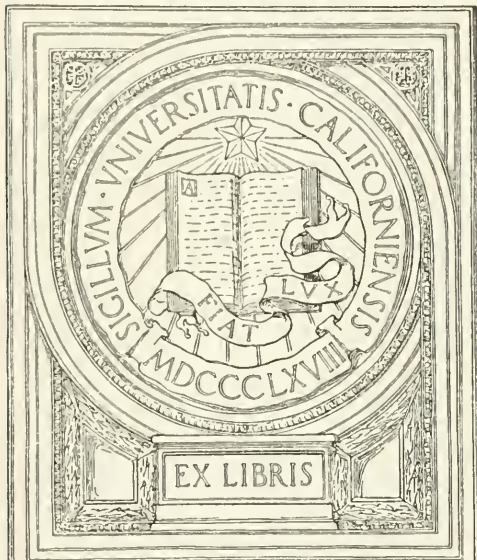




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# FAITHFUL FOR EVER.

BY

COVENTRY PATMORE.

45517

Of love that never found his earthly close,  
What sequel?

TENNYSON.

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BOOK I.



HONORIA.





I.

Frederick Graham to his Mother.



FREDERICK GRAHAM TO HIS MOTHER.

**M**OTHER, I smile at your alarms!  
Against my Wiltshire Cousins' charms  
I'm shielded by a prior spell.  
The fever, love, as I've heard tell,  
Like other nursery maladies,  
Is never badly taken twice.  
Have you forgotten Charlotte Hayes,  
My playmate in the pleasant days  
At Knatchley, and her sister, Anne;  
The twins, so made on the same plan,

That one wore blue, the other white,  
 To mark them to their father's sight ;  
 And how, at Knatchley harvesting,  
 You bade me kiss her in the ring,  
 Like Anne and all the others ? You,  
 That never of my sickness knew,  
 Will laugh, yet had I the disease,  
 And gravely, if the signs are these :

As, ere the Spring has any power,  
 The almond branch all turns to flower,  
 Though not a leaf is out, so she  
 The bloom of life provoked in me,  
 And, hard till then and selfish, I  
 Was thenceforth nought but sanctity  
 And service ; life was mere delight  
 In being wholly good and right,  
 As she was ; just, without a slur ;  
 Honouring myself no less than her ;  
 Obeying, in the loneliest place,  
 Ev'n to the slightest gesture, grace,

Assured that one so fair, so true,  
Somehow he served that was so too.  
For me, hence weak towards the weak,  
No more the unnested blackbird's shriek  
Startled the light-leaved wood ; on high  
Wander'd the gadding butterfly,  
Unscared by my flung cap ; the bee,  
Rifling the hollyhock in glee,  
Was no more trapp'd with his own flower,  
And for his honey slain. Her power,  
From great things even to the grass  
Through which the unfenced footways pass,  
Was law, and that which keeps the law,  
Cherubic gaiety and awe ;  
Day was her doing, so the lark  
Had reason for his song ; the dark  
In anagram innumerable spelt  
Her name with stars that throbb'd and felt ;  
'Twas the sad summit of delight  
To wake and weep for her at night ;

She turn'd to triumph or to shame  
 The issue of each childish game ;  
 The heart would come into my throat  
 At rosebuds ; howsoe'er remote,  
 In opposition or consent,  
 Each thing, or person, or event,  
 Or seeming neutral howsoe'er,  
 All, in the live, electric air,  
 Awoke, took aspect, and confess'd  
 In her a centre of unrest,  
 Yea, stocks and stones within me bred  
 Anxieties of joy and dread.

O, bright, apocalyptic sky  
 O'erarching childhood ! Far and nigh  
 Mystery and obscuration none,  
 Yet nowhere any moon or sun !  
 What reason for these sighs ? What hope,  
 Daunting with its audacious scope  
 The disconcerted heart, affects  
 These ceremonies and respects ?

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

One morning, when it flush'd my thought  
 That, what in me such wonder wrought,  
 Was call'd, in men and women, love,  
 And, sick with vanity thereof,  
 I, saying loud, "I love her," told  
 My secret to myself, behold  
 A crisis in my mystery!  
 For, suddenly, I seem'd to be  
 Whirl'd round, and bound with showers of threads,  
 As when the furious spider sheds

Captivity upon the fly,  
 To still his buzzing till he die ;  
 Only, with me, the bonds that flew,  
 Enfolding, thrill'd me through and through  
 With bliss beyond aught heaven can have,  
 And pride to call myself her slave.

A long, green slip of wilder'd land,  
 With Knatchley Wood on either hand,  
 Sunder'd our home from hers. This day  
 Joy was mine as I went that way.  
 I stretch'd my arms to the sky, and sprang  
 O'er the elastic sod, and sang  
 " I love her, love her !" to an air  
 Which with the words came, then and  
 there ;

And even now, when I would know  
 All was not always dull and low,  
 I whistle a turn of the sweet strain  
 Love taught me in that lonely lane.



Such glories fade, with no more mark  
 Than when the sunset turns to dark.  
 They die, the rapture and the grace  
 Ineffable, nor leave a trace,  
 Except sometimes, (since joy is joy,  
 In sick or sane, in man or boy,)  
 A heart which, having felt no less  
 Than pure and perfect happiness,  
 Is duly dainty of delight ;  
 A patient, poignant appetite  
 For pleasures that exceed so much  
 The poor things which the world calls  
       such,  
 That, when these tempt it, then you may  
 The lion with a wisp of hay.

That Charlotte, whom I scarcely knew  
 From Anne but by her ribbons blue,  
 Was loved, Anne less than look'd at, shows  
 That liking still by favour goes !

