opprest\[sic]\[5\]
No vague allurements glad the feeling breast
Be yours, be mine, our suppliant prayers to raise
Till he shall change them to the song of praise
Till as the waves with force impetuous roll
His name is echoed loud from pole to pole
Till every heart & every knee shall bow\[6\]
And the full tide of endless bliss o'erflow
Till not one thought one prejudice remain
To raise the mound or mar the work again
But all-united in the bond divine
Cling as the ivy does the oak entwine:
To him our sap our life our hope our friend
Whose breath supports us & whose arms defend
Till all each vail[sic] each covering rent away
Shall throng with rapture to the blaze of day
And as collected rays whose radiant force
More brilliant shine as near their parent source
So we in him & him alone can prove
A lasting friendship & an hallow'd love.

1. Truth resistless - i.e. Truth which cannot be resisted.
3. Zion's gate - the gate of Heaven. Mount Zion in Jerusalem was the hill on which the Temple stood.
3. tinsel'd - bright and appealing, but of no lasting value.
4. Immanuel - Hebrew, meaning 'God is with us'. Is 7:14 prophesies, 'Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel'.
5. Israel's seeds opprest - Image drawn from the oppression of the descendants of Israel, or Jacob, when they were enslaved in Egypt (Exodus, Chapters 1-12).
6. Is 45:23 - 'That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear', repeated in Rom 14:11. Also Phil 2:10-11 - 'That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow [...]'. Is 13:7 - 'Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt', on 'the day of the Lord' (v.6), may also be relevant.

A Prayer.

Oh thou my Guardian Lord and King
My guide whose praise with joy I sing!
Lend now thy kind and gracious ear
And grant O Lord thy suppliants prayer
Give me O give my heart to prove
The inward guidance of thy love
Preserve me in the path of life
O'er hill or dale, in peace or strife
Be all my movements mark'd by thee
Be all from doubt from wavering free
Be on my soul thy seal impress[sic]
Thy sacred voice compose[sic] my breast
Then life or Death, then peace or war
Alike shall please, for nought I'll care

1. compose - settle or calm.
The next three poems are grouped together here as they each address God directly: as the Almighty, the Creator and the Deity respectively. They are also similar in theme and content. A dual theme they share is that of God as both the ultimate goal of all desire and a source of upholding support. 'An Address to the Almighty' calls on God as the 'sole object of my heart's desire' yet asks 'Give me to feel thee as an arm below'. In 'Address to the Creator', God is conceived as simultaneously caring for individuals and maintaining the universe ('Whose hand supports us & upholds the spheres'), while the speaker yearns for the satisfaction to be found in Him alone: 'Thee, thee and only thee I long to claim/Oh let thy fullness crown my vast desire'. 'To the Deity', again, calls on God as 'My Lord my Life my vast desire', referring to 'The pure delight' which only God can bestow, and ends by asserting that, when 'upheld' by Him, fear is banished or diminished. Many other points of similarity can be found, not least the emphasis, present in much of Mary's religious poetry, on the joys of mystical experience. In 'An Address to the Creator', she describes how the longing for this experience could overtake her even when she was intending to write poetry, so that 'Down sinks the quill, the sheet unspoiled lies' and every 'faculty' she would 'oft resign'. 'The charms of poetry' are an 'inferior bliss' - merely the babblings of a 'murmuring muse' - even if writing poetry is one way of attempting to express that experience, as the first two lines of 'To the Deity' confirm.

An Address to the Almighty

Oh thou sole object of my hearts desire
Renew that heart and every thought inspire
Give me to feel thee as an arm below
Give me thy sweet & gracious voice to know
As from the couch of soft repose I rise
And shake the morning slumber from mine eyes
To thee my soul to thee my spirit turns
And with the lambent\(^1\) flame my bosom burns
Oh why, best lov'd & permanent delight
Doth not my heart more intimate unite
Why is not every hour an hour of thee
From ought of taint or base pollution free
Why am I not more moulded in thy will
More fix'd more stable more resign'd more still
Ah cease not great Creator still to move
Till all my powers are swallowed up in love
Till not an idea actuates my breast
Save by thy word thy forming word impress[sic]
Till not a sound my ready tongue reveals
But as thy spirit opes the sacred seals —
   Oh how my arms, my outstretch'd arms aspire
To reach the Heavens & grasp my full desire
Far, far from human frailties to remove
And, quench my thirst in thy redeeming love
Redeeming love what accents can we find
T'impress thy goodness on th'][immortal mind
None, none - thy pure thy gracious voice alone
Displays thy power & makes thy wonders known
All eloquent in speaking o'er the soul
Thou bid'st responsive tides harmonious roll
Absorbs the sense attracts the mental sight
And fills the whole with ever new delight
Not so when thou thy long'd for voice conceals
Nor ought of sunshine to my breast reveals
Alas, poor heart I languish faint & sigh
And (but for thy supporting arm) would die
All, all, a blank, no charm on earth I see
Creation pleases not I mourn for thee
And every tint in Nature's blooming dress
Does keener anguish on my mind impress
Oh what an aching void distracts the soul
What vast afflictions foaming billows roll
What floods of tears what misery bows the head
When thy bright ray O sun of life is shed
But when once more thou gilds the inward sphere
How blithe how happy all the powers appear
The flowers resume their sweetness all things please
And vocal music echoes thro' the trees
The drink we rapture from the vernal gale
Then sweetest slumbers o'er our rest prevail
For when from chains of death our thought is free
Creation charms and all is full of thee
So in a glass the full reflected light
Pours its vast atoms o'er th'admiring sight
But if withdrawn the cheering light of day
What clouds of darkness dim the visual ray
The mingled forms in strange confusion blend
All chaos does its baleful influence lend
Till when the light again resumes its sway
And every shade is lost amid the blaze of day --

1. lambent - gently glowing.
2. The afflictions experienced when God's presence is withdrawn are pictured as tumultuous waves, in contrast to the 'harmonious roll' of responsive tides experienced when His voice is heard (12 lines previously).
3. gilds the inward sphere - lights up and beautifies the inner life (as the sun does the outer world).
4. rapture - an odd use of this word as a verb instead of a noun.
5. vernal gale - spring breeze.
6. atoms - the tiny particles of dust suspended in the atmosphere, which can be seen in bright light. For further discussion of 'atoms' see 'Sun-rise', 1794, pp.234-35 in this volume, note 2.
Address to the Creator

Light of my life & of my soul
Who guides the Lucid planets as they roll
Whose breath illumes us and whose goodness cheers
Whose hand supports us & upholds the spheres
Oh dost thy pure thy vivifying ray
And make prolific even this mass of clay
Be all my powers, each look each word each thought
By thee directed and of thee be fraught
Subdued and sanctified - no movement rise
To break the peace which thy sweet word supplies
Still may the soft harmonious current roll
And tides of ecstasy salute my soul
Still the blest music charm my mental ear
And tell to all my powers "tis thou art there"
Oh let, as now, thy soft and sacred fire
My breast illumin[e] & my heart inspire
Be all and every selfish care suppress[si]
Thou thou alone my monarch & my guest
I ask no lot no heritage no fame
Thee thee and only thee I long to claim
Oh let thy fullness crown my vast desire
And fill my spirit with thy hallow'd fire
Be all consum'd - yea all - what can I give
In thee I move in thee alone I live
"["Oh come - the bride - come"]" let thy spirit say
And chase all shadows with the blaze of day
I ask no halveling share, thy whole be mine
Thine arm my succour & thy smile my shrine
Away with halves of morals and of sense
Thou thou alone canst quench the flame intense
Ah when I court the charms of poetry
My sick[e]ned spirit longs to rest in thee
Down sinks the quill, the sheet unspoiled lies
And heavenly brightness charms my ravish'd eyes
Absorps[absorbs] my ideas & my thoughts decline
And every faculty I oft resign
Naught naught but thee remains ah cease my heart
To covet strains where wisdom has no part
No bliss the murmuring muse can ever know
Like that of quiet peace 'tis heaven below
Tis the high anthem on an angels tongue
Tis the grand hymn by thronging seraphs sung
Tis that prolific word which form'd the whole
Which bade each planet in its orbit roll
Which each pure spirit drinks without alloy
And man even man was born for to enjoy
Ah give me, source of good, this ray divine
And each inferior bliss with transport I resign -

1. Space is left in the middle of the line, perhaps for word/words the copyist was unable to read and hoped to be able to insert at a later date.
2. Lucid - bright and shining, roll - turn on axis and/or orbit.
3. the spheres - heavenly spheres or planets.
4. And - perhaps added in error. The sense (that God's 'vivifying ray' or life-giving force makes 'this mass of clay' (the earth) 'prolific' or fertile) is improved, and the line scans better, if 'and' is omitted.
5. fraught - full.
6. lot - fortune, or portion in life.
7. halveling - half or partial.
8. Away with { . . } flame intense - 'morals' and 'sense' are regarded as insufficient (because grounded in human reason). They cannot offer the satisfaction the soul craves, which only the actual experience of God within can provide.
9. In the manuscript, 'poesy' is written in pencil above the word 'poetry'. So either the copyist or a later reader (the handwriting looks different, though with one word in pencil it is difficult to tell) felt that 'poesy' might be the correct word here. It would not scan so well, however.
To the Deity

In what soft numbers¹ shall my heart get free
Great source of Being! when I think of thee!
When all thy boundless blessings o'er my soul
In one vast tide of Joys harmonious roll!
When all thy gifts and all thy favors move
My raptur'd heart to yield thee Love for Love
Tis to thy presence gracious Lord I owe
The secret charm that sweetens all below
The pure delight which thou alone canst give
And the warm thrill which causes "Live to live"²
To thee the bliss which crowns my ardent glance
When my heart seeks thee in the wide expanse
Roves in soft exacty[sic] o'er Natures breast
And shouts triumphant in Existence blest!
Oh my lov'd Lord can earthly pleasures bind,
In ease inglorious an immortal mind?
Can social joys, which lead us up to thee
Detain our hearts nor leave our Spirits free
Oh no! the Soul which wooes[sic] thy dear embrace
Soars unentangled thro the realms of space
And tho' on earth the fair external lies
On wings of faith the purer spirit flies
Tell me my Lord my Life my vast desire
When shall thy word my every power inspire
When shall the fog which shades my soul in night
Be all consum'd by thy superior light
When shall I feel thy fire in every vein
Rapture in anguish! Extacy[sic] in pain!
Oh Lord thy sacred judgments I adore
And my heart humbled learns to bless thee more
(Away with fear! no fear my breast may know
Upheld by thee, in sufferings Love can glow)³
Be then thy Life, thy Truth thy Judgments mine
And Fear and anxious care shall all decline —

1. soft numbers - smooth or gentle verses.
2. "Live to live" - possibly 'life to live' is intended.
3. glow - clearly written in manuscript, and this may be correct, but could be copyist's error for 'grow'.

See headnote to 'An Address to the Almighty', p.301 above.
Yes, Solitude hath charms th’expanding mind
Turns from the world her purer joys to find
Her tranquil breast unbends our active powers
And the just tenor of the Soul restores!
Tis sweet to rove with her when twilight Gray[grey]
Steals o’er the plain - or Cynthia’s lucid ray¹
Sheds a soft radiance o’er the spheres around²
Nor broke the solemn peace by aught of sound
Mark the blue sky with brilliant planets fraught
In all the luxury of lonely thought.
Dear is the hour when bursting from the crowd
We leave the vain, the vacant & the loud
Its wonted spring³ to give th’elastic mind
And Contemplation’s treasur’d stores to find
But sweeter far than mild and tranquil sky
When Night’s rich glories sate th’admiring eye
To trace Creation’s excellence confest[sic]
In its grand reservoir - the Human breast
And dearer than the lone and silent joy
When boundless Nature does our thoughts employ
Is the rich glancing of a friend’s mild eye
Where sparkling wisdom does its beams supply
Accents which truth & judgment must approve
And sweetly falling from the lips we love
Blest interchange when thought & thought unite
And we in giving but receive Delight.

Ah! Solitude! not all thy charms impart
This warm & secret rapture to the heart
Not all thy magazine⁴ of wealth may lend
Can vie with Heav’n’s unrivalled boon - a friend
Will Solitudes lone pleasures cheer the heart
Which longs its vast sensations to impart
Or fill the wondrous chasm which Heav’n design’d
No charm, save one, should fill a kindred mind
No - Solitude thy fainter gleam expires
Like thy own Orb⁵ obscur’d by radiant fires ---

1. Cynthia’s lucid ray - Cynthia is a name for Artemis or Diana, goddess of the moon, derived from her birthplace, Mount Cynthus.
2. the spheres around - the heavens.
3. its wonted spring - its accustomed energy or vivacity. The mind is then conceived as being 'elastic' or flexible, and needing periods of solitude and contemplation to maintain its powers.
4. magazine - store.
5. thy own Orb - the moon, traditionally the planet of solitude and contemplative thought.
In the manuscript collection, this piece is placed between Mary's 'Elegy' on the death of Hannah Wilson Reynolds, née Forbes, in May 1799 and a copy of her 'Monody' on the death of her sister Jane Henrietta Birkett in October 1801. Either bereavement might account for the 'cankering cares' and 'secret anguish' Mary refers to, though there may be no connection. As it follows the poem on Hannah's death, I have decided to reproduce it here at the end of the 1790s material.

[Untitled]

Oft have I sought my Saviour's face
Oft have I woo'd his lov'd embrace
His smile my raptur'd heart hath warm'd
And all my soul his presence charm'd
Then high as Heav'n I raised mine head
For every anxious thought was fled
Nor durst⁴ the waves of grief annoy
My swelling tide of homefelt joy⁵
I claim'd a kindred great & high
Beyond the boast of ancestry
I spurr'd the grovelling things of earth
As far beneath my Heavenly birth
I sang as Israel sung before
My mount is strong my trials o'er³
Like them I thought the prize was won
And all my toilsome labor done
Like them my sore mistake I found
In many a path of rugged ground
And far from Canaan's verdant green
Dreamt of no wilderness between⁴
Ah me my heart is robb'd of joy
While cankering⁵ cares my thoughts annoy
My days of ease have swiftly fled
In secret anguish droops mine head
The victors song I chaunt⁶ no more
But learn in silence to adore!
Oh might I find a safe retreat
As neath the shadow of his feet⁷
Till the rude storm hath spent its rage
And its high foaming waves assuage
Then patient of his heavenly yoke
I'd bow to every awful stroke
Nor heed how low obscur'd I lie
Beneath his sacred canopy -
Lord of my life! of my desires!
To thee alone my soul aspires
By thee that anxious soul was form'd
Thy gracious power my bosom warm'd
Thy radiant[ sic] Truth's effulgent ray
Pour'd o'er my mind a rising day
Dispell'd the darkening gloom of night
And blest me with thy sacred light
Then gave mine inward eye to see
Thou source of Beauty! - all in thee
Strain'd in my view each wish to rove
And fix'd on thee my ardent love -
Thou bless the work thy hands hath made
And let me dwell beneath thy Shade
Till all my griefs away shall flee
And all my cares be lost in thee
Absorpt[ sic] each movement of my mind
To thy most Holy Will resign'd ----

1. durst - dared.
2. homefelt joy - joy felt deeply within oneself, in the heart.
3. My mount is strong my trials o'er - source untraced.
4. And far from [ . . ] wilderness between - see Num 13 and 14. The Israelites at first refused to enter Canaan, the land west of the River Jordan promised them by God, from fear based on false reports from their scouts sent out to explore the country. God punished their disobedience by condemning them to wander in the wilderness for forty years.
5. cankering - corrupting.
6. chaunt - chant or sing.
7. neath the shadow of his feet - to be under the shadow of the Almighty was to be under His protection. But it is more usual to speak of being under the shadow of His hand (e.g. Is 49:2), or His wings (e.g. Ps 17:8).
8. strain'd - abbreviation of 'constrained'.

1800 AND ONWARDS

DATED POEMS, AND POEMS

THAT CAN BE ASCRIBED A DATE
This was written nearly seven months before Mary's marriage, on 13 March 1801, to Nathaniel Card. It looks forward to their future together within a joyful, empathic relationship - one for which she feels they are well prepared as, in their case, 'thought meeting thought reciprocates delight'. This wording shows her vision is informed by a passage from that great favourite of hers - Thomson's The Seasons. As it resonates through her poem, the passage is reproduced virtually in full after the footnotes below.

Only two more, relatively brief, and undated, poems to Nathaniel appear in the collection. The copyist placed them at the end and I have done likewise.

---

**To Nathl. Card -**

Why droops my heart? say whence this heaving sigh
Or why this tear just trembling from mine eye?
While throngs of ideas bursting to be free
My dear Nathaniel when I think of thee
Ah! sure with thee each painful thought may cease
And Time on downy pinions glide in peace
My heart no more forebode uncertain woes
But all my griefs may on thy breast repose
While every accent gives my soul to prove
The healing virtue of the voice we love!
Yes! we are blest! each anxious hour is o'er
And doubts dark anguish racks our minds no more
Thought meeting thought reciprocates delight
And all our wishes all our hopes unite
No jarring interests urge the frown of care
No low ambitious pompous meed we share
No rank impels to rend the social tie
No prides high crested plume attracts our eye
In vain may Dissipation raise the song
Or madd'ning folly warp the heedless throng
For us no charm on Earth impels to roam
Blest in each other and content at home
Oh may our blended souls forever feel
The grateful homage which our thoughts reveal
May the full tide of joy still bend its course
To quench our thirst in its unmingled source
Ne'er may the voice of Adoration cease
To him whose smile creates unclouded peace
In whom we live our Being's aim and end
Our hearts firm refuge and our faithful friend
Thus as the mingled flame whose richer light
With doubled brilliance gilds the hours of Night
Ascends thro' air with bright and swifter ray
Bursts thro' increasing clouds & soars away
So may our spirits thus cemented prove
The Heavenly powers of Harmony & Love -

8 mo. 29th. 1800

1. downy pinions - feathered wings.
2. racks - torments.
3. No jarring [. . .] attracts our eye (4 lines) - as well as stressing that she and Nathaniel share an ideological outlook in which worldly ambition, or outward show, carry no weight, Mary indicates their marriage will not involve any change in the rank of either party that might disrupt existing social/class relationships - 'no rank impels to rend the social tie'. Jarring - discordant; pompous meed - grand or splendid lot or portion.
4. Dissipation - a 1784 definition of 'dissipation' was 'waste of moral and physical powers by vigorous indulgence in pleasure; intemperate or dissolute mode of living' (OED).

Passage from Thomson's *The Seasons*

After describing 'the agonies of love' - including seduction and betrayal, false love and jealousy - Thomson declaims:

But happy they! The happiest of their kind!  
Whom gentler stars unite, and in one fate  
Their hearts, their fortunes, and their beings blend.  
'Tis not the coarser tie of human laws,  
Unnatural oft, and foreign to the mind,  
That binds their peace, but harmony itself,  
Attuning all their passions into love;  
Where friendship full-exerts her softest power,  
Ineffable and sympathy of soul,  
Thought meeting thought, and will preventing will,  
With boundless confidence: for nought but love  
Can answer love, and render bliss secure.

Unlike the man who 'from sordid parents buys/The loathing virgin,' or 'eastern tyrants [who] [. . .] Seclude their bosom-slaves, meanly possessed/Of a mere lifeless, violated form',

[. . .] those whom love cements in holy faith  
And equal transport free as nature live,  
Disdaining fear. What is the world to them,  
Its pomp, its pleasure, and its nonsense all,  
Who in each other clasp whatever fair  
High fancy forms, and lavish hearts can wish?  
Something than beauty dearer, should they look  
Or on the mind or mind-illumined face;  
Truth, goodness, honour, harmony, and love,  
The richest bounty of indulgent Heaven!

'Spring', 1113-44
On 11 October 1801, Mary's sister, Jane Henrietta Birkett, died. She was two months short of her thirteenth birthday. Mary then wrote this monody, or poem of mourning, for her.

There are two copies of this poem in manuscript. The first (MS Vol. 2, pp. 147-49) is placed completely out of the chronological order Nathaniel Card attempted, between a 1788 poem ('To Cousin Bolton') and a 1792 one on the death of Mary's sister, Susannah Birkett. The second copy (MS Vol. 2, pp. 369-71) appears between 1799 and 1802-1804 material. The copies are in different hands. Perhaps the first was made from a manuscript of Mary Birkett Card's kept with the poem on Susannah's death, and the second from another original manuscript. There are few differences in wording - most variations are in capitalisation and punctuation, as is usually the case when two copies of a poem exist.

The first copy of the poem is reproduced here, with differences found in the second copy shown in the notes below, following closing square brackets. The heading in the second copy reads: 'A Monody to Memory / occasioned by the Death of her beloved Sister / Jane Henrietta Birkett'.

A Monody
to Memory - occasion'd by the death of herbeloved sister - Jane Henrietta Birkett

O memory pensive nurse of secret grief
In vain from thee my thoughts implore relief¹
In vain, thou mingled boon, which heaven imparts
To teach us wisdom & correct our thoughts
Here as in silence glide the unnoticed hours²
The faithful pencil³ oft the past restores
Culls from each scene, does all its pathos tell
And lingers long with friends I loved so well
Yes! memory! thou shalt cheer my mourning soul
Tho' swelling tides of anguish o'er me roll⁴
Tho' torn the wreath of joy I wore so gay⁵
And blasted & fading sweets decay
Yet in their soften'd tints their charms I see⁶
Tho' lost & ah! for ever lost to me
Thus gentle memory, thy moonlight ray⁷
Shall cheer me pensive o'er the devious way⁸
Shall to my view each silver'd scene⁹ restore
Till the sun rises, which shall set no more
Here let my bursting heart indulge its pain
Crush'd 'neath the foot - shall not a worm complain
Here memory, let thy dear engraving rise
And all my sisters image meet my eyes
Far[Fair] as the white robed innocence of youth
The bud of genius on the esteem[stem] of truth¹⁰
Bright as the moon that drinks the vernal dew
Sweet as the rose & proved as transcient too¹¹
Yet still remembrance all her virtue brings
And to her gentle form my fancy clings
Hears too her voice, melodious blithe & gay
Whose sprightly converse cheer'd the passing day
But when the needle claimed her ready hand
Oer fields of science, would her mind expand
Far distant realms & foreign climes explore
And search for knowledge as from shore to shore
Ah! Jane - my sister snatch'd so rude away
Ere thirteen summers, shed their genial ray
Ere thy young blossoms ripen'd on their tree
A rich reward for all who cared for thee
So have I seen beneath the breath of spring
Some sapful twig around its parents cling
Slip[sic] by the wise & prudent gardener's hand
In richer soil its verdant leaves expand
No more beneath its pristine gardeners care
Itself perhaps more fruitful & more fair
Thus memory bring thy treasure & impart
Some gleam of comfort to my wounded heart
Teach me that Heaven can ne'er inflict in vain
That future blessings flow from present pain
That he whose goodness form'd the mighty whole
Regards with mercy every human soul
Lops the right hand & pluck th'injurious eye
Which mars our passage to a fairer sky
Nor more his mercys in his gifts are known
Than in his rending judgment awful frown
Cheer'd by thoughts, my heart will cease to bleed
And patient faith will poignant grief succeed
Conscious that wisdom strikes but for the best
And we alone in resignation blest.

MC
11. **vernal dew** - spring-like dew. proved] prov'd
12. Textual variants in previous three lines: voice, voice blithe & gay] blithe and gay claimed] claim'd
13. science - knowledge. oer fields of science, o'er fields of science
14. This line is indented in the second copy. Ah! Jane -] Ah Jane
15. Textual variants in previous four lines: summers,] summers cared] car'd spring] Spring
16. sapful twig] sapfull twigg parents] parent Slipt - taking a cutting of a plant is known as taking a slip. wise & prudent gardeners'] wise and prudent gardeners
17. gardeners] Guardians
18. Textual variants in previous three lines: treasure] treasures Heaven] Heav'n
19. Mt 5:29-30 - 'And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.' Textual variants in three previous lines: form'd] formed pluck] plucks
20. Textual variants in previous six lines: mercys] mercies rinding [judgment] sending Judgments (rinding - in first manuscript copy, is poorly written, while 'sending' is clearly written in the second copy. 'Rinding' could be a copyist's error for 'sending', but 'sending' does not seem entirely appropriate either. Perhaps both copyists were attempting to render a word they could not decipher.) Cheer'd by thoughts,] Cheer'd by the thought blest.]

blest!
Mary's first child, William, was born on 10 January 1802. This intensely moralistic fable was written for him when he was just nine months old (the date given at the end of the poem is 21 October 1802). The OED offers several definitions of 'fable', one of which is a 'short story, especially with animals as characters, conveying a moral'. This poem tells such a story.

The Flies - a Fable

My son attend to Wisdom's sacred voice
And let Obedience crown thine early choice
Should vice or folly tempt thy steps to stray
Or headstrong youth entice thee from the way
Be thine to guard each avenue to sin
Nor tamper with the foe that lurks within
Turn from th'envenom'd glancings of his eye
And far from every vain allurement fly:
So shalt thou safely tread the paths of life
And rest securely free from care & strife

Once on a time (and true as Esop[sic] taught)
When birds instructed us & beasts had thought
Blithe was the morn & bright th'all cheering ray
Which warm'd to life each insect of a day
While idly gay nor heeding dangers nigh
In harmless mazes danc'd each sportive fly
Save one who many a setting sun had seen
Securely resting on th'enamell'd green
His form evinc'd the rainbows varying hue
With green and Oriente mingling darkest blue
And if on wing or with [a] cautious tread
His watchful eye still shun'd the hovering thread
Him sage Experience monitress severe
Had taught the Spiders wily arts to fear
And as his fellows gaily pass'd along
His fervent voice address'd the fearless throng
"O you who idly flutt'ring vainly gay
Bask in the sunshine of a transient day
Who think unknowing of the snares of youth
That all is pleasure innocence and truth
Ahl how unlike the real view of life
A constant warfare a perpetual strife
A field where virtue only wins the meed
Where simple ignorance has nought to plead
Where joy is earn'd with many a toil and pain
And they who strive may victory obtain
Learn then betimes each specious wile to dread
For snares unnumber'd hover o'er your head
See where abroad the swallow makes his way
And marks each roving insect for his prey
Shun the soft music of each warblers song
Your death my fellows lurks beneath their tongue
Then seek in silence an obscure retreat
For high in air portending ills await
Guard too from Luxury your artless taste
Th’empoisoned sweet that lays your numbers waste
Oft have I seen th’attractive potion laid
Oft urg’d the danger & in vain would plead
The maddening victims rushed to certain death
And lost in writhing agonies their breath
Be yours the frugal temperate repast
Nor love to gorge the dainties of a feast
So you the dance of sprightly health shall claim
And lifes full vigour animate your frame
But most I charge you fear the Spider’s pow’r
Who lurks in every corner to devour
His den contiguous to the beams of day?
Allures full oft an unsuspecting prey
But soon ah soon their sad mistake is known
In vain their heartfelt grief their piteous moan
And as they vainly struggle to get free
The wretch enjoys their helpless strife to see
By horror - seized - amidst a thousand pangs
They yield their vitals to his ruthless fangs
O my lov’d fellows let my words have weight
Lest dire experience prove their truth too late
Lest as your gore bestrews the path of death
You mourn your folly with expiring breath
Then leave thou idle flutterers who advance
And court the tempters wiles in careless dance
Nor heed the praise or blame which they impart
The sweetest plaudits issue from the heart
True they will scoff - but lol another hour
And all their arrogance of tongue is o’er
Be yours industrious while th’encircling light
Pours its vast atoms o’er the enraptured sight
To gain some cornerless obscure retreat
Far from the entangling thread th’empoison’d sweet
Alike impervious to the birds of night
As the grim foe who shuns the glare of Light
This done (nor hard the task if early sought)
Comfort shall crown your toil & ease your thought
Secure that when the beams of light are fled
A safe abode shield your protected head
Yet even in quest of daily food beware
Lest distant prospects mar yr. watchful care
Lest far from home your wearied steps prolong
And round your feet th’entangling mazes throng
Turn from each winding path each darksome way
Nor move but in the glorious light of day
So you in freedom, lov’d possession, blest
Shall pass your days in peace your nights in rest
No spiders horrid glare your hearts annoy
Which lightly bounding beat the dance of joy
And when these hours of transient bliss are o'er
And summers fervid heat revives no more
When hoary\textsuperscript{12} frost detains th'enfeebled mind
The limbs fall nerveless every power declin'd
When lost and dim fair healths enlivening glow
And the pulse stiffen'd shall forget to flow
Then to your home with steady course descend
And peace will all your tranquil steps attend
There rest till Winters gloomy reign is past
And spout\textsuperscript{13} the rage of every hostile blast
'Till a new sun shall wake to light and love
The sleeping tenants of the vocal grove\textsuperscript{14}
Then rise renewed and bless the power divine
Who gave the fields to bloom the light to shine
And even the fly with every living thing
To feel the soft reviving breath of Spring'' -
Here ceased the monitors sage voice - yet long
His vast attentive audience round him throng
Till the bright orb roll'd down the steep of day\textsuperscript{15}
Whose wonted summons the wing'd tribe obey\textsuperscript{16} -
These may forget unconscious of the past
But my lov'd William - let the moral last -
10 mo. 21st. 1802

1. Esop - variant spelling of Aesop, the ancient storyteller who probably lived c.500-600 BC, to whom Aesop's Fables have been largely attributed (though they may, in fact, be the work of several writers). The animals in Aesop's Fables speak.
2. Orient - shining pearl.
3. hovering thread - l. e. of a spider's web.
4. meed - reward.
5. specious wile - deceptive stratagem or trick.
6. th'attractive potion laid - i.e. a substance deliberately put down to trap flies.
7. contiguous to the beams of day - literally, adjoining or in close proximity to sunlight. Perhaps attempting to express the way sunlight plays on the threads of a spider's web.
8. vitals - internal organs.
9. plaudits - compliments.
10. atoms - probably referring to particles of dust as seen in bright sunlight.
11. yr. - manuscript abbreviation of 'your'.
12. hoary - white. 'Hoary' means, literally, 'white haired'.
13. spout - clearly written in manuscript. Perhaps to 'discharge' or 'dispel' - repelling 'every hostile blast'.
14. tenants of the vocal grove - poetic expression for birds.
15. Till ... steep of day - until the sun sank down below the horizon. steep - perpendicular slope.
16. wonted summons - accustomed call; the wing'd tribe - i.e. the flies.
The gift of a box of plums provides the opportunity for a moral analogy. The 'sweets' or pleasures that the plums give, though innocent, are nevertheless, like all joys on this earth, transient.

To a Family of lovely Children
11 mo 9th with a Box of Plums 1802

Go little box thy Fruits display
To my young friends addrest[sic]
And let thy transcient[sic] sweets convey
A moral to their breast

Say, that the changing scenes below
In varied forms allure
But may they - taught by wisdom know
Those blessings that endure

Say Earths delusive pleasures bland¹
Thy sweets resemble most
Which please but for a moment, And
The fond attraction's lost!

But the pure bliss which still shall last
Will never, never cloy
It springs for ever in the breast
A source of hallow'd joy

Go then with lasting charm to greet
Which wisdons choice attends
And be a thousand times more sweet
To please my little friends

MC

¹. bland - harmless or innocent, rather than the modern sense of 'innocuous'.

Seriously ill after the birth of her second child, Nathaniel, on 21 July 1803, Mary wrote this poem of supplication and resignation. The baby’s life was to be brief - he died in the following April (1804). When another son was born to her on 1 February 1805, he was given the same name - a frequent practice at this time. The second Nathaniel was the collector of her writings.

There are two copies of the poem in manuscript, with different titles: 'Written when very ill ...' and 'Written two days after the birth of my second son', dated '7th mo: 1803' and '7 Mo 23 1803' respectively. Oddly, the latter one was copied into the prose part of the manuscript collection. That copy is reproduced here because it is more specific in its title and date. Other than a slight difference in wording in the fourth line of the first stanza and the inclusion, in the copy in the poetry volume of the collection, of the word 'lone' in the final line, the two copies differ only in a few details such as capitalisation. Also, in the poetry volume copy, the stanzas are unnumbered, and alternate lines indented. Textual variants between the two copies are shown in the notes below, indicated by closing square brackets.

7 Mo 23 1803

Written two days after the birth of my second son

O King of Saints as on this painful bed
Alternate ease and agony I share
Ev'n while thine arm upholds my languid head
Ev'n while thy presence dissipates my care

2

O Mighty helper thou who heards't my cry
When in sore anquish I addressed thy throne
Again to thee I raise the fervent sigh
Grant that my heart & soul be thine alone

3

O Let me henceforth keep the law of Truth
Or in the hope of mercy life resign
Why should I live to waste the bloom of youth
Let me now die or live but to be thine

4

Seal thou my pardon be mine errors o'er
And let me ne'er thy sacred Gift offend
Or let this body feel a few pangs more
And from this thorny bed to the Grave descend
1. Ev'n while thy presence And thy lov'd presence
2. O Mighty helper thou who heard'st my cry Oh mighty helper! thou who heard'st my cry
3. Addressed] addrest
5. pardon be] pardon - be
6. Gift] gift
7. the Grave descend] the lone grave descend.

A few months later, hopefully recovered from the trauma of Nathaniel's birth, Mary wrote this inscription, or dedication, for a 'Mosshouse'. This was, most likely, a folly consisting of a shelter or cottage-like structure covered with moss, built in the grounds of a friend's house. This and various other features mentioned - 'shellwork' and an abundance of fruit trees - resemble those found at Mount Prospect, at Rathangan, where Mary wrote two poems some years earlier. (See pp. 248-53 in this volume.) Mount Prospect's 'moss-arched shed' also had imitation rocks hanging overhead. This might lead us to think all three poems describe the same place, yet this 'inscription' speaks of the 'charms of D'. Obviously, if 'D' is the initial letter of the name of the house in question, it cannot be Mount Prospect.

The owner of the 'Mosshouse' is not named, but it is clear that she was a benefactress of some kind. Her care for the birds visiting her garden, and their young, is in keeping with her philanthropy, particularly her contributions toward the maintenance and education of poor children, probably in a charity school.

I n s c r i p t i o n f o r a b e a u t i f u l M o s s h o u s e
11 mo 19th 1803

Stranger, would thy curious eye
The charms of D descry
Hast thou seen the gardens pride
(Art & nature close allied)
There Pomonas' richest hoard
Haste to grace the festive board
Pours her early fruitage round
Bids the juicy grapes abound
While beneath this rural shade
Oft her treasures are display'd
Flora there in blithe array
Blushes to the Orb of day
There her mellow tints expand
'Neath the owners careful hand
There her early treasures glow
Late her flowerets learn to blow
Favor'd garden, mansion fair
Who your beauties may declare
Stranger! canst thy wondering eye
Pass the varied shellwork by
Stores of Oceans briny wave
Rescued from Lethean grave
To please the taste & give employ
To many an idle girl & boy
Hast thou mark'd this lov'd retreat
Form'd for friendships converse sweet
Traced the charms which here abound
Where the rainbows tints are found
Then lift thine eye with silent dread
Six Rocks suspended o'er thine head
Tremendous sight, yet banish fear
Nor think the shades of danger near
For here the linnet builds her nest
And she who shields them safe from harm
Has form'd this grand contrasted charm
Oft may'st thou hear the chirping throng
Repay her bounty with a song
And as they hop from spray to spray
Chaunt the merry roundelay
Tardy stranger do thy feet
Hover near this blest retreat
Does here thy wishful glance remain
Thy fond reluctance to explain
So Eve in milton's tragic song
Did many a lingering look prolong!
Still - still enchanted wouldst thou stay
Nor think in vain thy long delay
Then stranger learn that these shall fade
The mossy grot, the verdant shade
The fruits, the flowers, the callow brood
Which oft her hand supplies with food
The wreck of time may these destroy
(Sunbeams of a transient joy)
But the kind heart which loves to bless
Which covets to relieve distress
Which bids the wretched seek her door
And palefaced sorrow weep no more
This nature's ruin shall survive
And in immortal record live
And many a child whose opening thought
Is now by her benevolence taught
May live to bless that bounty kind
Which pours instruction o'er their mind
Who, nor in vain, her aid did claim
When hunger pinch'd their feeble frame
Go - stranger with these truths imprest
Like her - in mercys School to rest

MC
1. Pomona - Roman goddess of fruit trees and gardens.
2. Flora - Roman goddess of flowers and spring.
3. blow - blossom.
4. shellwork - probably sea shells formed into a pattern or mosaic, perhaps to line the walls of a summer house or loggia. See note 8 to 'Mount Prospect', pp.248-51 in this volume.
5. Lethean - from the ancient Greek 'Lethe', meaning oblivion. The shells have been rescued from oblivion in the sea. Lethe was a river in the Greek underworld of Hades. Its water was drunk by human souls prior to their reincarnation. Its effect was to wipe away, or to cast into oblivion, the memories of their past lives.
6. How the shells 'give employ' to children is unclear - perhaps simply as objects of fascination.
7. rainbow tints - the shells would have been of different colours. The shells in the shell house at Mount Prospect are also described in this way.
8. The Mount Prospect poems mention 'mimic rocks'.
9. charm - i.e. the folly.
10. chaunt - sing; roundelay - birdsong.
11. Milton, Paradise Lost, IX. 735-44, particularly 743, where the forbidden fruit 'solicited her longing eye'.
12. grot - abbreviation of 'grotto', confirming the mosehouse is a folly of some kind.
13. callow brood - baby, or unfledged, birds.
14. her hand - that of the mistress of the house.
15. wreck of time - passage of time which causes all things to decay.
16. palefaced sorrow - personification of affliction.
17. natures ruin - i.e. death.
18. opening thought - developing mind.
In January/February 1804, Mary stayed at Milford Haven in South Wales with the family of the wealthy Quaker whaling magnate, Benjamin Rotch, and his wife, Eliza, at their home - Castle Hall. The Rotches originally came from Nantucket in America, moving first to Dunkirk and then to Milford Haven, in 1800 or 1801, at the invitation of Charles Francis Greville, nephew of Sir William Hamilton, and his agent in developing the new port and town at Milford. Greville aimed to encourage further prosperity in the town by persuading Rotch to run his whaling enterprise from there.

Some Nantucketers had already migrated to Milford in 1792 and were operating parts of their whaling businesses from there, but not on so large a scale as Rotch did after 1801. These included the Folgers and the Starbucks (source for 'Starbuck', the name of the chief mate on The Pequod, the Quaker-owned whaling ship, in Herman Melville's fictional epic, Moby Dick, written in 1851). All these families were forced to move from Nantucket after the American War of Independence (1775-1783), when Britain, no longer seeing the island of Nantucket as a colony, imposed huge duties on its whale-oil and derivative products, like candles, imported into Britain. Benjamin's father, William Rotch, was the main proprietor of Nantucket's whaling fleet. When given muskets as payment for a debt during the American Revolution, he made a pacifist statement by throwing the bayonets into the sea and distributing the guns to his whalers for hunting. One of his ships carried tea in the Boston Tea Party, another was the first to fly the American flag into an English port in 1783. William and Benjamin operated from Dunkirk circa 1786 to 1794 - the French government granted the Quaker group religious toleration and freedom from military duties. But as the French Revolution turned sour, it proved impossible to run their whaling operation from Dunkirk either and an alternative had to be found.

The full story of the Rotches at Milford is told by Ken McKay in The Rotches of Castle Hall (Milford Haven: Gulf Oil, 1996). Other books document the history of whaling at Milford. Particularly detailed is Edouard A. Stackpole's Whales and Destiny (Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1972). The Nantucket whaling families formed, in effect, a Quaker colony and, in 1811, built a meeting house at Milford which still stands today.

Rotch and his family lived at Milford until 1819 when, following bankruptcy, he had to auction Castle Hall and move away. While there the Rotches entertained many guests, mainly Friends travelling between England and Ireland as Waterford-Milford was a popular alternative to the Dublin-Holyhead route. But Rotch also hosted many non-Quakers as he moved in a variety of circles, including political, literary and artistic ones. According to his daughter: 'My father's hospitality knew no bounds, and our house was filled with the greatest variety of visitors. For months together we never sat down to a meal alone'. (Mrs John Farrar [Elizabeth Rotch Junior], Recollections of Seventy Years (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1866), p.54.)

It is possible that Rotch met Mary earlier in Ireland. He had made at least one visit there, showing an interest in Ireland and the way its trade was hampered by British restrictions. The Quaker diarist, Mary Leadbeater of Ballitore, has left a brief description of him on that visit:

Benjamin Rotch, a native of Nantucket, son to the honourable William Rotch, stopped a day or two at Ballitore in making a tour through Ireland. Uniting as he did the Quaker and the gentleman, his conversation was very pleasant. In France he was acquainted with Thomas Paine, whom he described as a drunken, dissolute man, whose company was avoided by sober, well-bred persons. He also knew Mary Wollstonecraft, whom he liked, as she was candid and engaging.


William Rotch returned to America and moved his fleet to New Bedford, where his business continued successfully. Another of his sons, William Rotch Junior, Clerk to New England Yearly Meeting for many years, left nearly £1,000,000 on his death in 1850. He donated generously toward the founding of the Friends Academy, New Bedford.
Many of Mary's poems written at Milford are undated and, although most were grouped together by the copyist, a few were not. 'An Adieu to my Friends at Milford' was, oddly, placed amongst Mary's prose writings. This was also the case with 'To Sally Starbuck - an acrostic' - a piece part poetry, part prose. And three other poems - 'On the Birth of Caroline Rotch', 'To Eliza Rotch Junr' and 'Written to Maria Rotch' - were separated from the others by 140 odd pages. I have put them all together and sorted them into date order where possible. When dates are given, in poems from different parts of the manuscript collection, they are always from January and February 1804, indicating that all the poems were written on the same visit.

The first dated poem written at Milford Haven marks the birth of Caroline Rotch, the baby born to Benjamin and Eliza Rotch on 5 January 1804. Mary composed these stanzas less than a week after the birth. Sadly, especially considering all the hopes expressed here for the little girl's future, Caroline was to die just over a year later on 29 January 1805. She was the sixth of the Rotches' seven children.

Milford Haven 1st mo 11th. 1804
On the birth of Caroline Rotch

Hist! the voice of joy & gladness
Sparkles bliss from every eye
Chased is all the gloom of sadness
Fast the shades of anguish2 fly!

Grateful praise to Heaven addressing
Heaven hath heard the suppliants prayer
Lol we view the promised blessing
Hush'd be every meaner3 care

Lovely babe, unfolded treasure!
Rapture fills thy parents heart
Pledge of dear domestic pleasure
That thine opening charms impart

Can the muse in silence languish
While she views thy tranquil frame
Feels her heart - a thought of anguish?
Glows she not with hallow'd flame?