This Love is a divinity,  
 And holds his high election free  
 Of human merit ; or, let's say,  
 A child by ladies call'd to play,  
 But careless of their becks and wiles,  
 Till, seeing one who sits and smiles  
 Like any else, yet only charms,  
 He cries to come into her arms.  
 Then, for my Cousins, fear me not !  
 None ever loved because he ought.  
 Fatal were else this graceful house,  
 So full of light from ladies' brows.  
 There's Mary ; Heaven in her appears  
 Like sunshine through the shower's tears ;  
 Mildred's of Earth, but gayer far  
 Than most men's thoughts of Heaven are ;  
 But, for Honoria, Heaven and Earth  
 Seal'd amity in her sweet birth.  
 The noble Girl ! With whom she talks  
 She knights first with her smile ; she walks,

Stands, dances, to such sweet effect  
Alone she seems to go erect.  
The brightest and the chastest brow  
Rules o'er a cheek which seems to show  
That love, as a mere vague suspense  
Of apprehensive innocence,  
Perturbs her heart ; love without aim  
Or object, like the holy flame  
That in the Vestals' Temple glow'd,  
Without the image of a god.  
And this simplicity most pure  
She sets off with no less a lure  
Of culture, nobly skill'd to raise  
The power, the pride, and mutual praise  
Of human personality  
Above the common sort so high  
It makes such homely souls as mine  
Wonder how brightly life may shine.  
Ah, how you'd love her ! Even in dress  
She makes the common mode express

New knowledge of what's fit so well  
'Tis virtue gaily visible !  
Nay, but her silken sash to me  
Were more than all morality,  
But that the old, sweet, feverous ill  
Has left me master of my will.

II.

Mrs. Graham to Frederick.



MRS. GRAHAM TO FREDERICK.

**M**Y dearest Child, Honoria sways  
A double power, through Charlotte Hayes!  
In minds to first-love's memory pledged  
The second Cupid's born full-fledged.  
The Churchills came, last Spring, to Spa,  
And stay'd with me a week. I saw  
And own I trembled for the day  
When you should see that beauty, gay  
And pure as apple-blooms, that show  
Outside a blush and inside snow ;

That high and touching elegance  
 Which even your raptures scarce enhance.  
 Ah, haste from her enchanting side !  
 No friend for you, far less a bride.  
 But, warning from a hope so wild,  
 I wrong you. Yet this know, my Child :  
 He that but lends his heart to hear  
 The music of a foreign sphere,  
 Is thenceforth lonely, and for all  
 His days like one who treads the Wall  
 Of China, and on this hand sees  
 Cities and their civilities,  
 And on the other lions. Well,  
 (Your rash reply I thus foretell,  
 Good is the knowledge of what's fair,  
 Though bought with temporal despair !  
 Yes, good for one, but not for two.  
 Will it content your wife that you  
 Should pine for love, in love's embrace,  
 Because you've known a prouder grace ;



Disturb with inward sighs your rest,  
 Because, though good, she's not the best ;  
 Her acts of fondness almost shun,  
 Because they are handsomer meant than done ?  
 You would, you think, be just and kind,  
 And keep your counsel ! You will find  
 You cannot such a secret keep.  
 'Twill out, like murder, in your sleep ;  
 A touch will tell it, though, for pride,  
 She may her bitter knowledge hide ;  
 And, whilst she accepts love's make-believe,  
 You'll twice despise what you'd deceive.

For your sake I am glad to hear  
 You sail so soon. I send you, Dear,  
 A trifling present ; 'twill supply  
 Your Salisbury costs. You have to buy  
 Almost an outfit for this cruise !  
 But many are good enough to use  
 Again, among the things you send  
 To give away. My Maid shall mend

And let you have them back. Adieu!

Tell me of all you are and do.

I know, thank God, whate'er it be,

'Twill need no veil 'twixt you and me.

III.

Frederick to his Mother.



FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

**T**HE multitude of voices blythe  
Of early day, the hissing scythe  
Athwart the dew drawn and withdrawn,  
The noisy peacock on the lawn,  
These, and the sun's eye-gladling gleam,  
This morning, chased the sweetest dream  
That e'er shed penitential grace  
On life's forgetful commonplace ;  
Yet 'twas no sweeter than the spell  
To which I woke to say farewell.

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

No more of this ! Dear mother, please  
To send my books to Plymouth. These,  
When I go hence, shall turn all hours  
To profit, and amend my powers.  
I've time on board to fill my post,  
And yet make up for schooling lost  
Through young sea-service. They all speak  
German and French ; and these, with Greek,  
Which Doctor Churchill thought I knew,  
And History, which I'm ill in too,  
Will stop a gap I somewhat dread,  
After the happy life I've led  
Among my Cousins ; and 'twill be  
To abridge the space from them to me.

Yonder the sullen vessel rides  
Where my obscure condition hides.  
Waves scud to shore against the wind,  
That flings the sprinkling surf behind ;  
In port the bickering pennons show  
Which way the ships would gladly go ;

Through Edgecumbe Park the rooted trees  
 Are tossing, reckless, in the breeze ;  
 On top of Edgecumbe's firm-set tower,  
 As foils, not foibles, of its power,  
 The light vanes do themselves adjust  
 To every veering of the gust !  
 By me alone may nought be given  
 To guidance of the airs of heaven ?  
 In battle or peace, in calm or storm,  
 Should I my daily task perform,  
 (Better a thousand times for love,)  
 Who should my secret soul reprove !  
     Mother, I've striven to conceal,  
 Yes, from myself, how much I feel ;  
 In vain. With tears my sight is dull,  
 My Cousin makes my heart so full.  
 Her happy beauty makes a man  
 Long to lay down his life ! How can  
 Aught to itself seem thus enough,  
 When I have so much need thereof !



Blest is her place ! blissful is she ;  
And I, departing, seem to be  
Like the strange waif that comes to run  
A few days flaming near the sun,  
And carries back, through boundless night  
Its lessening memory of light.  
Oh, my dear Mother, I confess  
To a weak grief of homelessness,  
Unfelt, save once, before. 'Tis years  
Since such a shower of girlish tears  
Disgraced me ! But this wretched Inn,  
At Plymouth, is so full of din,  
Talkings and trampings to and fro.  
And then my ship, to which I go,  
To-night, is no more home. I dread,  
As strange, the life I long have led :  
And as, when first I went to school  
And found the horror of a rule,  
Which only ask'd to be obey'd,  
I lay and wept, of dawn afraid,

And thought, with bursting heart, of one  
Who, from her little, wayward son,  
Required obedience, but above  
Obedience still regarded love,  
So change I that enchanting place,  
The abode of innocence and grace  
And gaiety without reproof,  
For the black gun-deck's lowering roof,  
Blind and inevitable law,  
Which makes light duties burdens, awe  
Which is not reverence, laughters gain'd  
At cost of purities profaned,  
And whatsoever most may stir  
Remorseful passion towards her,  
Whom to behold is to depart  
From all defect of life and heart.

By her instructed what may be  
The joy of true society,  
Frightful is solitude; yet 'tis,  
Compared with such infestment, bliss.

But, Mother, I shall go on shore,  
And see my Cousin yet once more !  
'Twere wild to hope for her, you say.  
I've torn and cast those words away.  
Surely there's hope ! For life 'tis well  
Love without hope's impossible ;  
So, if I love, it is that hope  
Is not outside the outer scope  
Of fancy. You speak truth : this hour,  
I must resist, or lose the power.  
What ! and, when some short months are o'er,  
Be not much other than before ?  
Decline the high, harmonious sphere  
In which I'm held, but while she's dear ?  
In unrespective peace forget  
Those eyes for which my own are wet  
With that delicious, fruitful dew  
Which, check'd, will never flow anew ?  
For daily life's dull, senseless mood,  
Slay the sharp nerves of gratitude

And sweet allegiance, which I owe,  
Whether she cares for me or no ?  
Nay, Mother, I, forewarn'd, prefer  
To want for all in wanting her.

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

IV.

Frederick to his Mother.



FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

**F**ASHION'D by Heaven and by art  
So is she, that she makes the heart  
Ache and o'erflow with tears, that grace  
So wonderful should have for place  
The unworthy earth ! To see her smile,  
As ignorant of her hap the while,  
And walk this howling waste of sin,  
As only knowing the heaven within,  
Is sweet, and does for pity stir  
Passion to be her minister ;

Wherefore last night I lay awake,  
 And said, " Ah, Lord, for thy love's sake,  
 Give not this darling child of thine  
 To care less reverent than mine !"  
 And, as true faith was in my word,  
 I trust, I trust that I was heard.

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



And crisis of the coming hour,  
 Did hope itself draw sudden power.  
 So the hot-brooding storm, in Spring,  
 Makes all the birds begin to sing.

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

While thus I raved, and cast in hope  
 A superstitious horoscope,  
 I reach'd the Dean's. The woman said,  
 "Miss Churchill's out." "Had she been dead,"  
 I cried, "'twere much the same to me,  
 "Who go, this very night, to sea."  
 "Nay, sir, she's only gone to prayer ;  
 "And here she comes, across the Square."  
 (O, but to be the unbanished sod  
 She daily treads, all bright from God !)

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

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

With nought to do, and fondly fain  
 To hear her singing once again,  
 I stay'd, and turn'd her music o'er ;  
 Then came she with me to the door.  
 " Dearest Honoria," I said,  
 (By my despair familiar made,)

"Heaven bless you!" Oh, to have back thenstepp'd,  
 And fall'n upon her neck, and wept,  
 And said, " My friend, I owe you all  
 " I am, and have, and hope for. Call  
 " For some poor service ; let me prove  
 " To you, or him here whom you love,  
 " My duty. Any solemn task,  
 " For life's whole course, is all I ask !"  
 Then she must surely have wept too,  
 And said, " My friend, what can you do !"  
 And I should have replied, " I'll pray  
 " For you and him three times a-day,  
 " And, all day, morning, noon, and night,  
 " My life shall be so high and right  
 " That never Saint yet scaled the stairs  
 " Of heaven with more availing prayers !"  
 But this, (and, as good God shall bless  
 Somehow my end, I'll do no less,)  
 I had no right to speak. Oh, shame,  
 So rich a love, so poor a claim !

My Mother, now my only friend,  
Farewell. The school-books which you send  
I shall not want, and so return.  
Give them away, or sell, or burn.  
Address to Malta. Would I might  
But be your little Child to-night,  
And feel your arms about me fold,  
Against this loneliness and cold!

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V.

Mrs. Graham to Frederick.





MRS. GRAHAM TO FREDERICK.

**M**Y own dear Child, Honoria's choice  
Shows what she is, and I rejoice  
You did not win her. Felix Vaughan  
Preferr'd to you? My faith is gone  
In her fine sense! And, thus, you see  
You were too good for her! Ah, me,  
The folly of these girls: they doff  
Their pride to sleek success, and scoff  
At far more noble fire and might  
That woo them from the dust of fight!