Welcome lov'd unconscious stranger
Bud of beauty, germ of truth
Sands of hope & shoals of danger
Will surround thy guiltless youth
Syren songs of bland seductions
   Oft thy listening ear may crave
But thy parents wise instructions
   Will from harm their darling save

Bounteous Heaven thy cup of blessing
   To its brim hath amply pour'd
'Neath a mother's fond caressings
   Shall thy mind be richly stored

All that earth can give 'twill yield thee
   Peace & plenty round thee flow
More than these - an arm to shield thee
   From the pangs of mental wo[e]

Thus thy mind - a spacious garden
   Shelter'd from the blast of sin
With parental cares rewarding
   Bloom serene & pure within

Thus the seeds which now lie dormant
   Richly cultured soon shall spring
Never may'st thou know the torment
   Which remorse & folly bring

Seel! the hedge now form'd to guard thee
   Prompt to mark the devious way
Smiles approving shall reward thee
   Peace shall gild each closing day

Welcome then dear little stranger
   To thy parents longing arms
Where unknowing even of danger
   Fostering care shall prune thy charms

And if e'er thy blue eye glances
   O'er this artless strain of mine
May the wish my love enhances
   Deep impress thee - Caroline

Virtue is a solid treasure
   Never will its brilliance fade
It soars beyond each mundane pleasure
   And the wreck that time has made

Low in humble resignation
   Dwells this daughter of the sky
Unattach'd to outward station
   Oft obscure its glories lie
Be it thine to court her dwelling
Shrink not from the thorny road
And reluctance vain repelling
Fix with her thy blest abode

Of her portion think not meanly
Angels on her footsteps wait
And while follies hunger vainly
Bread of life her children eat

Oh! then yield to her direction
To her voice thine ear attend
She will grant thee safe protection
When no mortal can befriend

She will lead to joys immortal
Crown thy soul with bliss divine
And beneath Heaven's sacred portal
May I meet thee - Caroline!

1. Hist - an injunction to silence.
2. shades of anguish - i.e. the pains of childbirth, and attendant worries.
3. meaner - less important.
4. Syren songs of bland seductions - in Greek myth, sirens were creatures, part bird and part woman, who lived on an island from where, by their bewitching song, they lured sea travellers to their deaths. Their songs only seem "bland" or harmless.
5. hedge - Quaker term for the protection from temptation and sin afforded by Quaker custom, practice and ways of life.
6. devious way - crooked or treacherous path.
7. prune thy charms - to promote a plant's correct growth, it must be clipped back. An image for the control and encouragement of a child's development.
8. the wreck that time has made - conventional expression for the way in which all material things deteriorate with the passage of time.
9. this daughter of the sky - i.e. virtue.
Alice and Ruth remain unidentified. Both names feature in the Milford Quaker family trees, but these individuals seem to have been either married women or children at the time of Mary's visit. (For instance, a couple named Daniel and Alice Starbuck had a daughter named Alice who would have been about eleven years old at this time.) They could not, therefore, be the addressees of this poem, which warns against the danger of mistaking mere flirtation for the expression of genuine feeling.

On the "Squeeze of the Hand"

The squeeze of the hand  
What power can withstand  
How expressive its language & force  
   Even Alice & Ruth  
   Acknowledge this truth  
And oft to its charms have recourse  
   Yet dear Alice believe  
   Ev'n a squeeze may deceive  
And mislead the too credulous mind  
   For the urchin of Love  
   By his arrows will prove  
That alas! my dear Alice, he's blind\footnote{Cupid, or Eros, the winged cherub-like son of Venus, the goddess of love, was blind - hence his arrows could hit at random, accounting for the blindness of infatuation.}  
   Then I pray thee withstand  
   The squeeze of the hand  
Nor trust to its magical power  
   If xx hath prest\textsuperscript{sic}  
   Thy hand to his breast  
Be coy and indulge him no more  

2d. mo:3d. 1804.
On 6 February 1804, Mary watched one of the Rotches' whaling ships - the 'Hannah & Eliza' - set sail for 'Zelanian' (New Zealand) grounds. Some idea of the scope of such whaling ships can be gained from a list of the 'Hannah & Eliza's' cargo, available from an earlier voyage. Edouard Stackpole tell us that when she sailed from New Bedford, America for Milford in December 1800, captained by Micajah Gardner, she carried 526 casks of sperm oil (value $29,650) plus numerous barrels of sugar, coffee, beef, pork, flour, molasses, rum, tar, beer and a little tobacco for its crew, along with some oak staves for ship-building and other outfitting materials. Benjamin Rotch personally took delivery of one barrel of nuts, three barrels of wheat flour and one small bag of dried apples for home use at Milford. (Stackpole, Whales and Destiny, p.238.)

Stackpole adds that, later, in April 1804, the 'Hannah & Eliza' left New Bedford again, still under Captain Gardner, for the Australia-New Zealand whaling grounds. This would have been the voyage that Mary saw commence from Milford on 6 February. 'The voyage to New Zealand proved eventful. 'Five days out' from Bedford the ship 'was chased and forced to heave to by the British frigate Leander, and ten of the crew were taken off by a pressgang' (Stackpole, pp.238, 242). This seems especially ironic in view of Mary's wish, expressed in this poem, that the crew should be 'restor'd/Sav'd from the press-gang hateful as the sword'. This mishap forced the ship to return to New Bedford, but it sailed again on 23 May, travelling to Tasmania (21 October 1804), Norfolk Island in New Zealand, and Broken Bay near Sydney (May 1805), arriving back at Milford with another of Rotch's ships, the 'Ann', in September 1806.

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**Milford 2 mo. 6th. 1804**

_On seeing the Ship "Hannah & Eliza"
Set sail_

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Mild as the Spring and saturate with health
The rosy morning flows with vital wealth
See where the tide extends th'unruffled wave
And thy fair banks dear rising Milford lave
Priz'd are the charms that gild thy social shores
When peace & plenty hail the fleeting hours
Priz'd thy wise haven & thy Port secure
Which from the storm oft many a bark allure
Where safe at anchor and from danger free
They bland repose, O Milford, find in thee
Priz'd thy rich commerce tho' an infant guest
For art & nature vie to make thee blest
But priz'd beyond thy soft and social charms
Beyond thy Haven safe from gathering storms
Th' impatient sailor views the fav'ring gale
Whose gentlest breeze unfurls the swelling sail
See where the host in tranquil movement pass
Drink the warm breeze & cut the liquid glass
But chief the Hannah & Eliza towers
High o'er the rest prepar'd for Zelanian shores
Herself her convoy & the flag she bears
The states united in her sixteen stars
Hostile to none unarm'd and only skill'd
The whale destroying harpoon oft to wield
See, she weighs anchor - now she's under way
And Gardiner guides her thro' the trackless sea
No more the eye her beauteous form can trace
Lost to our view in undistinguished space
In vain the telescope exerts its power
The Hannah & Eliza's seen no more
One drear emotion shop[stop?]9 athwart our breast
But hope sat smiling and the thot.10 supprest[sic]
And still we gaz'd the heartfelt wish to pour
May Heav'n protect her & in peace restore
Adieu fair ship when next thou greet'st this strand11
Swift fly the happy news to Erins land12
That safe arrived & crown'd thy tedious toil
Thy huge sides freighted full with purest oil
In health thy Captain, all thy crew restor'd
Sav'd from the press-gang hateful as the sword
Haste the glad tidings & a ray of joy
Shall gild my mind, & all my thots.13 employ
Soft sympathy pervade thro' every vein
And bring my heart to Milford back again
I oft have wept for sorrow not my own
See the tall barks majestic glide along14
Enraptur'd Commerce hails the gath'ring throng
Commercel dear bond, that cements human kind
Refines our manners & expands our mind
From pole to pole the social link extends
Binds man to man & makes all merchants friends
From distant lands culls every varied sweet
And pours them at her fav'rite[sic] Rotch's feet
Here might mine heart a willing tribute pay
My pen the impulse of that heart obey
Unskill'd to praise yet shd. my numbers scan15
That great Philanthropist the friend of man
Him whom no country can his love confine
But all may share who bear the stamp divine16
Wide as th'extended globe his bounty gives
And the grand reservoir of man receives
Instructs the ignorant upholds the weak
And wipes the tear from misery's pallid cheek
Him Nations court & Kingdoms strive to gain
Secure of Wealth & Commerce in his train
For there Industry prospers Fame rebounds
And the loud anvil echoes back the sounds17
Trade crowns with shops the levell'd plains and toil
Bears the rich produce of corn wine and oil
Gaul mourns his loss Columbia weeps in vain
But Britain bears the palm, tis Britain rules the main.18
So have I seen a graceful river glide  
Enrich the valleys gild the mountains side  
Copious and clear its sweep majestic spreads  
And gives new verdure to th'emplowed meads  
Wide and more wide extends its devious course  
Uncheck'd by ought it gains its parent source  
Oh! might the Muse indulge an artless song  
Recount those acts & oft the tale prolong  
And as her lyre the guileless truth inparts  
Echo the feelings of a thousand hearts  
But no - tho' silenc'd by a look rever'd  
Actions have spoke and actions will be heard  
For blest with every gift that men desire  
A fame unspotted and an honor'd sire  
A partner fair accomplish'd and benign  
With taste to know & love to value thine  
Children that round thee cling & promise there  
T'minister less thy wealth than virtues rare  
Given too the power & more than pow'r the mind  
To succour merit & relieve mankind  
T'ameliorate aﬄictions chastening rod  
And act the faithful steward of thy God  
Feels not thy breast that sweet & sacred flame  
Which Folly's pamper'd vot'ries vainly claim  
Glows not thy soul the homage due to see  
Of hearts made happy & enrich'd by thee  
Yes! and in schools of virtue taught to prize  
The priviledge[sic] Heav'n to Poverty denies  
Soft and attemper'd learn thine heart to feel  
And pliant yield as wax to meet the seal  
That wreath unfading in Immortal bloom  
Shall gild life's darksome passage to the tomb  
Shall when unclad[sic] & closed each mundane sight  
Attend thee faithful to the realms of light  
There all thy acts of mercy shall disclose  
Meet Heav'n's high plaudit & in peace repose.  
Ahl must no theme like this, my pen employ  
Alas, I turn to taste of meaner joy -  
Good men, & just[.] the praise of myriads shun  
Fools vainly court it - but unsought tis won.

1. lave - wash or bathe.  
2. bark - ship.  
3. bland repose - rest that is harmless, i.e. free from harm.  
4. tho' an infant guest - whaling and its associated commercial activity was a recent introduction to Milford, so still in its infancy there.  
5. liquid glass - surface of the sea, as smooth and clear as glass. The 'host' of ships appears to 'cut' it.  
7. The 'Hannah & Eliza' still carried the American flag. It is likely that she was registered in both Britain and America. The flag had sixteen stars because Louisiana, the sixteenth state, had been purchased in 1803.
8. The captain of the ship was Micajah Gardner.
9. shop - written in manuscript, but possibly copyist's error for 'stop'.
10. thot. - manuscript abbreviation of 'thought'.
11. this strand - the shore at Milford.
12. Erin's land - Erin was an ancient Celtic name for Ireland.
13. thots. - manuscript abbreviation of 'thoughts'.
14. Mary is visualising the future return of the ships to Milford, laden with their cargos.
15. shd. my numbers scan - Mary hopes her numbers (poetry) will scan in a dual sense - scan, or encompass, the virtues of Benjamin Rotch, and scan as verse. shd. - abbreviation of 'should'.
16. Benjamin Rotch devoted a proportion of his wealth to philanthropic activity. In 1811, he would donate £100 toward the new Quaker Meeting House in Milford (McKay, p.68). He had moved from his native America to France, where the Rotches ran their whaling business from Dunkirk (c.1786 until c.1794), and then to Milford. Thus he does not confine his love to any one country, but distributes his largesse to all 'those who bear the stamp divine', i.e. all humanity as each person is created in the image of God.
17. the loud anvil [. . . ] sounds - image for the endeavour of industry.
18. Trade crowns with shops [. . . ] Britain rules the main (four lines in all) - at Dunkirk, the foundation of the Quaker whaling colony had brought increased trade and prosperity to the locality, and it was Greville's hope that the Rotches' investment at Milford would also stimulate the economy there. It undoubtedly did in many ways, but there was disagreement at the time over the extent. Rotch's critics, mainly his competitors in the London whale-fishing business, claimed that by having their ships outfitted in America, not Milford, and employing Nantucketer, rather than local, people, the Rotches did little for the local economy.
19. devious - meandering.
20. an honor'd sire - Benjamin Rotch's father, William.
22. there - is clearly written in manuscript, but this may be a copyist's error - 'fair' would make more sense.
23. afflictions chastening rod - conventional construction of suffering as a form of discipline.
24. Lk 12:42 - 'And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season.' (The parable of the wise steward who keeps the lord's house in order against his return.)
25. vot'ries - abbreviation of votaries, i.e. worshippers or followers.
26. attemper'd - modified, attuned or moulded.
27. plaudit - praise or applause.
28. meaner - lesser.
This was probably written for the Rotches' daughter, Maria, aged six in February 1804. It takes the form of a child's prayer. Maria was destined, in the 1830s, to marry a Church of England clergyman, Stephen Langston, and to have three children. After her father's death in 1839 she was the chief support of her mother.

Written for Maria Rotch  2mo 8th

Power divine! by whom I live
The homage of mine heart receive
For tho'[thou]' benignant, gracious, mild
Wilt bless the offering of a child
Thine arm upholds the feeble knee
And guides my soul to think of thee
The hallowed voice I hear within
It bids me shun the shades of sin
My bended will it doth approve
And checks my folly when I rove
O! give me Lord of life, to know
The joys that from thy presence flow
From every stubborn thought to flee
And let me simply follow thee

Why should I waste my youth in vain
When bliss immortal I might gain?

1.  tho' - clearly written in manuscript, but probably copyist's error for 'thou'.

Benjamin Rotch was very well read and built up an extensive library at Castle Hall. This poem is written in praise of the library and its owner, but it also conveys a conventional moral message - the transience of earthly joys and intellectual pleasures, and the need to concentrate on things eternal.

Written for B Rotch's Library.

If art & elegance combin'd
   By taste & judgment wrought
The stores of many a cultured mind
   The essence of each thought.

If these rich fruits of midnight toil
   Which science\(^1\) loves to taste
The produce of each varying soil\(^2\)
   An intellectual feast

If these - & wealth with these combin'd
   And power that love has given
If these can satisfy the mind
   Then were this Mansion\(^3\) Heaven

But no! the fading joys of sense
   Or Reason's polish'd art
Can never quench the thirst intense
   Which fills the owners heart.

In vain he stoops to taste the stream
   That cheers the devious way\(^4\) -
He feels that Life is but a dream
   The sunbeam of a day.

And tho' possest[sic] of power & will
   To succour and to bless
Of Judgment and of wondrous skill
   To alleviate distress,

Yet thirsting for immortal rest
   Unsatisfied below
The flame ascends from Rotch's breast
   With Philanthropic glow

Check'd by no force - each object nigh
   Is fuel to its flame
It gains the summit of the sky
   Nor rests, but, whence it came.
Then stranger, tho' thy ravish'd sight
With wonder these survey
Yet these shall cease to give delight
And wealth & power decay.

But be it thine to satisfy
Th'immortal thirst of soul
No change can bid thy pleasures fly
No wreck of time\$^5\$ controul[sic]

Then may'st thou taste in nature's fields
The sweets of Science given
Cull the fair flowers this valley yields
And leave but Earth for Heaven

2 mo. 13.

1. science - knowledge, here the knowledgeable or inquiring mind.
2. produce of each varying soil - i.e. texts produced in different countries.
3. this Mansion - Castle Hall.
4. devious way - path of life seen as tortuous and full of pitfalls.
5. wreck of time - conventional expression for damage or deterioration occurring with the passage of time.
One of Benjamin and Elizabeth Rotch's daughters was also called Elizabeth, a name abbreviated to Eliza for most Elizabeths in the family. Eliza's undertaking to nurture and teach her newborn sister Caroline provided the occasion for this poem. Eliza, born in Dunkirk in 1791, would have been twelve or thirteen years old.

Eliza was to lead a varied life. After her father's bankruptcy, she emigrated in 1819 to New Bedford in America, home of her grandfather, William Rotch, where she cared for her grandparents. She became prominent in the Friends Meeting, but, with some other Rotch family members, attracted criticism as one of the 'New Lights', as liberal Quakers were called, and was eventually disowned by her Meeting, with others. She subsequently became Unitarian. She married John Farrar, Professor of Science and Mathematics at Harvard University, in 1828. Her writings include a popular book on etiquette entitled A Young Lady's Friend (1837), her own memoirs - Recollections of Seventy Years (1866) and those of her mother - Memoirs of the Life of Elizabeth (Barker) Rotch ( Wife of Benjamin Rotch) (1861). Two close friends were Americans Ralph Waldo Emerson, the writer and philosopher, and Margaret Fuller (1810-1850), author and women's rights campaigner. Fuller, like Emerson, was one of the New England Transcendentalists and, for two years, edited their journal, The Dial. Eliza 'took Margaret Fuller under her wing; and it was she who inspired Charles T. Congdon's mot: 'Eliza Farrar taught Margaret Fuller how to enter a room; and Mary Rotch taught Emerson how to save his soul' (Bullard, The Rotches, p.149). When John Farrar died in 1853, Eliza returned to London to stay with her widowed mother, moving back to the United States after her mother's death in 1857. She died at Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1870.

(Sources: Bullard, The Rotches, pp.126-30; McKay, Rotches of Castle Hall, pp.76-77.)

To Eliza Rotch Junr

And hast thou Eliza engaged to impart
Thy Funds of instruction to young Caroline
O'erflowing with happiness feels thy fond heart
A warm wish that her days may be tranquil as thine

Methinks thou wilt teach her that knowledge & truth
We high o'er the mines of Golconda¹ should prize
That the tastes & the habits we foster in youth
Mark our judgment in age, or² deficient or wise

Methinks thou wilt tell him[her]³ that learnings high mount
Tho['] so rugged it seem, is surrounded with flowers
Thou wilt hold out thy hand, thy past footsteps recount
And with hopes smiling promises charm the dull hours

Thou'lt teach her that virtue & grace are most dear
In their dignified dress she may homage receive
That the sex are like porcelain transparent & clear
We admit of no flaw, nor a fall can retrieve⁴

Thou wilt teach her to value the culture of mind
To require the high polish that art can bestow
For tho in the quarry the marble we find
Yet industry & care will its elegance shew
I know thou wilt teach her that nature alone
Is a soil all productive of flowers or of weeds
Wilt nip the young errors, e'er follies be known
And impregnate her soul with the noblest of seeds

How delightful the task dear Eliza thou'lt find
And how rich the reward her improvement shall give
To thee will reverberate the charms of her mind
For indeed 'tis more blessed to give than receive

Oh! mayest thou succeed in the[?thy]6 dignified aim
With practice consistent thy theory blend
Mayest thou nurture the spark that shall rise to a flame
To illume lifes dark passage & upwards ascend

Remembering that youths but the Queen of an hour
And that beautys sweet rose will infallibly fade
That Time shall the pomp of each structure devour
And the glory of man, in the dust will be laid

But oh! be thou watchful Religion to guard
Without her thy cares & thy labour are vain
This your passport to Heaven, your work & reward
Gives a zest to enjoyment, a solace to pain

So ennobling is she, that our faculties clear
Alone as the crab-trees' wild branches we scan
Tis she that ingrafts them with excellence rare
Makes a woman divine & an Angel of man

Then take dear Eliza, the hope of a friend
That on virtues strong Pivot thy lessons may move
And in vain shall the blasts of contagion descend
Nor[,] so lovely in life, shall death sever your love

MC

1. mines of Golconda - a rich diamond mine, at Hyderabad in India, therefore source of fabulous wealth.
2. or - i.e. either.
3. him - probably copyist's error for 'her'.
4. That [...] can retrieve - reflecting the contemporary construction of women as fragile, like delicate china, and of the 'double standard' that operated regarding the sexual behaviour of women and men, according to which a woman's reputation was irrevocably damaged by any fall from virtue.
the sex - referring to the female sex. It was common to refer to one gender in this general way.
5. Acts 20: 35 - 'I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.'
6. the - clearly written in manuscript, but may be copyist's error for 'thy'.
7. her - i.e. Religion.
8. Essentially, this verse states that human 'faculties' alone resemble the branches of the uncultivated crab-apple tree (the fruit of which is sour). Just as fine apples are only obtained through the culture of apple trees (engrafting the shoot of one tree onto another), human 'faculties' only reach their full potential through religion.
This poem takes the form of a prayer spoken by Eliza Rotch Junior, and might have been designed for her to use in her devotions or worship at home. (See poem immediately above for biographical information on Eliza Rotch Junior.)

Written for E Rotch Junr. Milford.

How shall my early thoughts get free
Great father when they rise to thee
For homage due I long to pay
And own thy universal sway
Recount thy love, thy favors tell
Enjoy thy works and with thee dwell.
'Tis by thy bounty Lord I share
My honor'd parents' ceaseless care
Their watchful eye that guards from ill
Their arm that shields from danger still
Their tender love that makes me blest
Prevents my wishes¹ soothes my breast
Comfort provides and longs to see
The crown of all their hopes in me.
These are thy blessings! Gracious Lord
Thy gift - my mind with knowledge stor'd
And if my heart thy law fulfill
Tis thine to sanctify my will
Or if emotions grateful rise
And hallow'd tears o'erflow mine eyes
From thee the soft sensations came
Who fans the spark and feeds the flame
Devoid of thee how vague my mind
No virtue in myself I find
No power to practice what I'm taught
No will to conquer what I ought
Ohl then be oft thy presence given
And lift my soul from Earth to Heav'n.
Still let my grateful heart o'erflow
And sing thy praise, for much I owe
In health - while many a languid head
Lies joyless on a thorny bed
I have a home, with comforts stor'd
And plenty decks our social board²
But many a child is left to know
The stings of poverty and woe
Chill'd by stern want must bear the storm
While I am happy cloth'd & warm
Their minds no letter'd lore³ hath grac'd
Uncultur'd as the barren waste
But I am told of every fault
By precept and example taught
I share the tenderest parents' love
Do thou Oh Lord! mine heart improve
From vain delusions set me free
And let me only live to thee!

The mimosa was known as 'the sensitive plant' because its leaves close up, or shrink, when touched or placed in darkness and open again when exposed to sunlight. This could be seen as emblematic of modesty and virtue. Its beauty, too, was much admired. Percy Bysshe Shelley's poem entitled 'The Sensitive Plant' (1820), for instance, questions whether 'love, and beauty, and delight,' (see final stanza) represented by the plant, the maiden who tends it and their garden, can ever really die. (The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed. by Thomas Hutchinson (London: Oxford University Press, 1905; repr. 1965), pp.589-96.)

The Sensitive Plant. Milford.

Emblem of Modesty! dear lovely flower
Of Virtue's dignity, of Wisdom's power
From the rude touch thy shrinking leaves decline
But wide expand to meet the genial shine
Taught by this lesson, Alice,¹ let thy breast
Hail the dear pleasures of domestic rest
Shun Folly's touch - that bane² of heedless youth
But wide expand thee to the rays of truth
So shall thy virtues grace each parents eyes
Drink wisdom's beams & waft thee to the skies.

1. Possibly Alice Starbuck, daughter of Daniel and Alice Starbuck, who would have been eleven years old in 1804. Another candidate, especially in view of this poem's warning to 'shun Folly's touch', is the Alice addressed in 'On the Squeeze of the Hand', p.327 in this volume.
2. bane - curse, cause of trouble or woe.
Here, the poem's speaker is Benjamin Rotch. He and Mary probably collaborated in writing it. Henry Leach was a friend of Rotch's at Milford, and a regular guest at Castle Hall. A good deal of raillery appears to have gone on in the Rotch circle, and Leach's wit is a topic in several of the Milford poems. See particularly the following poem 'Ruth to T'. See also 'The Shew-man', 'Ruth & M. C. to B. Rotch, for the foregoing.' and 'The Monkey to the Magpie', pp.349, 353, 354 respectively.

Milford Haven
B Rotch to H. Leach.

Dear Harry thy volatile spirits of wit
If rightly applied may my malady hit
For reflection intense does an headach produce
And thy aether may be for a moment of use
Indeed since that fluid the faculty¹ say
Will these spasms of my stomach so grievous allay
Why may not thy subtile[sic] effusions of brain
By exerting my muscles, evaporate pain
For I think that between 'em a likeness I view
As ever was counterfeit guinea to true
Alike they relieve us, immersing in thought
Alike they fly off and the refuse is naught
Thy head to the vial immense I compare
Thy brain is Sal Volatile,² lighter than air
When the zest is flown off & its particles fled
Alas! my poor Harry you both are quite dead
Alone in the corking my simile's vain
For thy tongue is so porous³ it cannot contain
So I pray thee enclose me a packet or two
And I'll send thee a fee if the recipe do

1. faculty - i.e. doctors, the medical faculty.
2. Sal Volatile - solution of ammonium carbonate, spirit of hartshorn. Form of smelling salts, usually contained in a vial (glass medicine bottle) and taken for a variety of ailments: headaches, sickness and indigestion, fainting (though too much Sal Volatile could make one light-headed).
3. Porous - full of holes or gaps that allow substances, for instance fluid or air, to pass through. There is no stopping Harry's wit and volubility.
The identity of the Ruth for whom this was written is not known. She could have been a member of a Quaker family or, perhaps, a visitor. She is possibly the same Ruth as is mentioned in 'A Squeeze of the Hand' (p.327 in this volume). Mary wrote this verse for her to rebut the attentions of an unwanted admirer. The references to this admirer's ineffectual wit in comparison with that of Benjamin Rotch probably mean that the poem's intended recipient was Harry Leach, a friend of Rotch's who features in other poems as a figure of fun. See 'B Rotch to H. Leach' immediately above.

Ruth to -

Thy wit is like a boiling pot
    For ever pouring o'er
But all the flashes thou hast got
    Are bubbles and no more.

But Rotch is like the fire below
    Whose bright and genuine beam
Would make a thousand such as thou
    Evaporate in steam.

Nor think my friend, my maiden heart
    With tinsel\(^1\) to allure
An ounce of sense would soon impart
    A safe and certain cure.

1. tinsel - something attractive but without real value or substance.
The following is from 'E.L', a lady of mature years, to 'G.S', a young Quaker man whose eager attentions and adoption of fashionable dress in order to woo her have led her to fall in love with him. Having won her heart, however, he has slighted her 'proffer'd love'. 'G.S' is identified in the poem as Gayer Starbuck - and, in his gay outfit of 'hunting coat', 'velvet cape' and 'cravat high', he certainly lives up to his name. Gayer, in his early twenties in 1804, was the son of Daniel and Alice Starbuck, Nantucketers who moved to Milford from Nova Scotia in 1793, and so was the elder brother of Alice Starbuck, possible addressee of 'The Sensitive Plant', p.338 above.

Presumably, Mary composed the poem at E.L's request, though they may well have collaborated in its production. At any rate, E.L.'s plea to regain Gayer's wandering affections was unsuccessful. He later married an Eleanor Penrose - the couple are buried together in the grounds of the Friends Meeting House at Milford Haven.

It is likely that 'E.L' was Eliza Leach, sister of a friend of Benjamin Rotch's - Harry Leach of Sunnyhill. Benjamin had met Leach and his two single sisters, Eliza and Mary, when in Milford to plan the Rotch family's removal there. He subsequently took the girls back to London with him, spending much time showing them the sights, much to the annoyance of his wife Elizabeth who had remained in London to organise the sale of their house in Islington. She did not appreciate the arrival of guests, or their taking up her husband's time. Eliza Rotch Junior says the girls 'made themselves as agreeable as they could' but their presence was nevertheless a great trial to her mother. The Leach sisters eventually accompanied the Rotches back to Milford. (Extracts from Memorials of the Life of Elizabeth (Barker) Rotch (Wife of Benjamin Rotch), being the *Recollections of a Mother* by her daughter, Eliza Farrar [Eliza Rotch Junior] (Springfield: 1861) in Bullard, The Rotches, pp.339-40.)

Eliza Leach, being single, lively, on intimate terms with the Rotch family and other Quakers in the small community of Milford, while not a Quaker herself, would seem to fit the bill for 'E.L'. Members of the Leach family, for instance, are mentioned frequently in the diary of Abiel Coleman Folger. (The Folgers were another prominent Quaker whaling family. Abiel's husband Timothy was a merchant and magistrate.) The Folgers, Starbucks, Rotches and Leaches regularly exchanged visits and entertained one another. (Diary of Abiel Coleman Folger, Milford Haven, 1806-11, typescript copy, Haverford West Public Record Office.)

E.L .... to G. S.... Milford.

In what soft accents shall my thots. get free
To paint the anguish in mine heart for thee
How shall my trembling hand her task fulfil
Forgetful Gayer! ah, why remember'd still
In vain to Milford does fond fancy rove
In vain - if thus you slight my proffer'd love
These "sunny hills" afford me no delight
While you dear Gayer are banished from my sight
And ev'n gay Pembrokes ever varying scene
Gives the long sigh, as mark'd the space between
- False man can absent months thine heart set free
While here I languish and in vain for thee
Shall I resentful dip my pen in Gall
Pride whispers, yes! since thou deserv'est it all
Say not to justify thy cold neglect
Eliza only claim'd thy just respect
That thou unconscious of my souls alarms
Admired, not lov'd my antiquated charms
(And once believe me I was young as thou
Tho' dress supplies the want of beauty now)
That thy false lips thy passion ne'er reveal'd
And mine (till anguish bursts mine heart) are seal'd
But tell me not of words, thine eyes would rove
And its loud language bade me cherish love
Thy ready hand its frequent office sought
Thine offer'd arm on all my fancy wrought?
My tender soul concentred on thee hung
And drank the envenom'd poison of thy tongue
Oft thy soft sounds have charm'd my listening ear
Inaudibles which love alone can hear
Those fond attentions which attracted me
Invisibles which love alone could see
Ah plead not ignorance thy plea is vain
Nor play the coquet to elude my chain
Full well I know thou sought the toilet's aid
To lure my heart by Fashions self array'd
No sober youth that woos a sober friend
Would e'er to Proteus Fashions laws attend
And this my charge ungrateful Gayer to thee
That this alluring net was spread for me
Witness thy close cropp'd head thy cravat high
And thy stuff'd neck array'd in sable dye
That die, dear youth thy secret wish imparts
To rival officers in Ladies hearts
Witness thy hunting coat of green or black
By fashions scissors cut for folly's back
And well I ween to charm no quaker maid
In thy fair form in all the ton displayed
From head to foot its varied range I see
And velvet cape with square toed boots agree
Nor does thy tongue soft complem'ts decline
Thy Ma'am and Sir, & you, all match with mine
Then what thy aim neglectful Starbrick say
Or why thy dress in fashions mode display
Nay more, dear youth thy brother Paul go view
His plain attire declares my words are true
No shewy Dame like me he apes to win
But wisely keeps the bounds of truth within
Thou know'st, for wisdom hath illum'd thy mind
And sterling sense hath thy vague thots. refin'd
Historic annals oft thine eyes explore
And turn the page of Science o'er & o'er
Good nature too hath given thy heart to glow
Thy gentle heart that feels anothers woe
Then why to me so inconsistent prove
Allure my fondness and despise my love
Why claim the arts the studied arts of dress
And then my long attracted flame, repress
While thine address encouragement affords
The strong attraction needs no aid of words
Ah say then roving Gayer if these be vain
Say if thou deign'st to wear mine ancient chain
Say if thine heart to crown my love incline
And all thy dress and all thy words are mine
If faithful thou and unimpaired thy flame
Oh let one long'd for line reveal the same
By the wing'd Mercury which some call post
Declare that all my fears & doubts are lost
That once my arts long practis'd shall succeed
And cause in age thy gentle youth to bleed
And tho' each moment juvenile is o'er
Shall catch an heart who never catch'd before
With fading lustre court thy gracious boon
Like Sol who charms thee more at eve than noon
So shall be thine my wrinkles & gray[sic] hair
And mine thy Buckish dress thy blazing Star.

1. thots. - manuscript abbreviation of 'thoughts.
2. "sunny hills" - both the hills around Milford and 'Sunnyhill', the residence of the Leaches adjacent to that of the Rotches at Castle Hall.
3. Gall - bile, or bitterness, also substance secreted by an insect or fungus onto a plant.
4. souls alarms - agitated inner feelings.
5. way - clearly written in manuscript, but probably copyist's error for 'was'.
6. eve - clearly written in manuscript, but probably copyist's error for 'eye'.
7. Thy ready hand [. . .] fancy wrought - it was customary for a gentleman to perform offices for a lady, such as handing her her coat or cape, and offering her his arm when walking together or to lead her from the room. Gayer did this in such a way as to encourage E.L.'s feelings for him.
8. concentrated - brought to one point of concentration.
9. coquet - flirt. This male form was common at this time, but has since become obsolete, only the female form 'coquette' remaining in use.
10. toilets aid - help of dress, or other ways of enhancing appearance such as styling the hair.
11. by Fashions self array'd - dressed in the height, or epitome, of fashion.
12. sober friend - sober Friend (i.e. Quaker).
13. In Greek mythology, Proteus looked after the flocks of Poseidon, god of the sea, who granted him the gift of prophecy. But he avoided those who sought to consult him by changing into different shapes and wearing different clothes.
14. stuff'd neck [. . .] sable die - Gayer enveloped his neck in his tall cravat. sable die - black dye.
15. ween - think, suppose or believe.
16. In - clearly written in manuscript, but probably copyist's error for 'is'; ton - fashionable style of the day (abbreviation of 'bon ton' - high fashion, from the French, literally 'good tone' or 'taste').
17. Quakers did not use formal modes of address such as 'Ma'am' or 'Sir', regarding these as elevating one person above another, and adhered to the archaic forms 'thee' and 'thou' instead of 'you'. Gayer compromised these customs by conforming to the manners of contemporary, polite society observed by non-Quakers, like 'E.L'.
19. Gayer's brother Paul Starbuck, a grocer and, later, trustee of the Quaker burial grounds.
20. apes - to ape is to mimic or copy. Paul does not try to copy Gayer's behaviour in wooing a fashionable woman.
21. keeps the bounds of truth within - Quakers called adhering to their testimonies, such as simplicity, 'keeping within the bounds of truth'. Paul does this by dressing plainly in the Quaker tradition.
To Sally Starbuck - an acrostic

The Goldfinch---

Sally let thy flexile\(^1\) heart
All the charms of mercy prize
Let Compassion soft impart
Lessons pointing to the skies
Youth's the hour of virtuous strife
Spring of nature soon tis o'er!
Then adown the verge of life
Autumn pours her ripen'd store
Rise superior far to Earth
Be thy claim a nobler birth
Unto thee rewards shall flow
Cause each good and gentle mind
Keeping mercy, mercy'll find

The foregoing lines were occasion'd by an interesting circumstance. Sitting at table 1Mo 26 in one of those worthy families whose kind attentions and unaffected hospitality caused those hours which would otherwise have mov'd with leaden pace to glide smoothly & pleasantly along, on the banks of Milford Haven, & partaking less of corporeal refreshment than of "The feast of reason and the flow of soul" - those intellectual enjoyments so highly prized by those whose minds are susceptible of the exquisite felicity of cultivation when suddenly our attention was attracted towards that dear little girl to whom was presented a beautiful goldfinch which had just been caught for her by a mischievous thoughtless boy - the poor palpitating creature was received with eagerness and an involuntary emotion of delight - she gazed on it with unaffected joy, while its variegated plumage excited her admiration and her features were illumin'd by the transitory emanation. But a few moments reflection on the propriety of retaining in captivity the unoffending object of her wishes dissipated the ebullitions of joy. It was mentioned that of all creatures to whom Liberty was dear, there were none so fitted to enjoy it, as the feather'd tribe, none so completely form'd for it, as they: none who seem'd so ill calculated to brook confinement - their light floating bodies; their airy pinions, which soaring thro' the midway sky, all form so strong and striking a contrast to the close pent wiry cage, that the voice of consideration rejects the caprice which suggested it. Alas! to what evils do thoughtless children subject the innocent victims of their casual amusements - how often do they unknowingly inflict many an agonizing pang and how necessary is it that they sedulously cherish every dawning of that celestial ray which illumes the opening mind & invariably imprints there the sacred lesson of "whatever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them" - and widely as universal nature extends that genuine impulse of philanthropy. "I know Sally", said her Mother, "that thou wouldst feel more real pleasure in restoring that bird to its wonted liberty than thou possib[ly] canst experience in confining it". "But I will get a large cage for it replied Sally whose countenance evinced an internal struggle between compassion and a desire to retain it", "And that will be less to this poor bird, than a small room would be to thee" - "But I have seen birds very happy singing in their cages" - "Yes", said her father, "and I have seen them striving to break their imprisoning bars, pushing with painful violence their beak thro' the wires, and using every innefectual[sic] effort to regain their native liberty: & who possessing humanity would desire to inflict such agonizing sensations, because that when the conflict was over, (if they by death eluded not the inglorious triumph of their heedless persecutors) it would amuse with a song, or hop about its narrow confines. How much more gratifying is it to see them happy in Liberty, enjoying their existence, & chaunting their varied notes in that sphere in which the wise Author of nature hath placed them". The force of conviction rolled onward with impetuous weight it was a torrent carrying all before it; her inclination yielded to reason;
her ideas of pleasure to those of humanity - she went to the door, released the goldfinch & returned to the company possessed of more intellectual and internal felicity than she could have experienced from the retention of the poor flutterer. What a triumph! how ennobling the exercise of humanity! & how delightfully prognosticating\textsuperscript{11} the maturation of those amiable sensibilities which improve & heighten the happiness of life and which by preserving the heart tender disposes it to receive divine impressions, as the flame which softening the ductile\textsuperscript{12} wax prepares it for the seal, & is always abundantly rewarded by tenfold increase of every good disposition which waits but for exertion and extension to increase in the prolific soil of the youthful mind.

1. \textit{flexile} - tractable, able to adapt (therefore susceptible to good influences).
2. \textit{adown} - poetic form of 'down'; \textit{verge} - downward slope. (Human life is seen as declining into autumn, once its spring, or youth, is over.)
3. \textit{Cause} - abbreviation of 'because'.
5. \textit{ebullition} - spontaneous or sudden outburst.
7. \textit{midway sky} - middle of the sky.
8. \textit{sedulously} - diligently or assiduously.
9. Mt 7:12 - 'Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the Law and the Prophets'.
10. \textit{chaunting} - chanting or singing.
11. \textit{prognosticating} - indicating, foretelling.
12. \textit{ductile} - pliable, yielding.
Mary may have brought her own son, William, with her to Milford - he would have been just two years old. But the Rotches also had a little boy named William (William Barker Rotch) who was born in Milford in August 1802, and would thus have been aged seventeen months at the time of Mary's visit. Either William could have been subjected to the 'blandishments' of Ruth and Maria, as described in this poem, but it is more likely that it was William Rotch.

The Contest.

Ruth and Maria, maidens gay
   Strive Williams heart to gain
And each their blandishments display
   The object to obtain

Maria pours the wonted hoard¹
   Of many a silver'd toy
With these she decks the festive board
   T'attract her darling boy

Ruth conscious that the charms of mind
   Affection will secure
With gentlest art & nurture tries
   The urchin² to allure

Pleas'd with the toys he playful sports
   On blithe³ Maria's knee
Anon⁴ the trinkets tire - he courts
   With sober Ruth to be

To you the child untaught in guile
   Instruction doth impart
Amusements vague may please a while
   But softness wins the heart

1. wonted hoard - usual store or collection.
2. urchin - a mischievous, or impish, boy.
3. blithe - happy and joyful.
4. Anon - soon.
Next, Mary advises someone called Maria on the need to ensure her own financial security. In view of the content, Maria cannot be the six-year-old Maria Rotch - she must be another relative or guest.

**Maria when applied for by an old Miser affected generosity and we advising her to make sure of a settlement - I added**

Maria while I pity thee  
Some comfort let me give  
Tis wise to imitate the bee  
And thus on Nectar live

Uncertain joys gay spring affords  
Maria those are thine  
But we for Winters treasur'd hoards  
Would all its charms resign

Then pray accept a friends advice  
Nor cherish baseless hope  
Autumnal harvests wait thy choice  
Be sure thou reap the crop
This comic tale about a local Justice of the Peace imbued with a sense of his own dignity and self-importance, undermined by events, probably concerns Henry Leach who was indeed a local JP and who seems to have been the butt of some teasing within the Rotch circle. Two individuals named Henry Leach are listed in *The Names of His Majesty's Several Justices of the Peace of the Said County of Pembroke* held at Haverford West Public Record Office.

**The Shew-man.**

I've a story to tell
  Be attentive I crave
Of what woes some befell[sic]
  Who were dup'd by a knave

A certain wise Justice
  Of Judgment profound
Whose shrewdness we trust is
  Most gravely renown'd

His fancy was curious
  Some feats to behold
Which Fame (often spurious)
  This Justice had told

So eager and willing
  Th'atchievements[sic] to know
That he came with his shilling
  To peep at the shew

When taken their places
  And given their fee
They sat with long faces
  Expecting to see

The lights were extinguished
  And long did they wait
'Till their hopes were relinquished
  In fear and debate -

I can't help reflecting
  How funny this spark!
When he unsuspecting
  Long grop'd in the dark -
I wonder his shrewdness
   No falsehood could find
I hope tis not rudeness
   To say he was blind

For while he sat moping
   Like monkey or ape
The knave was eloping
   And made his escape

At length all suspecting
   The people were rude
And voices collecting
   A tumult ensued

All cry Justice! Justice!
   And loudly they roar'd
In him their[that?]² their trust is
   His aid they implored

He doubtless might dread
   This would hurt his renown
When plum on his head
   An old woman fell down

Such noise and confusion
   Did our Hero affright
I could use an allusion
   But no - twould seem spite

At length like Don Quixote³
   The door he found out
And he left them to fix it
   And settle the rout⁴

Now Ruth⁵ it will please us
   This farce to retain
And when next time he teaze us
   He'll triumph in vain

1. spark - usually, a smart young gallant or man about town, but also a flash of wit - appropriate for Leach whose wit features in several of the Milford poems.
2. their - repeated in manuscript. Probably copyist's error for 'that'.
3. Don Quixote - hero of the Spanish novel Don Quixote de la Mancha, by Cervantes (Part I: 1605, Part II: 1615). In a state of mental disorder caused by reading too many chivalric tales, he travels the world seeking adventures and becoming implicated in comic situations, frequently causing mayhem.
4. rout - riot.
5. Almost certainly the Ruth of 'Ruth to', p.340 above.
This little verse might have been written about the sweet voice of a child - Benjamin and Elizabeth Rotch's six-year-old daughter, Maria - or, more likely, to compliment an adult guest who sang or wrote verse, probably the same person as in 'Maria when applied for by an old Miser [ . . . ]', p.348 above.

[Untitled]

The music of Maria's tongue
My fainter lyre hath quite unstrung
For ah beneath her accents gay
My trembling notes have died away

1. The lyre was the instrument of the muses, and so a metaphor for poetry.

On the Whalefishery .......