But now, Dear, since the storm is past,  
 Your sky should not remain o'ercast.  
 A sea-life's dull, and, so, beware  
 Of nourishing, for zest, despair.  
 Remember, Frederick, this makes twice  
 You've been in love ; then why not thrice,  
 Or ten times ? But a wise man shuns  
 To say " All's over," more than once.  
 Religion, duty, books, work, friends,  
 Are anodynes, if not amends.  
 I'll not urge that a young man's soul  
 Is scarce the measure of the whole  
 Earthly and heavenly universe,  
 To which he inveterately prefers  
 The one beloved woman. Best  
 Speak to the senses' interest,  
 Which brooks no mystery nor delay :  
 Frankly reflect, my Son, and say,  
 Was there no secret hour, of those  
 Pass'd at her side in Sarum Close,

When, to your spirit's sick alarm,  
 It seem'd that all her marvellous charm  
 Was marvellously fled? The cause  
 'Tis like you sought not. This it was :  
 It happen'd, for that hour, her grace  
 Of voice, adornment, posture, face  
 Was what already heart and eye  
 Had ponder'd to satiety ;  
 And so the good of life was o'er,  
 Until some laugh not heard before,  
 Some novel fashion in her hair,  
 Or style of putting back her chair,  
 Restored the heavens. Gather thence  
 The loss-consoling inference !

I blame not beauty. It beguiles,  
 With lovely motions and sweet smiles,  
 Which while they please us pass away,  
 The spirit to lofty thoughts that stay,  
 And lift the whole of after-life,  
 Unless you take the thing to wife,

Which then seems nought, or serves to slake  
Desire, as when a lovely lake  
Far off scarce fills the exulting eye  
Of one athirst, who comes thereby,  
And inappreciably sips  
The deep, with disappointed lips.  
To fail is sorrow, yet confess  
That love pays dearly for success !  
I blame not beauty, but complain  
Of the heart, which can so ill sustain  
Delight. Our griefs declare our Fall,  
But how much more our joys ! They pall  
With plucking, and celestial mirth  
Can find no footing on the earth,  
More than the bird of paradise,  
Which only lives the while it flies.

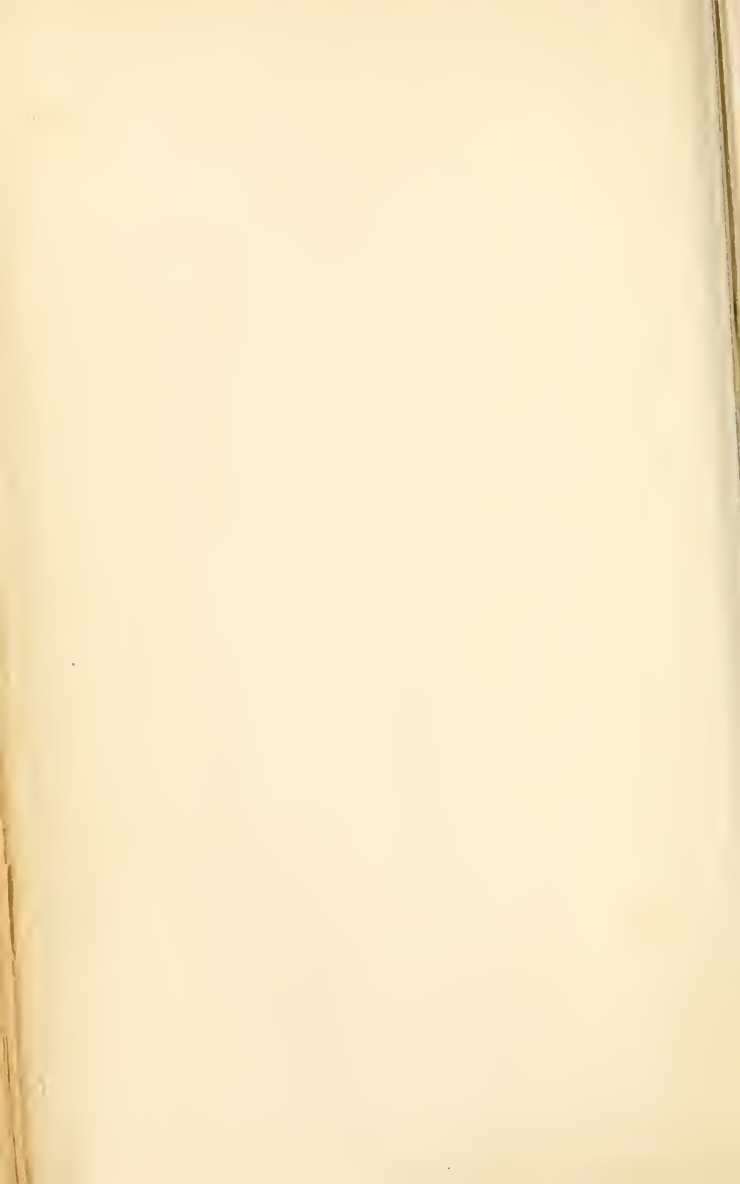
Think, also, how 'twould suit your pride  
To have this woman for a bride.  
Whate'er her faults, she's one of those  
To whom the world's last polish owes

A further grace, which all who aspire  
To courtliest custom must acquire.  
The world's her duty and her sphere ;  
But you have still been lonely, Dear.  
(Oh, law perverse, that loneliness  
Breeds love, society success !)  
Though young, 'twere now o'er late in life  
To train yourself for such a wife ;  
So she would fit herself to you,  
As women, when they marry, do.  
For, since 'tis for their dignity  
Their lords should sit like lords on high,  
They willingly deteriorate  
To a step below their rulers' state ;  
And 'tis the commonest of things  
To see an angel, gay with wings,  
Lean weakly on a mortal's arm.  
Honorina would put off the charm  
Of cultured grace that caught your love,  
For fear you should not seem above

Herself in fashion and degree,  
As in true merit. Thus, you see,  
'Twere little kindness, wisdom none,  
To light your barn with such a sun.

VI.

Frederick to his Mother.





FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

**D**EAR Mother, do not write her name  
With the least word or hint of blame.

Who else shall discommend her choice,

I giving it my hearty voice ?

She marry me ? I loved too well

To think it good or possible.

Ah, never near her beauties come

The business of the narrow home !

Far fly from her dear face, that shows

The sunshine lovelier than the rose,

The sordid gravity they wear  
Who poverty's base burthen bear !  
(And they are poor who come to miss  
Their custom, though a crown be this.)  
My hope was, that the wheels of fate,  
For my exceeding need, might wait,  
And she, unseen amidst all eyes,  
Move sightless, till I sought the prize,  
With honour, in an equal field.  
But then came Vaughan, to whom I yield  
With grace as much as any man,  
In such cause, to another can.  
Had she been mine, it seems to me  
That I had that integrity  
And only joy in her delight—  
But each is his own favourite  
In love ! The thought to bring me rest  
Is that of us she takes the best.  
'Twas but to see him to be sure  
That choice for her remain'd no more !

His brow, so gaily clear of craft ;  
His wit, the timely truth that laugh'd  
To find itself so well express'd ;  
His words, abundant yet the best ;  
His spirit, of such handsome show  
You saw not that his looks were so ;  
His bearing, prospects, birth, all these  
Might well, with small suit, greatly please ;  
How greatly, when she saw arise  
The reflex sweetness of her eyes  
In his, and every breath defer  
Humbly its bated life to her ;  
Whilst power and kindness of command,  
Which women can no more withstand  
Than we their grace, were still unquell'd,  
And force and flattery both compell'd  
Her softness ! Say I'm worthy. I  
Grew, in her presence, cold and shy.  
It awed me, as an angel's might  
In raiment of reproachful light.

Her gay looks told my sombre mood  
 That what's not happy is not good ;  
 And, just because 'twas life to please,  
 Death to repel her, truth and ease  
 Deserted me ; I strove to talk,  
 And stammer'd foolishness ; my walk  
 Was like a drunkard's ; once she took  
 My arm ; it stiffen'd, ached, and shook ;  
 I guess'd her thought, and could have dropp'd ;  
 The streams of life within me stopp'd.  
 A likely wooer ! Blame her not ;  
 Nor ever say, dear Mother, aught  
 Against that perfectness which is  
 My strength, as once it was my bliss.

Nor let us chafe at social rules.  
 Leave that to poets and to fools.  
 Clay grafts and clods conceive the rose,  
 So base still fathers best. Life owes  
 Itself to bread ; enough thereof  
 And easy days condition love ;

And, highly train'd, love's roses thrive,  
 No more pale, scentless petals five,  
 Which moisten the considerate eye  
 To see what haste they make to die,  
 But heavens of brightness and perfume,  
 Which, month by month, renew the bloom  
 Of art-born graces, when the year  
 In all the natural grove is sere.

Thank God, I partly can descry  
 The meaning of humanity !  
 In sight of him who sees it float  
 As many an isolated mote  
 In accidental light or dark,  
 And wants the instructed sense to mark  
 Its method, and the ear to hear  
 The moving music of its sphere,  
 What wonder if his private loss  
 Seem an intolerable cross,  
 Not to be suffer'd, in mere awe  
 Of what he calls the world's cold law.

But he who once, with joy of soul,  
 Has had the vision of the whole,  
 Though to the wringing of his heart,  
 Will never more prefer the part.  
 Blame none, then ! Bright let be the air  
 About my lonely cloud of care.

“ Religion, duty, books, work, friends :”  
 ’Tis good advice, but there it ends.  
 I’m sick for what they have not got.  
 Send no more books ; they help me not.  
 I’m hurt, and find no salve for that  
 In gospels of the cricket-bat  
 Or anvil ; and, for zoophytes,  
 And algæ, and Italian rights,  
 Myself and every soul I see  
 Are nearer, dearer mystery,  
 And subject to my proper will,  
 To some extent, for good or ill.  
 And, as for work, Mother, I find  
 The life of man is in his mind,

(Though, trust the strains the fashion strums,  
 It seems 'tis rather in his thumbs !)  
 To work is well, nay, labour is,  
 They say, the bread of souls. If 'tis,  
 We do not worship corn and yeast ;  
 Indeed, they scarcely make a feast !  
 Bread's needful, but the rule stands so  
 That needful most is oft most low.  
 I act my calling, yet there's still  
 A void which duty cannot fill.  
 What though the inaugural hour of right  
 Comes ever with a keen delight !  
 Little relieves the labour's heat,  
 Or crowns the labour when complete ;  
 And life, in fact, is not less dull  
 For being very dutiful.  
 "The stately homes of England," lo,  
 "How beautiful they stand !" They owe  
 How much to me and such as me  
 Their beauty of security !

But who can long a low work mend  
 By looking to a lofty end ?  
 And let me, since 'tis truth, confess  
 The want's not fill'd by godliness.  
 God is a tower without a stair,  
 And His perfection love's despair.  
 'Tis He shall judge me when I die ;  
 He suckles with the hissing fly  
 The spider ; gazes patient down,  
 Whilst rapine grips the helpless town.  
 His vast love holds all this and more.  
 In consternation I adore !  
 Nor can I ease this aching gulf  
 With friends, the pictures of myself.  
     Then marvel not that I recur  
 From each and all of these to her.  
 For more of heaven than her have I  
 No sensitive capacity.  
 Had I but her, ah, what the gain  
 Of owning aught but that domain !



Nay, heaven's extent, however much,  
Cannot be more than many such ;  
And, she being mine, should God to me  
Say " Lo ! my Child, I give to thee  
All heaven besides," what could I then,  
But, as a child, to Him complain  
That, whereas my dear Father gave  
A little space for me to have  
In his great garden, now, o'erblest,  
I've that, indeed, but all the rest,  
Which, somehow, makes it seem I've got  
All but my only cared-for plot.  
Enough was that for my weak hand  
To tend, my heart to understand.