Oh Milford what blessings await thy bleak coast
How amply rewarded thy toil
Let thy light shine in darkness thy lamps a bright host
For thy Virgins can never want oil

1. toil - referring to whaling, Milford's main industry during these years.
2. Virgins - virgin lamps, which will never be short of oil as long as the whaling ships keep returning laden with their precious cargo. Mary is punning on this meaning and Jesus's parable of the wise and foolish virgins. The parable describes how the wise ones ensured they had sufficient oil to keep their lamps burning till the bridegroom's arrival, while the foolish ones, coming unprepared, had to go to buy more oil and so missed the wedding. Similarly, we must be prepared for we never know when the Son of Man will come. (Mt 25:1-13)
Here Ruth and Eliza (perhaps Benjamin’s wife, Elizabeth, though she could just as easily be Eliza Leach, or even the Rotches’ daughter, Eliza), in mirthful vein, beg him to eschew ‘pig meat’ owing to its unfortunate effect on him. Pork was sometimes considered to have a detrimental effect on physical and mental health, particularly if eaten often. In *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), Robert Burton wrote, ‘Pork, of all meats, is most nutritive in its own nature, but altogether unfit for such as live at ease, or are any ways unsound of body or mind; too moist, full of humours [...] nought for queasie stomachs, in so much, that frequent use of it may breed a quartan ague’. (See 16th edn, from original edn (London: B. Blake, 1836), Part 1, Sect. 1, MEMB 2, Subsect.1, p.141.) (A quartan ague is a fever recurring every third day.)

Rotch did have some stomach problems at this time (see ‘B Rotch to H. Leach.’ p. 339 above). However, the real culprit here may have been *Pigs’ Meat*, a journal produced by the radical Thomas Spence from 1793 that was regarded as seditious. He was arrested for selling it and Thomas Paine’s *Rights of Man* in December 1793. Spence also had links with the United Irishmen through radical but small organisations of United Englishmen and Scotsmen in Britain, and was arrested again in 1798. His journal’s title was a response to Edmund Burke’s characterisation of the people as a ‘swinish multitude’ in *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), and its content included excerpts from radical political and philosophical works as well as Spence’s own writings. (See David Worrall, *Radical Culture* (Brighton: Harvester, 1992), pp.22-31.) Although it was directed at radicals and the artisan classes, it is possible Rotch could have been passed copies of *Pigs’ Meat*, particularly given that his friend Henry Leach was a J.P. - copies might have been confiscated, for instance, if they featured in a case at the local magistrates’ court. Mary’s mention of the ‘malevolent nature of swine’ which might ‘incline’ Rotch’s ‘judgment’ ‘to their obstinate will’ lends itself to this interpretation.

### Ruth’s Petition to B. Rotch.

Attend I beseech thee my earnest request
And grant me relief for I’m sorely distrest[sic]
For Eliza & I both implore and intreat†
That thou’II deign to abstain from all kinds
of pig meat.

Our cares for thy health are so poignant & true
That we almost desire we could make thee a Jew²
On hams or on bacon forbid thee to dine
For we dread the malevolent nature of swine
Lest their grossness malign should some
juices instill
And thy judgment incline to their obstinate will
We in agony dread a return of the bile³
If repell’d by the Bacon health ceases to smile
Let kindness I pray thee bear rule in thy breast
And without reserve grant us our anxious
request
With concession long sought let our wishes be crown’d
And thro’out[sic] our dear circle shall
pleasure abound -
This verse follows on from the previous one, 'Ruth's Petition to B. Rotch', in the manuscript collection and, as the title indicates, is connected with it. It asks Rotch to 'restore/The sole cause of our dread' - possibly the journal *Pigs' Meat*. See the 'Petition' above, where the girls 'dread the malevolent nature of swine'.

Ruth & M.C. to B. Rotch, for the foregoing.

Since in vain our request  
   To that unpolite Gayer¹  
Who refused to assist  
   Tho' distrest[sic] we declare  
We pray thee restore  
   The sole cause of our dread  
For Harry's shrewd roar  
   Hangs over our head  
Tis a sore thing in truth  
   His smart lash to endure²  
So pardon our youth  
   It our folly may cure  
We expect from B Rotch  
   An effectual relief  
For he cannot encroach  
   And he won'[t] play the thief

¹. Gayer Starbuck, see 'E.L . . . to G.S . . .', p.341 above.  
². Harry was Henry Leach, Benjamin Rotch's friend, noted, and ridiculed, for his wit (see 'B Rotch to H. Leach.' and 'Ruth to ?', pp.339 and 340 above). A 'roar' can mean a loud laugh, and 'his smart lash' refers to his wit. If Leach passed Rotch copies of the journal *Pigs' Meat*, his reaction is understandable.  
³. The last two lines form a compliment to Rotch that may also be connected with wit. To 'encroach' or 'play the thief' may be references to plagiarism, i.e. of others' witticisms.
In this piece Mary styles herself the monkey and 'H.L.' (Henry (Harry) Leach, close friend of Benjamin Rotch) the magpie. 'H.L.' is a justice of the peace and a wit (or imagines himself one). He has accused Mary of plagiarism and she, artfully, retaliates in a similar vein. An ape is, of course, a mimic or imitator, while one 1632 definition of a magpie was 'an idle or impertinent chatterer' (OED).

M.C. H.L.
The Monkey to the Magpie

A certain Justice shrewd and keen
Who with his friends is frequent seen
The very magpie of the table
Who talks and chatters while he's able
Fix'd on poor me his blinking eyes
And thus exclaim'd he wondrous wise
Do you observe that cunning elf
Indeed she's very like myself
You think her wit is her own coining
But trust me Rotch 'tis all purloining
With plagiarisms her mind is fill'd
In depth of judgment quite unskill'd
Today, she artful tries to borrow
What serves to make you laugh tomorrow
Perchance she wakes while others dream
Steals all their thoughts & skims their cream
I this decision won't relinquish
Even could from cant she dont distinguish
She's but an ape - so you take care
And of her monkey tricks beware
Then why good friend provoke my spite
Fools may retort and apes may bite
But well I ween thou guest the truth
I ought could steal from thee, forsooth
And why so fierce thy blinking eye
Children, not me, twould terrify
Alas! I fear thy Judgments blind
Tho' safe in vacuum rests thy mind
Thou tracest others by thyself
I'll prove thee here a luckless elf
For Ruth - whom thou declares thy second
Alas without thy host thou reckon'd
Says that my thoughts are sound and true
And thy own image fair thou drew
Indeed I think we're much the same
So here a truce I now proclaim
Tis sad the world should see us, brother
For ever sparring with each other
When like as twins we steal or borrow
Alike we jest to banish sorrow
Our shallow gleanings oft unfold
And make our tinsel\(^6\) pass for gold
Alike we credit our friends table
And eat & drink while we are able
(As our encreasing size bespeaks\(^7\)
Our surface sleek, our ruddy cheeks)
Talk sense or nonsense - so it pass
And seldom fail to drink our glass
Well! - since alike our features tally
Thou cease to backbite, I to rally
And prove that wonders do not cease
When fools like us can dwell in peace.

Milford haven[sic]

* a grammatical error on which he animadverted\(^8\)

1. elf - a fairy, or supernatural creature apt to get into mischief or play tricks. Here a crafty or mischievous character.
2. Mary commences her reply.
3. ween - think or believe.
4. elf - see note 1 above. Mary applies the same epithet to 'H.L.' as he did to her. However, he is luckless - because he cannot win the argument.
5. Ruth - clearly written in manuscript, but may be copyist's error for 'Rotch' as the next line goes on to speak of 'thy host', and it was Rotch who entertained Mary and Harry Leach at Castle Hall.
6. tinsel - decoration without real value or substance.
7. encreasing - variant spelling of 'increasing'; bespeaks - tells or shows the evidence of.
8. animadverted - criticised or passed censure.
In this brief verse, Mary attributes the poetic gifts she displays at Milford to Rotch's encouragement and influence - his male mentorship, and, in keeping with prevailing notions of feminine modesty, asserts that her aim in writing is not to gain any personal recognition but simply to give pleasure within the private, domestic sphere.

[Untitled]

I envy not th'applause of fame
Domestic pleasure is my aim
Nor thought to wear a poets bays¹
Till Rotch approv'd my simple lays
Would he repress th'exuberance wild
Of fancy's vague untutor'd child
Or clip the wings that soar away
How would my judgment own his sway

¹. a poets bays - wreath of laurel leaves, the crown of a poet and emblem of poetic prowess.

Ruthena's gift of a pen, with the expressed wish that Mary's 'numbers' or verses might shine, prompted the following lines. 'Ruthena' was perhaps an expanded form of 'Ruth', and so it is reproduced here, before 'To Ruth in tears' (in manuscript it is placed a little later).

[Untitled]

Ruthena gives a silver pen to say
"Clear & unsullied let thy numbers shine"
I take thy boon dear girl, but to obey -
   Requires more judgment solid & Divine.
To Ruth in tears.

Ah! much I fear, Corroding Care,
Pervades thy gentle breast, dear Ruth
Th'unconscious sigh, The tearful eye
Confirm my thoughts & speak the truth
Say can thine heart No griefs impart
To ease th'internal weight of woe ¹
Ah cease to moan Unseen, alone
And friendship shall her aid bestow
Where Love presides And joy divides
A double bliss shall either share
If woes invade By mutual aid
The lessen'd weight may banish care
Such power to bless Does love possess
When two congenial hearts unite
That trust me Ruth, I speak the truth,
No words can paint the just delight
Then cease to mourn Let Hope return
And chase those pearly tears away
Let Rotch's smile Thy fears beguile
And Peace resume her wonted sway.

¹. Mary asks Ruth to ease her sorrows by sharing them.

[Untitled - Addressee unknown]

A furious temper in thy face I see
O wo[e] be to the wife that's bound to thee
But if with thine well match'd hers be
the same
The strong collision might a
town inflame ......
A rebus is a puzzle where the clues (originally pictures or letters, but subsequently punning or word-play) suggest the syllables of a word. This one was created to convey the name of a seemingly ungrateful female guest.

A Rebus.

In days of yore by Heroes used
   While all my state admire
But now each nobler task refus'd
   I'm doom'd to drudge for hire

My second when impress'd by pain
   Methinks I hear you cry
My third in writing we obtain
   And does before you lie

These when united will expound
   A wondrous female's name
Who in this house asylum found
   And prov'd a legal claim

And strange that of her country's ways
   She never yet would speak
Altho she talks with equal ease
   Of English French or Greek

Indeed we think her manners rude
   Nor judge her sense profound
For not a sign of Gratitude
   We yet in her have found ..

Yet still her wants are loud express'd
   And prompt attendance claim
But never sin defil'd her breast
   Nor blush'd her cheeks with shame

Much might I say but that I fear
   My meaning were too plain
Do thou Eliza search with care
   Her character to gain

1. Probably Eliza Rotch, Benjamin Rotch's wife - the hostess.
As with 'The Contest', p.347 above, the William for whom these two poems were written could be either Mary's own two-year-old son (if she took him with her to Milford) or, more likely considering Mary's habit of writing verses for her hosts, the Rotches' seventeen-month-old baby boy.

**William to his Mother**

Dear Mamma thy darling see
Thus I cling around thy knee
Smile & let thy smile impart
Joy & gladness to my heart
Let thy soft endearing kiss
Bend my will & crown my bliss
Docile thus to thee I turn
Thou shalt teach & I wilt learn

Milford Haven

**Another**

Dear Mamma I long to be
All thou canst desire in me
Bid farewell to every fault
For I covet to be taught
Never may thy frown impart
Woes that rend thy Williams heart
See me docile to thy will
All thy kind commands fulfill
Smile, & say thy boy shall prove
Worthy of maternal Love
In the last poem written at Milford, bidding her friends 'adieu' before her return to Ireland, Mary remembers the pleasant times they have enjoyed together. The poem mentions many individual members of the Milford Haven Quaker families, as well as Benjamin Rotch's friend, Mr. Leach. It is addressed to Mary's hostess, Benjamin's wife, Elizabeth Rotch Senior.

An Adieu to my friends at Milford.
2 mo. 16th. 1804

Addressed to E. Rotch Senr.

Tho' softest ties allure to Erins land
And fav'ring breezes bid the sails expand
Yet in my pensive breast does sadness dwell
And my tongue fa[lters, sic] e'er I say farewell
Strange that the flowers which friendships bower adorn
Inflict the keenest pang the sharpest thorn
Strange that the cordial draught whose rapturous taste,
Makes life worth living, bears such dregs at last
Yet such my fate! the source of purest joy
Corrodes my heart and does my peace annoy
On memory's tablet2 is your love impress[ sic]
And grateful ardour glows within my breast
Long shall that love a cherish'd guest remain
Tho' time annihilate the parting pain.
And oft as Fancy's airy visions glide
Enlarge the circle of your dear fire-side
There all that interests you delight to know
And drink the streams of knowledge as they flow
Whether wise converse evening hours beguile
Or diamond pointed wit commands the smile
Or Samuel's reasoning sage & sense profound3
Or Leach's irony spreads laughter round4
Or if Lucretia lends an added mite5
And near6 affection gives and takes delight
Or Hopkins, lovely as the breath of spring7
Or gentle Ruth their mental treasures bring8
Or friendly Paul or Alice mild and fair9
Or the kind youth by name and nature Gayer10
Or if more grave you, placid, love to trace
Content & comfort in Abiel's face11
For not the known experience of her Lord
Lessons of purer wisdom may afford
Or Daniel, hospitable friendly kind
Or his lov'd counterpart in soul & mind12
Or the young groupe[sic] who willing homage pay
For swift to hear, nor slow to learn are they
With these full oft my intellectual eyes
Shall catch the spark of wisdom as it flies
There mark the honest zeal, the heartfelt glow
That gilds thy husband's philanthropic brow
The words that indicate his stedfast mind
Prudent yet noble and tho' plain refin'd
Who all embracing in one general plan.
(Each clime his own, his brother every man)
Longs to extend benignant virtues sway
And kindle worlds with his prolific ray
Oft too shall memory thy lov'd children trace
Coheirs of all thy elegance and grace
Thy dear Eliza polish'd and refin'd
Fraught with the sapience of her mother's mind
Already taught to succour & to bless
And guide her pencil to relieve distress
Thy precious fair Maria good as fair
Her bosom sympathy's deposit rare
Sweet lovely flower of Virtue and of Truth
The bud of genius or[on] the stem of youth
Her mind all nerve that does with love expand
Her soul soft music for a masters hand
Touch'd by that hand twill pour forth strains divine
Rich melody! harmonious & benign
Will gain all hearts & each affection move
Save those - if such there be - who have no hearts to love.
Thy darling William manly noble free
Docile as wax, the germ of goodness he
Oft in his namesake I'll delight to trace
His mimic attitudes his beauteous face
And the young Caroline's Expanding form
Replete with mercy's pure & genuine charm
These deep engraven shall my mind explore
When Milford-haven meets mine eye no more
When Castle-hall's wide views are lost to me
(Save what perspective memory oft will see)
And tracing these to thee my valued friend
The soft affections of my heart ascend
Thy self the master-key the spring that guides
The bond that links them & o'er all presides
Oh! may thy thought the absent image bear
Of her who shared thy love & soothing care
May friendship ask & friendship shall comply
In your remembrance may I never die

1. Erins land - Ireland.
2. memory's tablet - figurative term for human memory. A tablet was a stone slab or plaque on which an inscription was written, but also a thin sheet of wood or ivory for writing on with a stylus. Several such tablets, or leaves, could be linked together. Both sorts of tablet convey the idea of memory as a site on which discrete memories are inscribed without easy erasure.

3. Samuel - Samuel Starbuck, merchant and, later (1810), member of the banking firm of Rotch, Phillips and Starbuck (Milton and Haverfordwest Bank).

4. Leach - Henry Leach, friend of Benjamin Rotch, mentioned in several other poems written at Milford.

5. Lucretia - Lucretia Starbuck, née Folger, wife of Samuel Starbuck.

6. near - close.

7. Hopkins - no information found.

8. Ruth - mentioned in several poems. Probably a member of one of the Milford Quaker families.

9. Paul or Alice - Paul and Alice Starbuck, children of Daniel Starbuck, grocer, and his wife Alice. Brother and sister to Gayer Starbuck. Alice was about eleven years old in 1804.


11. Abiel - Abiel Coleman Folger, wife of Timothy Folger, American Consul at Milford Haven. Author of a journal now in the keeping of Haverford West Public Record Office. Abiel and Timothy were the parents of Lucretia Starbuck, wife of Samuel.

12. Daniel and his lov'd counterpart - Daniel Starbuck and his wife Alice, née Vaughan, parents of Paul, Gayer and Abiel.

13. Benjamin Rotch was noted for his philanthropy.

14. tho' plain refin'd - although plain (i.e. a plain Quaker in his way of life), still refined (i.e. having the manners of a gentleman).

15. Who all embracing [. . .] prolific ray - Rotch is depicted as one who regards himself as part of a brotherhood of man that transcends national boundaries or distinctions - thus he calls 'each clime', or country, his own.

16. Eliza - Elizabeth Rotch Junior, aged about thirteen. Mary goes on to eulogise the virtues of the Rotches' other children.

17. sapience - wisdom.

18. guide her pencil to relieve distress - write to obtain funding for charity, as Mary did in composing poems to possible benefactors requesting money for charitable projects.

19. Maria - Maria Rotch, aged six.

20. William - William Rotch, aged eighteen months.

21. his namesake - Mary's own two-year-old son, also called William.


23. Castle-hall - the home of the Rotches, which they had just purchased. See poem entitled 'To Castle Hall [. . .]', p.390.
Mary returned to Ireland from Milford Haven in February 1804. There are then no dated poems in the collection until this poem, and the following one, written in June. (One reason for this gap, perhaps, may have been the tragic loss of her baby, Nathaniel, in April.)

Here, Mary replies to an acquaintance named Eliza on behalf of ‘A’ (unidentified). It seems that ‘A’ would like some books returned, and Eliza has insisted, in jest, that she make her request in verse.

Supposed to be addressed by

A

Thy Messuage Eliza I strictly convey’d
And endeavour’d thy wish to obtain
That all claim on the books must in verses be made
With a song to redeem them again.

But alas Im. afraid that my neighbours light wings
Have been clipt by the scissors of Time
For she says that the notes of her tremulous strings
Will not soften the theme into rhyme

And she thinks that the warblers that visit thy bower
Who receive from thy hand their supply
On thy ear such a thrill of sweet melody pour
That her song must in languishment die

But she says that tho' poor her effusions of brain
Yet sincere was the joy of her heart
To see thee restor’d to each comfort again
And that health does its lustre impart

That when Nature to meet thee unfolded her stores
When the birds sung more sweet on the spray
When Flora enamell’d each meadow with flowers
And the garden was lovely and gay

That when brighter the hue of each dew dropping tree
And the air's balmy breath gave delight
That she shar’d in their joy their protectress to see
And in sympathy added her mite -

6th. mo: 1804

1. on the books - written twice in manuscript, almost certainly copyist's error.
2. Flora - Roman goddess of spring and flowers.
To a dear Friend and family
6 mo. 4th. 1804.

How sweet is the converse that flows unrestrain'd
From the lip to the heart of a friend
How pleasant is harmony social unfeign'd
With candour that ne'er may offend.

Impell'd by the wish to possess that delight
I fondly solicited thee
To cheer my abode with your presence tonight
And partake of refreshment with me

For vague are the treasures of nature & art
If friendship, if love, be untrue
'Tis they that to beauty its graces impart
And tis them I solicit in you.

For tho' welcome the dew that refreshes the blade¹
And welcome the flowers of the spring
To us are more welcome in kindness array'd
The social enjoyments you bring

Then haste that at least for a few fleeting hours
May the cream of enjoyment be mine
Be cloudless ye skies intercept with no showers
And may Boreas to Zephyr resign²

¹ blade - i.e. blade of grass.
² The hope is that Boreas, the cold north wind, will give way to his brother Zephyr, or Zephyrus, the gentle west breeze.
C. B. was Catherine Birkett, Mary's cousin whose adoption of worldly ways was later to upset her family deeply. She was eventually disowned in 1814 for marrying outside the Society of Friends. (See Appendix 7, 'Individuals Featuring in the Writings of Mary Birkett Card'.)

She was sent to England, to the Quaker boarding school at Ackworth, for her education - her name appears in the list of pupils until 1799. In September 1804 she was nineteen years old.

This verse was designed to accompany Mary's gift to Catherine of a copy of the spiritual journal of Job Scott, the dedicated and eloquent Quaker minister from Providence, Rhode Island in America who visited Ireland in 1793. Scott was a quietist who, though steeped in the Bible, placed greater emphasis on inner mystical or religious experience than on external authorities - even the scriptures. He contracted smallpox in Ireland, and died at Ballitore while staying with the Shackleton family there. By 1804, his journal had become a popular and influential Quaker text.

Incidentally, Job Scott's daughter Lydia married William Rotch Junior in America. He was the brother of Benjamin Rotch, Mary's friend at Milford Haven.

To C. B. with J. Scott's Journal

Dear Girl O may this great Example prove
A just incitement,¹ as a gift of Love
Like his, be winnow'd all thy chaff within
Cleans'd from thy dross & purg'd from all thy sin²
Then shall a crown of endless joy be thine
And as the stars thy bright memorial shine

9 mo. 19. 1804.

1. Incitement - i.e. stimulus to spiritual development and virtue.
2. Winnowing wheat to extract the grain, and the smelting of metal to remove the 'dross' (waste or impurities), were conventional metaphors for a process of spiritual purification.
Here, Mary answers a friend who has complained that she writes too much about serious or religious subjects - 'the gravest themes'. (An understandable tendency when we consider the recent loss of her baby, Nathaniel, in the April.)

To a Friend ----

And dost thou blame my sober muse
That chiefly gravest themes would chuse[sic]
On Joys Immortal love to dwell
And leave untouch'd the comic shell
I feel the justice of the thought
Nature with transient charms is fraught
Vast tribes of Being issue forth
And perish almost at the birth
Pleas'd for a moment mount the sky
Just bloom and fade are born and die
Yet these in varied hues array'd
The Lord of endless life hath made
Number'd each class its rise and fall
And given a share of bliss to all
Even pleasures we oft trifes find
Streams that refresh the weary mind
The minionet we ne'er reject
The rose with pleasure does affect
Charm'd with the violets scented blue
Who ever blames its fading hue
And cold and cheerless must he be
That these can with indifference see
Tis wisdom to enjoy each hour
And cull the sweet of every flower
Let Annuals please our sense awhile
And Friendship, true perennial smile
So shall emotions grateful flow
To whom we every blessing owe ---

9th. month 28th. 1804.

1. comic shell - presumably an empty shell, hence the comic is seen as hollow.
2. Vast tribes of Being [..] born and die - perhaps thinking of ants or other winged insects which appear in their thousands, only to fly briefly, mate and die, and of flowers which bloom just for a short space of time.
3. minionet - the mignonette, botanical name reseda, is a pretty annual flower. One type, reseda dorata, has particularly attractive greyish-green blooms with a pleasant smell.
4. sweet - pleasure.
5. Annuals - plants which flower for one season only, hence a metaphor for transitory pleasures, as opposed to friendship which is perennial, a plant which flowers year upon year.
This poem welcomes back a friend returning to town from the country at the onset of winter. Many commercial families, as well as the nobility and gentry, would spend the summer at their country houses, and return to Dublin in the autumn for the fashionable winter 'season'.

To a Friend on her return to Town -

Lost are those scenes of pure delight
Which charm'd my oft enraptur'd sight
Th'enamell'd mead the landscape gay
The fragrant bower, the vocal lay¹
The woods sublime whose branches high
Attun'd my soul to melody
Autumn resigns her plenteous reign
And pours no more the golden grain
No more inspires the tuneful throng²
Yet, oft reluctant moves along
And as she casts a transient eye
Still lingers in the sunbeam gay
See where descends a leafy shower
Sad proof of Winters iron power
Cold is the air & keen the blast
And oft the lowring[sic]³ sky o'er cast
Yet feels my heart no thrill of pain
Nor covet Summers longer reign
Since piercing winds & heav'n's that frown
Have driven the friend I love to town
Have fill'd the chasm we used to mourn
And glads our hearts by her return
Restor'd the circle cheer'd and gay
Which joyless droops when she's away
Resume the sweetly social scene
Bid ease and comfort smile serene
And oft as evening hours return
And grateful steams the teeming um⁴
The blazing fire shall we surround
Where many a brilliant spark⁵ is found
And intellectual treasures grow
Enrich'd by giving what we know -
Then Natures charms I pleased resign
If Love & Friendship may be mine
Nor morning jaunt nor noontide shade
Nor days in length of light array'd
Nor cooling fruits nor scented flower
Which o'er our sense its odours pour
Nor sober walk at pensive Eve
Shall absent cause mine heart to grieve
Insipid are the joys they lend
Compar'd with Heaven's choice gift - a friend
For there we in their essence find
Creations beauties all combin'd
Nor sweet the music of the grove
Unchoruss'd by the voice we love!
O then may health our circle\textsuperscript{6} crown
And heedless of stern winters frown
Our minds shall taste of purer joy
Which no rude elements destroy
Shall tho' benumb'd each leafless tree
Glow with the warmth of sympathy.

10th. mo: 1st. 1804

1. vocal lay - birdsong.
2. tuneful throng - poetic expression for birds.
4. teeming urn - conventional poetic expression for the tea urn, full to overflowing. grateful - welcome.
5. brilliant spark - punning on 'spark': spark from the fire and spark of wit.
6. circle - i.e. social circle.
7. Friendship, unlike summer, cannot be destroyed by rude elements - the ravages of winter.
These lines were written to comfort someone at a time of great sadness and grief.

To

Ah dearest girl shall grief impart
Its mildew¹ o'er thy gentle heart
And not Affections cordial hand
Its sable² influence withstand
  Ah no, soft sympathy shall pour
Into thy wounds her balmy³ store
Shall bid thy baseless sorrows cease
Infuse content, and, whisper peace -
And mourn not if thy lot be cast
To bear full many a wintry blast
If not maternal care be shed
Around thy unprotected head
But storms arise and tempests roll
And almost harrow up⁴ thy soul
Yet fear not for the arm below⁵
Shall blunt the edge of every woe
Uphold thy fainting feeble knee
Remove thy doubts & comfort thee
Thy patient faith will he approve
His banner over thee is love⁶
Tho' dark the morn the sun will rise
Dispel the mists & gild the skyes[sic]
And when at noon dark clouds are seen
Doubt we a sun beyond[,] serene
For mercy dwells beneath his hand
Tho times are not at our command
Say not that [']neath inclement skies
Unhous'd the tender nursling⁷ dies
That nipping frosts its bloom repel
And piercing winds its ardours chill
But placed beneath a friendly shade
Its energies are all display'd
Say not that even the fruitful vine
Would round an oak its tendrils twine
But take its lov'd support away
And sunk to earth its powers decay
Say not nor thou to these compare
Thyself a myrtle green and fair
Whose stedfast[sic] leaves unfading bloom
And thro each season shed perfume⁸
The breeze that chills the tender flow'r
But o'er the air its odours pour  
And long its vigorous branches rise  
While many a well housed nursling dies.  
And trust me x x x x He whose voice  
Hath bade thee make his will thy choice  
Would thee from all thy dross refine  
That joy and gladness may be thine  
That so from all defilement free  
His love may view no spot in thee.  
But think not that tho tempest tost  
Thy little bark may now be lost  
For yet within thy troubled breast  
Does not the peaceful Saviour rest?  
Then hold on Faith & Patience still  
Nor rudely wake him e'er he will  
And thou in hallowed rest shalt live  
Which men can neither take nor give  
10th. mo: 3d. 1804.

1. mildew - destructive mould or canker.
2. sable - black, hence darkening.
3. balmy - healing.
4. almost harrow up - cut or wound almost to destruction.
5. the arm below - i.e. the supporting arm of God.
6. Song 2:4 - 'He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love'.
7. nursling - infant plant.
8. The myrtle is an evergreen plant with a pleasing scent. It was sacred to Venus, the Roman goddess of love, and hence emblematic, here, of the need to remain steadfast in the love of God.
9. Name of addressee omitted.
10. dross - Impurities. The unwanted materials left behind when metal is refined, or smelted.
11. Song 4:7 - 'Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee.'
12. bark - ship. An appropriate image for the spirit, navigating its way through the vicissitudes of life.
13. Song 2:7 - 'I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please.' (Repeated in Song 3:5 and 8:4.)
1804 was a traumatic year for Mary. She was deeply affected by the loss of her second child, Nathaniel, in April, seeing his death as a punishment for her own sin. (See Vol.1, Prose, journal entry '5th Mo 11 1804', p.37.) This poem earnestly desires the gift of patience to bear sorrow, and see through it to a divine purpose. Its emphasis on holding fast to faith in grief, on patience and resignation, a surrender of the internal spirit to the divine will, bears some resemblance to the previous poem, 'To [. . .]' - see particularly the closing few lines of each.

To Patience

Celestial Patience! let thy rays impart
Some glimpse of comfort to my drooping heart
Assist that heart its load of griefs to bear
And heal the ruthless wounds of canker'd care
Oppress'd & humbled let afflictions rod
Repine my soul & fix my hope in God
Inspir'd by thee my mind shall learn to feel
The sting extracted from each varied ill
In every pang the gracious Mover see
Who deigns to break my bonds and set me free!
Ah why the wish these trials to avert
Which Heaven has sent to purify my heart
Since when that work that sacred work is o'er
The tooth of anguish knows my breast no more
Our lesson learnt we feel no terrors there.
Then gentlest Patience lend thy lenient balm
T'assuage mine anguish & my woes to calm
For soon each agonizing throb shall cease
And in the grove my wearied frame find peace
Soon shall my eyes their tribute cease to pour
And racking thoughts disturb my brain no more
Soon not a trace of suffering will appear
But the rich fruit that crowns lifes toilsome year
Then Patience let me bear each low'ring storm
And thou in me thy perfect work perform
Since at one glance the great Phisician[ sic] sees
What medicine best may suit the minds disease.
And equal wisdom equal love we share
In the warm cordial or the draught severe
Oh might my heart in patient faith resign
And know no movement save the will divine

10th. month 23d. 1804

1. canker'd care - anxiety that acts like a disease, corrupting or damaging the spirit.
2. afflictions rod - sorrows are viewed as corrective, as God's way of refining the soul.
3. repine - make discontented (i.e. make the soul dissatisfied with this life, so that hope resides in God alone).
4. gracious Mover - God, seen as guiding all things to good purpose.
5. lenient balm - soothing, healing Influence. balm - a healing ointment; lenient - gentle.
6. tribute - i.e. tears, the tribute the eyes pay to sorrow.
7. racking - tormenting.
9. the great Physician - God as Divine Healer.
10. Medicine may be pleasant (a cordial is sweetly flavoured, and stimulating or comforting) or unpleasant (a draught was a common word in the eighteenth century for a medicinal drink and many were revolting concoctions, often emetic, the aim being to purge the body of disease - this could be what is meant by a 'draught severe'). But both may be effective.
John Marriott (1762-1797) was a Lancashire Quaker who wrote poetry from the age of sixteen. A traumatic early love affair was thought to have endowed his work with a sense of poignancy. Recovering, he married Ann Wilson in 1795 and enjoyed brief happiness before his death less than three years later. His friends published some of his poetry in 1803: A Short Account of John Marriott, containing extracts from some of his letters, to which are added some of his Poetical Productions (London: [n.pub], 1803). It became quite popular, particularly among Quakers. Mary's dedicatory poem reveals what she found to admire in his work.


Written in a Volume of J Mariott's[sic] Poems --

Sweet Moralist let thy chaste lines
   Salute Eliza's eye¹
For there unrivall'd nature shines
   In modest dignity

Soft Sympathy inspired thy strains
   And gave thine heart to glow
Taught thee to feel anothers pains
   And ting'd thy lyre² with woe

May she whose breast its charm benign
   Will cherish and regard
Accept this humble form of thine
   And think of Mary Card.

   11mo. 27th. 1804

1. Eliza - unidentified. Mary knew several Elizas, including Eliza Rotch Senior and Eliza Rotch Junior at Milford, and Eliza Alexander in Dublin.

2. lyre - the instrument of the muses, hence a metaphor for poetry.
This poem is addressed, within the text, to ‘Fidelia’, someone unwilling to accept sympathy or comfort. ‘Fidelia’ may have been her real name, or a stock poetic name chosen for her. It is worth noting that a ‘Fidele’ is mentioned in ‘To S: Hoare’ (see p. 430 in this volume).

7 mo. 26th. 1805.

To ________________

Ah why wilt thou ever repel the soft aid
    That Sympathy fain\(^1\) would bestow
Thy chaplet\(^2\) of youth health & vigour will fade
    Consum'd by the Canker\(^3\) of woe.

Look around thee & see how in this chequer'd\(^4\) vale
    There's an union of pleasure and pain
Tho' the frost pinch us oft & the tempest assail
    Yet the sun will revisit again

And see how the rosebud peeps out from the thorn
    Like Rapture encircled by Care
How Lights\(^5\) in the depth of Obscurity born
    And the Shadows of night disappear

Then build not my friend on this changeable scene
    For its joys and its sorrows have end
Be thy hope on the Anchor thats steady, serene
    That will ever in danger befriend

Then smile dear Fidelia ah smile from thine heart
    For I long for thy bosoms repose
Religion unfailingly peace will impart
    And friendship diminish thy woes -

---

1. fain - gladly.
2. chaplet - garland or wreath for wearing around the head, hence a decoration destined to wither.
3. canker - poisonous growth.
4. chequer'd - changeable.
5. lights - probably 'light is' is intended.
The 'E.D.' of the following poem was Elizabeth Dawson, a benefactress to whom Mary applied on a regular basis for funds to clothe the children of the General Daily Free School. See 'An Address to E.D. for clothing the Children of the Poor School', 1806, p.387; 'To E.D.', p.389; 'An Address to Elizth. Dawson requesting a Donation to assist in clothing the Poor Children of the General Daily Free School', 1807, p.405; and 'To E.D.', p.406. She also appealed to her 'On behalf of the Aged & Infirm Female Servants' in 1809 (p.420).

There were several eighteenth-century Quaker Elizabeth Dawsons. The Dawsons were bankers. In the 1740s, John Dawson was a partner in Fade's Bank, a large concern, which failed in 1755. In 1717 a Benjamin Dawson married Elizabeth Fade. They had two daughters named Elizabeth, who probably died young, and a son, John Dawson Coates (d.1797), a bank-owner, who married Elizabeth Pim in 1766 and also had a daughter, Elizabeth, born in 1771. Whichever Elizabeth is Mary's addressee, she is probably the Elizabeth Dawson with whom Deborah Darby stayed on a visit to Dublin in May 1807. (Sources: Webb's Pedigrees, Dublin; Harrison, Biographical Dictionary, pp. 43, 95; Labouchere, Deborah Darby, p.320.)

The General Daily Free School was in all probability the Dublin Free School in St Catherine's Parish, founded by Friends in 1798, building on the success of their Sunday School run by Meath Street Meeting from 1786. Ephraim Bewley, a Quaker businessman, played a lead part. Quakers raised money themselves and persuaded Dublin gentry to subscribe toward a building in School Street where an elementary education without denominational bias was offered to the poor children of the parish, Catholic or Protestant. The main aim, however, was to provide for poor Catholics who, under the punitive laws of the Protestant Ascendancy, were forced to attend Protestant schools or denied an education altogether. The school was successful and helped initiate the foundation of the Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor of Ireland, later the Kildare Place Society, in 1811. The Society's teachers were trained at School Street before taking posts in its schools set up across Ireland on the Lancastrian model, invented by the Quaker Joseph Lancaster, whereby some pupils were taught by older ones or 'monitors', enabling many children to be educated under the overall tutelage of one teacher.

There is an interesting description of this school in Warburton, Whitelaw and Walsh's History of the City of Dublin (1818):

This seminary, open to the children of all denomination of Christians, and therefore called the Dublin Free School, is situated in School Street, in the parish of St. Catherine; it is of a rectangular form, 156 feet by 37, of brick, and three stories high; of these, the basement storey consists principally of stores rented by merchants in the vicinity, and on the two upper floors are the school-rooms, four in number, viz., two for males, and two for females; each 56 feet by 33, spacious, lofty, and well ventilated. The male and female schools have entrances perfectly distinct; and are separated from each other by a spacious committee-room, and an apartment appropriated to the superintendent, who by an ingenious contrivance of the architect, is enabled by a small change in his position, to command an uninterrupted view of the four schools, though on different floors. (This plan is deemed so efficient for the purposes of superintendence that it is adopted in some extensive manufactories in the Liberties.) While he sits, the entire of the male and female schools on the first floor are open to his inspection, as are those on the second floor when he stands: thus a constant sense of his superintending eye contributes greatly to preserve order and silence; while his communication with his assistants is direct and unembarrassed by the necessity of moving from one school to another to give his directions.

The building was pulled down to make way for a new primary school on the site in 1973 - and it remained non-denominational until shortly before that time.

Sources: The Irish Times, 3 February 1973; M. Quane, 'Quaker Schools in Dublin', Journal of Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, 94:1 (1964), 1-66 (pp.56-57); Warburton, Whitelaw, Walsh, History of the City of Dublin, II, 852-54; Wigham, The Irish Quakers, pp.73-74.
To E. D.

on behalf of the Children of the General Daily Free School

Friend of the muse for whom the Nine
Delight to form th'harmonious line
Tis thine to bid her numbers flow
Tis thine to soothe the voice of woe.
And wilt thou in thy sweet recess
Still deign to succour and to bless
Cause pangs of penury to cease
And to the troubled breast speak peace
Still loves thy generous heart to heal
The griefs that Poverty must feel
To bid the streams of comfort flow
To quench the parching thirst of woe
Then may'st thou hear this artless strain
Nor let the muse implore in vain
For soon shall winters form appear
Stern tyrant of the closing year
The leaves shall fall the birds retire
Aghast beneath his vengeful ire
And streams congeal'd & drifts of snow
Forth at his awful mandate flow
While chilling blasts enfuriate reign
And mock the labours of the swain
Ah may'st thou from thy lov'd retreat
Where peace and comfort on thee wait
Where Plenty pours her golden horn
And social joys thine hours adorn
May'st thou some gracious boon impart
To warm and cheer each little heart
For scanty cloaths their limbs enfold
All unprepar'd for winters cold
Tis not enough thy bounty kind
Helps to expand and teach their mind
Half naked shivering mean & poor
They hope from thee a little more
A little tho' for thee to grant
Is much to those who sorely want
Then deign to hear compassions claim
Help us to cloathe each shivering frame
So shall their hearts with joy rebound
And - Muse rejoice! thy labour's crown'd

9mo. 5th. 1805
The muses were nine in number.

*bid her numbers flow* - i.e. the numbers, or poetry, of Mary's muse.

sweet recess - Elizabeth Dawson's home, later 'thy lov'd retreat' (line 23). Perhaps a mansion or country house.

ire - anger.

congeal'd - solidified, hence iced over.

swain - rustic or country worker.

golden horn - the horn of plenty, known as the cornucopia, was owned by Amaitha, the Greek goddess of plenty or abundance. It was a goat horn that was able, magically, to produce whatever was asked for, given to her by her father, Zeus.

It seems Elizabeth Dawson was already funding the school to some extent.

The next poem, written at the onset of winter in November 1805, expresses joy in a contented family life. Mary now had another son, born 1 February 1805, also called Nathaniel like the one who died the previous April. Her first child, William, was now nearly four years old.

**Home**

Keenly blow the blasts of Winter
Flecks of snow enrobe the ground
While the beams of day shed fainter
Lengthening Twilight hovers round

Chang'd the sounds that undulating
Pour it melodious on the ear
Rolling wheels with noises grating
Swift their destin'd burthens\(^1\) bear

Cheerless is each rural mansion
For its owner hies to town\(^2\)
Or\(^3\) to aid his hearts expansion
Or his hours in pleasures drown:

Pinching frost each pore pervading
Drives the wanderer to his home
Turn my feet the moonlight aiding
To yon cheerful\([\text{sic}]\) blissful dome

What tho' humble be my dwelling
Far remote from Pride or State
Comfort oft is Care repelling
Peace and plenty on me wait
There the Elm each branch extending  
   Seems to guard the favor'd spot  
Tho' around its leaves descending  
   Never be its charms forgot -

Often hast thou⁴ led the stranger  
   To our threshold point the way  
While thy foliage sav'd. from danger  
   Little feet⁵ that sought thy spray  

Precious emblem of affection  
   Deep thy sap lies in its root  
Suns⁶ of friendship's sweet connection  
   Will return - & thou wilt shoot.  

For beneath our roof, enjoyment  
   Does from sacred sources spring  
Dear is every bland⁷ employment  
   Time seems ever on the wing  

As I trace th'unfolding graces  
   That illume each darling boy⁸  
Health sits smiling on their faces  
   And their hearts rebound with joy  

Save that erst the weary column⁹  
   William would with art evade  
Then with look of grief and solemn  
   Transient woes his rest pervade  

Here sweet boys no ills foreboding  
   Shelter'd from affliction's ire¹⁰  
Here is peace, no guilt corroding¹¹  
   Purchas'd by your honor'd sire¹²  

He it is, whose smiles approving  
   Lend the charm that crowns our joys[joy]  
He it is - whom dearly loving  
   That our frequent thoughts employ  

In his absence peace retiring¹³  
   Waits the welcome lov'd return  
While by William (still enquiring)  
   Scarcely can its length be borne -  

At its period¹⁴ - joy'd to meet him  
   Little arms around him press  
With unfeigned welcomes greet him  
   As they claim the fond caress -
Ahh the joys of Wealth are fainter
Than the shade of those I know.
Spring, or Summer Autumn Winter
Still unchang'd they equal flow

Oh then may my heart surrender
Grateful homage ever due
May its love flow warm and tender
And that homage oft renew

For indeed my cup of blessing
Rises higher than hope or thought
For beyond my poor expressing
May I taste it as I ought

11th. month 1805.

1. burthens - archaic form of 'burdens'.
2. hies to town - those from the wealthier classes fortunate enough to own a country house as well as one in town usually returned to the city for the winter, Dublin's 'season'.
3. Or - either.
4. thou - addressing the elm, which has acted as a marker for travellers or visitors.
5. little feet - i.e. of small birds or mammals seeking to hide from predators.
6. suns - i.e. days. An image linking summer days, when clement weather made visiting easier, with the warmth of human friendship.
7. bland - simple or innocent.
8. each darling boy - Mary's sons, William and Nathaniel.
9. erst - formerly; column - perhaps a column of figures in arithmetic.
10. ire - anger.
11. corroding - eating away at, damaging the fabric (i.e. of peace).
12. honor'd sire - the boys' father, Nathaniel Card, who, through his business, has provided the family with security.
13. An odd line. Perhaps, If punctuated as, 'In his absence, peace retiring', peace recedes in the family's excited anticipation of the father's return.
14. period - ending, i.e. of waiting.
15. the shade of those I know - i.e. the shelter of friends and family.
An Address to Hans Hamilton M.P.

Hans Hamilton was Member of Parliament for Dublin County in April 1806 when this poem was written seeking his support for that year’s anti-slave trade bill, the Foreign Slave Bill, in the British House of Commons. Returned on 14 July 1802 for the August 1802 to October 1806 Parliament, Hamilton had first been elected to the Irish Parliament in 1798, along with Frederick John Falkiner, to represent Dublin County. (Dublin then had thirteen MPs altogether.) The Act of Union with Britain in 1801, after the 1798 Irish Rebellion, meant that Irish MPs joined their English counterparts at Westminster. Hamilton became a long-standing MP, returned in five subsequent elections under the Union: 1806, 1807, 1812, 1818 and 1820-26.