Oh, the sick thought, 'twixt her and me  
There's nothing, and the weary sea !



VII.

Frederick to his Mother.



FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

**M**OTHER, in scarcely two hours more  
I set my foot on English shore,  
Two years untrod ! and, strange to tell,  
Nigh miss'd, through last night's storm. There fell  
A man from the shrouds, that roar'd to quench  
Even the billows' blast and drench.  
None else but me was by to mark  
His loud cry in the louder dark,  
Dark, save when lightning show'd the deeps  
Standing about in stony heaps.

No time for choice ! A fortunate flash  
 Flamed as he rose ; a dizzy splash,  
 A strange, inopportune delight  
 Of mounting with the billowy might,  
 And falling, with a thrill again  
 Of pleasure shot from feet to brain,  
 And both paced deck, ere any knew  
 Our peril. Round us press'd the crew.  
 " Your duty was to let him drown,"  
 The Captain said, and feign'd a frown ;  
 But wonder fill'd the eyes of most.  
 As if the man who had loved and lost  
 Honoria dared no more than that !

My days have else been stale and flat.  
 This life's, at best, if justly scann'd,  
 A tedious walk by the other's strand,  
 With, here and there cast up, a piece  
 Of coral or of ambergris,  
 Which boasted of abroad, we ignore  
 The burthen of the barren shore.

Often might I my letters fill  
With how the nerves refuse to thrill ;  
How, throughout doubly-darken'd days,  
I cannot recollect her face ;  
How to my heart her name to tell  
Is beating on a broken bell ;  
And, to fill up the abhorrent gulf,  
Scarce loving her, I hate myself.

Yet, latterly, with strange delight,  
Rich tides have risen in the night,  
And sweet dreams chased the faneies dense  
Of waking life's dull somnolence.  
I see her as I knew her, grace  
Already glory in her faee ;  
I move about, I cannot rest,  
For the proud brain and joyful breast  
I have of her. Or else I float  
The pilot of an idle boat,  
Alone with sun, and sky, and sea,  
And her, the fourth simplicity.

Or Mildred, to some question, cries,  
(Her merry mischief in her eyes),  
“The Ball, oh, Frederick will go ;  
“Honorina will be there !” and, lo,  
As moisture sweet my seeing blurs  
To hear my name so link’d with hers,  
A mirror joins, by guilty chance,  
Either’s averted, watchful glance !  
Or with me, in the Ball-Room’s blaze,  
Her brilliant mildness thrids the maze ;  
Our thoughts are lovely, and each word  
Is music in the music heard,  
And all things seem but parts to be  
Of one persistent harmony,  
By which I’m made divinely bold ;  
The secret, which she knows, is told ;  
And, laughing with a lofty bliss  
Of innocent accord, we kiss ;  
About her neck my pleasure weeps ;  
Against my lip the silk vein leaps ;



Then says an Angel, " Day or night,  
 " If yours you seek, not her delight,  
 " Although by some strange witchery  
 " It seems you kiss her, 'tis not she ;  
 " But whilst you languish at the side  
 " Of a fair-foul phantasmal bride,  
 " Surely a dragon and strong tower  
 " Guard the true lady in her bower."  
 And I say, " Dear my Lord, Amen !"  
 And the true lady kiss again.  
 Or else some wasteful malady  
 Devours her shape and dims her eye ;  
 No charms are left, where all were rife,  
 Except her voice, which is her life,  
 Wherewith she, for her foolish fear,  
 Says trembling, " Do you love me, Dear ?"  
 And I reply, " Ah, Sweet, I vow  
 " I never loved but half till now."  
 She turns her face to the wall at this,  
 And says, " Go, Love, 'tis too much bliss."

And then a sudden pulse is sent  
 About the sounding firmament  
 In smittings as of silver bars ;  
 The bright disorder of the stars  
 Is solved by music ; far and near,  
 Through infinite distinctions clear,  
 Their two-fold voices' deeper tone  
 Thunders the Name which all things own,  
 And each ecstatic treble dwells  
 On one whereof none other tells ;  
 And we, sublimed to song and fire,  
 Take order in the wheeling quire,  
 Till from the throbbing sphere I start,  
 Waked by the beating of my heart.

Such dreams as these come night by night,  
 Disturbing day with their delight.  
 Portend they nothing ? Who can tell !  
 God yet may do some miracle.  
 'Tis now two years, and she's not wed,  
 Or you would know ! He may be dead,

Or mad and wooing some one else,  
 And she, much moved that nothing quells  
 My constancy, or, merely wroth  
 With such a wretch, accept my troth  
 'To spite him ; or her beauty's gone,  
 (And that's my dream!) and this vile Vaughan  
 Takes her release ; or tongues malign,  
 Convincing all men's ears but mine,  
 Have smirch'd her : ah, 'twould move her, sure,  
 To find I only worshipp'd more !  
 Nay, now I think, haply amiss  
 I read her words and looks, and his,  
 That night ! Did not his jealousy  
 Show—Good my God, and can it be  
 That I, a modest fool, all blest,  
 Nothing of such a heaven guess'd ?  
 Oh, chance too frail, yet frantic sweet.  
 To-morrow sees me at her feet !

Yonder, at last, the glad sea roars  
 Along the sacred English shores !