In 1792, the year Mary published A Poem on the African Slave Trade, the British House of Commons decided to end the trade of slaves to foreign countries, and abolish the trade (but not slavery itself) in British dominions by 1796. However, the House of Lords prevaricated, one reason being an association of the abolition cause with radicalism, a fear fuelled by post-revolutionary events in France and the slave rising in San Domingo in 1791. William Wilberforce continued to put motions before Parliament year on year until 1798. After a six year gap, he revived the cause in Parliament in 1804 (this bill failed in the Lords) and again in 1805. The abolitionists then pursued a ‘national interest’ argument to stop the supply of slaves to Dutch Guiana, a new colony. It was feared that colonies taken from France during the Napoleonic wars, particularly in the Caribbean, might have to be returned when the war ended. Hence importing fresh slaves to them could be a waste of money. Also, British West Indian planters, fearing competition, did not want the sugar industry on these other islands to thrive. In August 1805, Prime Minister William Pitt secured a Royal Proclamation banning trade to newly won colonies.

After Pitt’s death (January 1806), Wilberforce found even more support in the new administration. It was agreed that the Attorney General would bring in the Foreign Slave Bill (following the Royal Proclamation), calling for the end of the supply of slaves to both conquered islands and foreigners. It was guided through Parliament, assisted by the new Prime Minister, Lord Grenville, in March and April. Largely unopposed for the reasons given above, it was passed in early May 1806. Hopefully, Hans Hamilton voted in favour (most of the Irish MPs who joined Westminster after the Act of Union on 1 January 1801 were sympathetic to abolition). Unlike the 1792 Bill, it was also passed in the Lords on 16 May. This Act effectively put a stop to between two-thirds and three-quarters of the British slave trade (estimates vary), making complete abolition seem inevitable.

The abolitionists’ primary aim was finally achieved the following year. On 25 March 1807, the slave trade was abolished throughout British dominions. 1 May was the last date on which a slave-ship could sail legally from a British port. The campaigners then turned to the ending of slavery itself. This took another twenty-five years until, in 1833, all slaves throughout the British Empire were freed, and their owners compensated to the tune of £20,000,000.

Mary’s poem is likely to have been a response to the decision made by the London Abolition Committee, when it met on 7 March 1806, to encourage individual members of the public to write directly to their MPs. Thomas Clarkson was specifically asked to make abolitionists in Ireland aware of this tactic. Writing to Charles Lloyd on 8 March, Clarkson stressed the need for secrecy and speed as it was thought that if slavery’s supporters heard of this plan they might well try to ‘canvass’ MPs first. (Jennings, pp.105-06.)

An Address to
Hans Hamilton M.P.
On behalf of the Injured Africans

4 mo. 5th. 1806

Place'd on the Eminence of wealth & fame
Whence noble thoughts & princely deeds we claim
A chosen Guardian of this favor'd Isle
That tarnish'd vice may fade & virtue smile
Proclaim our wants & dissipate our fear
To bid the sun of freedom rise & shine
For there Oppression shakes her scorpion rod
And calls forth vengeance from the Avenging God
There rests the curse that poisons all her joys
The piercing thorn that her repose annoys
The Guilt - O Heavens! how foul its impious shade
Mars every charm, each intellectual grace;
And stamps a blot on Albion's beauteous face.

O shame of Heathens Slavery shalt thou reign
And still make desolate brown Afric's plain
Still shalt thy commerce fraught with blood succeed
And Christians own, nor blush to own the deed
Let Britain's rulers bid the monster die
They speak - his chains unfettered cease to gall
Justice pervades and Love embraces all
At their command his ruthless fangs expire
And shades of darkness to their caves retire
Wide & more wide its beams benign extend
The whole Creation feels its hallowed power
And Colour separates man from man no more
And as a spark may cause a world to glow
As from small drops increasing rivers flow
As sightless atoms do huge mountains rise
And seeds minute may swell to reach the skies
So be thine heart O Hamilton the ray
Whence Truth may kindle an Eternal day
The precious magnet whose attractive force
Leads roughest metals & directs their course
Thy single voice with Reason on thy side
May pierce hard hearts & thro each conscience glide
Even as the stream that winds its stedfast[ sic] way
Tho' clouds may lower & tempests breathe dismay
Till gathering strength, each obstacle o'er past
A spacious river fills the plains at last
Thus may kind heaven our ardent hope succeed
And bless the soul that aids the generous deed
And what tho' Hosts opposing rise to say
That Colour subjects man to tyranny
Truth may roll onward with impetuous weight
Bear down her foes & conquer in debate
For sure where our Imperial Senate guides
Th'unchanging Law of Equity presides
Be theirs the mead[ mead]7 by Providence designed
Who follow Mercy's path shall Mercy find
And as they peace & joy o'er Afric shed
May those rich blessings crown their sacred head
And Oh! be thine the greatly glorious deed
Our sable brethrens freeborn rights to plead
To bid fair Virtue's fragrant bloom to expand
Whose fruit shall cheer thee & enrich thy hand
Her leaves are healing & her odours pour
Balsamick8 influence from shore to shore
And hers the charm as bounteous Heav'n imparts
To bless refine and harmonize our hearts
(For Wars & Conquests may extend a name
But Righteousness exalts a Nations' fame[])
Be thine to disappoint the Harpy train9
Who trade in souls of men for love of gain
To stop the stern oppressors savage voice
And let the woe worn exil'd slave rejoice
To bend the broken heart the feeble knee
And liberate what Heave'n created free10
T'avert from Britain the avenging rod11
Silence loud groans & wipe off tears of blood
Restore the bliss of families and heal
The pangs inflicted long by hearts of steel
So be thy joys an overflowing stream
And unborn thousands hail the grateful theme
Let peace internal all thy paths defend
In sickness shield thee & in death befriend
And when thy sun of life hath ceas'd to shine
Receive thy soul to harmony divine
Where those whose minds in Heathen darkness chain'd
Yet true to Nature's inward Law remain'd12
Shall hail thee welcome to that blissful shore
Where Mercy reigns & Slavery galls no more.
1. this favor'd Isle - Ireland.
2. Senate - the British Parliament. The Senate was the governing council of Ancient Rome.
3. Afric - poetic name for Africa.
5. Albion - ancient name for Britain, probably derived from 'albus', the Latin word for 'white'. The white cliffs of Dover could be seen from the continent.
6. sightless atoms - particles so small they cannot be seen with the naked eye. See note 2 to 'Sun-rise' (1794), pp.234-35 above.
7. mead - probably copyist's error. Should read 'meed', meaning 'reward'.
9. Harpy train - in classical mythology, the Harpies were monstrous winged creatures who stole and plundered whatever they could lay hold of.
10. what Heave'n created free - all human beings are seen as created free by God. A view in direct opposition to the pro-slavery argument cited earlier that 'Colour subjects man to tyranny'.
11. the avenging rod - I.e. of Divine Justice.
12. Where those [..] Inward Law remain'd - Quakers believed that even those who had never heard the Gospel could still be open to the Inner Light, present within each individual, and thus gain eternal life.
The Incurable Hospital is now the Royal Hospital Donnybrook in Dublin, which cares for over 230 severely incapacitated or elderly patients. For information I am indebted to a fascinating history published by the Hospital in conjunction with The Social Science Research Centre, University College Dublin - The Royal Hospital Donnybrook: A Heritage of Caring 1743-1993 (1993), by Helen Burke.

Founded in 1743-44 by the Dublin Charitable Musical Society for the Hospital for Incurables, the hospital moved to Donnybrook in 1792. Many philanthropic organisations raised funds through charity concerts, and this Musical Society's efforts were directed toward establishing a hospital for those designated 'incurable' - people considered untreatable by other hospitals built in the eighteenth century for Dublin's poor. According to Cheyne Brady, a nineteenth-century governor of the Incurable Hospital:

> These hospitals received every variety of disease. In them patients were tended for periods varying from a few days to months. Some were discharged cured, others, partially cured, returned to their humble homes, while from time to time some diseases baffled the skill of the physicians, who were coerced to pronounce upon them the hope withering verdict

**INCURABLE**

Amongst these were to be found the dreaded cancer which eats its way into the vitals, the terrible and mysterious consumption, and paralysis, which may be compared to a living death, diseases which [. . .] disqualify the sufferer for the duties of life. The general hospitals could not occupy their beds permanently with such irrecoverable cases. (Royal Hospital Donnybrook, p.6.)

The lady for whom Mary sought a hospital bed, by writing the following poem to a possible benefactor, was just such a one.

**To**

**A Request for 20 Guineas to place a poor Woman in the Incurable Hospital**

O seated in thy bowers of peace
   Say wilt thou hear a mourner's prayer
The chilling dews of anguish chase
   And heal the wounds of fell\(^1\) despair

Yes for thy kind compassionate heart
Delighted to pour the wished relief
The balm\(^2\) of comfort to impart
And banish penury and grief

Ah turn thine eye where pale and wan
   A wretched helpless female lies\(^3\)
Whom tho' wise Heav'n protracts her span\(^4\)
   No hope of cure illumes her eyes.
And more to whelm her aching heart
   Two feeble infants lisp their woes
No succour can her hands impart
   No daily food - or nights repose

And still to swell her sorrows tide
   Her aged mother lives to see
Her blasted Hopes her Joy her Pride
   Reduc'd to hopeless misery.

For stiffen'd as with bands of death
   Her useless limbs enchain'd remain
No movement save her quiv'ring breath
   Nor hope of cure may she retain -

O let thy pitying heart expand
   Thy bounteous hand assuage her woes
Drive off pale famine & command
   A vacant seat of calm repose -

Oft have we wish'd to place her there
   Where hopeless misery may abide
But vain the wish and vain the prayer
   Tis Gold that opes the portals wide

And vain, if on the list enroll'd
   Even tho' Physicians sign her case
No door of entrance there - but Gold
   And twenty guineas wins the place -

Once gain'd - in calm repose she spends
   The sad remainder of her days
No future burthen to her friends
   Her comforts all their care repays

O may thy power dispense the sum
   Nor blame my pen - nor think me bold
In hours unborn - in worlds to come
   The generous deed may be enroll'd.

10th mo: 31st 1806.

1. fell - cruel, acute.
2. balm - healing (balm was a healing ointment).
3. Goldsmith, The Deserted Village, 325-26 - '... Ah, turn thine eyes/Where the poor, houseless, shivering female lies.'
4. tho' wise Heav'n protracts her span - although Divine Providence lengthens her life.
5. whelm - contraction of 'overwhelm'.
6. There was always keen pressure for beds, owing to a shortage of funds (from charity and a small government grant) rather than space. In the early nineteenth century, a list was kept of 30 candidates who had to attend the
monthly Hospital Board meeting in case a vacancy occurred. If they did not attend, they were 'struck off' the list. Others waited in turn, so if someone was offered a bed, their list place was taken up immediately. (Royal Hospital Donnybrook, p.37.)

In 1795, the governors had resolved:

that no person be admitted in future without previous inspection by the board at large and a certificate from at least 2 of the medical gentlemen who attend the house; that in deciding the pretensions of candidates for admission respect be had: first to their deformity or the misery of the complaint; secondly to their age, giving preference to the older; thirdly to good character attested by respectable persons.

(Royal Hospital Donnybrook, p.14.)

Also in 1795, eight extra beds had been created for patients nominated by subscribers who paid £5 a year. 'The patient had to be approved by the board "before whom petitions are to be laid, mentioning the age, name, occupation and infirmities of the candidate, who is also to appear in person before them"' (p.16). By 1802 this system had become problematic, as some subscribers failed to pay regularly, so it was decided that one subscription of 20 guineas could obtain a bed for life. Some patients found this themselves - two did so in 1806. Others had to find someone to champion their cause. (p.29.)

7. burthen - archaic form of 'burden'.
8. Conditions in the Hospital were not very comfortable. Patients had to wear uniform, marking them as inmates even when they went out, visiting was limited, and discipline strict with smoking banned (if suspected, the whole ward was put on 'low diet' until the smoker was discovered) (pp.31-33). There was no bath, and only straw mattresses, until 1811-12. Patients looked after themselves as much as possible, often cooking on their wards. The more able cleaned, or cared for other patients, as there were only three nurses, regarded as servants, not professionals: 'On 31 December 1800 there were 35 patients in the hospital, 16 women and 19 men, and, in addition to the housekeeper, 5 servants: a cook, a porter and three nurses' (p.29).

9. It does not look as though Mary's appeal was successful, unless this lady's admission went unrecorded. The hospital archivist found only one female subscriber patient, Mary McEvoy, admitted in 1806 - but this was in June, and Mary did not write her poem until October. Also, Mary McEvoy's subscriber was the Hon. Baron Smith, who paid 10 guineas. Two other female patients were admitted after: Teresa Clark, subscribed for by 'several persons' in 1809, and Jane McDermott, paid for by the Rev. Crofton, first recorded, without her original admission date, in 1810. It is unlikely to have taken two years or more to obtain a bed for Mary's candidate.
See 'To E.D. on behalf of the Children of the General Daily Free School' (otherwise known as the Poor School), p.375 above. Mary wrote a poetic appeal to Elizabeth Dawson for funds to provide clothing for the children each winter, 1805-07.

II mo. 12th. 1806
An Address to E.D
for cloathing for the Children of the Poor School

Again dreary winter appears
    And chills with his rude breath the flowers
The leaves as they fall are in tears
    And the garden resigns its sweet stores
Again the storm howls at thy door
    When comfort its fury repels
But alas! to the naked and poor
    It the tide of their misery swells

See where their torn offspring¹ are led
    To the threshold of Wisdoms fair fold²
Their minds there with knowledge are fed
    But their bodies near perish'd with cold
Each morn as collected they come
    Their tatter'd robes drop with the rain
Or cold does their fingers benumb
    As with wet feet they trip up the lane

Tis thine bounteous friend to impart
    The comforts of cloathing[sic] to these
A little to cheer the young heart
    A defence in the storm & the breeze
And oft as the wintry blast howl'd
    Thy kindness those children have known
Thy gift hath protected from cold
    Not confin'd to instruction alone.

And conscious that oft in thy breast
    The whispers of charity reign
And pitying those children distrest[sic]
    We ask for thy bounty again
Nor blame us, oh! friend of the Muse
    That we yearly thy tribute implore
Nor our simple petition refuse
    On behalf of the naked & poor.
The flame that disseminates light
Loses nought of its brilliance & shine
And Charity's lustre more bright
Increases in beauty divine
Even kindness sincerely designed
Reverberates back on the heart
And impressed on the tablet of mind
Does the thrill of mild rapture impart

Oh Friendship! thou idol beloved
How blindly I doated on thee
In the lapse of a few years I proved
That thou wert no basis for me
I prov'd - my eyes ache at the sight
That friendship & truth may decline
But Charity - lovely as light
No ebb, no mutation is thine.

Oh! then may thy lustre & charms
Make our bosoms with sympathy glow
Be our peace in the midst of alarms
And our shield from the arrows of woe
Thus led by thine heavenly ray
To realms of pure pleasure above
We may there claim acquaintance with thee
And rejoice in the fullness of love

1. torn offspring - the children are clothed in 'torn', or tattered, rags.
2. threshold of Widsoms fair fold - entrance to the school.
3. Kind deeds produce a keen pleasure in the mind of the giver, which is more than mere self-satisfaction. tablet of mind - the mind, like the memory elsewhere in Mary's work, is envisaged as a site on which feelings and ideas are impressed. A tablet was a stone slab or plaque on which an inscription was written, but also a thin sheet of wood or ivory for writing on with a stylus. Several such tablets, or leaves, could be linked together.
4. mutation - change.
When Elizabeth Dawson responded to appeals, like that in the previous poem, Mary composed another brief poem to accompany a receipt for the funds donated. This one, simply dated '1st Mo: 28th', could relate either to the September 1805 or the November 1806 appeal, but the latter is more likely. See also 'To E.D.', p.406 in this volume.

To E. D

We need thy subscription benevolent friend
And here I enclose the receipt
The help which thy kindness is pleased thus to send
Does cheering sensations create

And oft as we toil in the fields of the mind
Our path is made easier by thee
Thy bounty a useful ingredient we find
To make sorrow and ignorance flee

For this and thy present so lately bestowed
To cover the naked and poor
We return thee our thanks for with joy
our hearts glow'd
Thy reward - may it ever endure -

1st. mo: 28th

1. toil in the fields of the mind - work in education. Mary may well have taught in the school herself.
Nearly three years after her stay with Benjamin Rotch and his family at Milford Haven in South Wales, Mary wrote this poem eulogising the family's home there, Castle Hall - a country house situated in grounds of approximately 180 acres.

Since her visit in January/February 1804, around the time Rotch bought the house,* it had been 'improved' dramatically. Rotch created ornamental gardens with terraces and gravel walks. He started an arboretum, which became one of the best in Britain, and built a glass and iron orangery, some 80 feet long, where he grew citrus trees brought from abroad on his whaling ships, and three pineries - special glasshouses for growing pineapples, rarities in Britain at this time. He also added two wings to the house, with bowed fronts. (The original house was built in the 1770s by John Zephaniah Holwell, an ex-Governor of Bengal and escapee from the Black Hole of Calcutta.) These enlargements enabled the Rotches to offer hospitality to ever more guests, while the gardens were much visited. The improvements attracted comment. For instance, the Welsh historian, Fenton, expressed his enthusiasm in his *Historical Tour through Pembrokeshire* (1811).

Mary had obviously heard about developments at Castle Hall, perhaps through a continued correspondence with the Rotches - though if so, none survives - or from other Irish Friends who had since been the guests of Benjamin Rotch when travelling between England and Ireland using the Waterford/Milford route. She writes not only to compliment the Rotches on their work at Castle Hall, but also to remember the happy, carefree time she spent there when, in its grounds, she felt inspired to write poetry, 'to tune her notes as blithe' as those of its songbirds. This is contrasted with her present business cares in Dublin and the duplicity of the world of trade, which impedes her writing, 'repellant the Muses native glow'. However, the casting of Castle Hall as a haven isolated from the business world is ironic in view of the fact that Castle Hall itself was a monument to trade - the visible mark of Rotch's successful ventures. And the Rotches, like the Cards, were not free from business cares. Rotch, like one previous and one subsequent owner of the mansion, was to lose it after he went bankrupt - he had to sell the house in 1819 (McKay, *Rotches of Castle Hall*, p.63).

* The Conveyance - John Marchant/John Warlow, wine merchant, to Benjamin Rotch Esq - is dated 17 February 1804. See also lease Hugh Stokes to Benjamin Rotch, 29 September 1804. Both at Haverford West Public Record Office.

To Castle Hall, near Milford-Haven
the Seat of Benjamin Rotch

Fair Castle-hall and art thou chang'd
Where once the Muse delighted rang'd
Do rich improvements bid thee reign
The pride of Milford's peaceful plain?
Do grace & beauty crown thine head
And charms unnumber'd o'er thee shed?
Doth plenty heap her golden store
Which by diffusing swells the more?
Doth Harmony the power impart
T'attract the eye & cheer the heart?
And whence this change? - ask why the soul
Revives & animates the whole!
Ask why the life's warm current gay
Adds Lustre to a lump of clay
Or marvel not that thou art fair
When lov'd Eliza\(^2\) centers there
Her presence gilds\(^3\) thy bright domain
And thou possessing her must reign.
O for a Cot beneath thy shade\(^4\)
Far from these toiling haunts of trade
Where keenness with dishonest art
Entraps the unsuspecting heart
Where varied cares incessant roll
That rack\(^5\) the head & vex the soul
That chilling as the Winter's snow
Repel the Muses native\(^6\) glow
Cold as the frost that nips the bud
Destructive as the tempests flood
Nor may the quivering lyre\(^7\) impart
The genial feelings of the heart
For cold suspicion must preside
And from his fellow, man divide
Friendship appalled shrinks far away
And sordid interest bears the sway
Truth lies unnoticed, candor fails
And cunning o'er the weak prevails
In vain Industry claims her meed
Tis Art or guile that most succeed\(^8\) -
Oh bear me from the Harpy train\(^9\)
The proud, the covetous, the vain,
(Who mar each purer source of joy
And oft the lengthen'd hours annoy)
And lead me to some favor'd spot
Where wiles & fraud & trade forgot
The Muse might wake to Nature's call
And sing thy praise sweet Castle-hall
There oft I'd seek at early dawn
Th' enamell'd mead the verdant lawn
List to the songsters on the spray
And tune my notes as blithe as they
Or when by Phoebus' rays\(^10\) oppress\(^{[sic]}\)
My limbs beneath thy shades might rest
While the free thought in Classic lore\(^11\)
Accumulates her mental store
Or livelier gathers strength and power
From every shrub & every flower
Learns to adore the forming hand\(^12\)
To feel resign'd at his command
And dearer than th'instructive line
To feel his energy divine\(^13\) -
Our hearts refine our minds improve
And our hopes center in his Love
O Castlehall thy fragrant bowers
Thy spacious fields thy scented flowers
Thy prospects\textsuperscript{14} wide, that grasp the sky
Where rivers vales and mountains lie
All, all instruct us and we find
The goodness of the Immortal Mind
His mercies beam\textsuperscript{15} in all around
His plenteous gifts in thee are found.

Thus should our Summers roll away
Nor Winter bring us joys less gay
The social hearth, the converse kind
Which emanates from hearts refin'd
The glad or sympathizing tale
The chat which sure can never fail
Of all we've heard and all we know
While steams the urn with grateful glow\textsuperscript{16}
That o'er employments tranquil rise
Each fair\textsuperscript{17} the polish'd needle plies
While one may pour instruction dear
To mend the heart & charm the ear
Give to the circle, precepts sage
From Rotch's vastly varied page
Or lovelier than the "mighty dead"\textsuperscript{18}
Eliza's voice its charms may shed\textsuperscript{19}
In all that melody benign
Which soothe'd this wo[e]-worn heart of mine
In polish'd wit whose radiant glow
Hath oft chas'dd's sorrow from my brow
Hath wak'd the Muse in numbers\textsuperscript{20} gay
When my lov'd home was far away
Her accents meek her friendship kind
Hath still'd the tempest of the mind
Hath bade the mental shadows fly
And wip'd the tear from sorrows eye
For sure the wormwood and the gall\textsuperscript{21}
Are banish'd far from Castle-Hall
While Harmony & Peace appear
To rule o'er mind & matter there
Give birth to Genius & inspire
The Poet's theme the Muse's Lyre.

No marvel then that thou art chang'd
That all thy scenes with taste arrang'd
That charms surpassing thought are seen
Thy flowers more sweet thy fields more green
For sure in thee the magnet rests
Whose powers attract our willing breasts
And thou possessing her\textsuperscript{22} art found
More lovely than the plains around

Farewell sweet Castle-hall the seat
Of pleasures rare of Virtues great
Oft doth my mind thy beauties trace
Oft seek the lustre of thy face
Oft covet that thou long may'st shine
Replenish'd by the hand Divine -
Thus blest and blessing, mayst thou be
And leave ah leave a nook for me

11mo 18th. 1806

1. The classical goddess of plenty was depicted holding the cornucopia, or golden horn of plenty, which had the power of endless abundance. This was based on the myth of Amalthea, the nymph who nursed the infant Zeus, King of the Greek gods, with goat's milk. In return, Zeus gave her the goat's horn, which he imbued with special powers - this became known as the cornucopia.

2. Eliza - Elizabeth Rotch, wife to Benjamin.

3. Gilds - used here rather than the more usual 'gilds'. Eliza's presence beautifies, and completes - she is the life and soul of Castle Hall.

4. Cot beneath thy shade - there were several small dwellings on the Rotch estate that Benjamin Rotch let at low rents to friends or acquaintances.

5. Rack - torture.

6. Native - natural, or inherent.

7. Lyre - the lyre was a musical instrument sacred to the muses, hence a metaphor for poetry.

8. In vain [. . .] most succeed - in the world of business, 'industry', or hard work, does not obtain its just 'meed', or reward - rather, it is artifice and duplicity which triumph.

9. The Harpy train - in classical mythology, the Harpies were winged monsters who stole and plundered whatever they could lay their hands on.

10. Phoebus rays - Phoebus was an epithet for Apollo, the god of the sun.


12. The forming hand - i.e. of God, the creator.

13. And dearer [. . .] energy divine - to experience the presence of God, through the natural world and within the self, is more valuable than learning about Him through the written word ('th'instructive line').


15. Beam - shine.

16. The urn - i.e. of tea; grateful - welcome, pleasing.

17. Fair - beautiful young woman.

18. Thomson, The Seasons, 'Winter' (1726-46), 431-32 - [. . .] There studious let me sit, /And hold high converse with the mighty dead -. Therefore Rotch's vastly varied page refers to his library (see p. 333 in this volume).

19. The voice of Benjamin Rotch's wife, Eliza.


21. The wormwood and the gall - common term for mortification and grief. Wormwood is a bitter herb, and gall, as well as being a word for bile, means bitterness.

22. Her - once again, Elizabeth Rotch.
Early in 1805, Mary found a good friend in Sarah (Sally) Hoare. (See Vol. I, Prose, journal entry for ‘4th Mo 4th 1805’ where, when enumerating all the blessings left to her once a financial crisis was over, Mary refers to ‘kind friends […] and a tender sympathiser in our dear Sally Hoare who is lately given to me.’) Sarah Hoare was an educator (she ran a school in Dublin), a poet and an amateur botanist. She is the addressee of two of Mary’s letters, and several poems. (See Appendix 7, ‘Individuals Featuring in the Writings of Mary Birkett Card’.)

In 1806, Sarah suffered a severe bout of sickness, and Mary writes to express joy and thankfulness at her recovery. She also hopes that God may continue to protect and guide her friend, while confirming their mutual faith in God’s wisdom.

To Sarah Hoare -

Oh thou for whom our anxious breast
The pangs of Sympathy possesst[ sic ]
Who in affections gentle spell
Attracts our hearts to Love thee well
For thee what hopes what fears were known
When sickness sought thee for its own!
Again restor'd from pain set free
Our thankful minds rejoice with thee
   O may that Power who rules the whole
And visits every human soul
Preserve thee in the devious way¹
And cheer thee by his heavenly ray
For many a toilsome path is thine
That asks the aid of strength divine
And many a thorn thy feet may wound
That needs the balm in Gilead found.²
   Oh be it thine with stedfast[ sic ] heart
To walk unmoved - to act thy part
Deeply to feel that sacred fear
Which lessens every meaner care
And as in wisdom and in truth
Thy precepts teach the rising youth
Allure their tender minds to see
The beauty of simplicity
Its sweet reward with thee shall rest
Unfading odours in thy breast
And whether he our Judge and Friend
Who Justice does with mercy blend
Whether in blessing he may bless
Or visit ev’n with sore distress
In life or death in weal³ or woe
For thee the healing streams shall flow
Enrich thy soul thy joy thy stay⁴
Which Earth nor gives nor takes away
And in the hour which sets thee free
(And come it will to thee and me)
When lost is all terrestrial light
And fled the power of mortal sight
When all is darkness all is woe
Save where Eternal beams shall flow
Then shall thy light arise and shine
Replenish'd from the source divine
And every pain whose piercing dart
Hath serv'd to purify the heart
And every grief whose stern controll[sic]
Refin'd and Angeliz'd\(^5\) the soul
More precious than fine gold will prove
The pledge of pure paternal love\(^6\)

12 mo. 29th. 1806

1. devious way - circuitous route, difficult to follow. A term for the journey through life, strewn with problems and temptations.
2. Gilead - an area of Israel east of the Jordan near Mount Hermon and Lebanon noted for the production of balm, which was used for medicinal purposes in biblical times. For instance, we learn in Gen 37:25-28 that Joseph's brothers sold him to some Ishmaelites coming from Gilead with camels carrying spices, balm and myrrh to sell in Egypt. Later, Gilead was part of the lands parcelled out to the half-tribe of Manesseh, Joseph's first born son. It was given to Machir, Manesseh's first born, and his descendants (Jos 17). Machir's son was named Gilead (Num 26:29).
3. weal - well-being or good health.
4. stay - mainstay, comfort and support.
5. Angeliz'd - literally, to make the soul like an angel's, free from all impurities and sin.
6. paternal love - the fatherly love of the Creator. Suffering is seen as the 'pledge' or confirmation of His willingness to prepare human souls for eternal life.
In this poem, Mary Birkett Card compares hectic city life in Dublin, its contrasts between rich and poor, and money-getting, with the peaceful rural life Mary Leadbeater enjoys at Ballitore and draws upon in her poetry. It is interesting in giving a resumé of the perceived functions of poetry by women like Mary Leadbeater and Mary Birkett Card: to promote virtue, initiate sympathetic feeling, and educate - in particular, to help young women 'Fulfil each duty of domestic life'. Mary also decres 'Heathen lore', or classical mythology, as working against these aims - a statement that appears to mark her own rejection of classicism, as no classical reference appears in her subsequent work.

Mary Leadbeater was the daughter of Richard Shackleton (see Mary Birkett Card's poem on his death, p.172 in this volume), and granddaughter of the Abraham Shackleton who founded the Ballitore School that Edmund Burke attended. Burke always remained on friendly terms with her father. Richard Shackleton took over the school and she was brought up there. Her brother, Abraham Shackleton II, took over in turn but, when he omitted elements of the classics, believing they encouraged aggression, the school had to close for some years. This Abraham Shackleton, who eventually left the Society of Friends in the wake of the 'deist controversy', was probably responsible for the young Mary Birkett's flirtation with deism (see 'Progress of Infidelity', Vol. I, Prose, p.21). Mary Shackleton married William Leadbeater in 1791 and they continued at Ballitore, where she became the postmistress. She was a friend of the writer Maria Edgeworth and corresponded with Burke, with whom she and her father stayed at his home, Beaconsfield, on a visit to England in 1784. At this time, she met the painter Joshua Reynolds and literary figures, including George Crabbe. In a letter to him (1816), she remembered her father's quip, complimenting Crabbe on publication of The Village in 1783, that 'Goldsmith's would now be the deserted village' (Leadbeater Papers, II, 335).

Mary Leadbeater's first book, Extracts and Original Anecdotes; for the Improvement of Youth, was published in 1794, but her Poems not until 1808. This poem of Mary Birkett Card's, calling Leadbeater the 'Sweet muse of Ballitore', is dated January 1807. Leadbeater's poetry circulated, at least among Quakers, long before it was published (see 'A Poem to my much esteem'd friend Deborah Pike 1787', p.31, in this volume), so Mary Birkett Card would have had access to her work. The final lines of this poem show the two women knew one another. In 1811 came Leadbeater's Cottage Dialogues among the Irish Peasantry, prefaced by Maria Edgeworth, and Cottage Biographies, being a collection of Lives of the Irish Peasantry in 1822. Better known are The Leadbeater Papers (1862): Volume I includes 'The Annals of Ballitore', a journal of daily life in the village, and Volume II, correspondence with Burke and Crabbe, amongst others. Leadbeater also edited her parents' letters, and compiled Biographical Notices of Members of the Society of Friends who were resident in Ireland in 1823.

Mary Leadbeater's house, the former post office at Ballitore, has recently been refurbished for opening to the public, and the museum in Ballitore Quaker Meeting House houses a growing collection of material on the history of the village (founded by Quakers in the seventeenth century), its famous school and the Shackleton family.

An Epistle to M. Leadbeater.

From these throng'd scenes where contrasts oft preside
Famine & splendour, poverty & pride
My mind salutes thee in thy peaceful vale
Encircled there by charms which never fail
For dear to Genius[,] Natures lovely child
The village cot, lone walk, & woodland wild
These oft thy sweet and simple theme inspire
And touch with Harmony the Muses lyre
Call forth each latent idea and impart
Health to the nerves & rapture to the heart
Whilst every object cheers thy feeling breast
And every sound lulls thy thoughts to rest
The Lark that soaring pours its melting strain
The lowing kine whose fragrance scents the plain
The ruddy milkmaid jocund blithe & gay
The shepherd boy that tunes the merry lay
His fleecy charge that crop th'enameled blade
Nor dream of woes in store - but gambol o'er the mead
The river flowing with mellifluous trill
T'enrich your verdure & supply your mill
The trees whose gothic arch - but ah no more
They beautify the plains of Ballitore
The inn that gives variety of scene
Where tranquil order peace & neatness reign
These all remote from City's & from strife
Form the mild harmony of rural life
How different from the sounds that harshly greet
The unpleas'd ear in every crowded street
The rolling chariot wheels the loud rattan
The Hawkers cries the indolent Sedan
The clamorous beggar, the half famish'd sweep
Whose shrivel'd form inclines our hearts to weeps
The wo[e]-worn female - haply old and poor
That sings, yea, sings for bread from door to door
These more than these of discords thoug[s] possest
Combine to steel or agonise the breast
Yet mid these painful scenes we choose to dwell
And break the force of Nature's magic spell
O thirst of gold thou nurse of bitterest woes
That steal'st our daily peace our nights repose
Fools that we are, to barter joy and health
For the poor visionary bliss of wealth
To lose the placid mind the tranquil head
And clasp thy painted image in their stead
Tis ours to expiate the faulty deed
The heart that knowing errs will surely bleed
For all thy fancied Paradise must fall
Nor satisfy the Immortal soul at all
Nor to the breast one lovely thot. bestow
Nor aid thy lyre, nor bid its numbers flow
Nor heal the wounded Conscience when we lay
All pale and nerveless to Disease a prey -
Nor give a joy so pure so void of strife
As the calm current of domestic life
The lisp of Infancy - the precept sage
That sweetly flowing gilds the lips of age
The social friend whose converse may inspire
By oft collision sparks of Wisdom's fire
And more the faithful partner form'd to share
The hearts best feelings & its burthens bear
Lov'd muse of Ballitore thine artless song
Hath sweetly rov'd these simple joys among
Thy gentle hand hath traced the Peasants cot
Nor was the widows mournful tale forgot
Hath mark'd the pious tears of filial woe
(Sorrows which wait, alas! on all below)
For these thou lov'st to raise the artless song
That, like your beauteous River, smoothly flows along
Hail Poesy! thou pleasant boon design'd
T'ameliorate the manners and the mind
To soothe the soul to gild with ray serene
And spread a calm when tempests rag'd within
The joyous hour of social rest to cheer
When the young circle throng around to hear
Then Poesy to thee the power is given
To fix the wandering thought & point to Heav'n
To lure the untutor'd mind to Wisdom's way
Smooth rugged paths & all their charms display
Make sterner knowledge wear a lovelier dress
And in soft language virtues meed express
Twas this of old they form'd the sacred line
And Kings & Prophets sang in strains divine
Shame on the Bards, who mar thy beauteous face
Refines the manners & improves the heart
That Pagan tales can e'er adorn the lay
Or add to simple Truths bright Majesty
To rouge & dress each native charm entomb
To[o] vainly worn to rival Natures bloom
Sweet Muse of Ballitore thy numbers rove
O'er verdant hill, or vale, or shady grove
And sweeter far the fragrance of the fields
Than all the empoisoning store that fable yields
Long may thy strains harmonious please & shine
And Truth & Nature dictate every line
Long may they flow & as they flow express
Lessons of Wisdom in poetic dress
The precious buds of sympathy impart
And spread affections reign in every heart
Bid the young stem of infant genius grow
And teach their lisping accents how to flow
Fulfil each duty of domestic life
The tender mother & the faithful wife

Adieu dear friend my lengthen'd tho. ts may tire
And all thy wonted patience soon expire
Yet let this small memento of regard
Bring to thy view the form of

Mary Card

1st. mo: 16th. 1807
1. thy peaceful vale - the village of Ballitore in County Kildare is situated in a shallow valley. Mary Leadbeater in her poem, 'Ballitore' (1778), describes it as:

   This charming spot, where joys abound,
   By rising hills encompass'd round;
   Fair hills, which rear the golden brow,
   And smile upon the vale below  (Leadbeater Papers, I, 17.)

2. the Muses lyre - metaphor for poetry.

3. kine - cattle.

4. th'enamelled blade - i.e. of grass, shiny bright or in variegated colours.

5. The River Griese runs through Ballitore. It provided the power for the mill. 'Mellifluous', meaning 'sweetly flowing' or 'sweet as honey' (OED), a word usually used to describe beautiful or eloquent language, here denotes the sweet sound of the flowing stream.

6. The mill once run by Quakers at Ballitore is now in ruins, but a later one, Crookstown Mill built in 1840 by John Bonham, a local landowner of Huguenot descent, has become a popular tourist attraction.

7. The village was famous for its beautiful trees. Of particular note was an avenue lined with elms:

   Let us begin, where fair and wide,
   Grac'd with young elms on either side,
   The lov'd Mill-avenue we tread,
   Dear to the daughters of the shade. (Leadbeater, 'Ballitore' (1778) in Leadbeater Papers, I, 17.)

   Groves of trees also abounded amongst the fields surrounding the village. Sadly, many trees were cut down for firewood and supplies when Ballitore was sacked in May 1798 by British soldiers in the Irish Rebellion and subsequent plunder by both sides in the conflict. More timber was cut down for sale after the Rebellion.

8. the Inn - this was built circa 1802. Mary Leadbeater wrote in her journal for that year: 'The Inn on the high-road from Dublin to Cork was completed, and was let to Thomas Glaizebrook. It soon acquired a goodly reputation. One night in Fourth-month this year the house was uncommonly full of guests - Friends travelling to the Yearly Meeting in Dublin, gentry going to the Curragh races, and officers on their march'. (Leadbeater Papers, I, 296.)

9. rattan - resounding noise. A word more often used for a loud knocking sound or drumbeat.

10. Hawkers were street sellers who advertised their wares by shouting cries specific to their trade. Sedan chairs were a frequent sight in the city and could be hired like modern taxis. Indolent - because they freed the occupant from the effort of walking.

11. Small boys employed by master sweeps to clean chimneys were often underfed, not only to save expense but because, if smaller, they were better able to climb narrow shafts.

12. haply - perhaps.

13. steel or agonise - i.e. either harden the heart or cause distress.

14. thy painted image - i.e. the 'thirst for gold', seen as idol worship.

15. knowing - i.e. knowingly.

16. fancied paradise - imagined Heaven, i.e. the vision of perfect happiness brought through wealth.

17. that. - abbreviation of 'thought'.

18. numbers - verses.

19. burthens - archaic form of 'burdens'.

20. Leadbeater's Poems of 1808 mainly concentrate on the joys of rural life, or pathos - often tragic events in the lives of ordinary country people (the resignation of the suffering subjects earns the poet's unstinting praise).

21. virtues meed - i.e. reward for virtue.

22. Speaking of Biblical verse, such as the psalms. Mary goes on to compare this with the use of classical mythology in poetry, which 'mars' rather than improves.

23. To rouge - to colour the cheeks by applying rouge, or red powder. Therefore to cover natural charms.

24. fable - myth or fiction.

25. genius - knowledge and imagination.

26. tho.ts - abbreviation of 'thoughts'.

Joseph Williams

Joseph Williams was a respected elder, and at one time a minister, in Dublin Monthly Meeting. When he died, aged over seventy, on 17 August 1807, his funeral was a large affair attended by many Friends. Mary’s tribute was this obituary poem, published in 1807, lamenting the passing of one regarded as a prophet in the Church. It uses powerful Old Testament imagery to address the Quaker Church which will suffer from his loss: the ‘trees of Lebanon’, the ‘walls of Judah’, ‘fruitful valleys’, ‘Mountains of Gilboa’. Elders like Joseph Williams were responsible for the spiritual condition of the meeting (as indeed they still are) and had a guiding role to play with regard to the ministry. Hence, the ‘trees of Lebanon’ may be, metaphorically, the ministers whose ‘boughs’ Joseph Williams ‘nurs’d & train’d’. (Mary’s poem was printed by R. Napper, 29 Capel Street, 1807. It can be found at Friends House Library, London, in a volume headed, Tracts, Vol. 204 (24) Box 10.)

Williams attempted to maintain discipline during a period when some members were departing from traditions of plainness, and from orthodoxy in belief. The greatest challenges to belief came through a questioning of the authority and literal interpretation of scripture, arising out of the rationalism of the Enlightenment. These difficulties resulted in what came to be termed the Irish Separation after 1798, when many Friends left the Society. (See ‘Progress of Infidelity’, Vol. I, Prose, p.21, where Mary regretfully describes her own flirtation with rationalistic, deistic thought.) Williams was frequently nominated by National Meeting between 1794 and 1796 to visit the lax and to promote zeal. Later, in the deist controversy, he was tasked with prevailing upon those holding opinions considered schismatic. He often tried to reconcile parties - remonstrating, for instance, with the Evangelical American minister, David Sands, when he became vituperative toward someone critical of his ministry. (Rathbone, A Narrative of Events, p.76.) Yet Williams’s efforts could also exacerbate schism. When he and Sands combined to prevent another American, Hannah Barnard, whose ministry they felt undervalued the scriptures, from travelling further in Ireland, and to stop London Yearly Meeting issuing her a certificate to travel in Europe, some liberal Friends felt the Society was becoming credal and judgmental and were confirmed in desires they already had to leave it.

Mary Leadbeater tells us that Joseph Williams was ‘an edifying speaker’, who had ‘a burden of work within the Society’. He was ‘plain, firm, with candour and unaffected manners’, and a ‘strong sense of duty’, but nevertheless was ‘worn down by the lukewarmness and degeneracy of the times within the Society’. (Leadbeater, Biographical Notices of Members of the Society of Friends, who were resident in Ireland (London: Harvey and Dutton, 1823), pp.343-46.) His hospitality was remarkable, and it seems that most travelling ministers from England or America enjoyed at least a brief spell under his Dublin roof before embarking on their tours of Ireland. He is mentioned in several of their journals, for example those of Martha Routh, Rebecca Jones and Deborah Darby.

There are two copies of the poem in the manuscript collection, over two hundred pages apart (MS Vol. 2, pp.191-95 and 426-30). There are few differences in wording apart from one difference in the title (see note 1 below) and a couple of other minor differences, one probably due to a copyist’s error. The second copy indents the first line of each section of the poem instead of leaving a line space. Many differences exist in areas such as punctuation, capitalisation and indentation. The later copy is almost totally lacking in punctuation and capitalises initial letters of nouns more frequently. The first manuscript copy is reproduced here and textual variants between it and the second are shown in the notes, indicated by closing square brackets.
Lines to the memory of our late esteemed and justly valued Friend
Joseph Williams

In what sad lines shall sorrow learn to flow,
Prest[sic] by the ponderous load of infelt2 woe,
What mournful muse the solemn strain shall pour
And tell the Church her Prophet is no more

Bow, trees of Lebanon, whose beauteous forms
Shade from the heat & cover from the storms,
Whose roots drink deep of Zion's sacred spring;
And in whose leaves the unfledg'd warblers sing;
Let your tall heads in act of sorrow bend
For him who pruned your boughs & nursed & train'd
For him who lopp'd each wither'd branch away
Nor foster'd useless verdure, idly gay;
For him who watch'd you with peculiar care,
Nor ever would the barren fig tree spare.

Lament ye walls of Judah where he stood
A faithful watcher in the cause of God!
Where oft his warning voice we wont to hear
When fox or tiger threat'ned mischief near.
When glossy serpents rose, insidious, sly,
And heedless flocks perceived no danger nigh.
Oh! then how burn'd his zeal that all might know
The guileful mazes of the specious foe;
And ever active he to point the road
That, safe & simple led to truths abode.
Then mourn, ye walls of Judah! - loud complaint
Pervades your borders; & our spirits faint.

Howl, fruitful valleys, where refreshing dews
And fragrant flowers their balmy sweets diffuse;
For he no more shall cull the noxious weed,
And in your bosoms plant the precious seed.
No more shall chase the empoisoning streams of strife
Nor dig laborious for the wells of life;
No more shall guard with long & painful toil,
The hedge which parts you from th'uncultur'd soil,
Nor lead your tender lambs to pastures fair,
Beside still waters & the shepherds care.

Mountains of Gilboa, whose barren waste
Nor dew, nor rain, nor fields of offerings graced
Where perish'd, useless, warlike weapons lay;
And mighty shields were vilely cast away.
There oft his single arm opposed the foe,
Nor turn'd back empty from the sword or bowl
But there no more his fearless voice shall rise
Nor error grieve his soul - nor fools despise,
Nor dauntless bid the trumpet sound again,
Whilst envious archers aim their darts in vain:
Nor yet while vengeance lifts the direful rod
Shall his heart tremble for the ark of God. 14
No more the battle to the gate shall turn,
Guard each enclosure & each breach discern;
Nor when Goliath's threats our hosts defy,
Shall his sure weapon bid the monster die. 16

Mountains of Gilboa! sate your thirst of gore
For he upholds our feeble knees no more
Save that his farewell blessing strength imparts
And animates with hope our drooping hearts.
Ev'n at[as] the mantle that on earth remain'd,
When heavens high steep the great Elijah gain'd17
That did replete with gifts & grace descend
To cheer & console18 his mourning friend.
And as his hand the pledge of love retain'd
New zeal inspired him, & new strength he gain'd
Thus from his lips the hallow'd accents pour'd
Which told of better days & comforts stored,19
Of prospects ripening o'er his mental view,
Of bright examples - & of heavenly dew,
Of joys that o'er the church may rise & spread,
When he is number'd with the silent dead,
Of judges glorious as in days of yore,20
Of prophets who the precious ointment bore.21

Thus did the seer on Pisgah's mountain stand
And view from distant heights the promised land;22
Thus did his eye to future scenes extend;
Thus did his blessing to his flock descend;
Thus did his care, his zeal, his love impart,
The farewell breathings of his anxious heart;
And as the voice our listening ear impress'd,[sic]
Its truth & clearness fix'd it in our breast,
With love divine his ardent bosom glow'd
And sacred sounds with energy o'erflow'd.
We heard - nay more, we felt his words impart,
Comfort & courage to the mourners heart;
Yet o'er our souls contrasted feelings sway'd
And anxious fears & deep regrets pervade.
We joy'd23 in hopes those better days to see
But oh! departed friend we mourn'd for thee.24

Yet why indulge the plaintive strain of woe,
While endless bliss does round thy spirit flow:
Why grieve that thou th'immortal prize hast won
Which all may gain who act as thou hast done
That thou from fields of labour art removed
To rest with him whom thou hast dearly lov’d
That all thy painful services are o’er
And our rebellions wound thy peace no more
That thou from all regret & care art free
Crown’d with the diadem prepared for thee!
Ah! rather let us all thine hopes fulfil
In meek submission to his holy will:
Let us thy footsteps & thy works retrace,
Thy self denial & thy faith embrace:
Let us thy zeal, thy ardent zeal retain
And from the sins that grieved thy soul refrain
And on us may a double portion rest
Of that which cloth’d & dignified thy breast;
Then shall our mourning change to purest joy,
To hopes unmingled, peace without alloy;
And when this mortal covering shall decay,
To the bright meed which cannot fade away.

1. The title of the second manuscript copy is 'To the Memory of our Late Endeared / and justly valued friend / Joseph Williams'.
2. infelt - deeply felt.
3. Textual variants in this section (4 lines): flow,] flow woe,] woe muse] Muse more] more
4. Ps 104:16-17 - 'The trees of the Lord are full of sap, the cedars of Lebanon which he has planted/ Where the birds make their nests.' (Solomon’s Temple was built with the timber of cedar trees from Lebanon.)
Zion’s - the Holy City's (Mount Zion was the hill at Jerusalem on which the Temple stood).
5. Mt 21:18-21 - Jesus cursed the fig tree which had leaves but no fruit, saying ‘Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever’. Joseph Williams was unafraid to rebuke others when he felt it necessary. Textual variants in this section (10 lines): Bow,] bow storms,] storms Zion’s sacred spring; ] Zions sacred spring unfleg’d warblers sing; ] unfledged warblers sing pruned] prun’d verdure, Idly gay; ] verdure Idly gay care,] care
6. walls of Judah - walls of Jerusalem, the Holy City, which was sited in Judah, the land south of the River Jordan and west of the Dead Sea assigned to the tribe of Judah, and one of the two kingdoms of the ancient Hebrews united by King David.
7. we wont to hear - we were accustomed to hear.
8. specious foe - the Devil, who may appear in various guises and set deceptive traps for the unwary.
10. noxious - harmful.
11. hedge [. . . ] soil - the protective boundary, both spiritual and in discipline or practice (habits of dress and speech, for example) which separated Quakers from those of 'the world'.
12. Ps 23:1-2 - 'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want/He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.'
Textual variants in this section (10 lines): Howl, fruitful valleys,] Howl fruitful valleys diffuse] diffuse; weed,] weed And In your bosoms) Nor In your bosoms seed,] seed life; ] Life & painful toil,) and painful toil which parts] that parts soil,) soil fair,) fair shepherds care,) Shepherds care
13. 2 Sam 1:21 - 'Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain upon you, nor fields of offerings: for the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil.' Mount Gilboa was the site of a battle between Israel and the Philistines in which the Israelites were defeated. King Saul and three of his sons, including Jonathan, were killed. Saul himself was wounded by enemy
arrows and, seeing the battle lost and lest he be captured and cruelly treated, committed suicide by falling upon his sword. (1 Ch 10 and 1 Sam 31.) The remaining Israelites were slaughtered or fled the battlefield.

14. The ark of the covenant was a decorated box made of acacia wood, carried by the Israelites in their wanderings and later kept at Shiloh and then the temple in Jerusalem. It enshrined the Book of the Law - the stone tablets engravened with the Law given to Moses by God. It symbolises the covenant or special agreement between God and His chosen people. Initially the Israelites and later the Church.

15. Goliath was a giant warrior in the Philistine army, killed with a stone from the young David's sling, (1 Sam 17). Hence a metaphor for the enemies of the Church or the spiritual life.

16. Textual variants in this section (16 lines). First 8 lines - Nor dew, nor rain, nor dew nor rain grace'd grace'd perish'd, useless, perish'd useless lay lay away away opposed the foe oppos'd the foe bow soul soul nor fools despise soul nor fools despise
Second 8 lines - again, again archers Archers vain vain while vengeance lifts the direful rod whilst vengeance lifts the ireful rod ark of God ark of God battle battle turn, turn discern; discern defy, defy die d

17. 2 Kgs 2:11-15 describes how the prophet Elijah was taken up to Heaven in a chariot of fire, leaving only his mantle (or cloak) behind. His friend and companion Elisha smote the waters of the Jordan with it and they parted to let him walk across the river. Elisha thus inherited the mantle, or became the successor, of Elijah.

18. consolate - comfort.

19. stor'd - in store, i.e. for the future.

20. The judges, who acted as military leaders as well as dispensers of justice, were the rulers of Israel before the monarchy was put in place.

21. The prophets of ancient Israel anointed its kings with oil, to show that God chose them.

22. Deut 34:1-8 - when Moses climbed Pisgah, a mountain east of the city of Jericho, God showed him all the Land that He had promised to the descendants of Abraham. Moses then died in the land of Moab, near Mount Pisgah.

23. joy'd - took pleasure in.

24. Textual variants in this section (16 lines). First 8 lines - see on Pisgah's see on Pisgah's promised land extend; extend descend descend his care, his zeal, his love impart, impart his care his zeal his love impart heart heart imprest, imprest & clearness and clearness breast, breast
Second 8 lines - o'erflow'd o'erflow'd impart, impart courage, courage and courage heart; heart pervade; pervade hopes hope Oh! Oh mourn'd for thee, mourn for thee

25. Diadem - headband of jewels or flowers received as reward for victory.

26. without alloy - without anything to spoil it.

27. bright mead - shining (even glorious) reward (i.e. eternal life).

28. Textual variants in this section (22 lines). First 11 lines - woe; woe flow; flow removed; remov'd regret & care; regret or care; diadem prepared for thee; Diadem prepared for thee; Ah! Ah
Second 11 lines - will; will retrac; retrac embrace; embrace zeal, thy ardent zeal; zeal thine ardent zeal breast; breast; joy; joy unmingled, peace without alloy; unmingled - peace without alloy, decay, decay

In the second manuscript copy, this 22 line section is not separated from the previous 16 line section.
Mary wrote a poetic appeal to benefactress Elizabeth Dawson for funds to provide clothing for the children of the General Daily Free School each winter from 1805 to 1807. See notes to 'To E.D. on behalf of the Children of the General Daily Free School', p.375 in this volume, for information about this school.

An Address to Elizth. Dawson requesting a Donation to assist in clothing the Poor Children of the General Daily Free School

Benevolent friend! thy Suppliants feel
To need thy annual bounty still
And thus thy wonted aid they claim
To teach the mind and clothe the frame
For penury with piercing dart
Repels the vigour of the heart
Does many a brilliant thought entomb
And blasts young genius in its bloom
Oh be it thine to lend a ray
To light them thro' this devious way
Its cheering beam shall gild thy breast
For we in blessing most are blest
And nought of all the joys of sense
Is sweeter than Benevolence
Kind friend to thee all bounteous Heaven
The power of doing good hath given
Source of the purest joy below
Which only they who feel can know
And little think the giddy throng
Whom vice & fashion lead along
That vain their search Content to find
She dwells but in the virtuous mind
Nor may the taper burning bright
Enhance her pure efficient light
Celestial beam! its warmth intense
Proceeds from true benevolence!
And may she be the frequent guest
To aid and console thy breast
There may she raise the grateful song
From many an heart and many a tongue
There oft her calm delights repose
To aid reflection as it flows
The moonlight ray of mem'ry cheer
And point to future blessings near.

11mo. 5th. 1807.
1. Recognising the stunting effects of poverty.
2. devious way - path of life, beset with temptations and difficulties.
3. And nought [...] Benevolence - referring to the pleasurable sensation dispensing charity confers upon the giver, what Mary elsewhere calls a 'glow'.
4. giddy throng - conventional expression for the heedless or uncaring.
5. taper - a wax candle.
6. consolate - comfort.
7. Possibly hymns or prayers, from different authors and nations.

On this occasion, Elizabeth Dawson responded with two guineas, and Mary composed this little verse by way of thanks and receipt. See also 'To E. D', p.389.

To E.D.

Two Guineas received by the hands of S. Hill¹
I hope we shall wisely apply
To lessen the sufferings our children may feel
And the comforts of clothing to buy
Accept of the tribute of grateful esteem
Of thanks which unfeignedly flow
And may we in dispensing thy bounty to them
With Judgment & prudence bestow.

1. S. Hill - Mary's friend, the minister Susannah Hill. See Appendix 7, 'Individuals Featuring in the Writings of Mary Birkett Card'.
The addressee is not identified here, but the reference in the second stanza to clothing and warming 'the shivering form' probably means it was Elizabeth Dawson once more. (See two poems immediately above.)

To

O thou to whom the sons of grief
   In pensive numbers\(^1\) oft complain
Whose ready hand affords relief
   When sorrow pours the dulcet\(^2\) strain
   Then oft they feel
   Thy power to heal
To wipe the tear from Misery's eye\(^3\)
To chase affliction\[^{[s]}\] long drawn sigh
The faint and feeble knee to raise
And tune the mind to songs of praise

Thine too is Wisdom's sacred lore
   The varied talent to improve
For he who gave & blest thy store
   Requires the tribute of thy love
   To clothe and warm
   The shivering form
To make even Mammon prove thy friend\(^4\)
As precious incense shall ascend
As acts more truly wise than they
Who waste the midnight oil away\(^5\)

For what avails th'immortal soul
   The Heroic line the Classic strain\(^6\)
The storms that over Empires roll
   And desolate\(^7\) the fertile plain
   The din of arms
   Whose loud alarms
With zeal the Warriors breast inspire
And kindle oft the martial fire
These are not fruits of Wisdom's tree
Nor blossoms of Eternity!
Nor may the Trump of Fame convey
Immortal honours to the heart
The storied marble will decay
And pride will as a scroll depart.
But ever bright
As rays of Light
Shall Charity's fair form arise
And aid her vot'ries to the skies
Her soothing voice shall never cease
To whisper Everlasting Peace

Yes for when languor shall assail
And pining sickness seize the frame
When friendship's cordial draught shall fail
Nor wealth present his golden dream
Then when the mind
Shall look behind
Each act of Mercy will impart
A ray of comfort to the heart
Break through the hove'ring gloom of death
Nor leave us with our parting breath

11th. mo: 14th. 1807.

1. pensive numbers - poetry in thoughtful, melancholic strain (pened by Mary or others on behalf of the poor - the sons of grief).
2. dulcet - sweet and melodious.
3. Thomas Gray, Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard (1751), 123 - 'He gave to Misery all he had, a tear;'. In contrast, the addressee of Mary's poem has the 'power' to relieve misery.
4. Mammon - from Aramaic, meaning 'riches', a personification of money and wealth. Usually a hindrance in seeking the Kingdom of Heaven, money can yet be a 'friend' if used benevolently in the service of others.
5. The last three lines of this stanza are somewhat obscure. Charitable work or giving, to educate and clothe the poor (presumably the children of the General Daily Free School), is contrasted with the toil of those who burn 'the midnight oil' studying, to become learned or, perhaps, rich. Charitable 'acts' are more 'truly wise'.
6. Heroic poetry relates the adventures of heroic figures, often from the classical period, frequently in epic form. Heroic couplets (rhymed pairs of lines in regular iambic pentameters) were favoured for this style of poetry. the Classic strain - also refers to classical reference and mythology, which Mary appears to have rejected - see 'An Epistle to M. Leadbeater.', 1807, p.396 in this volume.
7. desolate - i.e. lay desolate.
8. Trump of Fame - conventional poetic expression for the spread of fame, or reputation. Trump - sound of trumpet.
9. storied marble - stone memorial relating an individual's achievements.
10. pride will as a scroll depart - adapting conventional simile for rapid dissolution, 'as a scroll on fire'. Pride will fall as fast as a scroll of paper burns. Paper, of course, also decays in the natural course of events.
11. vot'ries (votaries) - worshippers or followers.
12. cordial draught - punning on 'cordial', as both a refreshing or medicinal drink, particularly one to stimulate the heart's action, and an adjective meaning warm and friendly.
These verses were written to Elizabeth, Mary's sister (since 1806 the wife of Robert Hudson), to accompany a rather unusual gift - a china jug painted with gilt and 'plein des oeufs' ('full of eggs'). Why these words are in French is unclear - perhaps they were inscribed on the side of the jug. The eggs may have been ornamental, or even, perhaps, painted on the side of the vessel. But certainly, the jug itself is a practical article - it is to be used at Betsy's table.

The opportunity is taken, as ever with poems accompanying a present, to draw a moral.

To with a gilt Jug -
Plein des oeufs

Go beauteous piece of brittle clay
And let thy chequer'd\textsuperscript{1} sides convey
The soft & silk lin'd snowy shells
Where liquid gold in chrystal[ic]\textsuperscript{2} dwells
Gold that oft feeds the vital flame\textsuperscript{3}
And adds new vigour to the frame
Go and to Betsy's eye impart
The thoughts that move her sisters heart
Say that in thy frail form we see
An Emblem of mortality
That all which art may polish fair
The gilded flowers of learning rare
The chequer'd\textsuperscript{4} paths by science stor'd
In midnight musings oft explor'd
Not these united all can save
Or bar the portals of the grave
Th\textsuperscript{[u]}[upholding hand withdrawn - they fall
And one vast wreck includes them all!
But here we differ - thou no more
Shall glitter mid the shining store
No more to Betsys lips impart
The wholesome draught that cheers the heart
Nor grace her hospitable board
Nor beverage e'er from thee be pour'd
Here then we differ - lifes frail clay
Dissolving yields a brighter day \textsuperscript{5}
The clogs of earth - or gilt or fair
Alike must one destruction share\textsuperscript{6}
But 'tis the mind - the mind within
That shines in every storm serene
That bids defiance to the tomb
And triumphs in Eternal bloom!

1st. mo: 9th. 1808
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1. chequer'd - patterned in squares and/or alternating colours.
2. chrystal - the albumen, or white of egg, which is crystal clear.
3. vital flame - source of life or energy. Egg yolks were known to be full of essential nutrients, and eggs are traditionally symbolic of new life and regeneration. Mary may also be punning on 'gold' - thinking of the gold decoration on the jug and gold as wealth sustaining life.
4. chequer'd - here meaning variable, but no doubt the 'chequer'd sides' of the jug (see note 1 above) are emblematic of these 'chequer'd paths'.
5. lifes frail clay [...] brighter day - the human body, on dissolution, releases the soul to Heaven.
6. The clogs of earth [...] destruction share - earthly objects all meet the same end, however beautiful they are - 'or [either] gilt or fair'.
Abigail Knott Junior, whose gift of a pair of watch cases (pouches for keeping watches when not worn) prompted this poem, was the daughter of William Knott, a Dublin thread, tape and ribbon manufacturer, and his wife, Abigail. William and Abigail had twelve children and the family lived at 35 New Row West, Dublin (also their business premises) in 1808. They moved to Edenderry in 1809. (Webb’s Pedigrees, Friends Historical Library, Dublin.) Abigail Junior (1789-1837) was a young girl of eighteen when this poem was written for her. She was later to become Mary Birkett Card’s sister-in-law on marrying her brother, William Birkett, in 1813. (See Appendix 7, ‘Individuals Featuring in the Writings of Mary Birkett Card’ - two other poems concern the Knott family, including another addressed to Abigail Knott Junior.)

As is often the case with Mary’s verses written by way of thanks for a gift, the opportunity is taken here to draw some moral lessons.

To A Knott Junr.
On receiving a pair of open Watch Cases
3mo. 14th. 1808.

Thy beauteous gift my gentle friend
Is elegantly wrought
There neatness art and order blend
To teach my erring thought

For when the glooms of night impart
Their sadly pensive power
Thy graceful boon instructs mine heart
To prize the passing hour -

And when these colours bright and gay
Shall glisten o’er mine head
Attracting oft the earliest ray
That rosy morn may shed1

Then by thy gift allur’d - mine eye
Shall read a lesson there
And as the transient moments fly
For future days prepare

And oh perhaps in nights unborn
When joy shall yield to fear
When sickness plants the blighting thorn
These my lone hours may cheer

And oft in memory’s faithful chain
Shall past ideas2 glide
Of many a sweetly social scene
By your beloved fireside -
Yet surely friendships fervent glow
   Declines such puny aid
It triumphs over all below
   And blooms when these shall fade

1. Watch cases were usually made of soft material like velvet, and were often colourful and richly embroidered, sometimes with motifs or maxims. They could be hung up in the bedroom at night - frequently, as here, on the headboard.
2. Ideas - mental pictures.
3. Referring to the watch cases, the bright colour of which will fade in time.
Hannah Pettigrew, with whom Mary had stayed in 1795 at Mount Prospect near Rathangan, paid a surprise visit to the Cards in Dublin in 1808 with another friend or relative identified only as 'AR'. Mary and Hannah renewed their friendship, sharing memories of earlier days when Mary had been Hannah's guest - probably referring to the stay at Mount Prospect. (See 'Mount Prospect' and 'To H Pettigrew', pp.248-53 in this volume.)

On a Visit paid by H Pettigrew and A R to their friends in Dublin 10 month 1808

I too have shar'd the fond delight That soothes & cheers the breast Have felt the hours of youth renew'd When I was Hannah's guest

For deep impress[sic] on Memory's page Those happy days remain And oft in retrospective view I live those hours again.

For sweeter than the sweetest rose Her memory's odorous balm More pensive and more calm

Her cultur'd mind inform'd my soul Which on her accents hung That as the ivy to the oak To her example clung

And as a root that upward springs And sends its branches round So did her friendship glad my heart So did its fruits abound
To her, my dear & early friends
I your affection owe
The joys that from your converse rise
That from your presence flow

And as the engraving on a tree
Does with its growth increase
So deep impressions early form'd
No time nor change efface.

But when renewed the sacred touch
Of friendship's faithful hand
The chords vibrate [a]round the heart
With pure delight expand

Even as the lyre that wak'd to life
By skilful fingers prest[sic]
Pours forth the soft mellifluous³ sounds
That soothe the sorrowing breast

And what is man? a masterpiece
Most exquisitely fine
Whose every nerve is form'd to aid,
An Harmony Divine!

Ah! why should sin discordant break
The texture of the soul?
Attract the poor deluded eye
And mar a beauteous whole!

Why when replete with life & power
The human fabric⁴ rose
Blest with a thirst for heavenly good
An heart with love that glows

Why when the path of truth refines
And dignifies the breast
And friendship, gentle friendship comes
To give to life its zest!

Be mine the pure serene delight
Which leaves no sting behind
To share with you in converse sweet
The pleasures of the mind

For richer than the gorgeous robe
Of fancy's tinsel glare⁵
The look benign the social smile
With you my friends to share
Oh! might the Muse indulge a wish
The wish, the hope of love
That these delightful mental flowers
May all perennial prove -

1. Illude - poetic/literary word meaning 'deceive'.
2. This line refers to someone who, it is revealed three stanzas later, was instrumental in forming the friendships with Hannah Pettigrew and AR. This was, in all probability, Mary's close friend, Hannah Wilson Forbes, who had died in 1799 after childbirth. Hannah Pettigrew was, almost certainly, the daughter of Robert and Anne Pettigrew and thus niece to both Hannah Wilson Forbes's parents - James and Anne Forbes - and to Joshua and Hannah Wilson of Mount Prospect near Rathangan (Anne Forbes, Hannah Wilson and Anne Pettigrew being sisters, the daughters of Joshua Strangman). Hannah Pettigrew knew the Forbes family well and compiled genealogical information about them.
3. Mellifluous - 'sweetly flowing', or 'sweet as honey' (OED). Usually used to describe eloquent speech.
4. Fabric - frame or structure.
5. Gorgeous robe/Of fancy's tinsel glare - attractive outward dress of the imagination (probably art or poetry), seen as artificial in comparison with the joys of friendship.
6. Perennial - permanent, flowering year after year.
Mary's first daughter and fourth child, Sarah (born 24 August 1807), died when just over a year old on 14 September 1808. Two months later Mary felt strong enough to write about this tragic event, and how it affected her. She was, at the time of writing this poem, already six months into another pregnancy. This child was to be a second daughter, named Mary, who lived to adulthood.

Mary wrote very little poetry thereafter. In October, only a month after Sarah's death, she had felt able to compose a poem when her old friend, Hannah Pettigrew, paid her a visit (reproduced immediately above). But only five poems are copied into the manuscript collection after 'To Hope': two dated 1809 ('To E Dawson on behalf of the Aged and Infirm Female Servants' and 'To the Same for a Friend', which I too, following a chronological order, place after this one), and three undated poems - an untitled one on friendship and two addressed to her husband Nathaniel, which I too have placed at the end of the collection. No poems bear a date later than 1809, although, of course, a few undated poems placed earlier in the manuscripts may belong to a later period, as Nathaniel Card's order was not strictly chronological. But it does seem that after 1808-09, Mary abandoned poetry and confined her writing to her spiritual journal and letters.

The implications of this, and the strong possibility that this poem represents a renunciation of aspects of her creative imagination, are explored elsewhere in this thesis, in the introduction to her life and work (see latter part of Chapter 5). There it is also compared with other poems on hope, and its delusive power (a common theme in eighteenth/early nineteenth-century poetry), particularly Felicia Hemans's representation of maternal loss in 'The Domestic Affections' (1812) and Dr Samuel Johnson's lines 'On the Death of Dr. Robert Levet' (1782). Suffice it to say here that, despite sharing many conventions with other works, Mary's treatment of hope is very different in the way it arises from, and almost certainly enacts change in, her own life.

Curiously, this poem is included in the prose manuscript volume as well as the poetry one. In the prose volume, it forms the last item, and as such may have been meant to carry special significance, although it is not the only poem to be placed with the prose. Mary's poem written after the birth of her second son, Nathaniel, for instance, appears in both the poetry and prose sections of the collection in this way (see 'Written two days after the birth of my second son', 1803). It is impossible to know whether these duplications were intentional, or simply done in error. And two other poems, 'An Adieu to my friends at Milford' and 'To Sally Starbuck - an acrostic', are found amongst the prose papers.

Differences between the two copies of 'To Hope' are few. The words 'and only' are added in the sub-title to the poetry section copy: i.e. 'To Hope / Written after the death of my beloved and only Daughter'.

In the body of the text, there are few differences in wording - most variants are in punctuation and capitalisation. The copy included with the prose manuscripts is reproduced here because it is dated and, as it carries more punctuation, may be a revised version. Textual variants are shown in the notes, indicated by a closing square bracket. For the sake of simplicity, explanatory and textual notes are combined into one extended note for each verse.

I have inserted line breaks between stanzas, as this verse division was clearly the copyist's intention. (In the copy included with prose, only a centred line without a line space shows such divisions, whereas the copy in the poetry volume has line breaks as given here.)
To Hope

Written after the death of my beloved Daughter

Away, Away, delusive power
   No longer may thy voice enslave me
For Death hath pluck'd my loveliest flower
   And thou did'st cruelly deceive me.1

Why did I hourly trust in thee?
   Why did I think thou promis'd fairly;
When heartfelt pangs await me,
   The loss of one I lov'd most dearly.2

How often watching 'oer her form
   That form in which my soul delighted
My bosom glow'd with raptures warm
   With hopes - alas! they all were blighted3

Oft would my ardent fancy trace
   The harvest of my ripen'd treasure
Enhance each smile each opening grace
   And view each little act with pleasure.4

And sure the seeds of future flowers,
   In her sweet breast were dawning early
Benign were all her mental powers
   Attracting love - we loved her dearly!5

And oh! when agonized with grief
   These aching eyes beheld her languish
When medicine yielding no relief
   She pined in patient, silent anguish6

O then thy fleeting visions, Hope
   How did my rack'd ideas cherish
Thy faithless whispers were my prop
   Alas! they all were doom'd to perish.7

How did I watch her beauteous face
   To see the rose of health returning
How every varying symptom trace
   Each sleepness night, each wakeful morning8
I saw her lovely fabric fall,
Caught the last glance of her blue eye.
I drank the wormwood & the gall,
And saw her frame in ruins lie!9

Away then Hope! with all thy train
Of soft illusions, vain, ideal
That keenly edge the dart of pain
With joys unsolid - sorrows real.10

And oh! to feel the chasm within,
The piercing pang that touch'd us nearly!
The dreary clouds that intervene;
- The loss of her we lov'd so dearly:11

Oh! may no more thy voice allure,
With prospects baseless & ungrounded,
But may I feel an anchor sure
Beyond the reach of hope unfounded.12

For this embitter'd draught hath rais'd
The silent dread! the secret cry
That when all nerveless & diseas'd,
The prey of Death; my frame shall be.13

That then no hopes like these may smile,
Full sweetly smile! and then deceive me
My soul of endless rest beguile,
Lull me to false repose! and leave me14

As when the unskilful hand applies
A salve to cure the rankling sore,
While yet the lurking venom lies
Neath the smooth'd surface cover'd 'oer15

Thus may not I; life's journey past.
Embrace a shade; and miss the blessing;
But feel mine anchor firm & fast;
A certain Evidence possessing!16

Then roll on Time! thy years & days
And gravel extend thine awful portal
No matter thro' what thorny ways,
So we obtain the prize Immortal.17

11 Mo 16. 1808 Mary Card.

1. Away, Away, delusive power[ Away away delusive Power Death hath] Death has flower] flow'r did' st cruelly deceive me.] didst cruelly deceive me
2. fairly; fairly await me; fairly await me dearly; dearly
3. watching 'o'er watching o'er
4. smile smile; pleasure; pleasure
5. flowers; flowers loved her dearly
6. patient; patient
7. rack'd ideas - tortured thoughts. O then thy fleeting visions, Hope! Oh! then my fleeting visions - hope ("my" is probably a copyist's error, and 'thy' correct, as hope is being addressed) perish; perish
8. night; night
9. fabric - frame, or physical structure. the wormwood and the gall - common term for mortification and grief. Wormwood is a bitter herb, and gall, as well as being a word for bile, means bitterness. fall; fall eye; eye & the gall; and the gall lie; lie.
10. Hope! Hope unsolid - sorrows real; unsolid, sorrows real -
11. nearly - keenly, closely. within; nearly; nearly intervene; intervene - The; The dearly; dearly
12. Oh! Oh allure; allure & ungrounded; and ungrounded hope unfounded; Hope unfounded
13. nerveless - powerless, unable to move. rais'd; raised dread; dread & disease'd; and diseased Death; death
14. my frame shall be; this frame shall lie ("lie", as it rhymes with 'cry', is probably correct.)
15. smile; smile smile; smile & beguile; beguile repose! repose, me; me -
16. shade - ghost or phantom. I; I past; past shade; and; shade & blessing; blessing fast; fast Evidence possessing! evidence possessing.
17. roll on; roll on, years & days; days and years - gravel! gravel! thro' what thorny ways, through what thorny ways ('days' rhymes with 'ways', so 'years and days' is correct, and the transposition an error in the 'poetry volume' copy.)
The next poem is addressed to the benefactress, Elizabeth Dawson, who contributed to the General Daily Free School. Mary seeks her financial assistance on behalf of another philanthropic venture - provision of a home for retired female servants who might otherwise end up in the House of Industry, or workhouse. Their prospects, once they ceased to earn, particularly if they had no relatives to support them, were indeed dire. Though Mary wrote an appeal, or advertisement, for funding for this scheme in April 1808, probably for placing in local newspapers as well as sending to possible subscribers, the plan did not come to fruition until 1817. The Asylum then ran for twenty-two years, closing in 1839. Mary’s appeal (see Vol. I, Prose, p.182) outlines how the scheme would operate. One benefit, for employers, was that servants would be more likely to remain with them longer and give more dedicated service if they knew a secure place would be provided for them in old age - especially if the only means of admission was a good reference from an employer.

As with poems seeking money for poor schools, this poem too stresses the benefits and pleasures of charity for the donor - an inner ‘glow’, peace, joy and contentment. It appears to have been successful, as the poem immediately following, entitled ‘To the Same - for a friend’, expresses gratitude for relief kindly given.

To E. Dawson
On behalf of the Aged & Infirm
Female Servants

4 mo. 23rd. 1809.

When grief excites the heartfelt sigh
When drops the tear from Misery’s eye
Where shall each plaintive sufferer flee
Where friend of sorrow but to thee

When bending neath the weight of years
The worn-out suppliants form appears
Where hopeless helpless shall they flee
Ah! surely not in vain to thee

When youths delightful rose is fled
And age surrounds their hoary head
Disease and want and death they see
And who may cheer their hours like thee

Hard is their patient helpless lot
Nor be their useful toil forgot
For now from want and care set free
Their dying thanks may rise to thee

Oh! Friend of sorrow let thine ear
The claims of aged misery hear
No more they bend th’unpliant knee
But humbly ask relief from thee
Let now thy bounteous thought extend
Their Latter moments to befriend
Let these awhile forget their woes
Awhile in well earned peace repose
E'er the dark curtain intervenes
And clos'd their eyes on transient scenes

And as thine heart shall kindly glow
To soothe the poor domestic's woe
Impart the boon which gracious Heav'n
To thee with liberal hand hath given
Be thine the sweet reward of Joy
The inward peace without alloy\(^3\)
The hope that cheers the gen'rous mind
The pleasure tranquil & refin'd:
And thus with interest large receive
What now thy charity may give.

1. Thomas Gray, *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* (1751), 123: 'He gave to Misery all he had, a tear;'.
2. hoary - aged, white-haired.
3. without alloy - pure, without anything to debase it, or detract from it.
The 'Same' is probably Elizabeth Dawson once more - see poem addressed to her 'On behalf of the Aged & Infirm Female Servants' immediately above.

To the Same - for a friend.

When imprest[sic] by the warmth of compassion and love
Thy Bosom expands to relieve the distrest[sic]
Shall the Muse check the tribute that gratefully flows¹
Or repel the soft ardor that glows in her breast

Ah! no, for the virtues that brighten the soul
Exceed in their brilliance the gem of Peru²
And sweeter by far are the flowers of the mind
Ye roses & lilies! more fragrant than you

The spark³ that illumes and irradiates man
O'er the whole inward sphere sheds its heavenly ray
It increasingly spreads & disseminates light
And it gilds his horizon - tho' Suns may decay

Oh, then may sweet sympathy dwell in thy heart
And still may the pleasure of giving be thine
May the poor who partake of thy bounties rejoice
And still be the accents of gratitude mine.

11th. mo: 25th. 1809.

1. the tribute that gratefully flows - tears.
2. the gem of Peru - Peruvian gold and precious stones frequently appear in poetry as tropes for fabulous wealth. For example Isaac Watts, in 'Praise for Birth': 'I would not change my native land/For rich Peru with all her gold.'
3. The spark [. . .] - referring to what Quakers term 'the Inner Light', considered to exist within each person.
UNDATED POEMS

CONSIDERED TO HAVE BEEN WRITTEN

AFTER 1800
A rebus is a kind of puzzle, like an enigma, but where the clues suggest the syllables of a word - in this case, a girl's name. (Originally, a rebus consisted of pictorial clues, before it became, in general, based on punning.)

In the manuscript collection, this poem is placed between poems dated 1803 and 1804, so it may have been written about that time.

A Rebus

His name whose punishment was sent of God
Because he spoiled his sons & spared the rod
Next add, those plain externals which surround
The lowest stop of learnings rising ground
A chattering bird, who learns like fools to prate
Yet bears no wisdom, in his shallow pate
And Him, whom natures primal laws require
To crown with joy, a virtuous hoary sire
These simple words announce a female name
Whose taste & elegance are known to Fame

MC

1. Name untraced. Prov 13:24 reads, 'He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.' Also, Prov 23:13-14 - 'Withhold not correction from the child; for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.'


3. hoary - aged, white-haired.
The following two poems are placed in the manuscript collection amidst the Milford Haven material, and so may well have been written at Milford during Mary's visit there in January/February 1804. However, there is nothing in either poem to link them definitely with that visit, and so I have decided to reproduce them here.

George, to whom the first is addressed, remains unidentified, but it is obvious that he assisted Mary in editing or revising her poems.

To George

Those lines I scribbled rude and free
Are cloth'd so neat dear George by thee
To smooth & trim my woodnotes wild
That scarce my muse might know her child

In the second poem, the imagined speaker is a pocket book, perhaps sent as a gift, which addresses 'E.A.'. The initials might stand for Eliza Alexander - see Appendix 7, 'Individuals Featuring in the Writings of Mary Birkett Card'.

A Pocket-book to E. A.

Let others court the splendid seat
I envy not their aim
But here for thine acceptance wait
Oh deign to hear my claim.

Then let me here - a useful guest
Oft on thy table lie
And bear a moral to thy breast
When e'er I meet thine eye

Tis not alone that neatest care
Thy form & mine arrays
Nor do our hidden stores appear
To every casual gaze
Fast lock'd from every ruder hand
   Our varied treasures rest
But wide alike our charms expand
   Industry to assist¹

Nay more, dear girl, we both contain
   A monitor within²
A faithful glass³ - where every stain
   And every spot is seen.

Mine shelter'd safe with wondrous care
   No dimness may attract⁴
May thine an equal lustre bear
   And shine on every act⁵ –

Thus we reciprocal may rove
   And share each mutual want
An humble friend I wish to prove
   Do thou protection grant -

¹. A pocket book could be a pocket-sized edition of a popular work, often poetry, or a compendium of items and texts for everyday use. The latter were usually lockable, and might contain a variety of material such as recipes, a calendar, mottoes and religious sayings, notes, names and addresses, diary, an almanack, and poems. Of course, these ‘charms’ and aids to daily life could only appear when the book was unlocked and opened.

². monitor within - Internal guide.

³. glass - mirror.

⁴. Perhaps, If the book is taken care of and kept closed when not in use, the printed matter cannot fade, or go dim, in the sunlight.

⁵. Mary hopes that E.A.'s internal monitor may shine brightly, like the printed page, to guide or shed light on all her actions.
No indication of the identity of the addressee is given here, but he or she was someone whose company Mary cultivated and who, after spending some time in Dublin, had decided to make a home there. The poem's manuscript position indicates a date circa late 1804-05.

To xxx

As the dew that new verdure distils o'er the flower
As the dry parched earth that's refresh'd by a show'r
As the bright polar star that does lustre impart
And revives by its ray the lorn\(^1\) mariners heart
As the sun whose young beams gild the dawn of the year
So pleasant to me does thy friendship appear!
But what object on earth so delightful we find
Such a treasure! so vast! as a well cultur'd mind
And truly that heart must be gentle & pure
Which friendship's attraction doth sweetly allure
For if discords hoarse accents be heard in the plain
It will banish the graces that wait in her train
And tho' she to candour & freedom invites
Yet all rudeness disgusts her, all harshness affrights
Her counsel is prudent from Wisdom it flows
She enhances our pleasures & lessens our woes
Her office - soft sympathy's power to improve
For no voice is so sweet, as the voice that we love
Impell'd by that voice I have sought thine abode
To enjoy thine effusions,\(^2\) as sweetly they flow'd
Like the miser who anxiously visits his store
And tho' much he possesses yet covets much more
So I sometimes blest with thy converse refin'd
Do incessantly wish for thy thoughts & thy mind
Would usurp to myself what another enjoy'd
And intrude on the time so much better employ'd
With delight have I heard of thy permanent stay
And that doubt, as the shadows of night flee away
For yet crown'd thy endeavours & labour of love
Our minds to enlighten our hearts to improve
Of the fruit of thy hands thou with pleasure shall see
And thy work will thy praise & thy recompense be
O then let a ray of thy friendship so kind
Continue to cheer & illumine my mind
And since metals by friction are polish'd & bright
Haply\(^3\) back on thyself may reflect the pure light
And the flame gathering strength may more swiftly ascend
To that mansion of rest where all sorrows have end.\(^4\)
The National Botanic Gardens in Glasnevin, Dublin, now extending to nearly 20 hectares of landscaped grounds with water and rock gardens, an arboretum, and glasshouses, were founded by the Royal Dublin Society in 1795. This poem was written after Mary visited them with a friend, Sally - almost certainly Sarah Hoare, an enthusiastic botanist and, later, author of 'The Pleasures of Botanical Pursuits. A Poem', printed in Priscilla Wakefield's *Introduction to Botany* (1818) and *Poems on Conchology and Botany, with plates and notes* (1831).

Mary's poem concentrates, however, not so much on the beauties of the Botanic Gardens, but on human cruelty, because she and Sally had found all the Gardens' bees lying 'murdeed in heaps'. At this time, bees were smothered *en masse*, usually around October, to obtain the honey from their hives, a practice long criticised for its cruelty to creatures considered emblematic of diligent industry. See, for instance, James Thomson's extended passage in *The Seasons* (1726-46), with which Mary would undoubtedly have been familiar, on the hive 'robbed and murdered' and man's tyranny ('Autumn', 1172-1207). By the turn of the century, much work was being done to find an alternative method (see note 3 below).

This concern for animal suffering lends further credence to Mary's companion being Sarah Hoare. The *Dictionary of Quaker Biography* states: 'her compassion extended to the treatment of animals, which she felt to be a cause of great suffering, and she was not above using every means in her power to prevent the pursuit of cruel and degrading sports'. This included writing a letter, published in *The Times*, attempting to dissuade Lord Wombwell from staging a fight between his largest lion and six mastiffs for a £5,000 stake in 1825. And Sarah's diary entry for 22 March 1832 reads, 'The formation of a Society for the promotion of humanity to animals gives me great comfort. May it prosper! Only He who gave me life can know how much I have suffered on account of the cruelties practised on them [. . .] and all I have really done to mitigate their sufferings' (*Annual Monitor*, 1856, p.101).

If Sally was Sarah Hoare, this visit to the Botanic Garden must have taken place after she and Mary became friends in late 1804 or early 1805. (See Appendix 7, 'Individuals Featuring in the Writings of Mary Birkett Card'.)

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**Occasioned by a Walk to the Botanic Garden**

Serene was the morning & balmy the air  
When Sally allur'd me to rove  
To inhale the mild breezes & her converse to share  
Awhile in the classical grove.

And tho' Winters stern ravage was seen in the shade  
Yet the foliage was lovely in death  
And the late blowing flowers were in beauty array'd  
Still charming & sweet was their breath!
I gazed on each scene its soft sympathy caught
For twas Nature's own harmony reign'd
The prospect around us with comfort was fraught
And my heart glow'd with rapture unfeigned.

When dear Sally, instruction no doubt to impart
Led our footsteps to visit the bees,
But oh! what a pang keenly thrill'd thro' my heart
Yea the current within second seem'd to freeze -

For murder'd in heaps the poor labourers lay
And the hives busy humming had ceas'd
Ah man! all the earth is oppress'd by thy sway
And cruelty sweetens thy feast!

Tho' Nature profusely her viands prepar'd
Tho' unbounded her offerings to thee
Yet insipid they seem with reluctance are shar'd
If unstained and bloodless they be!

Oh why is this thirst after gore in the mind?
Why for us should such misery reign?
And why are the meals that refresh human kind
Preceded by anguish and pain?

Yet the beasts of the forest who riot in blood
With aversion and dread be behold
While harmless their nature who crop the green food
And the infant may visit the fold

And sure if the diet (as Sages have said)
Affects both the temper and mind
No marvel that Wars horrid tumult has spread
Or that passion debases our kind.

1. This autumnal description fits with the month being October, when the bees were usually smothered.
2. the current within - the circulation, or blood.
3. Edward Wakefield in An Account of Ireland Statistical and Political (1812) describes the beekeeping industry in several Irish counties. It was usual, when the bees were suffocated in October, to keep around three hives in every ten so there were sufficient insects to breed the next year. For reasons of expense as well as humanity, other methods were being tried. The Rev Dr Butler in Kilkenny tied up the hives in a cloth and suspended them from beams in his cellar from October to April, when the bees were liberated. Mr Acheson in Derry and a Mr Green in Kilrea adapted systems of moveable boxes with glass panes, which enabled the honey to be separated from the bees. Wakefield expresses the hope that this more humane procedure will prevail. (I, 356-58.)
4. fold - i.e. sheep-fold or pen.
5. The idea that diet affects human behaviour and personality was becoming more widespread. Shelley, for instance, asserted this a few years later in A Vindication of Natural Diet (1813). Mary Birkett Card's brother, George Harrison Birkett, became vegetarian as well as teetotal. Quaker James Haughton became vegetarian in 1846 for health as well as humanitarian reasons, being influenced by J. Newton's book, A Vegetarian Regimen (1811). He became President of the UK Vegetarian Society and involved in The Dublin Auxiliary for the Protection of Animals. (Richard Harrison, Richard Davis Webb: Dublin Quaker Printer (1805-72) (Skeagh, Cork: Red Bam Publishing, 1993), p.52.)
Sarah Hoare, a close friend of Mary's certainly from early 1805 (see poem above), ran a school in Dublin, mainly for Quaker girls, as well as being a poet and an amateur botanist. She is the addressee of two of Mary's letters, and several poems.