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

*Postscript.* Since this was penn'd, I read  
 That " Mr. Vaughan, on Tuesday, wed  
 " The beautiful Miss Churchill." So  
 That's over ; and to-morrow I go  
 To take up my new post on board  
 The Wolf, my peace at last restored,

For all the showering tears that soak  
This paper. Grief is now the cloak  
I fold about me to prevent  
The deadly chill of a content  
With any near or distant good,  
Except the exact beatitude  
Which love has shown to my desire.  
You'll point to other joys and higher.  
I hate and disavow all bliss  
As none for me which is not this.  
Think not I blasphemously cope  
With God's decrees, and cast off hope.  
How, when, and where can mine succeed ?  
I'll trust He knows who made my need !



VIII.

Frederick to his Mother.





FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

**I** THOUGHT the worst had brought me balm,  
'Twas but the tempest's central calm.

Vague sinkings of the heart aver  
That dreadful wrong has come to her,  
And o'er this whim I brood and doat,  
And learn its agonies by rote.  
As if I loved it, early and late  
I make familiar with my fate,  
And feed, with fascinated will,  
On very dregs of finish'd ill.

I think, she's near him now, alone,  
 With wardship and protection none ;  
 Alone, perhaps, in the hindering stress  
 Of airs that clasp him with her dress,  
 They wander whispering by the wave ;  
 And haply now, in some sea-cave  
 Where the salt sand is rarely trod,  
 They laugh, they kiss. Oh, God ! oh, God !

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

Thus, all day long till frightful night  
I fear she's harm'd by his delight,  
And when I lay me down at even  
'Tis Hades lit with neighbouring Heaven.  
There comes a smile acutely sweet  
Out of the picturing dark ; I meet  
The ancient frankness of her gaze,  
That simple, bold, and living blaze  
Of great goodwill and innocence,  
And perfect joy proceeding thence !  
Ah ! made for Earth's delight, yet such  
The mid-sea air's too gross to touch.  
At thought of which, the soul in me  
Is as the bird that bites a bee,  
And darts abroad on frantic wing,  
Tasting the honey and the sting ;  
And, moaning where all round me sleep  
Amidst the moaning of the deep,  
I start at midnight from my bed—  
And have no right to strike him dead.

What world is this that I am in,  
 Where chance turns sanctity to sin !  
 'Tis crime henceforward to desire  
 The only good, the sacred fire  
 Of all the universe is hell !  
 I hear a Voice that argues well :  
 “ The Heaven hard has scorn'd your cry ;  
 “ Fall down and worship me, and I  
 “ Will give you peace ; go and profane  
 “ This pangful love, so pure, so vain,  
 “ And thereby win forgetfulness  
 “ And pardon of the spirit's excess,  
 “ Which soar'd too nigh that jealous Heaven  
 “ Ever, save thus, to be forgiven.  
 “ No Gospel has come down that cures  
 “ With better gain a loss like yours.  
 “ Be pious ! Give the beggar pelf,  
 “ And love your neighbour as yourself !  
 “ You, who yet love, though all is o'er,  
 “ And she'll ne'er be your neighbour more,

" With soul which can in pity smile  
 " That aught with such a measure vile  
 " As self should be at all named 'love !'  
 " Your sanctity the priests reprove,  
 " Your ease of grief they wholly miss.  
 " The Man of Sorrows names not this !  
 " 'The years,' they say, 'graft love divine  
 " 'On the lopp'd stock of love like thine,  
 " 'The wild tree dies not, but converts.'  
 " So be it ; but the lopping hurts,  
 " The graff takes tardily ! Men stanch  
 " Meantime with earth the bleeding branch.  
 " There's nothing heals one woman's loss,  
 " And lightens life's eternal cross  
 " With intermission of sound rest,  
 " Like lying in another's breast.  
 " The cure is, to your thinking, low !  
 " Is not life all, henceforward, so ?"

Ill Voice, at least thou calm'st my mood ;  
 I'll sleep ! But, as I thus conclude,

The intrusions of her grace dispel

The comfortable glooms of hell.

A wonder ! Ere these lines were dried,  
 Vaughan and my Love, his ten-days' Bride,  
 Became my guests. I look'd, and, lo,  
 In beauty soft as is the snow  
 And powerful as the avalanche,  
 She lit the deck. The Heav'n-sent chance !  
 She smiled, surprised. They came to see  
 The ship, not thinking to meet me.  
 At infinite distance she's my day !  
 What then to him ? Howbeit they say  
 'Tis not so sunny in the sun  
 But men might live cool lives thereon !

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

Though more than ever I admire,  
Removes her out of my desire.

They bade adieu ; I saw them go  
Across the sea ; and now I know  
The ultimate hope I rested on,  
The hope beyond the grave, is gone,  
The hope that, in the heavens high,  
At last it should appear that I  
Loved most, and so, by claim divine,  
Should have her, in the heavens, for mine,  
According to such nuptial sort  
As may subsist in the holy court,  
Where, if there are all kinds of joys  
To exhaust the multitude of choice  
In many mansions, then there are  
Loves personal and particular,  
Conspicuous in the glorious sky  
Of universal charity,  
As Hesper in the sunrise. Now  
I've seen them, I believe their vow

Immortal ; and the dreadful thought,  
 That he less honour'd than he ought  
 Her sanctity, is laid to rest,  
 And, blessing them, I too am blest.  
 My goodwill, as a springing air,  
 Unclouds a beauty in despair ;  
 I stand beneath the sky's pure cope  
 Unburthen'd even by a hope ;  
 And peace unspeakable, a joy  
 Which hope would deaden and destroy,  
 Like sunshine fills the airy gulf  
 Left by the vanishing of self.  
 That I have known her ; that she moves  
 Somewhere all-graceful ; that she loves,  
 And is belov'd, and that she's so  
 Most happy ; and to heaven will go,  
 Where I may meet with her, (yet this  
 I count but adventitious bliss,)  
 And that the full, celestial weal  
 Of all shall sensitively feel



The partnership and work of each,  
And, thus, my love and labour reach  
Her region, there the more to bless  
Her last, consummate happiness,  
Is guerdon up to the degree  
Of that alone true loyalty  
Which, sacrificing, is not nice  
About the terms of sacrifice,  
But offers all, with smiles that say,  
'Twere nothing if 'twere not for aye !