To S: Hoare

How rapidly yesterday flew the short hours
How refreshing and fragrant the tea
How delightful the charm that soft sympathy pours
While engaged in sweet converse with thee

Amidst thy young circle so joyous and gay\(^1\)
I candor and gentleness meet
For theirs are the smiles that enliven the day
Untainted by guile or deceit -

We felt not the cold of the keen piercing air
Illum'd by the fires cheerful\([sic]\) blaze
Fidele\(^2\) too & Juba reposing were there
The picture of comfort and Ease.

How different their lot from th'enjoyments we taste
Who the anguish of Penury share
May we never by luxury folly or waste
Deprive them of what we can spare

And I thought as I gaz'd o'er their varied employ
And was tracing their bias of mind
That tho' differing in tempers in sources of joy
In taste and in judgment refin'd,

Yet the same even standard of Wisdom & truth
Is the measure allotted for all
And the grave as the gay whether aged or youth
Neglecting this standard must fall

Tis to this as a prop that can strengthen and save
Thy tender young plants\(^3\) must adhere
To this must with firmness & constancy cleave
And guard it with diligent care -

May'st thou as a Gardiner\([sic]\) judicious & wise
Their minds to this standard incline
For much in thy power my Sally there lies
E'er habits subvert the design.\(^4\)
It is thine the sweet task to direct the young shoot5
   And its branches luxuriant to prune
Since their growth tho' so blooming but injures the fruit
   And their grace and their beauty fade soon

Tis thy hand my lov'd friend the young stalk must assist
   While flexile6 it yield[s] to thy sway
With the cords of true love to its prop to entwist
   And its growth will thy labour repay.7

Thus sweetly harmonious your moments will flow
   Nor will time leave a trace of regret
In the strait8 path of Truth no repentance we know
   Tho' the mazes of error beset -

Then as oft I revisit your tranquil retreat
   Mine heart shall partake of delight
And allur'd by the stimulus forceful as sweet
   In the flame9 thence ascending unite

1. Sarah Hoare was said to love the company of young people and she probably took pupils as boarders. See Mary's letter to her cousin Elizabeth Rebecca Card, Letter 17 in Vol. I, Prose, congratulating her on her removal to Sarah Hoare's where 'opportunities for Intellectual improvement abound' (1 February 1809).

2. An individual named Fidelia features in another poem. See 'To -', 26 July 1805, p.374 in this volume.

3. tender young plants - pupils and young people under Sarah Hoare's care.

4. E'er habits subvert the design - i.e. before bad habits have a chance to develop. The idea is that if you train children early enough, inculcating sound moral standards, they will not depart therefrom.

5. James Thomson, The Seasons, 'Spring', 1152-53 - 'Delightful task! To rear the tender thought/To teach the young idea how to shoot'.

6. flexile - flexible, tractable.

7. Tying a young plant to a stick to support its growth is a metaphor for the way Sarah must, with love, bind her young pupils to their prop - the 'standard of Wisdom and truth' referred to in the sixth verse.

8. strait - narrow.

9. flame - i.e. the flame of friendship.
This poem, again addressed to Sarah Hoare (see two poems immediately above), may belong to the period circa 1806-07, as it is located in the manuscript collection between poems dated 1806 and 1807. It is singular in having a form and rhyme scheme not found elsewhere in Mary's poetry, making a welcome change from the couplets usually employed. (A similar form is adopted, thought with a different rhyme scheme, in 'To the Head-ach' by Felicia Hemans - see The Domestic Affections (1812), pp.28-30.) It celebrates the joys of Seventh Day, or Saturday, night when, once the warehouse and business were shut up, a few precious hours could be spent relaxing together as a family. These joys were heightened, too, by awareness that the next day (First Day) was to be one of 'hallowed rest'.

Seventh day night.
Address'd to Sarah Hoare

Lov'st thou at early morn to rove
Th' enamell'd mead, the verdant grove
And hear each warblers note of love
By Nature taught.

Or when neath Evening's silent sway
Thy footsteps brush the dews away
And mid the silvery moon beams stray
In pensive thought?

These oft may wake poetic fire
And many a soothing strain inspire
To melodize the Muses lyre
In numbers bright

But dearer to thy Mary's breast
Than all the charms by these possesst[sic]
With pure felicity my guest
on seventh day night

For then the toilsome week is o'er
And business racks the head no more
Nor echoing raps assail the door
nor cares annoy

But gain'd an hour of rest at last
And by no cloud our sky o'ercast
We drink oblivion of the past
and peace enjoy
Still'd is th'unquiet hum of trade
Its busy haunts are lost in shade
The office lock'd the porters paid
and warehouse closed

We feel as Mariners on shore
Who, just escap'd the tempest's roar
Dream not of dangers yet in store
While safe repos'd

Our fire burns bright our thoughts are free
And fragrant our repast of tea
Most cheering when illum'd by thee
With smile serene

Our little darlings round us press
In haste to urge the fond caress
Which does a parents bosom bless
And crowns the scene.

Perchance they court a longer stay
And banish slumber far away
To lengthen out the closing day
In pleasures bland

Soon tir'd they sink to calm repose
Such as no guilty mind e'er knows
And sleep his mantle o'er them throws
With liberal hand

O Luxury! not all thy power
To wile away the tedious hour
Can o'er the heart such comfort show'r
As scenes like this

No less tomorrows prospects cheer
To us its hallowed rest is dear
And fills our mind with joy sincere
And hopes of bliss

For we delight to seek his face
Whose presence beautifies each place
And meet with those who meet to trace
His power divine

To us the prospect of that day
When earthly cares & toil give way
Is lovelier than the potent ray
Of noontide shine
For us the bow that ever bends
His force elastic quickly spends
Nor swift the darting arrow sends
   To gain the prize
So He who form'd the human mind
Seasons of rest hath well design'd
Which give new vigor to mankind
   To mount the skies

Even as our frame refreshment knows
Awaking oft from bland repose
When health in crimson current flows
   And prompts delight
Then marvel not why I prefer
To evening walk, or morning air
This sweet cessation from dull care
   On seventh day night.

1. The lyre was an instrument sacred to the muses, hence a metaphor for poetry. numbers bright - poetry which is joyful and gay.
2. racks - vexes or bothers.
3. It is not known what business Mary and Nathaniel Card engaged in. In the 1800 Gentlemen's and Citizen's Almanack, which gives a Dublin street directory, Nathaniel Card is listed only as a merchant of 16 Summerhill. But he could have owned or rented a warehouse for his goods elsewhere. He may have been involved in wine or beer. One relative, Ralph Card, was a wine merchant at 10 Aungier Street, and Nathaniel's mother, Eleanor Card, leased a dwelling house and brewery - Mount Brown at 169 James's Street - to Robert Shaw in 1806 (Dublin Registry of Deeds, Deed no. 581 499 395031). Or he could have been involved in the import and export of tallow, and therefore connected with the candle-making and soap-boiling business Mary's father ran.
4. bland - innocent or harmless.
5. The bow constantly in use quickly loses its elasticity, and is no longer capable of shooting arrows fast or accurate enough to meet their target. Hence working too much or too hard defeats its object.
This apostrophe to poverty depicts it as a ragged, gloomy and haunting figure which, beside bringing actual physical want, poisons its victims' lives by impoverishing their minds. Those who can preserve their virtue and integrity in the face of poverty, it asserts, are truly 'great'.

The poem's position in the manuscripts indicates a date circa 1805.

To Poverty

Hencel avaunt, 1 thou cheerless guest
Of haggard form & tatter'd vest
I covet not with thee to dwell
Thy frost benumbs the vocal shell 2
More pinching than the Eastern blast
More gloomy than the sky oercast
Obscur'd by thee, th'energick[sic] 3 mind
Resigns its elegance refin'd
Abash'd its strength and glories hide
And bow before the sons of Pride
Thy barren soil no verdure knows
Uncultur'd neath eternal snows
Nor may the buds of genius[sic] blow 4
Nor may the bloom of beauty grow
Even truth & candour fade away
And Freedom shrinks beneath thy sway
While Envy rears her crested form
And discord pours th' [lunshelter'd] storm
And all they know & all they hear
Thy Vassals, Poverty, must bear
While ruthless care corrodes 5 the heart
And want inflicts th'envenom'd dart
Even energy of soul may fail
Nor lofty ideas aught avail
Nor thoughts sublime a charm impart
To break thy spell, thy chain t'avert
No cheering hopes from grief to save
No prospects save beyond the grave

Oh Poverty! thy power I see
Evinced in yonder leafless tree
The sun of wealth no longer shines
And every Summer friend declines 6
The choir 7 who harmonized its spray
Now seek subsistence far away
In vain its naked branches spread
Its throng of visitors have fled
And all who flatter'd all who cheer'd
When blasts blew keenly, disappear'd.
  Ah who like thee can search the heart
And all its hidden springs impart
Trace to its source each act of man
And every virtue rightly scan
Disrobe the soul of false attire
And bid its tinsel charms expire
While oft deceit and meanness rise
Which wealth enshrouds from mortal eyes
Errors and follies are reveal'd
Which but for thee were long conceal'd.
And great indeed that man must be
Replete in Heaven-born dignity
Who neath thy sable gloom of night
Still shines with pure unsullied light;
Who feels thy blast; thy storms may see
Yet shrinks not - unappall'd by thee
Whose soul can never meanly bow
Whose words with equal tenor flow
Whose sap within his root remains
Tho' all his honours strew the plains
Tho' youth and wealth & beauty fly
Yet shall his glory never die

1. avaunt - begone.
2. The body is seen as the shell, the container or outer covering, of the human voice. The implication is that the poor are often unable to find a voice or act owing to the inhibiting effects of poverty (perhaps because survival becomes their sole focus).
3. energick - vigorous, or lively.
4. blow - flower.
5. corrodes - damages, eats away at.
6. Referring to what we might call 'fair weather friends' who desert others in times of difficulty or when there is nothing to be gained from befriending them.
7. choir - songbirds.
8. tinsel charms - attractions outwardly appealing but lacking genuine substance.
9. enshrouds - hides or covers.
10. Whose sap [..] root - whose principles (particularly religious principles) stay firmly rooted, or who remains true to him/herself.
There were numerous branches of Quaker Robinsons, and several Deborahs amongst them, so it is difficult to pinpoint the Debby Robinson whose words prompted this poem. Possibilities are Deborah Robinson, née Corfield, who married Samuel Sandwith Robinson in 1789, the mother of thirteen children between 1790 and 1813, or Deborah Robinson, born 1779, daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth Robinson of Killarney. Both were members of Dublin Monthly Meeting.

The poem's position in the manuscripts indicates a date circa 1805.

To D Robinson

Thou mayest remember that I was particularly struck with those words of thine - "I have a home" - if there were a chord in my heart attun'd to harmony thou struck upon it and the vibration was forceful enough to keep me awake for some time. Thou may'st thank thyself for the trouble of reading the annexed lines by awakening sensations to which those words of thine gave birth - as the sparks of which if I were the flint thou operated as the steel.

With the wish that the concluding hope may be thine also, I remain,
Thy affectionate friend,
Mary Card.

"I have a home", delightful sound
It makes my heart with joy rebound
From Debby's lips the words I hear
They reach my heart & center there.

"I have a home", some potent spell
Must surely in the numbers¹ dwell
Sweet as the music of the grove
And charming as the voice of Love

"I have a home", tis bliss to hear
For peace and comfort wait me there
Joys that oppression cannot know
Pleasures that leave no taint of woe

"I have a home", and dwell in peace
Each jarring² thought hath learn'd to cease
No discord vain my hours annoy
Or checks the current of my joy

"I have a home", no stranger there
With fraud or guile may interfere
No envious tongue create a sigh
Or there my privilege deny.
"I have a home" & round my head
Tho' many a storm its fury shed
Yet oft this thot.[sic]³ inspir'd relief
And check'd an agony of grief

"I have a home", and there I know
The raptures that from friendship flow
The smile serene - the converse kind
Which emanate from hearts refin'd

"I have a home" - a sure retreat
A refuge from the storms of fate
An anchor when the waves beat high.
A covert from a lowering sky.⁴

"I have a home" and there I see
A bounteous God provides for me
I learn to feel for all who live
And know that it is blest "to give" -

"I have a home" and there secure
I think of many an houseless poor⁵
Hence soft emotions grateful rise
Hence pitys tears bedew mine eyes.

"I have a home", & oh my soul
When Time shall yield his stern controul[sic]
When ages of Eternal Day
Commence their never ending sway
When all this transient scene is o'er
When sin misleads the heart no more.
When even the purest joys below
Shall cease to charm, shall cease to flow
Then midst the awful wreck of fate⁶
Oh may my soul - serene, sedate
Unmov'd tho' rent the worlds vast dome
Say, rapturous words -
"I have a home!"

1. numbers - verses or metrical feet in poetry, but here referring to the phrase "I have a home", used as a refrain throughout the poem.
2. jarring - discordant or disturbing.
3. thot- manuscript abbreviation of 'thought'.
4. A covert from a lowering sky - cover from a sky portending storm.
5. an houseless poor - stock poetic term for a poor, homeless person. Goldsmith in The Deserted Village asks '(... turn thine eyes...)
6. awful wreck of fate - tragic life events or vicissitudes of life.
It is also not clear whether this School was the General Daily Free School in St Catherine's Parish, Dublin (see p.375 in this volume), or another establishment. The latter is more likely. Linked with it was a 'repository' - a scheme whereby needlework and clothes made by the girls could be sold. It appears they did the work at home, 'in many a garret cold and drear', but perhaps there was a shop or warehouse attached to the school, where the goods were sent for sale. The poem tells us this idea was the brainchild of the poem's addressee (unnamed). One aim was to raise funds as the school was in severe financial straits. It had initially done well, attracting donations from subscribers, one wealthy man in particular, but, by the time of writing, enthusiasm had diminished and its nine original Trustees had all abandoned the scheme. Another aim was to provide the girls with some means of earning a livelihood, or augmenting a low family income. Importantly, this would also develop self-respect, inculcate habits of hard work and self-reliance and combat idleness that, it was thought, might lead to crime.

The poem reveals that Mary's friend Hannah Reynolds, née Wilson Forbes, played a lead part in setting up the school and attracting funds. Her death is mentioned. Hence it must have been written after Hannah's death in 1799. As it also speaks of 'many an annual tribute' to funds since that time, we can assume a date at least several years later. It is placed in the manuscripts amongst material dated 1805.

Maria Luddy describes a school and repository which must have been very similar to this one in which Hannah and Mary were active:

A group of women opened a Charitable Repository and School of Industry in Bandon in 1811. Its purpose was to provide a rudimentary education to poorer children. It appears to have catered only for girls and the curriculum followed was intended to provide 'a moderate proficiency in reading, a knowledge of plain and useful needlework and an acquaintance with religious truth'. The highest expectations for the pupils were that they would become upper servants, shop assistants or teachers in 'inferior schools'. The majority were not expected to go beyond the level of minor servants or of using whatever skills they had acquired in the school, outside the confines of their own homes. The women who ran this school recognised the economic value of children within the family unit and as an encouragement to parents to send them their daughters they promised to provide them with clothing 'as some equivalent of the small services of which the parents might be deprived by thus resigning the disposal of their children's time'. The clothing provided served another purpose in that it acted as a type of uniform which helped to distinguish the poorest children and thus make them more amenable to discipline. The school appears to have catered for about 100 pupils in 1814 and was supported in part by public subscriptions and also by the knitting and sewing done by the girls. (Women and philanthropy in nineteenth-century Ireland, pp.72-73.)

To
On the School and Repository

Yes Love Divine hath taught thine heart to glow
With meek compassion for anothers woe
Hath there its sweet & sacred lore pourtray'd[sic]
To harmonize with all whom God hath made
To lessen human griefs & point the way
Where Truth may dart an everlasting ray
To clear the soil of rubbish and of weeds
Repose it to receive the noblest seeds
Prune every useless branch & oft destroy
The noxious plants which injure and annoy
Thine eye hath seen that deep beneath the ground
The firm upholding basics must be found
Or with keen blasts beneath tempestuous skies
The fairest edifice in ruin lies
And thou hast long'd to form the minds of youth
In the strict mould of Industry & Truth
Beneath whose influence pure religion thrives
And early habits grow to virtuous lives
Thus the full measure in obedience given
Returns press'd down & overflows to Heaven
And as we bound the hasty strides of sin
The rich reward of Peace is felt within
Oh be it thine that pure and blissful ray
Which mundane power nor gives nor takes away
The charm that sweetens all we have or know
The hope that buoy's us o'er the waves of woe
The sure retreat beneath a low'ring sky
Safe from the ravenous beast the vultures eye
Cheer'd by thy smiles & foster'd by thy cares
Our drooping School a brighter aspect wears
Tho' sunk its funds withdrawn its early friends
Yet Hope (inspir'd by thee) new courage lends
And 'mid the wrecks of time that intervene
It gives its mite to Order tho' unseen
Still sheds in silence its unnotic'd aid
To heal the miseries want and vice have made
Even as the gentle dew that softly yields
Refreshing verdure to the parching fields

Time was when Novelty possesst its sway?
And Pity - (sunbeam of a Winters day)
When rich subscribers pour'd the gracious boon
And constant visitors each favor'd noon
Then as the childrens minds in learning grew
He cloth'd their shivering frames & fed them too
But now by other joys or cares engrossed
Who once assisted now forsake us most
He who the purse in days of plenty bore
Forgets those days & thinks of us no more!
Our nine Trustees - Oh shadow of a shade
Not one remains to lend the needful aid
Stript as the tree that braves the wintry sky
O'er distant plains our fallen honours lie
Yet sure the sap remains within its root
Seasons will change & leafless trees bear fruit

Hail holy charity! thy burning ray
Nor hostile foes nor faithless friends dismay
No transient gleam may light the sacred fire
No howling blast may bid thy warmth expire
The whole creation feeds thy hallow'd flame
Attracting all to Heaven from whence it came
Impress'd by thee we view'd with pitying eye
Uncultur'd minds in mournful ruins lie
Saw natures garden droop a dreary waste
A common open to each ravening beast
Saw choicest flowers degenerate into weeds
And noxious vapours rise from noblest seeds
Untutor'd courage brutal rage disclose
Religion sunk & Superstition rose
And even where Heav'n design'd a generous frame
Profusion - lavish'd to destruction came

Thus all appear'd unharmonized misus'd
The choicest blessings of the mind abus'd
The mind itself was sick its taste deprav'd
Of Truth of Judgment as of Health bereav'd
So the lost appetite rejects its food
When foul disease contaminates the blood

We saw & oft we mourn'd & long'd to heal
Those evils Povertys sad victims feel
For deep the baleful root of mischief lay
And radical the cure to do those ills away -
We saw that ignorance nurs'd deceit & fraud
That Truths bright wand each hov'ring vice oerawed
That Wisdom banished cunning far away
And learning cheer'd along the devious way
That brown Industry comfort must ensure
And drive off want & hunger from the poor
We saw & sought relief - the rich approv'd
Charm'd by the voice of One* by all belov'd
The structure rose & flourished neath her eye
Till her Lord call'd her to a purer sky
Then ah full many an annual tribute fail'd
And Poverty our little school assail'd
Pinch'd by the nipping frost each friend retires
And all its bright attractive blaze expires
Yet still a spark - a single spark we claim
Which charity thy breath may kindle to a flame

And much to thee benevolent friend is due
Who fann'd the smoking flax and fed it too -
Thy needful aid replenish'd it and relieved
Thy sage advice was gratefully received
Thy useful hints - thanks to the brilliant thought
Which help'd the funds, while it employmt. brought
Which bade us aid ourselves - and did unfold
The infant manufactory we hold
And by that thought in just gradations led
Increasing comforts on the poor to shed
Our small Repository rose to view
To crown the well earn'd labors of a few
For that - in many a garret cold & drear
Swift plies the needle - & its fruits are there
And many a vague delapidated[sic] cell
Where pale fac'd children of Industry dwell
Send there the finwrought\textsuperscript{2} article & try
T'arrest\textsuperscript{22} the purse & catch the roving eye
Oh may thine accents kind benevolent friend
Our tender nursling from each storm defend
The quivering flame but half emits a ray
And hovering clouds discourage & dismay
Slow are the sales - few seem to care or know
What increas'd comforts thro' this channel flow
Ah did they see\textsuperscript{24} the wretched female form
Whose tatter'd robes conceal but not keep warm
And with what gratitude her heart expands
If sold the puny produce of her hands
Or if an interest in the school they know
Whence early habits of Industry flow
Who by the produce of their work receive
The just reward the affluent please to give
Or if they feel concern'd for human kind
Who're by successful Industry refin'd
Whom idleness debases & degrades
And into Rapine Theft and Murder leads
(Thus on Society the untaught throng
Repay with interest large their early wrong)
Ah! were this felt not vainly should we plead
But humble worth would (as it ought) succeed
Our school would flourish - & the sales secure
A fund of blessings for the female poor
Ah! be it thine to cherish & approve
And heaven will surely bless thy work of Love!

H. W. Reynolds [Hannah Wilson Forbes, who married Thomas Reynolds of Wallington in Surrey in 1798. She died after giving birth to a son in 1799. See Appendix 7, 'Individuals Featuring in the Writings of Mary Birkett Card'.]

1. Repose - rest, thereby refresh, and so prepare the soil to receive seed (as land is laid fallow).
2. noxious - harmful.
3. low'ring - overcast, portending storm.
4. Job 28:7 - 'There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen.'
5. wrecks of time - fateful incidents, particularly misfortunes occurring in the course of time.
6. mite - small contribution.
7. when Novelty possest its sway - i.e. when the school was new, it attracted interest.
8. Visitors were often encouraged by those undertaking philanthropic endeavours as publicity helped promote funding. When Elizabeth Fry visited Newgate Prison, there was a regular parade of visitors who came to see her work with female prisoners.
9. He - a wealthy subscriber who remains unnamed, though the addressee of the poem would almost certainly be aware of his identity.
10. natures garden - i.e. the children of the poor. Their natural potential is unrealised unless cultivated.
11. noxious vapours - harmful fumes. Not only poisonous fumes, but natural mists, were sometimes thought to be a risk to health.
12. Untutor'd courage brutal rage disclose - i.e. if courage, perhaps thinking particularly of physical bravery and energy, is not channelled correctly, it can develop inappropriately into forms of aggression.

13. baleful - destructive or damaging.

14. cunning - artifice, or craftiness, but particularly related to deception (harking back to the 'deceit and fraud' mentioned two lines previously).

15. devious way - path of life seen as circuitious and full of temptations or dangers.

16. brown Industry - 'brown' can mean 'serious' or 'sombre', from the French 'brun'. 'Serious' is probably the meaning here. The idea, behind this and the next line, is the familiar one that the poor can help themselves by hard work if employment is made available to them.

17. the smoking flax - expression derived from Is 42:3: 'A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment into truth.' Isaiah was prophesying the coming of the future servant of God who will bring judgment to the Gentiles. A prophecy thought to be fulfilled in Jesus - Mt 12:17-21.

18. the brilliant thought - i.e. the idea for the repository.

19. infant manufactory - the repository, which is still new, or young.

20. just gradations - even stages.

21. finwrought - finely wrought, or beautifully made.

22. T'arrest - to stop or hold, therefore attract.

23. did they see - i.e. did they but see.

The position of this poem in the manuscripts indicates a date circa 1805-1806.

To ___________

Oft have these wild uncultur'd flowers
Amus'd & cheer'd my pensive hours
And as they harmonized my soul
Would many a secret woe controul[sic]

For balmy¹ odours ever yield
From every plant in Natures field
With candour thou each foible see
And love even more than pity me

1. balmy - both sweet-smelling and having a healing influence, like balm.
Truth, a concept of key significance to Friends, eludes easy definition. In the words of *Quaker Faith and Practice* (under 19.33), it 'is a complex concept; sometimes the word is used for God, sometimes for the conviction that arises from worship, sometimes for the way of life.' Truth is discovered through the leadings of the Light within, and in Mary's poetry it is often associated with light - see 'To a Friend', p.294 in this volume, where Truth is visualised as shining from its throne, lighting our 'frozen hemisphere'. Here, Truth is personified as a female figure, dressed 'in robes of Light'. She combines traits traditionally regarded as feminine - beauty and gentleness - with severity, firmness and the ability to confer strength. Her light is absorbed when the mind is quiescent and concentrated upon her, 'prostrate' 'in stedfast[ sic] gaze'. As internal 'Guide' who, if listened to, will preserve from error, her 'robe' (of light) also becomes, at the end of the poem, Mary's protector - her 'shield'.

In the manuscripts, this poem lies between poems dated 1804 and 1806.

**Truth**

What form is yours? array'd in robes of Light
Whose heavenly charms attract & fix the sight
As with benignant majesty and grace
Soft issuing from the vast ethereal space
Hal 'tis fair Truth her sacred voice I knew
Severe yet lovely firm yet gentle too
At her approach unhallowed thots[ sic] exprire
And shades of folly to their den retire
While the bright glancings of her radient[ sic] eyes
Dissolve the chain of vanity & lies
Strengthens the feeble bids the captive reign
Infusing power th'immortal prize to gain
And as the prostrate mind in stedfast[ sic] gaze
Imbibes with ardor her celestial rays
Pure and more pure its latent stores unfold
Refin'd as silver, purified as gold
Subsides its dross & every base alloy
While the freed spirit wakes a newborn joy
And the cleans'd temple of the human breast
Receives with homage due the sacred guest.

O Truth! how hath my soul desired to know
The rays of life that from thy presence flow
How have I felt my truant will resign
When all my hopes and all my fears were thine
How oft too hath the conflict raged in vain
Which flesh & spirit, death & life maintain
When folly trembled 'neath thine awful frown
When sin grew sick and ruthless pangs were known
O then, what Demon urg'd my steps to stray
Decline the contest & forget thy sway
Thus all my sufferings all my toil prolong
For ever changing sides 'tween right and wrong
Say what deceiving glow worms twinkling shine
Allur'd mine eye from simply following thine
What Ignis fatuus\(^3\) mock'd my vain desire
And left me tir'd & breathless in the mire
Or was it cowardice - ignoble shame
That shrank beneath the hammer & the flame\(^4\)
Or was it dread of man whose strength & power
Blossoms & withers as the transient flower
Or childlike weakness, suffering many a blow
By falls repeated e'er it learn to go\(^5\)
Say thou who know'st & let thy voice impart
Comfort & courage to my drooping heart
Guard thou the portal of my lips from guile
Nor let my words thine image fair defile
Place thou an holy watch whose jealous care
May mark each thought with scrutiny severe
Be thou the magnet whose attractive force
Shall guide my judgment with unerring course
Or as the artist, exquisite of skill
And I the clay obedient to thy will
Then shall my follies with my errors cease
Thou Truth my Guide, & my companion peace
And as thou mov'st all glorious in array
Tho' Earth were blackness & the Heav'ns dismay
Mid blasted hopes, with pleasant views entomb'd
And goodly fabric's\([sic]\)\(^6\) at thy nod consum'd
Yet shall each change to me no changes yield
Thy smile my safeguard & thy robe my shield
Beneath thy aid no maladies annoy -
Whose ways are pleasant, whose accents joy.

1. unhallowed thots - unholy thoughts. thots - manuscript abbreviation of 'thoughts'.
2. its dross and every base alloy - the impurities and unwanted substances eliminated in the refinement of metal.
3. Ignis fatuus - Latin for 'foolish fire', often called the will-o'-th-wisp. A phosphorescent light sometimes seen above marshland, misleading because it moves or disappears as the traveller approaches. It was thought to be the work of a sprite deliberately leading travellers astray.
4. the hammer and the flame - imagery derived from the metal refining process.
5. "A child often falls in the process of learning to walk.
6. goodly fabric's - structures, or frameworks, giving cause for happiness or betokening well. (The apostrophe is probably copyist's error.)
Here, 'E. Alexander Jnr.' is praised for her poetry on Nature and spiritual themes, and, simultaneously, for her modesty. The name Alexander occurs frequently in the Quaker registers, and the initial 'E' could stand for a number of Christian names. However, the title 'Junr' indicates she shared the same name as her mother. An Elizabeth Alexander, born in 1784, was one of the eleven children of William, son of Edward and Elizabeth Alexander of Limerick, and Elizabeth, daughter of James and Elizabeth Gough. They married at Meath Street and therefore lived in Dublin.

Funeral cards exist for both Elizabeths, mother and daughter, the daughter being given the diminutive Eliza. (Friends' Historical Library, Dublin.) The mother died in 1825, while Eliza lived at 11 Charlemont-Bridge in Dublin at the time of her death in 1824. A handwritten note on her card rather oddly states that she was 'unkindly treated all her life by her father William Alexander but provided by him with a splendid mahogany coffin. The polish not forgotten in 1872'.

(See also entry for Elizabeth Alexander in Appendix 7, 'Individuals Featuring in the Writings of Mary Birkett Card'.)

In the manuscripts, this poem follows one dated November 1807 and precedes 'To A. Knott Junr.' and 'Ballinclay', both possibly 1808.

To E. Alexander Junr.-

Lovely songstress of Nature who touchest the heart
   As sweetly harmonious thy melody flows
Whose themes every varying true virtue impart
   Whose beautiful language with piety glows

And still as each object thy pencil defin'd
   In the soft blended colours of fancy & truth
We are led by the forceful attraction of mind
   To the crown of thy hopes & the staff of thy youth

It is thus the young lily its beauty conceals
   Unassuming reclines its fair head in the vales
But reclus'd from the eye its sweet odour reveals
   And our senses delighted its fragrance regales

While the high stalking weed the rough brambles and thorns
   Still intrude in our presence unsought undesir'd
This elegant flower that our garden adorns
   Droops its beautiful form in rich foliage retir'd

It is thus that unconscious of dignified birth
   The bright sparkling diamond lies hid from the view
And its lowly abode does not lessen its worth
   Or diminish its purity solid and true
So the gem of humility cherish'd by thee
    Still sheds a bright lustre that cheers all around
And the deeper the root of the wide branching tree
    And the richer and lovelier its fruit will be found

'Tis thine dear Eliza to prize and to love
    That truth which thy soft flowing numbers\(^\text{1}\) have sung
Thy bosom its sweet soothing influence shall prove
    And its heartfelt vibrations shall dwell on thy tongue

Then why should we droop while a spark of desire
    Ascends from the soul to the fountain of joy
He most surely will cherish & nourish the fire
    And the reed that is bruised he will never destroy\(^\text{2}\)

Ah no! 'tis to bless and to save he delights
    And his love does the love of a parent exceed
His voice to a banquet incessant invites
    In his presence are rivers of pleasure indeed

Then rise thou, superior to doubt or to fear
    To the mists & the fogs that encircle the night
Let the Sun of thy Righteousness\(^\text{3}\) fully appear
    And no sadness or sorrow may dwell in His sight

But oh! 'tis for us to stand faithful and firm
    To banish each erring sensation of doubt
To trust in that arm which presides o'er each storm
    And to know the accuser of brethren\(^\text{4}\) cast out

Thus as over this changeable ocean we steer
    Thro' shoals & thro' quicksands which sometimes distress
Let us yield to the Pilot\(^\text{5}\) that ever is near
And we surely shall land in the haven of bliss.

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\(^{1}\) numbers - verses.
\(^{2}\) Is 42:3 - 'A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment into truth.' Isaiah is prophesying the coming of the future servant of God who will bring judgment to the Gentiles. A prophecy thought to be fulfilled in Jesus - Mt 12:17-21.
\(^{3}\) Mal 4:2 - 'But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings'. Again, often taken as a prophecy of Christ. Jesus was sometimes called the Son of Righteousness, partly a pun on 'Sun of Righteousness', but see also Heb 1:8 - 'But unto the Son he saith [. . . ] a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.'
\(^{4}\) the accuser of brethren - a term for Satan.
\(^{5}\) the Pilot - God as Divine Guide or Providence.
The next two poems relate to the Knott family. They are situated in the manuscript collection before poems dated October and November 1808. Another poem addressed to Abigail Knott, entitled 'To A Knott Junr. on receiving a pair of open Watch Cases', was written in March 1808. These two poems, then, might also have been written around that time. Abigail Knott Junr., the daughter of Dublin thread, tape and ribbon manufacturer William Knott, later became Mary Birkett Card’s sister-in-law on her marriage to Mary’s brother, William Birkett, in 1813. (See Appendix 7, 'Individuals Featuring in the Writings of Mary Birkett Card'.)

To A. Knott Junr.

Bright is the sun's enlivening ray
Which calls forth myriads\(^1\) into day
And sweet is summers balmy gale
Whence richest odours oft exhale
Gentle the dew that silent steals
Its precious influence o'er the vales
Where soft the trickling drops distil
As silverying moonbeams lip[tip]\(^2\) the hill
But dearer far than these the hour
When yielding to affections power
I share your converse kind and free
And close the tranquil day with thee
Yes! oft when hoary Time\(^3\) may shed
His whitening frost around my head
When Natures pulse may beat more slow
When lifes pale lamp more faintly glow
Even then I trust my heart will prove
The ardent glow of social love
The peace, the quiet the content
Of hours in your dear circle spent
For youth & innocence are there
Protected by parental care
And friendly intercourse possess[sic]
Of charms to soothe the troubled breast
There oft the pleasant smile is seen
To grace thy father's cheerful[sic] mien
Whose words and actions still impart
The welcome kind that glads the heart
For there no ebb of love I see
But ever social ever free
No icy coldness mars the scene
No clouds of discord intervene
No formal look that chills the mind
Nor pride in folly's school refin'd
But Truth & Candour there preside
On friendship's ever flowing tide
While John a willing mite oft lends
To please & entertain his friends
Descants on Politics and Strife
Or the soft charms of wedded life
And still thro' all we frequent trace
Affections ever lovely grace

There William too whose gentle mind
Delights to list to themes refin'd
To range thro varying poets lore
And thus increase his mental store
And then dear girl in whom we trace
Sweet duteous love & modest grace
O may they ever crown thy brow
With look benign & mild as now
And may we ever joy to see
The fruits of early care in thee
Example join'd with precept sound
Which nurs'd the heart & hedg'd thee round
There Joseph pleasant & belov'd
In business careful and approv'd
There Ben intelligent we find
With candid mien and active mind
Prompt to oblige and gratify
While kindness sparkles in his eye:
There Thomas of sage learning fond
Who treads on scientific ground
And Mary placid and serene
And lively Sally there is seen
With gracious Ann who loves to read
The pages of the pious dead
While little prattling Samuel pours
His faithful mem'ry's varied stores
And the sweet babe whose beauteous face
Pourtrays the germs of many a grace
There Crown of all thy Mothers smile
Does of its sting each care beguile
Promotes your innocent delight
For Happiness and Truth unite
Gentle yet firm her sway of love
Where Precept and Example move!
O! my lov'd girl not all the gold
That east or western Indies hold
Nor diamond sparkling in the mine
Can purchase pleasures pure as thine
For tis not Grandeur's haughty shade
The pomp of shew the vain parade
The wide domain, the splendid dome
That gives to mortals peace at home
No tis in calm domestic life
Remote from folly pride and strife
That comfort rears her modest head
And brightest gems their radiance shed
For lowly vales in fruits abound
While the high mount is barren found
And there the pinching frosts they know
While sunbeams gild the scenes below
Long may those tranquil joys be thine
Be friendships circling rainbow mine.

Mary Birkett Card goes on to enumerate the virtues or characteristics of each of the Knott children in turn. All feature in the Knott genealogy, or 'pedigree', at the Friends' Historical Library, Dublin. For the sake of simplicity, I list them in this note, in the order they appear in the poem, giving, for interest, their approximate age in 1808 (when the poem was probably written) and some information included in Webb's Pedigrees about their later lives:


Joseph (1791-1871), fifth child, aged about seventeen. Died unmarried, lived in Penzance.

Benjamin (1793-1832, or 1867 - genealogy gives 1867 as alternative date of death with query beside it), sixth child, aged about fifteen. Married Margaret Arbuthnot. Went to Canada.

Thomas (1795-1871), seventh child, aged about thirteen. Married Elizabeth, née Gatchell, widow of Joseph Walpole.

Mary (1797-1867), eighth child, aged about eleven. Lived with her brother Joseph in Penzance.

Sally (Sarah 1798-1880), ninth child, aged about ten. Also lived with her brother in Penzance.

Ann (1800-1825), tenth child, aged about eight. Died in Dublin.

Samuel (1802-1854), eleventh child, aged about six. Died in Melbourne, Australia.

Nehemiah, the 'sweet babe' of the poem (1807-1887), twelfth child, probably just a few months old at this time. Became an ironmonger in Liverpool.

Mary Knott's expertise in the management of apprentices was marked by the ditty; 'John was Knott but Mary was Abell'. (Harrison, Biographical Dictionary, p.67.)

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5. Descants - holds forth at length.
6. list - listen.
7. dear girl - the young Abigail Knott, aged eighteen or nineteen.
8. pages of the pious dead - books by religious authors now deceased. The phrase usually meant Quaker tracts or journals, known as Friends' books.
9. germs - seeds or beginnings.
10. Line, if punctuated, would read, 'There, Crown of all, thy Mother's smile'. Abigail Knott Junr.'s mother, Abigail, has an interesting entry in the Dictionary of Quaker Biography. Born in 1762 to John and Abigail Wright of Ballinclay, County Wexford, she was a 'lively girl', 'fond of dress'. A religious experience at the age of eighteen, however, changed her - she became an 'example of simplicity and humility'. After her marriage in 1784, she felt called to the ministry 'but always shrank from it and tried to walk blamelessly in all the other commandments of her Lord and to bring up her large family in His service'. She became an Elder in 1810 on moving to Rathangan, but it was not until 1824, aged sixty-two, that 'one of her daughters coming forth in the ministry, the call to her was renewed at that late hour; she yielded herself to appear and continued to the end of her life in short but lively communications in meetings and found true peace of mind.' She died at the age of eighty-four.
A pencil note in manuscript at the end of this poem announces that Ballinclay was the birthplace of Abigail Knott, née Wright, of Rathangan (mother of Abigail Knott Junr., addressee of the previous poem). Ballinclay is a hamlet in Adamstown, between Enniscorthy and New Ross, in County Wexford. The poem enumerates the virtues of Ballinclay and its mansion - home of the Wrights - and describes a walk to the Quaker cemetery there, and meeting house built with funds donated by John Wright, Abigail's father. A Meeting existed at Ballinclay from 1669 to 1726, when it moved to the home of Robert Webster at Ballydonnel and from there to John Wright's house around 1736. By 1742 Wright was living at Ballinclay and in 1743 he erected the new meeting house. (T. Wight and J. Rutty, A History of the Rise and Progress of the People called Quakers in Ireland from 1653-1700 (Dublin: L. Jackson, 1751), p.348.)

Meetings continued there, in the latter years intermittently, until 1818. A note by descendant M. Wright, dated 14 December 1921 (Friends' Historical Library, Dublin) states:

John Wright (grandson of the first Wright in our family tree) born 1698 built a meeting house for Friends at Ballinclay of brick at his own cost.
On his death the meeting was discontinued and during Joseph Waring's occupation the place was neglected and fell into ruins. The graveyard is still in use.

Joseph Waring bought the Wrights' farm at Ballinclay, and built a new Ballinclay House in place of the thatched one (which must have been where Mary stayed), in 1825. (Photograph Album 1, Friends Historical Library, Dublin.)

Ballinclay.

Far from the citys din, the haunts of trade
And sweetly shelter'd in the tranquill[sic] shade
Where Nature clothes[ sic] each scene in foliage gay
And little warblers hop from spray to spray
Where cultur'd hills & fertile vales appear
And plenty crowns the farmer's honest care
There - half its charms & modest worth conceal'd
Fair Ballinclay's neat Mansion stands reveal'd
How glow'd my heart as I its form survey'd
And o'er its grounds with willing footsteps stray'd
That social dome the nurse of health & truth
Where friends I love have pass'd their early youth
Its milk white front whose emblematic face
Yon verdant lawn & sheltering hedges grace
While there the garden shines in colours gay
And does its gentle florists taste display
The lofty orchard yields its nectar'd store
And golden fruits their mellow juices pour
While o'er each sweet the little labourers¹ haste
And cull from varying flowers the rich repast
Delicious feast! but oh! how dear the prize
For which Industry's patient offspring dies²
Here as I rove along by friendship led
Where each green hillock marks the silent dead
Where the neat wall prescribes the awful bound³
(Nor vain insulting pageantry is found)
There Dust\(^4\) that once encircled worth & truth  
The warmth of kindness & the bloom of youth  
That joyous lov'd to cheer the welcome guest  
In solemn quiet undisturbed may rest  
There his\(^5\) whose liberal & devoted mind  
His mouldering friends\(^6\) this lasting home design'd  
And tho' no storied Urn\(^7\) record his name  
Yon fabric\(^8\) gives his pious acts to fame  
Which plain and simple as the Donors heart  
And unadorned by vain or costly art  
Neat in its form in its interior clean  
The potent charm of Order rules serene  
There kindred spirits often meet to wait  
In silent suppliance at Wisdoms gate  
To seek refreshment from the living spring  
And to their Lord an humble offering bring  
For this each useful lore\(^9\) awhile resign'd  
Nor scythes nor ploughshares occupy the mind  
Each manual art, and daily toil forgot  
Left with the shop, the farm the healthful cot  
With one accord their mingling hearts unite  
In this just tribute to the God of Light  
Thus He the sage of Mamre's* fruitful plain\(^10\)  
Who sought his Masters face - nor sought in vain  
When to the Mount his pious feet were led  
Each earthly care and transient hope were fled  
The ass, with every servant left behind  
That nought might check the ardour of his mind\(^11\)  
Ah why should visionary joys of time  
Detain the soul from duties more sublime  
Why should these servile thoughts usurp the rein  
And Reason plead - & Mercy call in vain  
A day will come when peace is valued more  
Than all the treasures of Golconda's shore\(^12\)  
And these gay objects of intense desire  
Shall fade & vanish as a scroll on fire\(^13\)  
Sweet shades of Ballinclay your charms shall stand  
Recorded long by Mem'ry's faithful hand  
There on her tablet\(^14\) shall I love to trace  
Your simple beauties & your native grace  
For not the boast of splendor pomp or art  
Can touch the chords that vibrate round the heart  
Nor proud magnificence in luxurie's[sic] dress  
Can pure sensations of delight impress  
Yours rise beyond the pow'r of hoarded wealth  
Peace ease & competency\(^15\) crown'd by health  
With Hospitality's all-cheering ray  
These are thy Ornaments fair Ballinclay.

*Gen:14.13:

This was the birthplace of Ab. Wright now A. Knott - of Rathangan.  
[Pencil note in manuscript at end of poem.]
1. the little labourers - bees.
2. At this time bees were smothered in their hives in order to obtain the honey. This was increasingly coming to be regarded as a cruel practice, and trials were being made of alternative methods. See poem entitled 'Occasioned by a Walk to the Botanic Garden', p.428 in this volume.
3. bound - boundary, 'awful' (i.e. inspiring awe) because it borders the cemetery.
4. Dust - those buried, now reduced to dust.
5. his - i.e. the burial place of Abigail Knott Senior's father, John Wright.
6. mouldering friends - friends now also in their graves.
7. storied Urn - decorative commemorative urn. Quakers eschewed elaborate memorials or gravestones.
8. fabric - i.e. the meeting house at Ballinclay.
9. each useful lore - work or practical activity.
10. the sage of Mamre's* fruitful plain - the asterisk in manuscript guides the reader to a footnote at the end of the page - 'Gen 14:13'. This verse tells how one who had escaped (from the sacking of Sodom and Gomorrah) came to Abraham, who was living 'in the plain of Mamre the Amorite', to tell him of the capture of Abraham's nephew, Lot. Mamre was then amongst those who assisted Abraham to pursue the captors and bring Lot and his family back. The plain of Mamre was in Hebron, and Abraham had earlier built an altar there (Gen 13:18).
11. According to Gen 22:5, Abraham left his ass and servants behind when he intended to sacrifice his son, Isaac, at the Lord's bidding.
12. Golconda was the site of a mine at Hyderabad in India, famed for its diamonds.
13. scroll on fire - metaphor for rapid dissolution.
14. her tablet [i.e. of memory] - figurative term for human memory. A tablet was a stone slab or plaque on which an inscription was written, but also a thin sheet of wood or ivory for writing on with a stylus. Several such tablets, or leaves, could be linked together. Both sorts of tablet convey the idea of memory as a site on which discrete memories are inscribed without easy erasure.
15. competency - a sufficient amount of money to live on comfortably without undue luxury.

These verses on friendship come near the end of the manuscript collection, after poems dated 1809 and before the last two poems addressed to Mary's husband, Nathaniel Card. I have reproduced that position here.

[Untitled, Undated]

I know that friendship bids to flow
The current of the soul
It prompts to soothe the sufferers wo[e]
And seeks to heal the whole

I know that lovely as the day
And gentle as the dew
Is sympathy's congenial sway
Possest[sic] alas! by few --

But yet methinks each painful scene
Alone it would endure
Nor seek to wound anothers mind
With ills it cannot cure
These two poems dedicated to Mary's husband, Nathaniel Card, were placed at the very end of the collection by the manuscript copyist, so I have done likewise. Though they follow the undated poem above, which is preceded by poems dated sequentially 1808 to 1809, and so could have been written as late as 1809, their content gives no definitive clue as to date. They may have been written much earlier, and placed here by the copyist either because they came to hand later, or perhaps, for special emphasis, as may have been the case with 'To Hope' on the loss of Mary's daughter, Sarah, in 1808, oddly placed at the end of the prose collection.

The first celebrates domestic bliss and contentment - perhaps in the early years of the couple's marriage, though the poem conventionally reiterates that even this, like all 'the pleasures of time', cannot fulfil the deepest human need for 'unfading delight'. The second may have been written prior to a journey or separation of some kind.

**To N.C**

When free from the cares and commotions of life
In domestic enjoyments our moments are spent
When far from the rumors of War & of Strife
We taste the sweet zest of all blessings - Content

Ah then can we trust to the pleasures of time
Which bloom but to vanish and wither away
Can we rest in the vale unaspiring to climb
Nor press towards that prize which will never decay

No! deep lies a thirst in the centre of mind
A thirst of possessing unfading delight
And sooner or later this truth shall we find
That these Suns are but meteors which vanish in night

1. Possibly referring to the unrest in Ireland (sporadic outbreaks of violence still occurred after the end of the 1798 Rebellion), or to the Napoleonic Wars if the poem was written a few years later.
To N.C.

When these fleet hours of social joy are o'er
And our feet press this hapless soil no more
When distant lands & rolling waves between
Estrange from us each dear Paternal scene
Shall then the link which friendship sweetly forms
Retain in absence all its gentle charms
Ah mel as oer mine head the moments fly
Does keen reflection force the long drawn sigh
And many a flow'r in friendships Bowers that grew
Now pale & wither'd chills my mental view
Oh may our hopes, our cares, our friendships rise
Bloom ever young & blossom in the skies
Then swiftly let the passing moments scroll¹
Nor time nor change shall o' er our peace
  controul,[sic]
  fix'd in Immortal Bliss

¹. scroll - advance, go by (as in scrolling down a page).
APPENDICES
CONCERNING MARY BIRKETT CARD'S SON, NATHANIEL CARD, COLLECTOR OF HER WRITINGS

(NATHANIEL CARD FOUNDED THE UNITED KINGDOM ALLIANCE, A TEMPERANCE ORGANISATION, IN 1853)

NATHANIEL CARD, founder of the Alliance, was born in Dublin in the year 1805. About the age of fourteen he was apprenticed to his uncle, Mr. George H. Birkett of Dublin, founder of the Warrington, Manchester, and other temperance societies in 1830, who was much interested in his nephew, and observed with pleasure that the lad was a diligent attender of the meetings for worship of the Society of Friends, of which both were members.

In early life Mr. Card gave evidence of a serious, active, and benevolent turn of mind, and while yet a young man was much concerned for the welfare of his fellow-creatures. He cheerfully gave up his leisure time to visit and relieve the poor in connection with the various local charitable institutions. He took special interest in the institution for the suppression of beggars, by supplying them with various useful occupations by which they might earn their own living. During the ravages of the cholera in Dublin in 1831-32 he visited, at great personal risk, the dwellings of the afflicted, many of whom he was instrumental in relieving.

As already stated, Mr. Card took an active interest in the temperance movement, and no doubt he was encouraged in this by his uncle, Mr. Birkett. After settling in Manchester he soon won the esteem of the people, and in 1854 the citizens of the Cheetham Ward sent a deputation soliciting his consent to accept a seat in the council chamber, which upon public grounds he was induced to accept. He was not a platform orator, but an earnest, zealous, and laborious worker, not only for the Alliance but for other good movements. He frequently visited London in furtherance of the Alliance. He died on the 22d of March, 1856, at the early age of fifty-one years.

APPENDIX 2

DEEDS CONCERNING LAND AT DAME STREET, DUBLIN

(Referred to in Chapter 1, Biographical Outline)

Three deeds at Dublin Land Registry record the involvement of members of the Card family in sales of land at Dame Street, Dublin.

1. Memorial of an Indented Deed dated 15 August 1805, witnessed 29 October 1805 (Deed No. 387670)

This records that on 8 March 1805, the Court of Chancery, having heard a cause in which Eleanor Card, widow, was the plaintiff and 'Nathaniel Card of the City of Dublin, merchant, eldest son and heir at law of Nathaniel Card late of said city of Dublin, deceased', together with a bankrupt named William Cope and his assignee, Robert Alexander, were defendants, decreed that land and premises (a dwelling house with other buildings and improvements) to the north of Dame Street should be sold to the highest bidder in a public auction in July. The auction went ahead and the highest bid - a huge sum of £3000 - was made by Thomas Oldham. He bid on behalf of Eleanor Card, whose promissory note for £3000 he deposited at the Bank of Ireland where it remained 'to the credit of the said cause', and requested that the premises be conveyed to her. Cope, his assignee and Nathaniel Card then released the land, previously in the possession of Cope, to Eleanor at the direction of the Master of the Court of Chancery and Oldham.

2. Memorial of an Indented Deed dated 30 October 1805, Memorial witnessed 31 October 1805 (Deed No. 387694)

This records that Eleanor Card sold the land and buildings at Dame Street she had bought to Francis Tempest Brady, a Dublin lace manufacturer, for £4000 - a massive profit on the £3000 she had paid for it such a short time before.

Whether these transactions were part of a plan to raise badly needed cash, whether Eleanor was acting on behalf of her son Nathaniel (Mary Birkett Card's husband), who was in dire financial straits, or whether the two were at loggerheads, it is impossible to determine.
3. Memorial of Indented Deed of Lease or Conveyance dated 1 June 1816
(Deed No. 481990)

This concerns premises known as No 58 Dame Street, again to the north, but it
seems they are different to those referred to in the deeds described above. Once
again, the land had been subject to a decree in the court of chancery that it be
sold, this time back in 1794. The buyer in 1816 was a William Bolton, who paid the
hefty sum of £1020. A lengthy list of parties to the sale include, once again,
William Cope and his assignee Robert Alexander, and another Card - this time,
Nathaniel's brother Thomas Ligon Card, acting as the assignee of an insolvent
named Hugh Russell. There are also many other parties - brewers, merchants,
and three women as well as another possible relative (Henry Maddock Madden,
deceased.)

This deed may have no connection with the earlier two, but it confirms that the
Card family continued to maintain interests in that part of the city, and to be
involved in land transactions there.
Mary Birkett Card’s brother, William (born 1790), was a dentist and he and his wife, Abigail née Knott, with their children later ‘settled at Liverpool’, according to Webb’s Pedigrees (a genealogy of Friends’ families kept in Dublin Friends’ Historical Library). They had four daughters and one son, William, born in 1825. In 1843, William Birkett, now carrying on a soap-boiling and tallow-chandling business in England, applied to Hardshaw East Monthly Meeting, Manchester for re-admission to the Society of Friends, having been disowned for debt some time previously – whether in the Manchester/Liverpool area or Dublin is not clear. The following is a summary drawn from the Monthly Meeting Minutes over the next few years.

13 July 1843 - Two members had been sent to see William. They reported favourably on his character, but he could not furnish them with the certificate of his disownment, and so they wished to see him again when this was received. He explained his previous position, feeling he had profited from his errors, and was now ‘conducting himself’ in a ‘circumspect manner’. Although ‘legally discharged from his former debts’, he still ‘felt bound in justice to pay them if he ever has it in his power’. ‘He appeared to be a serious minded person, diligent in attendance at our meetings since his residence amongst us. We believe his conduct to be orderly and that he is attached to the principles of our religious society.’

On 24 April 1844 it is noted that he had made a formal request to be reinstated. Two members were to visit him and report back to the Meeting.

10 July 1844 - It is recorded that he had been ‘engaged for four years in a safe but moderate business of which he has taken on account half yearly, and has tried to make restitution to his debtors.’

He was re-admitted to membership, but in 1850 again ran into difficulties.

12 December 1850 - It is reported that William Birkett had failed to pay debts. Two members appointed to visit.
9 January 1851 - The following report was brought in:

We have seen William Birkett according to appointment. He informs that he is winding up his soap-boiling concern in Miller Street at the dissolution of a partnership early in 1849. He had about £100 due to him, after paying for all the debts of that concern. He then commenced business in the same line in Salford. He there laboured under disadvantages from deficiency of capital and was particularly unfortunate in his first lot of soap, which proved deficient in quality; and owing partly to inefficient packages, and great carelessness on the part of the Railway company, the damage and waste in transit to Bradford was very serious, and William Birkett estimates his losses on this transaction at about £130. In 4th Mo last, the Excise took possession for £107 duty before the expiration of the usual credit, and the expenses of sale by auction and sacrifice occasioned thereby William Birkett estimates at about £100. If he had closed his business at this time, it is possible he might have paid 10/ in the pound, but with the consent of his creditors, he concluded to make another effort to continue his business, raising about £80 by proceeds of sale of house, furniture etc, and in 9th Mo the Excise again interfered; and finding he would not longer carry on the business he turned everything into money at a considerable loss, paid the Excise their claim of about £80, and there then remained only 1/ in the pound for his creditors, which they agreed to accept as a settlement. The whole of the debts amounts to £338. William Birkett now acting as a broker and commission agent in Liverpool, and his principal creditors, Priestley, Griffiths & Co, whose debt is £134 are putting considerable commission business in his way which enables him to pay off their debts by stated installments.

He evinced much sorrow at the loss his creditors had sustained and is endeavouring to lay by sufficient to make 1/ into 5/ at an early date, and expresses his intention to discharge the whole in full, as soon as it may be in his power.

Manchester
1st Mo 7 1851
John Rooke
Thomas Carrick

The further consideration of which is deferred to our next meeting.

13 February 1851, Minute 11

The case of William Birkett with the report brought in last month, has obtained our further consideration; this meeting believes it right to testify against such imprudent trading; and concludes to separate William Birkett from membership with us as a religious society, and appoints John Harrison and Isaac Wright to prepare a minute of disownment for the approbation of our next.

20 March 1851, Minute 22

The friends appointed to prepare a minute of disownment in the case of William Birkett have brought in the following which being approved by this meeting, Joseph Merrick and George Bradshaw are appointed to hand him a copy and cause one to be read in Manchester Preparative Meeting, viz;

Minute 23

William Birkett, a member of this meeting, has failed in the payment of his just debts, having offered to creditors only one shilling in the pound, which they have agreed to accept in settlement of account. Although we take into
consideration, that he may have sustained losses by the unexpected but not illegal seizures of Excise duty, and the damage to goods in transit by railway, yet we are of the judgement that his failure has been mainly occasioned by his laxity in trading with a very inadequate capital, and by his not being sufficiently mindful of the standard of Christian rectitude, and of that responsibility to creditors, which we, as a religious society have ever believed ourselves called upon practically to acknowledge. In testimony against such conduct, and for the clearing of Truth, this meeting, after solid deliberation concludes to separate the said William Birkett from membership of our religious society, and he is hereby separated accordingly. In performing this disciplinary duty, we feel for William Birkett in his embarrassed and reduced condition; and we desire that the trials of adversity which he has experienced, may through Divine aid, not be without their practical good effect.

17 April 1851 - Recorded that the above minute was handed to William and read in Preparative Meeting.

12 June 1851 - Reported that William Birkett had stated his unhappiness with this decision and appealed to Quarterly Meeting.

Then:

The notice of appeal from William Birkett in the Quarterly Meeting in 9th Mo: next, against the decision of this Meeting in his case, having been received, we appoint Thomas Binyon, John Harrison, Josiah Merrick & Charles Thompson, to act as respondents on our behalf; of which the clerk is directed to inform William Birkett, and to furnish him with copies of the minutes in his case and to forward the names of the said respondents to said Quarterly Meeting.

9 October 1851 – Notes from Lancashire Quarterly Meeting 18/19 September 1851, Minute 16

The Committee appointed to hear the appeal of William Birkett against Hardshaw East Monthly meeting have brought in the following reports, viz;

At a meeting of the committee appointed to hear the appeal of William Birkett against Hardshaw East Monthly Meeting (present all the members of the committee) the appeal having been read, William Birkett and his assistants were heard in support of it – and the respondents in reply, until both reports had been fully and fairly heard; and it is the judgement of the undersigned members of the committee that the decision of the Monthly Meeting is annulled.

Willm Satterthwaite
Caleb Haworth
Christopher Tennant
George Cooke
Joseph Jasper
Firth Woodhead
Willm Ecroyd

Which report this meeting hereby records as its judgement in the case.

A copy of the minute is to be handed to Wm Birkett, and one is also to be sent to Hardshaw East Monthly Meeting.

William Ecroyd, Clerk.
PREFACES TO

A POEM
ON THE AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE

PUBLISHED 1792
POEM

O. THE

AFRICAN

SLAVE TRADE.

ADDRESS TO HER OWN SEX

BY M. BIRKETT.

"DISGUISE THYSELF AS THOU WILT, STILL, SLA-
"VERY, STILL THOU ART A BITTER CUP."

STERNE.

THE SECOND EDITION.

DUBLIN,

PRINTED BY J. JONES, NO. III, GRAYTON-STREET:

M, DCC, XCI.
IN presenting this juvenile attempt to the eyes of the public, I am sensible how much I lay myself open to the censure of those, whose superior discernment shall point out all its errors in their full magnitude.—I can only hope that the merits of the cause will in part plead my excuse; for the rest, I submit to their candor.

It is with the greatest diffidence that I presume to offer, to indiscriminate inspection, a production of so little labour, which never experienced the correcting hand of judgment, and which, overwhelmed with confusion, would shrink from the piercing eye of criticism—as the owl from the face of day.

M. B.
A POEM
ON THE
AFRICAN
SLAVE TRADE.
ADDRESSSED TO HER OWN SEX.
BY M. BIRKETT.
PART II.

"DISGUISE THYSELF AS THOU WILT, STILL, SLAVERY, STILL THOU
"ART A BITTER CUP."
STERNE.

DUBLIN,
PRINTED BY J. JONES, NO. III, GRAYTON-STREET.
MDCCXCI.
PREFACE.

ENCOURAGED by the kind and unmerited Partiality with which the first Part of this little Attempt has been received, I again present to public Observation, the spontaneous Effusions of an unpolished Fancy. I fear I may justly incur the Censure of having acted with unbecoming Warmth, though on such an important, interesting, and inexhaustible Theme. — Compassion for those unhappy Beings, whose Cause I urge,—my own inexperience,—and the Feelings of every humane Heart, to which I appeal, must be my Advocates.
MARY BIRKETT CARD'S ROLES WITHIN THE QUAKER WOMEN'S MEETINGS

The development of Mary's roles within the Dublin Women's Meetings, from the first mention found of her in 1807, was sketched in Chapter 1, Biographical Outline. The intention here is to convey a picture of what those roles entailed.

The structure of Preparative, Monthly, Quarterly and Yearly Meetings was set up by Quaker founder George Fox in the 1660s. Beside supporting women's preaching, Fox advocated separate women's meetings on the grounds that there were some issues more appropriate for women to deal with, and the women's meetings developed specific roles in relation to marriages, children and poor relief. Women's special role in the care of the poor was forged about 1659/60 and Dublin, like most Monthly Meetings, had separate Men's and Women's Poor Committees. Despite their more limited scope, Quaker women undoubtedly gained advantages from having their own meetings: autonomy in seeing to their own affairs, experience in public speaking, a sense of purpose, status if appointed to some position in the Society. In addition, men and women sat together on the Select Meetings of Ministers and Elders (paralleling the Monthly, Quarterly, Yearly levels) and on other joint committees like, in Ireland, those set up to visit the troubled Ulster Friends during the deist controversy. Mary's name appears as an addition to the Select Meeting and Overseers for Dublin Monthly Meeting on 14 March 1815.¹

Dublin Women's Monthly Meeting

From 1813 to 1816, Mary was Clerk to Dublin Women's Monthly Meeting.² The clerk's job, an annual appointment, was of vital importance. Quakers operated a consensual form of decision-making. There was (and still is) no voting to decide an issue. Instead, after open discussion and quiet, joint consideration, the clerk gathered 'the sense of the meeting' into a formal minute, taking account of all that had been said, which he or she then read to those present for assent. As Elizabeth Isichei points out, 'because no vote was taken, the only members who contributed to decisions were those who spoke, and the habitually silent exercised no power at business meetings whatsoever'.³ This is undoubtedly true, and the system lent itself to the formation of powerful, vocal elites. Nevertheless, at its best it gathered the feelings of all present into a unitary view, as opposed to voting which leaves people permanently arraigned on one side or the other. The role of clerk was not an easy one, even in the women's
meetings where the business dealt with was simpler. In Dublin Women's Monthly Meeting it was not always easy to fill the position. In January 1816, Mary was on the Committee set up to choose her replacement, and on her release the following month the post was split between Elizabeth Fayle as 'writing' clerk and Hannah Strangman Robinson as 'reading' clerk. (Mary had originally been appointed as 'writing clerk', with Elizabeth Robinson as 'reading clerk'.) The next year, when she again sat on the Committee, it could not even agree on a nomination.4

By then, Mary was an overseer.5 An overseer was of lower status than a Minister or Elder. Ostensibly, overseers had the pastoral care of members, offering advice, support and encouragement, but in practice at this time they were very much involved in looking into breaches of Quaker discipline, and compiling reports on these for the Monthly Meeting.

The business of Women's Monthly Meeting, as evidenced by the minutes during the period of Mary's participation (1807-1817), consisted mainly of: making appointments (clerk, overseers, doorkeepers, Friends to visit newcomers, visitors to Preparative Meetings, representatives to Quarterly and Select Meetings), nominations to/supervision of the Poor and Provincial School Committees, preparing/endorsing certificates of removal for Friends moving to other Meetings, managing accounts and collecting funds, initial stages of the marriage procedure, taking birthnotes. Mary shared in most of these tasks. Final actions or decisions, however, were taken in the Men's Meeting. Women took in the birth-notes, undertook preliminary work in connection with marriages, and visited transgressors (seemingly only other women). The men recorded the births, granted permission to marry, decided whether or not to disown, admitted to membership, and so on. Women noted and concurred with decisions made at the Men's Monthly Meeting.6 They did write up their own testimonies to deceased women Friends. These were considered important documents and were read out, 'united with' and duly signed by the Clerks of both the Men's and Women's Meetings. (Mary thus dealt with the testimony to her friend, the minister Susanna Hill, in 1815/16.7) Time-consuming for both sexes was answering the Queries to be sent up to Quarterly Meeting for onward transmission to Yearly Meeting. These were designed to ascertain members' spiritual condition, but in their endless variations on the same themes were more likely to have deadened it. Their content urged Friends to love one another, attend meetings for Worship, read the scriptures, set examples to their children and servants, adhere to the testimony against tithes, maintain plainness of speech and apparel, avoid vain sports and excess
in drinking or other diversions, be just in their dealings, relieve the poor, and admonish those who broke the rules. Phrasing the answers to these must often have been very tedious.

Quite a lot of time was taken up with Members' transgressions, the most frequent being non-attendance at meeting and breaking the marriage rules. Just as in the Men's Meeting, certain Friends were appointed to visit the guilty parties and encourage them to conform. One case must have been distressing to Mary in her new role as Clerk. On 16 November 1813, a woman Friend was appointed to visit Mary's cousin, Catherine Birkett, because she had married in church, and her sister Ann because she attended the wedding. No further mention of Catherine was found in the minutes, but a Certificate of Disownment exists which shows that she suffered the standard penalty for 'marrying out'. 8 Three months later, on 15 February 1814, a copy of a minute from the Men's Meeting is reproduced in the Women's minutes:

The case of Ann Card Birkett being resumed and the Meeting having been informed that she felt regret for her inconsistent conduct, and also that she had not been fully aware of the impropriety thereof [...] in attending her sister's marriage to a person not of our Society and by a priest [...] we believe it may be safe to accept of such acknowledgement, in the hope that her future conduct may be more consistent: and the Friends appointed in her case are contracted to pay her another visit and to inform her of our conclusion.

A woman Friend, then, first visited the erring sisters, but disciplinary action was taken by the higher authority of the men. The women's task was simply to note the men's decision.

Dublin Women's Monthly Meeting Committees – the Provincial School and Poor Committees

Mary sat on the Committee for the Provincial School. 9 This school, at Mountmellick, was established in 1786 by the Quakers of Leinster Province to supply 'the deficiency which appears in some places with respect to the education of Friends in low circumstances'. 10 Like being a school governor today, being on this Committee involved visiting the school and monitoring how it was run as well as attendance at meetings and some administration, in connection with the accounts for example. But it also involved examining the children to assess the standard of teaching. This was not a complex process, however. Many Quaker women served for a while on this group, so the workload was very much shared, and the lady visitors would simply ask several children questions about what they had been taught, or hear them read.
Mary was also on the Women's Poor Committee, at least from 1812-1815, and her sister Elizabeth Hudson from 1810 to 1816. Two members of the group were nominated each month to 'have the care of the poor', that is to carry out designated work in poor relief on the Committee's behalf for that period. Mary and Elizabeth were so nominated on a regular basis. In December 1813 they were two of the six women tasked with revising the lists (presumably of poor Quakers requiring or receiving relief) and collecting annual subscriptions, while Sarah Birkett, probably Mary's mother, was appointed to examine the accounts. Comparison of the minutes with those of the Men's Poor Committee show that the women's group had a more varied remit. The Men's Committee had responsibility for funerals - they appointed the gravedigger and paid his salary, supervised arrangements for the carriage used for burials, dealt with legacies - and they organised repairs to buildings. Mention is made of whitewashing the poor house, and repairs to roofs and windows of Meeting Houses. (A Quaker poor-house often adjoined the Meeting House. Very poor Friends might be allocated a room with fuel, candles and a small daily allowance.) They also paid out charitable behests and distributed goods such as coal and furniture. The Women's Poor Committee was more concerned with the actual relief of individuals. It might pay for someone to attend a sick person, or for the doctor to visit. It disbursed a large quantity of material goods: clothing, wine (considered therapeutic), medicines, material for clothes or bedding. One-off sums were given at times of crisis, such as sickness, particularly that of a family breadwinner, or bereavement. Longer-term work included educating young people, or helping them obtain the wherewithal to earn their own living. Orphans were boarded with families and, with children of poor families and widows, placed in schools at the Committee's expense. A family willing to take an orphan might be recompensed to the tune of eight to ten guineas per annum. Later apprenticeships were found and funded.

An idea of the work of the Committee in practice can be gained by tracing a case through the minutes.

On 10 September 1814, we learn that 'after much enquiry a place has offer'd for Hannah Boardman with a mantua maker, friends paying 30 guineas on her being placed for three years'. This had to go to Monthly Meeting to be approved and a particular Friend, S. Phelps, was charged with taking care of Hannah in the meantime. The following month, on 7 October, the Committee was informed that their hard work had been to no avail - Monthly Meeting had refused approval. (As the total amount disbursed by the Women's Poor Committee averaged £70-80 a year at this time, presumably 30 guineas was beyond its means and Monthly Meeting had to be applied to for the money. Whether it refused for financial or other reasons is not mentioned.) But Hannah's 'friends' (i.e. relations or others interested in her welfare) were
unwilling for her to become a servant in a Friend's family, so the matter was left 'for further consideration'. By 11 November, Hannah had been removed from the Provincial School and Monthly Meeting had nominated her to be 'under care' of Friends. Welcome news was that D. Sparrow of Wexford had agreed to employ her as a shop assistant for five years at a salary of six guineas per annum. Women's Monthly Meeting Minutes for 15 November note that Mary Card and Elizabeth Fayle were to prepare the appropriate removal certificate. The Poor Committee charged E. Alexander and E. Fayle with providing 'clothing for her and travelling expenses amounting to £7.15s.5d.' Much later, when her mother was sick in November 1817, Hannah was given 7s 'in consequence of her being out of work by her attendance on her mother'.

The Poor Committee seems to have done its best for Hannah, given its limited resources.

Representing Dublin at Quarterly and Yearly Meetings

Mary often represented Dublin at Leinster Quarterly Meeting, which could sometimes be held outside Dublin at Moate, Enniscorthy, Carlow or Mountmellick. From 1807, she was frequently one of Leinster's representatives to National Yearly Meeting of Women Friends for Ireland held in Dublin each April. Much of the business of Yearly Meeting consisted of drafting and signing national epistles, reading queries and epistles from other meetings, reading and signing certificates drawn up by men Friends for travelling ministers and appointing representatives to London Yearly Meeting. It must sometimes have been very monotonous. The Yearly Meeting held in April 1811, at which Mary was present, is typical.

It opened on 29 April with apologies, the appointment of a new clerk, Elizabeth Greer, and reading of the previous year's proceedings. Then certificates from men Friends concerning visiting ministers were read. On this occasion one of these was the famous Thomas Shillitoe. Two of the others, Thomas Clarke and Joseph Metford, visited the Women's Meeting, and were found to be 'edifying'. Adjourned until 4 o'clock, the Meeting reconvened with Epistles from women Friends at London Yearly Meeting and Philadelphia being read and the consideration of the answers to queries received from Quarterly Meetings. Answers to these were to be drawn up to be sent to London Yearly Meeting. There was then a breathing space until 4 o'clock the following day, 30 April, when another epistle was read from the last National Yearly Meeting, also some general advices. The Committee to prepare epistles to London was appointed, and two men Friends, Solomon Chapman and George Richardson, visited. Finally, a Testimony from Waterford Monthly Meeting commemorating the life of Richard Jacob was handed in by men Friends and read. The next day, 1 May, was taken up with the answers to queries which had now been prepared. They were read, altered, approved and signed by the Clerk. The final day, 2 May, the epistle to London, now drafted by the Committee, was brought into the Meeting. Again, it was read, altered, and signed by the Clerk. Rebecca Strangman and Elizabeth Pike were appointed to attend London
Yearly Meeting. Then followed what must have been the highlight of the event - a visit from Henry Hull, a travelling minister from America. Finally, the Testimony regarding Richard Jacob was signed, and the Meeting closed for another year. 18

This Women's Yearly Meeting, then, illustrates how it was subsidiary to the Men's, receiving visitors from the men, as well as ministers' certificates and testimonies to deceased friends they had drafted. Yet the women also operated their own separate system of correspondence, communicating with women Friends in Britain and America, and drafted answers to queries on their own account. Although not mentioned at this Yearly Meeting, women did sometimes visit, and occasionally address, the Men's Meeting. And, on some important issues, they worked with the men. In 1808, Mary was a 'named friend' appointed to sit with ministers and elders on a Committee:

to take into consideration, the answers to queries received by mens meeting, the state of the Society, and to lay same before this meeting, ... that should a similar concern prevail, some women friends might be nominated to unite with them.

This referred to the state of the Society in Ulster in the wake of the deist controversy. A joint committee of men and women Friends was duly formed and a statement produced. It was proposed that Yearly Meeting should consider making an appointment of 'solid judicious friends' to visit Ulster concerning the 'conduct of the discipline', and the following year, after the deliberations of another joint committee including Susanna Hill and Abigail Knott (mother of Mary' future sister-in-law), Rebecca Strangman and Rachel Maria Johnson were appointed to go. 19 Such a trip was surely more duty than pleasure, but travelling to Meetings far afield, and certainly to London Yearly Meeting, particularly in an official capacity, offered opportunities simply not available to non-Quaker women – opportunities which were eagerly embraced.

Ministry

No evidence was found that Mary travelled in the ministry, despite her early ambition to spread the gospel. She may not, ultimately, have felt sufficiently 'called', though there may have been practical obstacles in her own financial and personal circumstances. The Meeting funded a minister's travel expenses, but there were other costs. The Cards' business was always under strain, and there may have been difficulty in funding a nursemaid for the children or, if she was helping to run the family
enterprise, problems in managing it in her absence. Perhaps, given her concern for her husband's welfare evidenced in her last letter, she felt she could not leave him for a significant length of time. But it is clear, from her obituary in the Annual Monitor (1819, p.14), that she spoke in ministry, probably fairly frequently. It may be, therefore, that she was a 'permitted' minister, one who spoke in Meeting but was not 'acknowledged' or formally recorded. It was not unknown for some Friends to speak regularly and well and yet never become 'acknowledged', perhaps because there were sufficient people of high standing or ability as recorded ministers already, or even, sometimes, owing to factions within the Meeting. Only recorded ministers were granted permission, and funded, to travel.

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1 Dublin, Historical Library of the Society of Friends, Dublin Women's Monthly Meeting Minutes, 14 March 1815.
2 Ibid., 14 September 1813. Mary Card replaced Elizabeth Bewley as Clerk.
3 Isichei, Victorian Quakers, p.79.
5 Ibid. On 11 February 1817 she is listed as one of the overseers appointed to a committee 'to consider of a Friend to propose to the Monthly Meeting to fill the Station of Clerk'.
6 For instance, on 16 January 1816, Women's Monthly Meeting agreed with Men's Meeting that meetings should discontinue at Meath Street Meeting House and only continue at Sycamore Alley, where Mary worshipped.
7 Dublin, Historical Library of the Society of Friends, Testimony to Susanna Hill, 1 January 1816. Along with familiar Quaker names (the Bewleys, Fayles and Goodbodys) several Cards and Birketts appear as signatories: Mary's parents, William and Sarah Birkett, her brothers William Birkett Junior and George Harrison Birkett, uncle Henry Birkett, sister-in-law Elizabeth Hudson and husband Nathaniel Card. Several Women Friends were deputed by Dublin Women's Monthly Meeting to draw up the testimony on 12 September 1815 and it was read at the 14 November meeting.
8 Dublin, Historical Library of the Society of Friends, Certificate of Disownment for Catherine Birkett, 'signed in and on behalf of Dublin Monthly Men's Meeting', by Robert Fayle, Clerk, 15 March 1814.
9 Dublin Women's Monthly Meeting Minutes show Mary appointed to the Provincial School Committee 13 July 1813, and again on 10 September 1816.
10 Six Weeks' Men's Meeting, Leinster Province, 14 August 1784, cited in Labouchere, Deborah Darby, p.241, when a committee was established to look at how to meet this need.
11 Dublin, Historical Library of the Society of Friends, Dublin Monthly Meeting, Proceedings of the [Women's] Committee of the Poor. Mary was appointed to this committee on 15 December 1812 and released 10 January 1815 (Dublin Women's Monthly Meeting Minutes).
12 Dublin Women's Monthly Meeting Minutes, 14 December 1813.
13 Dublin, Historical Library of the Society of Friends, Dublin Monthly Meeting, Proceedings for the [Men's] Committee of the Poor, 1805-1826. Mary's father, William Birkett, sat on this Committee regularly from 1805, and her husband Nathaniel Card and brother-in-law Robert Hudson several times, e.g. circa 1813/14.
14 Proceedings of the [Women's] Committee of the Poor, particularly 12 January 1810. The cost of a physician's attendance is recorded as £3.8s.3d, while the fee for six months' board, lodging and schooling at the Quaker Provincial School was £7.14s.5d.
15 Proceedings of the [Women's] Committee of the Poor: 10 September, 7 October and 11 November 1814, 7 November 1817. Dublin Women's Monthly Meeting Minutes, 15 November 1814.
16 The Women's Poor Committee Minutes from 1847 show work continuing, but becoming somewhat narrower in scope. By that date, the main activity, besides giving small sums of money to needy individuals, was disbursement of clothing or bedding, particularly sheets, shirts
and shifts. Mary Card's daughter, another Mary Card, appears several times, for instance requesting 'a fresh grant of 5s. for Bess Lambert who she thinks will not live long', and similarly '5s. for Kinsella the shoemaker' (seemingly a loan, because Mary 'believes he will pay . . . [she] thinks he is a most industrious man')(pp.9-10). The same Kinsella was allowed to buy a sheet and a shirt at half price (p.19).

17 Dublin, Historical Library of the Society of Friends, Minutes of the Women's National Yearly Meeting for Ireland, show Mary as present in 1807 (she was charged with fifteen others 'to take into consideration the epistle from London') and then 1808, 1809, 1810, 1811 and 1813. There were usually about eight representatives from Leinster. In 1814 and 1816, 'family indisposition' prevented one or two people from attending - perhaps Mary was one of these.

18 Minutes of the Women's National Yearly Meeting for Ireland, 1811.

19 Ibid., 1808, 1809 and 1810. Rebecca and Rachel reported back in 1810 that they had attended the last Quarterly Meeting in Ulster and had felt 'satisfaction in having done so'.

...
APPENDIX 6

ORDER OF MARY BIRKETT CARD’S WORKS IN THE MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION

(Manuscript spelling, punctuation and capitalisation of titles and dates reproduced as in transcription.)

Volume I
THE MISCELLANEOUS WORKS of MARY CARD collected by her Son Nath.I Card 1834

Geo Harrison Birkett's Account of the last illness and death of his sister Mary Card. 1-14
Mary Cards Will. Dublin 3d Mo 19th 1817 14-15
Some Account of Remarkable deliverances experienced by friends during the disturbances of 1796 and 1798 15-32

[Journal entries:]
Parkgate 8th of 5th Mo 1794 32-33
London 5th Mo 18th 1794 34
Dublin 7th Mo 12th 1796 34-36
Canal Packet Boat 9th Mo 23 1796 36-38
Edenderry Meeting 9th Mo 25 1796 38
Dublin 11th Mo 2nd 1796 38-40
Dublin 11th Mo 19th 1796 40-42
Dublin 11 Mo 21 1796 42-44
Dublin 12th Mo 1st 1796 44-46
Dublin 12th Mo 11th 1796 46-48
Dublin 2nd Mo 21st 1797 49
Dublin 2nd Mo 26 1797 49-50
3rd Mo 12th 1797 50-57
Dublin 3rd Mo 16 1797 52
3rd Mo 16th 1797 [same date as above] 53-54
Dublin 4th Mo 5 1797 54
4th Mo 12th 1797 55
8th Mo 1st 1797 55-56
Hampstead 8th Mo 31-1797 56-58
Dublin 10th Mo 19 1797 58-59
Dublin 7th Mo 13-1798 59
Dublin 8th Mo 1-1798 59-60
Progress of Infidelity Dublin 8th Mo 25 1798 60-73
Dublin 9th Mo 16 [17]98 73-74
Dublin 11th Mo 5 1798 74-75
Dublin 1st Mo 15 1799 76
Dublin 1st Mo 21 1799 76-77
2nd Mo 23 1799 77-78
Dublin 9th Mo 30 1799 78
2nd Mo 2 1801 78-80
Dublin 12th Mo 21 1801 80-81
10th Mo 9 1802 81-83
Dublin 12th Mo 17 1802 83-84
Dublin 2nd Mo 4 1803 84-85
Dublin 7 Mo 6 1803 86

[Poem:]
Written two days after the birth of my second son 7 Mo 23 1803 87

[Another copy of this poem, entitled 'Written when very ill', dated '7th mo: 1803', appears in MS Volume 2, p.377.]
10th Mo 14 1803
5th Mo 11 1804
6 Mo 13 - 1804

To: C . . . 10th Mo 21 - 1804
To E . . . 10th Mo 24 1804

1st Mo 14th 1805
1st Mo 21st 1805
1st Mo 24th 1805
25th
26th
1st Mo 26th 1805
1st Mo 27th 1805
1st Mo 28th 1805
1st Mo 29th
1st Mo 30th 1805
2nd Mo 2nd 1805
1st(? ) Mo 3rd & 4th 1805
1st(? ) Mo 5th 1805

Occasioned by a continuance of most unjust behaviour towards us
2nd Mo 8th 1805
14th
2nd Mo 26th 1805
3rd Mo 4th 1805
3rd Mo 5th 1805
3rd Mo 6th 1805
3rd Mo 7th 1805
3rd Mo 12th 1805
3rd Mo 14th 1805
3rd Mo 15th 1805

Extracts from Michael de Molinos
Extract from the Life of Abbot Alfred
From Macurrius of Egypt AD 390
From Francis de Sales
Copied from the margin of the old Bible printed 1599 by J Crook

To . . . [a friend] 4th Mo 10th 1805

4th Mo 17th 1805
[undated]
4th Mo 20th 1805
4th Mo 23rd 1805
5th Mo 3rd 1805
5th Mo 7th 1805
5th Mo 23rd 1805
5th Mo 27th 1805
5th Mo 31st 1805
6th Mo 11th 1805
6th Mo 17th 1805
[undated]
[Letter:]
To CB 6th Mo 20th 1805 147-50
[Journal entries:]
6 Mo 23rd 1805 150-52
6th Mo 28th 1805 152-54
[Letters:]
To . . . [a brother] 7th Mo 15th 1805 154-57
To E [undated] 157-58
[Journal entries:]
7th Mo 22nd 1805 159
7th Mo 29th 1805 159-60
8th Mo 4th 1805 160-62
8th Mo 10th 1805 162
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[Letter:]
To DK 8th Mo 21st 1805 164-66
[Journal entries:]
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10th Mo 7th 1805 168-69
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[Letter:]
To CB 11th Mo 27th 1805 170-74
[Journal entries:]
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1st Mo 8th 1806 179-80
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2nd Mo 3rd 1806 181-84
3rd Mo 18th 1806 184-85
3rd Mo 24th 1806 185-86
4th Mo 30th 1806 186-87
[Letter:]
To . . . [cousin Catherine Birkett] Dublin 6th Mo 14th 1806 187-89
[Journal entries:]
Dublin 7th Mo 11th 1806 190
Dublin 7th Mo 15th 1805[?1806] 190-92
7th Mo 15th 1806 192-94
Dublin 10th Mo 11th 1806 194-95
[Letter:]
To a servant (at parting) 12th Mo 5th 1806 195-98
[Journal entries:]
1st Mo 5th 1807 198-200
Dublin 2nd Mo 2nd 1807 200-02
2nd Mo 10th 1810 202
[Letters:]
To W. A 8th 30th 1807 202-05
Dear Friend 5th Mo 1808 205-08
My dear Cousin Rathmines 7th Mo 16 1808 209-11
[Journal entries:]
Dublin 3rd Mo 22nd 1809 211-12
5th Mo 9th 1809 212-13
7th Mo 11th 1809 213-16
[undated] 216-18
2nd Mo 12th 1810 218-20
2nd Mo 18th 1810 220
2nd Mo 15th 1810 220-21
10th Mo 13th 1810 221-24
Dublin 10th Mo 25th 1810 224

[Letters:]
My dear SH 10th Mo 25th 1810 225-28
To MG 11th Mo 1st 1810 228-30

[Journal entries:]
11th Mo 15th 1810 231-32
12th Mo 4th 1810 232

[Letter:]
My dear Friend 2nd Mo 20th 1811 232-34

[Journal entry:]
3rd Mo 8th 1811 234

[Letters:]
To EA 5th Mo 14th 1812 234-36
[To an uncle] Dublin 7th Mo 7th 1812 237-40
[There are two pages numbered 240 in MS.]
To SR Dublin 7th Mo 1812 240-43
To CE Dublin 8th Mo 21st 1812 243-45

[Journal entries:]
Dublin 8th Mo 24th 1812 245-48
8th Mo 24th 1812 [second entry with this date] 248-51
Dublin 9th Mo 14th 1812 251-52
9th Mo 14th 1812 [second entry with this date] 252-53
Dublin 10th Mo 2nd 1812 253-54
10th Mo 12th 1812 254-55
10th Mo 19th 1812 255-56
10th Mo 26th 1812 256-66

[In MS, p.259 is numbered 260 in error, hence there are two pages numbered 260.]
10th Mo 29th 1812 266

[Letter:]
My beloved Brother George 10th Mo 31st 1812 267-71

[Journal entry:]
11th Mo 14th 1812 271-75

[Letter:]
To my brother George [Undated] 275-76

[Journal entry:]
Dublin 12th Mo 2nd 1812 277-78

[Letter:]
To A R Dublin 12th Mo 25th 1812 278-82

[In MS, p.279 is numbered 280 in error, hence there are two pages numbered 280.]

[Journal entry:]
Dublin 2nd Mo 22nd 1813 282-83

[Letter:]
To A Robinson 5th Mo 21st 1813 283-88

[Journal entry:]
5th Mo 29th 1813 288-89

Extract of a letter from Thomas Scattergood to Hannah Wilson Forbes
dated 12th Mo 24th 1797 289-99

[Journal entries:]
5th Mo 30th 1813 299
2nd Mo 26th 1814 291

[Letter:]
My beloved friend 2nd Mo 26th 1814 291-94

[Journal entry:]
2nd Mo 28th 1814 294

[Letters:]
To M A Dublin 3rd Mo 12th 1814 294-97
My precious friend Dublin 3rd Mo 12th 1814 297-98
[To JP?] Dublin 3rd Mo 23rd 1814 298-303
To C Dublin 4th Mo 30th 1814 303-05
To S Birkett 9th Mo 7th 1814 305-09

Journal entries:
10th Mo 18th 1814 309-11
11th Mo 18th 1814 311-13

Letters:
My most tenderly beloved Aunt Dublin 4th Mo 21st 1815 313-16
My much respected & beloved friend JE[?] Dublin 6th Mo 10th 1815 316-19
To MW & MG Dublin 10th Mo 7th 1815 319-22
My honor'd & often remember'd friend D Sandys Dublin 10th Mo 20th 1815 322-25

Journal entry:
11th Mo 8th 1815 325

Letters:
My dear Cousin 2nd Mo 1st 1816 236-30
My beloved Friends JNM & LD 7th Mo 13th 1816 330-31

Journal entries:
Dublin 8th Mo 30th 1816 331-35
Dublin 11th Mo 26th 1816 335-39
Dublin 1st Mo 8th 1817 339
Dublin 2nd Mo 6th 1817 339-41

Letters:
To W Watkins 3rd Mo 7th 1817 341-43
[to a brother] 4th Mo 20th 1817 343-49

Journal entries:
Dublin 5th Mo 17th 1817 349-51
5th Mo 26th 1817 351-52

Letter:
To [her husband, Nathaniel Card] Dublin 8th Mo 16th 1817 352-57

Meditations:
[Untitled, undated, on perfection] 357-59
[Untitled, undated, on humility] 359-[62]
No pages are numbered in MS after p.359.

[Untitled, undated, on dress] 363-64
[On God as teacher] 7 Mo 8th 1797 364
[Untitled, Undated, enjoining ‘tenderness’ towards those who ‘sleep’] 364-67
[Untitled, Undated, on ‘learning temporal and spiritual’] 367-70
[Untitled, Undated, on the ‘infallibility of the Church’] 370

Journal entries:
[undated, on God’s mercy to herself] 371-72
Dublin 9 Mo 18th 1797 373-74
Dublin 1st Mo: 9th 1798 374-76

Miscellaneous pieces:
[Untitled, on the Irish situation] 3rd Mo 23rd 1798 376-79
Ministry Dublin 7Mo 18th 1798 379-80
Friendship 8 Mo 3rd 1798 380-81
Beauty. [Undated] 381
Philosophic Mind. 8 Mo 15th 1798 382

Letter:
To [a friend] 8th Mo 2d 1799 383-84
On Interments. 10 Mo 1st 1800 384-89
[Prayer or journal entry:] 4 Mo 9th 1802 389-90

Letter:
To The Gafnies 8 Mo 1807 390-93
Asylum for Aged & Infirm Female Servants 4 Mo 4th 1808 393-96
[Poem with prose:] 396-400

To Sally Starbuck - an acrostic
| Poem:     | An Adieu to my friends at Milford. 2 mo. 16th. 1804 [400-03] |
| Letter:   | To Elizabeth Rebecca Card... 2d Mo 1st 1809 [403-09] |
|          | Thoughts on a Circulating Library of approved Religious Books. 3d Mo 8th 1814 [410-11] |
| Poem:    | To Hope Written after the death of my beloved Daughter 11 Mo 16.1808 [412-14] |
|          | [Another copy of this poem 'To Hope', undated, appears in MS Volume 2, pp.491-94.] |

**Volume 2**

**THE POETICAL WORKS of MARY CARD collected by her Son Nath.l Card 1834**

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A Hymn composed by Mary Birkett on her recovering out of a Pleurisy Fever 1787 Aged 12 Years

On the Death of my dear & only brother Edward Birkett Addressed to my Mother 3rd mo 10th 1787

On the Death of my dear Sister Hannah Birkett An Elegy 3mo 17th 1787

On the Death of my dear Sister Sally Birkett 3mo 27th 1787

An Elegy on the Death of my dear friend Mary Haughton 11mo 16th 1787

A Hymn & Prayer Conjoined 1786 [1787?]

To my Sister Sally Birkett 1787

On Night by MB aged 11 years 1786

A Poem to my dear & much esteem'd friend Eliza Pike 1787

A Poem to my much esteem'd friend Deborah Pike 1787

To William Pike on his affliction 1787

To H W Forbes 1787

On the Pleasures of a Good Conscience 1787

On Lambs An ode 1787

On Innocence 1787

On Death 1787

A Poem to J Lancashire 1787

On being presented with a pocket book by J Lancashire 1787

A Prayer 1787

On Entering into Dublin 1784

On my sister Betsy recovering out of a convulsion fit on the 13th of 3rd mo 1786

An Ode to Summer 1786

To C & B Ellerton on their return to Ireland 1787

A Reflection 1787

On Spring 1785

Ode to a Summer Morning

Ode to Truth 1785

A Poem to my dear Cousin Sal[?] Bolton 1788

A Monody to Memory - occasion'd by the death of her beloved sister - Jane Henrietta Birkett

To the Memory of her beloved sister Susanna Birkett 6mo. 19th 1792

A Poem On the African Slave Trade


Lines to the memory of our late esteemed and justly valued Friend Joseph Williams

To H W Forbes with the second part of my Poem on the African Slave trade 1792

Inscription for Forbes Lodge 7th month 1792

Inscription for a Painting of the Cherokees done by H - W - F

An Enigma

On the Death of our sincerely lamented Friend Rich'd. Shackleton 9 mo 1792

To J Lancashire on his arrival in Dublin 11th mo 3rd. 1792

To J - L 11mo 14th 1792

Advice to a Youth 11mo. 30th 1792

Written by Moonlight at Summer Hill 12th mo 29th. 1792

To Eliza Forbes 12mo 30th 1792

A New Years offering to her Friends Forbes 1mo. 1st 1793

Morning at Summer Hill

To Anne & H W Forbes Summer Hill 1mo 16th 1793

To D W

For H W F

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To Him who wished for it 214-15
To ....... At Supper 215
To ....... [beginning 'Ah! flattery like the Syrens Song'] 215
On Sleep 215
Motto for a drawing of H-W-F 216
On Wit 216-17
A Charade 217
To Anne, H-W & E Forbes & D Watson 3rd. month 21st 1793 217-28
To D=W Watson 4mo. 22nd 1793 228-30
To D=W Watson With Rowes Letters Dublin 5th mo 4th 1793 231
A Recipe to cure Love 232-33
The tears of Friendship 6th mo 19th. 1793 233-38
To Eliza Forbes & S Watson 7th. mo 3rd. 1793 238-40
An Epistle to D=W Watson 7mo 16th 1793 240-44
Soliloquy supposed to be written by Marie Antoniette [sic] just before her separation from the Dauphin. Scene the Abbaye 8th mo 15th 1793 244-49
A first day Evening Meditation 9mo 16th 1793 249-51
All hallows Eve 251-55
Written for D-W. address'd to L Goff With the Soliloquy &c [etc] 255
Written for the Charity Girls North Strand 2nd mo 1794 255-56
Another for the Same 2mo 16th 1794 256-57
To The Memory of A L Card 4th mo 10th 1794 257-59
[there is no p.258 in MS]
Answer to an address sent to me on the occasion of the foregoing lines 5th mo 1st 1794 259-62
A Petition To my Cousin T. Harrison Queens College London 6th mo 1st 1794 262-63
An evening Thought address'd to her much admired cousin L Harrison London 6th mo 4th 1794 263-64
J. S. Journey from Esher to London London 6th mo 7th 1794 264-68
To Lydia Harrison London 6th mo 10th 1794 268-71
To — [beginning 'Soft breathes the vernal gale,'] London 8th mo 14th 271
Mount Prospect 8th mo 22nd [probably 1795] 271-74
On S Forbes 9th month 20th. 1790 275-77
To H Pettigrew Mount Prospect 8mo 31st 1795 277-79
Written in the Ruins of Kendal Castle 6th month 1787 279-81
[Another copy of this poem on Kendal Castle appears on MS pp.436-38, dated 1789.]
A Satire 281-83
On the Power & Goodness of God a Poem 1787 283-87
[Another version of this poem, entitled 'On The Attributes of God', appears on MS pp.28-32.]
To a Family of lovely Children with a Box of Plums 11 mo 9th 1802 287-88
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To H. W. Forbes, with a Locket of her Hair Sun-rise 1794. 304-06
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To Debby Watson, standing beside a beautiful well 327-28
[Untitled] [beginning 'Lovely Mary blooming flower,'] 330
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To D: Watson 332-34
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A Contemplative view of Nature 338-42
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To the Deity 356-57
To him who said - "I pant for Solitude" 358-59
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To her Friend S[?] Appleby with verses on the Slave Trade 361-62
Elegy Occasioned by the deeply lamented death of my long-lov'd & truly amiable friend H W Reynolds, who departed this transitory life 5th. mo: 9th. 1799. 362-66
[Untitled] [beginning 'Oft have I sought my Saviour's face'] 367-68
A Monody to Memory occasioned by the Death of her beloved Sister Jane Henrietta Birkett 369-71
[Another copy of this monody appears on MS pp.147-49.]
The Flies - a Fable 10 mo. 21st. 1802 371-75
Supposed to be addressed by A 6th. mo: 1804 375-76
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[Another copy of this poem entitled 'Written two days after the birth of my second son', dated '7 Mo 23 1803', appears in MS Volume 1, p.87.]
To a Friend 9th. month 28th. 1804. 377-78
To a Friend on her return to Town 10th. mo: 1st. 1804 379-80
To C. B. with J. Scott's Journal 9 mo. 19. 1804. 381
To [beginning 'Ah dearest girl shall grief impart'] 10th. mo: 3d. 1804. 381-83
To x x x [beginning 'As the dew that new verdure distils o'er the flower'] 383-85
Occasioned by a Walk to the Botanic Garden 385-86
To Patience 10th. month 23d. 1804 387-88
Written in a Volume of J Mariott's[sic] Poems 11mo. 27th. 1804 388
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To E. D, on behalf of the Children of the General Daily Free School 9mo. 5th. 1805 397-99
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To _____ [beginning 'Oft have these wild uncultur'd flowers'] 408
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To A Request for 20 Guineas to place a poor Woman in the Incurable Hospital 10th mo: 31st 1806. 416-18
To Sarah Hoare 12 mo 29th. 1806 419-20
An Epistle to M. Leadbeater. 1st. mo: 16th. 1807 421-25
To E.D 1st. mo: 28th 425
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[Another copy of this obituary poem for Joseph Williams appears on MS pp.191-95.]
An Address to Elizth. Dawson requesting a Donation to assist in clothing the Poor Children of the General Daily Free School 11 mo. 5th. 1807.

To E. D. 430-31

To with a gilt Jug - Plein des oeufs 1st. mo: 9th. 1808 432-33

To A Knott Junr. On receiving a pair of open Watch Cases 3mo. 14th. 1808. 433-34

To Nathl. Card 8 mo. 29th. 1800 434-36

Written in the Ruins of Kendal Castle 6 mo. 13th. 1789. 436-38

[Another copy of this poem on Kendal Castle appears on MS pp. 279-81, dated 1787.]

Written for E Rotch Junr. Milford. 438-39

The Sensitive Plant. Milford.

To George 440

B Rotch to H. Leach. Milford Haven 440-41

Ruth to - 441-42

E.L .... to G. S.... Milford. 442-45

On seeing the Ship "Hannah & Eliza" Set sail Milford 2 mo. 6th. 1804 445-49

The Contest.

Maria when applied for by an old Miser 451

The Shew-man.

[Untitled] [beginning 'The music of Maria's tongue'] 454

On the Whalefishery 454

Ruth's Petition to B. Rotch. 455

Ruth & M.C. to B. Rotch, for the foregoing. 456

M.C. H.L. The Monkey to the Magpie Milford haven 456-58

On the "Squeeze of the Hand" 2d. mo:3d. 1804. 459

[Untitled] [beginning 'I envy not th'applause of fame'] 459-60

Written for B Rotch's Library. 2 mo. 13. 460-62

To Ruth in tears. 462

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A Pocket-book to E. A. 464-65

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An Address to E.D for cloathing for the Children of the Poor School 11mo. 12th. 1806 470-73

Seventh day night. Address'd to Sarah Hoare 473-76

To ___ [beginning 'O thou to whom the sons of grief'] 11th. mo:14th. 1807. 476-78

To E. Alexander Junr.- 479-81

To A. Knott Junr. 481-84

Ballincly.

On a Visit paid by H Pettigrew and A R to their friends in Dublin 10 month 1808 485-87

To Hope. Written after the death of my beloved and only Daughter 488-91

[This copy of 'To Hope' is undated. Another copy of the poem appears in MS Volume 1, pp.412-14, dated '11 Mo 16.1808'.]

To E. Dawson On behalf of the Aged & Infirm Female Servants 4 mo. 23rd. 1809. 495-96

To the Same - for a friend. 11th. mo: 25th.1809. 496-97

[Untitled] [beginning 'I know that friendship bids to flow'] 497-98

To N.C.

To N.C. 498-99
APPENDIX 7

INDIVIDUALS FEATURING IN THE WRITINGS OF MARY BIRKETT CARD (MBC)

Alexander, Elizabeth. Friend. Probably Elizabeth Alexander (1784-1824), daughter of William and Elizabeth Alexander, who served at both Dublin Women's Monthly Meeting and Ireland Women's Yearly Meeting and on several committees, e.g. Leinster Provincial School governors. MBC addressed one poem to her, probably another, and also a message from her deathbed - Vol. 2, pp.425 and 446, Vol. 1, p.191.

Appleby, S. Possibly Susannah Appleby (1754-1827), companion to Sarah Darby the sister-in-law of Deborah Darby of Coalbrookdale. She became a minister in 1791 and sometimes travelled in the ministry with Deborah Darby. One copy of MBC's A Poem on the African Slave Trade may be dedicated to her - Vol. 2, p.138.


Birkett, Catherine (Kitty) (b. 1784). Cousin. Daughter of MBC's paternal uncle Henry Birkett and his wife Mary née Sharp. 'Kitty' was rebellious and found it impossible to follow the Quaker discipline, particularly with regard to plain dress, or live up to the standards her family demanded. MBC sent her a copy of the journal of the American Quaker minister, Job Scott, who died in Ireland in 1793, and wrote several letters remonstrating with her - Vol. 2, p.365 and Vol. 1, Letters 3, 6, 10, 11, 33, pp.103, 108, 112, 113, 141. She was disowned for marrying outside the Society in 1814. Her married name was Morris. She may have married again later - see below under Tew.


Birkett, Elizabeth (Betsy) (1783-1875). Sister. Poem on her recovery from sickness in childhood - Vol. 2, p.11. Married Robert Hudson, son of Samuel and Hannah Hudson of Cooladine in Wexford, in 1806. They had seven children and remained in Dublin. She remained within the Society, and served on a number of Quaker women's committees such as the Committee for the Poor. MBC sent a poem to her with a gift of a gilt jug, she is mentioned in MBC's will and present during her last illness - Vol. 2, p.409 and Vol. 1, p.186 and p.192.

Birkett, George Harrison (1792-1848). Brother. Became a soap boiler and tallow chandler like his father William Birkett. MBC's son Nathaniel was apprenticed to him. Active in the Society of Friends, but eventually disowned in 1837 for not attending worship. Vegetarian and teetotal, he helped to found the first temperance society in Manchester in 1830. MBC wrote letters encouraging him in his faith, he is mentioned in her will, and he wrote an account of her last illness and death - see Vol. 1, Letters 7, 25, 26, 42, pp.109, 131, 133, 152 (though Letters 7 and 42 could be to another brother, William Birkett); p.186 and pp.188-93.


Birkett, Sarah (1753-1836). Mother. Daughter of Edward and Sarah Harrison of Kendal, she married MBC’s father, William Birkett, a Liverpool tallow chandler and soap boiler, in 1774. The family moved to Dublin in 1784. They had thirteen children. Of five poems on the deaths of MBC’s siblings, one, on Edward Birkett’s death (1787), and a section in another, on Susanna Birkett’s death (1792), are addressed to her mother - Vol. 2, pp.17, 167. Mary’s parents were both with her during her last illness - Vol. 1, p.188.

Birkett, Sarah (Sally) (1781-1787). Sister. Two poems addressed to her and one on her death - Vol. 2, pp.14, 15 and 20.

Birkett, Sarah Sharp (Sally) (1787-1825). Cousin. Younger sister of Catherine Birkett above. MBC wrote to congratulate her on her marriage in 1814 - Vol. I, Letter 34, p.143. A funeral card reveals her husband was Michael S. Clarke, a schoolmaster in Carlow. As Sarah Clark [sic] she is mentioned in MBC’s will - Vol. 1, p.186.


Birkett, William (b.1790). Brother. Two letters could be either to him or his brother George Harrison Birkett - Vol. 1, Letters 7 and 42, pp.109, 152. Present during MBC’s last illness - Vol. 1, p.188.

Bolton, E S. Cousin, exact relationship unknown, to whom an acrostic written at Kendal in 1794 is dedicated - Vol. 2, p.233. Probably a relative of MBC’s uncle Thomas Bolton of Warrington, husband of her maternal aunt Hannah Harrison.

Bolton, Hannah (b.1755). Aunt. Born Hannah Harrison, sister to MBC’s mother Sarah and George Harrison the anti-slave trade campaigner, she married Thomas Bolton (see below) in 1779. Mentioned in MBC’s will - Vol. 1, p.186.


Bolton, Thomas (c.1757-1789). Uncle. Lived at Warrington, occupation unknown, but was the son of Benjamin Bolton, a Warrington corn and flour dealer originally from Norton in Cheshire. Married MBC’s maternal aunt Hannah Harrison (see entry above for Hannah Bolton) in 1779. Poem composed in Liverpool on his premature death - Vol. 2, p.68.


Card, Hannah (1812-1881). Daughter. Included in MBC’s epistle to her children in a journal entry, and present during her mother’s last illness - Vol. 1, journal entry ‘10th Mo 26th 1812’, p.85 (p.86) and p.188.

Card, Mary (1809-1871). Daughter. Included in MBC’s epistle to her children in a journal entry, and present during her mother’s last illness - Vol. 1, journal entry ‘10th Mo 26th 1812’, p.85 (p.86) and p.188.
Card, Nathaniel (1776-1842). Husband, son of Nathaniel and Eleanor Card. Also a cousin - he and MBC had to have the agreement of their Quaker meeting to marry owing to this consanguinity. He became a Quaker two or three years before their marriage in 1801. A Dublin merchant (though on his son Nathaniel's wedding certificate his occupation is given as 'yeoman'), little is known about him. He involved himself in Quaker work, being nominated to several Dublin Meeting committees. Four poems are addressed to him, and MBC's last extant letter - Vol. 2, pp.255, 310, 454, 455 and Vol. 1, Letter 43, p.155. He is mentioned many times in her journal. His second wife was Ruth Johnson, daughter of Jervais Johnson of Co. Antrim (possibly Jervis Johnston, a Friend who travelled in the ministry in America). Nathaniel was disowned in 1826 for 'drinking to excess', but a note in the Card Family Bible states he continued a Quaker all his life.


Card, Nathaniel (1805-1856). Third son, collector of his mother's writings. Given the name Nathaniel as the first child of that name had died in infancy. Apprenticed to his uncle George Harrison Birkett (see above), he also became a tallow chandler, and a candlewick manufacturer. Moved to Manchester in 1837 where he became prominent in local business, Manchester Council, and charitable work, founding the United Kingdom Alliance for the Total and Immediate Legislative Suppression of the Liquor Traffic in 1853. He was for some time Treasurer of this institution. Married Hannah Binyon, also a Quaker, in 1837, and the couple had three children: Mary Hannah, Lucy Ann and Charles. Charles died in an accident at sea aged twenty-one, and Mary Hannah of an illness at sixteen, so his only descendants today are through Lucy Ann who married Thomas Beakbane in 1868. Nathaniel is mentioned several times in his mother's journal (his birth, and bouts of sickness): Vol. 1, '2nd Mo 2nd 1805', p.44; '1st Mo 5th 1806', p.66, '1st Mo 8th 1806' and '1st Mo 28th 1806', p.67. Another, '8th Mo 4th 1805', p.61, mentions a son's sickness - either his or his brother William's. Also included in epistle to her children in journal entry '10th Mo 26th 1812', p.85 (p.86).


Card, William (1802-1867). Son. Moved to Hardshaw East Meeting Quaker meeting area, probably to Liverpool, returned to Dublin 1841. He did not marry as far as is known. Poetic 'fable' written for him as a baby - Vol. 2, p.315. His illness is mentioned in MBC's journal, another entry mentions a son's sickness (either his or his brother Nathaniel's), included in epistle to her children in a journal entry and present during his mother's last illness - Vol. 1, '3rd Mo 14th 1805', p.47, '8th Mo 4th 1805', p.61, '10th Mo 26th 1812' p.85 (p.86), and p.188.

Clark(e), Sarah (1787-1825). Cousin. See above - entry for Sarah Sharp Birkett.

Darby, Deborah (1754-1810). Quaker minister and wife of Samuel Darby of Coalbrookdale, son of Abraham Darby II who perfected the technique of smelting iron ore with coke discovered by his father Abraham I, thus helping to initiate the Industrial Revolution. Visited Ireland in the ministry with Rebecca Young for nearly six months in 1797/98. 'Elegy' written on death of MBC's friend, Hannah Wilson Forbes, mentions ministerial 'family visit' made by her - Vol. 2, p.258 (see postscript).

Dawson, Elizabeth. Benefactress to whom MBC wrote poems requesting money to clothe the children of the General Daily Free School (founded by Quakers to educate poor children without denominational bias in Dublin) and funds for a home for sick and
Forbes, Anne (1732-1801). Mother of MBC's friend Hannah Wilson Forbes and her brother James. Daughter of Joshua Strangman (1703-1747), member of one of the wealthiest merchant families in Dublin, and his wife Anne née Pike. Strangman, Courtney, and Ridgway was a shipping partnership, engaged in the provisions trade. She married James Forbes the elder, also a merchant, in 1751. Mentioned in several poems about the Forbes family. One poem addressed to her and her daughter Hannah, and another to her, Hannah, her daughter-in-law Eliza Forbes and Eliza's sister, Debby Watson - Vol. 2, pp.187 and 188.

Forbes, Elizabeth (Eliza) (c.1776-1814). Born Elizabeth Watson, daughter of Solomon and Mary Watson of Summerville in Clonmel, and sister of MBC's intimate friend Debby Watson, she married James Forbes, brother of MBC's other close companion Hannah Wilson Forbes, in 1792. The couple had ten children. She was his second wife, the first being Mary Goffe, daughter of Jacob and Elizabeth Goffe of Horetown House, County Wexford. Poem dedicated to her on her marriage, one addressed to her and her sister Sarah Watson, and another to her with her sister, Debby Watson, her mother-in-law Anne Forbes and Anne's daughter Hannah Wilson Forbes - Vol. 2, pp.182,203,188.

Forbes, Hannah Wilson (1768-1799). Daughter of James Forbes, a Quaker merchant, and his wife Anne, née Strangman (see Anne Forbes above). Close friend of MBC's from childhood. She and MBC exchanged verses and were involved in charity work together including founding a 'School and Repository' for poor children - a scheme whereby poor girls earned an income from needlework beside receiving an elementary education. Enjoyed painting and drawing. Married Thomas Reynolds of Carshalton in Surrey in 1798 and died just over a year later after giving birth to their son Thomas Forbes Reynolds. Many poems addressed to her, including one enclosing Part 2 of MBC's A Poem on the African Slave Trade, and an 'Elegy' on her death. Several poems also addressed to the Forbes family, or written in their homes. See Vol. 2, pp.37, 114, 137 (enclosing anti-slave trade poem), 170, 181, 183, 185, 187, 188, 199, 258 ("Elegy"), 263, 265, 268, 277. Also legacy of school briefly mentioned in Vol. 1, journal entry '5th Mo 23rd 1805', p.55.


Gafnies. A family, perhaps not Quaker, to whom MBC wrote - Vol. 1, Letter 13, p.115.

Goff[e], Lydia. Sent a copy of MBC's 'Soliloquy' in the imagined voice of Queen Marie Antoinette of France - Vol. 2, p.208. Probably Lydia Goff[e] (1772-1844), one of the twenty-one or twenty-two children of Jacob and Elizabeth Goffe of Horetown House, County Wexford, and sister of Dinah Wilson Goffe the author of 'Divine Protection' (in J.M.R, Six Generations in Ireland, 1893) which recounts the events of
the Irish Rebellion as they affected her family. Also sister of Mary Goffe, first wife of Hannah Wilson Forbes's brother James (see Elizabeth Forbes above). Lydia married Simeon Lamphier, not a member of the Society of Friends, in 1821. The Goffes came to Ireland when Puritan preacher William Goffe, a General in the Commonwealth Army, was given land there for services to Oliver Cromwell. He was one of the signatories to Charles I's death warrant, and married a cousin of Cromwell. (The Goffes seemed to cover the religious spectrum in the mid-seventeenth century. Of William Goffe's brothers, Stephen was a Catholic priest, chaplain to Charles I's Queen, Henrietta Maria, and tutor to the future Charles II, while John was an Anglican rector in Kent.) The Goffes in Ireland were early converts to Quakerism.


Harrison, T. (probably Thomas). Cousin. Probably nephew of MBC's mother whose maiden name was Sarah Harrison, and her brother George Harrison, London merchant and leading slave trade abolitionist. Poem addressed to him as student at Queen's College, Oxford - Vol. 2, p.224.

Harrison, Lydia (b. 1779). Cousin, and friend and companion on MBC's visits to London. Daughter of George Harrison (1747-1827), wealthy Quaker merchant in London (though born the son of a shoemaker in Kendal, Westmoreland), one of the founding six Quaker members in 1783 of the first anti-slave trade committee in Britain, and long-term member of the London Abolition Committee that directed much of the campaign, working with William Wilberforce and Thomas Clarkson. Her mother Susanna was the daughter of William Cookworthy of Plymouth, discoverer of china-earth and the first manufacturer of fine porcelain in Britain, and his wife Sarah Berry. Lydia was named after her aunt Lydia Cookworthy. Her brother, George Harrison Junior (1790-1859), a barrister, wrote a memoir of his grandfather William Cookworthy and published in 1856 A Few Thoughts on the Present State of the Society of Friends, which led to his disownment from the Society. Lydia Harrison married first Richard Shepley and then her first cousin Thomas Harrison, son of George's brother William. Poems written to her during MBC's visit to London in 1794, and another possibly in 1797 - Vol. 2, pp.225,226,229 and 253.

Haughton, Mary (d.1787). Childhood friend. 'Elegy' composed on her death - Vol. 2, p.24. The Haughtons were a numerous Quaker family. Branches were involved in bay-yarn, corn and hardware. Joseph Haughton (1765-1845) of Ferns near Ballitore set a pacifist example to Friends in the 1798 Rebellion by breaking his hunting gun publicly in the street.

Helton, John. Did business with the Cards, but became a rival. He was in all probability the tanner disowned by the Society of Friends in 1807 for evading payment of a debt to Charles Dudley (Dublin Monthly Meeting Minutes, 15 September 1807). In a manner unclear from MBC's journal, he accused her husband Nathaniel Card of shady dealing. The case came before arbitrators. See Vol. 1, journal entries from '1st Mo 24th 1805' to '4th Mo 4th 1805', pp.40-51, particularly that for '3rd Mo 23rd 1805', p.49, also '1st Mo 8th 1806', pp.67-68.


Hill, Susanna (1769 -1815). A minister in the Society of Friends in Dublin and MBC's close friend for many years. Her ministry is first mentioned in Vol. 1, journal entry '1st Mo 5th 1807', p.73. The daughter of Thomas and Abigail Knott of Edenderry, she
married Jonathan Hill in 1801. Accompanied the American evangelical minister David Sands and others on a dangerous journey to the Quaker meeting at Enniscorthy during the 1798 Rebellion - see Vol. I, Letter 38, p.148. When nearing her own death, MBC dreamt she saw Susanna Hill, some two years deceased, beckoning to her. The Jonathan present at MBC's deathbed was probably Susanna's husband. See account of MBC's death, Vol. 1, pp.188, 191-92.

Hoare, Sarah (Sally) (c.1767-1855). Friend of MBC's from 1805 (see Vol. 1, journal entry '4th Mo 4th 1805', p.49). A poet and botanist, she ran a school for Quaker girls in Dublin, and later one in Bristol, before moving to Bath in 1832. She published Poems on Conchology and Botany in 1831 and A Poem on the Pleasures and advantages of botanical pursuits (n.d.). 'The Pleasures of botanical pursuits' is appended to Priscilla Wakefield's Introduction to Botany, 8th edn, 1818. She was very concerned about cruelty to animals, opposing bull-baiting and other blood sports. Her letter to Lord Wombwell attempting to stop a fight between a lion and mastiffs going ahead in his grounds in 1825, published in The Times, was later published in The Leisure Hour (43, p.678, 21 October 1852). Also agitated against prize fighting, remonstrating with the pugilist Bill Neat in 1822. Several poems of MBC's are addressed to her, including, almost certainly, one written after a visit to the new Botanic Gardens in Dublin, and one letter. See Vol. 1, Letter 17, p.120 (also Letter 18, p.123); Vol. 2, pp.394, 428, 430, 432.

Hoyland, John and Elizabeth. A conversation with this couple is mentioned in Vol. I, journal entry '9th Mo 29th 1805', p.63. Almost certainly John Hoyland (1752-1831) and his wife Elizabeth (1758-1839) who married in 1781. Elizabeth was a minister who travelled extensively in England, Scotland and Dunkirk while John was a factor (commission agent) from Sheffield who also published historical books, one on the customs of gypsies. John Hoyland's brother Joseph, an apothecary, and his wife Margaret, a minister from the age of twenty-one, moved to Waterford in Ireland in 1791.


Kersey, Jesse. Well-known American travelling minister from Philadelphia who visited Ireland in 1805. (He also stayed that year at the home of Deborah Darby at Coalbrookdale.) MBC recounts a conversation with him and he is also mentioned in a letter to the evangelical minister David Sands - Vol. 1, journal entry '4th Mo 5th 1805', p.51 and Letter 38, p.148.

Knott, Abigail, Junior (1789-1837). Daughter of respected Quaker minister and elder Abigail Knott Senior and her husband William Knott, a Dublin tape, thread and ribbon manufacturer. Abigail Knott Senior came from Ballinclay in Wexford, where her father John Wright funded the building of the Meeting House. Abigail Junior married MBC's brother William Birkett, a dentist, in 1813, by whom she had six children. The family eventually moved to Liverpool. One poem thanks her for the gift of some watch-cases, another was written at Ballinclay - Vol. 2, pp.448, 451. She is mentioned in MBC's will and was present during her last illness - Vol. 1, pp.186 and192.

Lancashire, J. Background as yet unknown. Possibly a travelling minister or elder from England who visited Ireland in 1787 and 1792. Two poems written to him on each visit, on one he presented MBC with a pocket book - Vol. 2, pp.43, 44, 175, 177.

E.L. Probably Eliza Leach, sister of Pembrokeshire J.P. Henry Leach, the friend of Benjamin Rotch (see below). Love poem written with her, or on her behalf, to Gayer
Starbuck (see below) of the Starbuck Quaker whaling family at Milford Haven - Vol. 2, p.341.


Leadbeater, Mary (1758-1826). An acquaintance, possibly friend. Quaker poet and author. The daughter of Richard Shackleton (see below) of Ballitore, County Kildare, she grew up in the vicinity of the famous school there run by her grandfather Abraham Shackleton I, her father, and then her brother Abraham Shackleton II, in turn. Her 'Annals of Ballitore 1766-1824' chronicle life in the village and events there in the Irish Rebellion of 1798. She also wrote poetry, memoirs of her parents, Biographical Notices of Irish Friends, and two volumes of vignettes concerning the daily lives of the Irish peasantry. Met and corresponded with some literary figures, for example the poet George Crabbe. She married William Leadbeater in 1791, and became postmistress at Ballitore for many years. Poem addressed to her in 1807 - Vol. 2, p.396, also mentioned in poem to Deborah Pike (1787), p.31.

Pettigrew, Hannah. Friend of MBC's as a young woman. Probably daughter of Robert Pettigrew and his wife Elizabeth née Strangman (daughter of Dublin merchant Joshua Strangman and therefore sister to Hannah Wilson Forbes's mother Anne, see above). Collector of genealogical information on the Forbes family. Two poems written in 1795 at Mount Prospect near Rathangan, home of her uncle and aunt Joshua and Hannah Wilson, mention her, and she visited MBC in Dublin in 1808 - Vol. 2, pp.248-53 and 413.

Pike, Deborah. Childhood friend. Probably Deborah Pike (1776-1788), daughter of Richard and Ann Pike, sister of Elizabeth Pike, later Elizabeth Barrington. Poem addressed to her and poem on her death - Vol. 2, pp.31 and 50. Richard Pike, the first of the family to settle in Ireland, was a corporal in Cromwell's army who was given land at Cork in lieu of pay, but lost it when he became a Quaker and left the army in 1655. The Pikes in Cork, initially involved in wool and linen drapery, founded a bank in the early eighteenth century.


Robinson, A. Friend to whom MBC wrote encouraging her in her faith and urging more frequent attendance at Meeting - Vol. 1, Letters 27 and 28, pp.134 and 135.

Robinson, Deborah. No definite details - there were several contemporary Quaker Deborah Robinsons. Possibilities in Dublin Monthly Meeting include Deborah Robinson, née Corfield, who married Samuel Sandwith Robinson in 1789, and Deborah Robinson (b.1779), daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth Robinson of Killarney. Poem addressed to her on the joys of 'home' - Vol. 2, p.437.

Robinson?, S. No definite details - there were several contemporary S. Robinsons, usually Sarah or Susanna. See Vol. 1, Letter 23, p.129 - addressee is 'SR'.
Rotch, Benjamin (1764-1839). Friend at whose home in Milford Haven, South Wales, MBC stayed for several weeks in January and February 1804. Rotch was a wealthy Quaker whaling magnate from Nantucket in the United States. His father, William Rotch, was the chief shipowner in Nantucket (a town populated by Quakers engaged in the whaling industry). One of William's ships (the Bedford, carrying oil) first flew the American flag into an English port in 1783. Benjamin brought his family to Milford Haven circa 1800/1801 to set up his whaling enterprise there, consequent upon problems following the American War of Independence and the French Revolution, joining other American Quaker whaling families already at Milford - the Starbucks and Folgers. Intellectual, a good conversationalist, who had contact with some notable cultural figures (he had met radical authors Thomas Paine and Mary Wollstonecraft in Europe), he played host to a large number of guests, particularly en route between Ireland and England, at his home - Castle Hall, Milford. Nearly thirty poems written during MBC's stay at Castle Hall - Vol. 2, pp.323-62, also p.390.


Rotch, Elizabeth (Eliza Rotch Senior) (1764-1857). Wife of Quaker whaling magnate Benjamin Rotch. Left America with him, first for Dunkirk, and then after the French Revolution, to Milford Haven. Bore him seven children, several of whom are mentioned in MBC's poems. Poem written on leaving Milford Haven is addressed to her - Vol. 2, p.360.

Rotch, Elizabeth (Eliza Rotch Junior), later Elizabeth Farrar (1791-1870). Daughter of Benjamin and Elizabeth Rotch, born at Dunkirk. Moved to USA in 1819 to care for grandfather, William Rotch, who had moved his American whaling business to New Bedford. Became one of the Quaker liberal 'New Lights', eventually a Unitarian. Friend of Ralph Waldo Emerson, author, philosopher and Unitarian minister, and of Margaret Fuller, feminist and author (both New England Transcendentalists). Married John Farrar, Professor of Science at Harvard University. Wrote memoirs, including a memorial of her mother Elizabeth Rotch Senior, and books for children and on etiquette. Two poems addressed to her at Milford - Vol. 2, p.335 and 337.

Rotch, Maria (b.1797). Another daughter of Benjamin and Elizabeth Rotch. Married Stephen Langston, an Anglican clergyman. One poem written at Milford in 1804 is addressed to her and she is mentioned in another - Vol. 2, pp.332 and 360. Other Milford poems mention a Maria, though this may be an adult guest and not the Rotches' daughter, only six years old in 1804 - Vol. 2, pp.347,348,351.

Rotch, William (1802-c.1826-28). Son of Benjamin and Eliza Rotch. Moved to America when he was fifteen, and travelled to frontier at Illinois, but died of dysentery before taking up a job in New Bedford. Three poems written at Milford Haven are probably addressed to him, although a less likely possibility is MBC's own son William - Vol. 2, pp.347, 359.

Sands, David (1745-1818). Well-known American Quaker travelling minister of evangelical persuasion. Born of Presbyterian stock in Long Island, he moved to Orange County, New York at fourteen. Largely self-taught, he was employed in business and as a schoolteacher, and was convinced as a Friend, commencing in the ministry about 1772. Travelled widely in America, Europe, Britain and Ireland, sometimes in companionship with William Savery, the Quaker minister whose preaching spurred Elizabeth Fry to a life of religious devotion and prison reform. A very eloquent preacher, his ministry had a powerful effect on many people, but he was also concerned to combat the growing tendencies, as he perceived them, in the Society towards deism and irreligion. He was in Ireland in 1798 during the Rebellion
and led a group of Friends on a remarkable journey to Quarterly Meeting at Enniscorthy in the midst of the conflict. MBC wrote a letter to him in 1815 that mentions this when informing him of the death of their mutual friend Susanna Hill (see above) - Vol. 1, Letter 38, p.148.


Shackleton, Richard (c.1728-1792). Son of Abraham Shackleton I, founder of the famous school at Ballitore attended by author and politician Edmund Burke amongst other well-known people in public life, and his wife Margaret. Began a friendship with Burke at school that lasted all their lives. Took over the school. He married first Elizabeth Fuller in 1749 and then Elizabeth Carleton in 1755. By his first wife, he was the father of Abraham Shackleton II (1752-1818), who became headmaster of Ballitore School in his turn and played a key role in the deist controversy amongst Friends, and by his second wife the father of Mary Leadbeater (see above). Although his son Abraham Shackleton II is not mentioned by name in MBC's work, it is possible he was the schoolmaster and elder who led her to entertain deist thoughts - see 'Progress of Infidelity', Vol. 1, p.21. Poem written on the death of Richard Shackleton - Vol. 2, p.172.

Starbuck, Gayer (c.1772-1859). Son of Daniel and Alice Starbuck of the American Quaker whaling family settled at Milford Haven. Addressee of love poem composed in voice of 'E.L.', probably Eliza Leach (see above) and mentioned in two others written at Milford - Vol. 2, pp.341 and 353, 360. Later married Eleanor Penrose, and founded a brewery. Buried in Friends Cemetery, Milford Haven.

Starbuck, Sally. Probably Sarah Starbuck, daughter of Samuel and Lucretia Starbuck of Milford Haven, and first cousin of Gayer Starbuck (see above). Samuel Starbuck was a partner in banking firm of Rotch, Phillips and Starbuck circa 1810. Acrostic addressed to her with account of release of caged bird given to her as present - Vol. 2, p.344.

Tew, Catherine. Cousin. Possibly MBC's first cousin Catherine Birkett (see above) - Tew might be a later married name. Mentioned in MBC's will - Vol. 1, p.186.

Watkins, W. Background unknown. Individual to whom MBC wrote urging he/she turn from sin - Vol. 1, Letter 41, p.151.

Watson, Deborah (Debby) (1772-c.1736). One of MBC's two most intimate friends before her marriage to Nathaniel Card, the other being Hannah Wilson Forbes. Daughter of Solomon and Mary Watson of Summerville in Clonmel near Waterford. Debby met MBC when her sister Eliza Watson married Hannah Wilson Forbes's brother James. Originally seventeenth-century Protestant planters in Ireland, and Quakers very early in the movement, the Watsons became major bankers in Clonmel, but the bank failed about 1820. Debby moved to Somerset in 1810 and died in Bath, where her parents also spent their latter days. Numerous poems are addressed to Debby specifically or mention her - Vol. 2, pp.188, 196, 198, 199, 203, 205, 208, 265, 279, 282, 284, 286, 291, 297, 298, 299.

Watson, Sarah (b.1774). Sister of Deborah Watson above and Eliza Forbes née Watson. Married Robert Roberts of Dublin in 1794 and later Robert Law, according to Webb's Pedigrees (Friends' Historical Library, Dublin). The Roberts family had major
Williams, Joseph (1736-1807). Much revered elder and minister amongst Friends in Dublin. Attempted to reconcile opposing factions in the religious controversies taking place within the Society in Ireland, and to stem the tide away from tradition. He railed particularly against slackness in discipline and worldliness. MBC's obituary poem was published in 1807 - Vol. 2, p.400.


Young, Rebecca (1758-1834). A Quaker minister who journeyed widely with Deborah Darby of Coalbrookdale. Married William Byrd, another minister, noted as a shopkeeper for his refusal to sell slave-produced goods, in 1800. Accompanied Deborah Darby on visit to Ireland in 1797/98. ‘Elegy’ written on death of MBC’s friend Hannah Wilson Forbes mentions ministerial ‘family visit’ made by Deborah Darby and Rebecca Young - Vol. 2, p.258, see postscript.

Individuals mentioned In 'Some Account of Remarkable deliverances experienced by friends during the disturbances of 1796 and 1798' (Vol. 1, pp.160-67)

Jacob Hancock, Mary Ridgway, John Cozins, Thomas Thompson, Samuel and Hannah Hudson, Thomas Mason, Jacob and Elizabeth Goff, Joseph Mack, Lord Chancellor Fitzgibbon, David Sands, Josia and Elizabeth Manliff, William Hooure, Joseph and Ruth Jumain, Joshua and Hannah Wilson, Jane Watson, Robert Woodcock, Thomas Gatchell, Jervis Johnston, Wilson Johnston, Joseph Haughton, Patrick Kenny.

Authors of religious texts quoted by MBC:


St Francis de Sales (1567-1622). Bishop of Geneva canonised by the Catholic Church for his work in the Catholic revival following the Reformation. MBC copied extract from his work (probably A Treatise on the Love of God (1616), a book of mystical piety, though exact text not found) - Vol. 1, p.172.

St Macarius the Great (d. circa A.D. 390). Syrian mystic. Attributed author of a collection of spiritual homilies, twenty-two of which were included by John Wesley in Vol. 1 of his Christian Library. Mary copied extract from his work (exact source untraced) - Vol. 1, p.171.

Miguel de Molinos (1627-1696). Spanish monk and mystic influential in evolution of religious movement known as quietism. His spiritual 'method' attracted a huge following on the continent, and he enjoyed the confidence of the Pope, but was eventually accused of heresy. He was forced to recant by the Inquisition and died in prison. MBC copied extract from his work, The Spiritual Guide (1675) - Vol. 1, p.169.
Nayler, James (c.1617-1660). Follower of Quaker founder George Fox and leader in London during Fox's imprisonment. A powerful speaker, he enjoyed a large following. When in 1656 he rode into Bristol surrounded by eight people intoning 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Israel', intended as a symbol of the second coming of Christ, he was tried for blasphemy and punished by public whipping, branding, the boring of his tongue with a hot iron and imprisonment. The incident caused an anti-Quaker backlash, but when freed three years later Nayler was reunited with Fox. He died soon afterwards, following an attack by robbers on a journey to his family. His dying words, a classic text amongst Friends, are a comfort to MBC on her deathbed - Vol. 1, p.191.

Crook, J. (d. 1699). MBC copied text from the margin of a 1599 Bible, possibly written by this person - Vol. 1, p.172. May have been John Crook, convinced by George Fox in 1654, a Quaker minister and author of numerous tracts, testimonies and epistles. A 'Short Account of his Life' was prefixed to a reprinted collected edition of his works in 1791.
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