BOOK II.



JANE.



I.

Mrs. Graham to Frederick.



MRS. GRAHAM TO FREDERICK.

**I** WEEP for your great grief, dear Boy,  
And not less for your lofty joy.  
You wanted her, my Son, for wife,  
With the fierce need of life in life !  
That nobler passion of an hour  
Was rather prophecy than power ;  
And nature, from such stress unbent,  
Rekurs to deep discouragement.  
Trust not such peace yet ; easy breath,  
In hot diseases, argues death ;

And tastelessness within the mouth  
Worse fever shows than heat or drouth.  
Wherefore take timely warning, Dear,  
Against a novel danger near.  
Beware lest that "ill Voice" once more  
Should plead, not vainly as before.  
Wed not one woman, oh, my Son,  
Because you love another one !  
Oft, with a disappointed man,  
The first who cares to win him can ;  
For, after love's heroic strain,  
Which tired the heart and brought no gain,  
He feels consoled, relieved, and eased  
To meet with her who can be pleased  
To proffer kindness, and compute  
His acquiescence for pursuit ;  
Who troubles not his lonely mood ;  
Asks nought for love but gratitude ;  
And, as it were, will let him weep  
Himself within her arms to sleep.



Ah, desperate folly ! (Though, we know,  
Who wed through love wed mostly so.)

Before all else, when wed you do,  
See that the woman equals you,  
Nor rush, from having loved too high,  
Into a worse humility.

Whose Child, whose *Cousin* are you ? Wait  
Until this blast shall well abate !  
Though love may seem to have wreck'd your life,  
Look to the salvage ; take no wife  
Who to your stooping feels she owes  
Her name ; such debts make bosom-foes.

A poor estate's a foolish plea  
For marrying to a base degree.

A gentlewoman's twice as cheap,  
As well as pleasanter, to keep.

Nor think grown women can be train'd,  
Or, if they could, that much were gain'd ;  
For never was a man's heart caught  
By graces he himself had taught.

And fancy not 'tis in the might  
 Of man to do without delight ;  
 For should you in her nothing find  
 To exhilarate the higher mind,  
 Your soul will clog its useless wings  
 With wickedness of lawful things,  
 And vampire pleasure swift destroy  
 Even the memory of joy.

So let no man, in desperate mood,  
 Wed a dull girl because she's good.  
 All virtues in his wife soon dim,  
 Except the power of pleasing him,  
 Which may small virtue be, or none!

I know, my just and tender Son,  
 To whom the dangerous grace is given  
 That scorns a good which is not heaven ;  
 My Child, who used to sit and sigh  
 Under the bright, ideal sky,  
 And pass, to spare the farmer's wheat,  
 The poppy and the meadow-sweet !

He would not let his wife's heart ache  
 For what was mainly his mistake ;  
 But, having err'd so, all his force  
 Would fix upon the hard right course.

I see you with a vulgar wife !  
 Or one absorb'd in *future* life,  
 And in this transitory place  
 Contented with the *means* of grace ;  
 Uncultured, say, yet good and true,  
 And therefore inward fair, and, through  
 The veils which inward beauty swathe,  
 All lovely to the eye of faith !  
 Ah, that's soon fagg'd ; faith falls away,  
 Without the ceremonial stay  
 Of outward loveliness and awe.  
 The weightier matters of the law  
 She pays ; mere mint and cummin not ;  
 And, in the road that she was taught,  
 She treads, and takes for granted still  
 Nature's immedicable ill ;

So never wears within her eyes  
 A false report of paradise,  
 Nor ever modulates her mirth  
 With vain compassion of the earth,  
 Which made a certain happier face  
 Affecting, and a gayer grace  
 With pathos delicately edged !  
 Yet, though she be not privileged  
 To unlock for you your heart's delight,  
 (Her keys being gold, but not the right,)  
 On lower levels she may do !  
 Her joy is more in loving you  
 Than being loved, and she commands  
 All tenderness she understands.  
 It is but when you proffer more  
 The yoke weighs heavy and chafes sore.  
 It's weary work enforcing love  
 On one who has enough thereof,  
 And honour on the lowlihead  
 Of ignorance ! Besides, you dread,

In Leah's arms, to meet the eyes  
 Of Rachel somewhere in the skies,  
 And both return, alike relieved,  
 To life less loftily conceived.

Alas, alas !

Then wait the mood  
 In which a woman may be woo'd  
 Whose thoughts and habits are too high  
 For honour to be flattery ;  
 And such would surely not allow  
 The suit that you could proffer now.  
 Her equal yoke would sit with ease ;  
 It might, with wearing, even please,  
 (Not with a better word to move  
 The indignant loyalty of love !)  
 She would not mope when you were gay,  
 For want of knowing aught to say ;  
 Nor vex you with unhandsome waste  
 Of thoughts ill-timed and words ill-  
 placed ;

Nor hold small things for duties small,  
 (This brands ill-breeding most of all,)

But, gilding uses with delight,  
 And comprehending nature right,  
 Would mend or veil each weaker part  
 With some sweet supplement of art.

Nor would she bring you up a brood  
 Of strangers bound to you by blood,  
 Boys of a meaner moral race,  
 Girls with their mother's evil grace,  
 But not her right to sometimes find  
 Her critic past his judgment kind ;  
 Nor, unaccustom'd to respect,  
 Which men, where 'tis not claim'd, neglect,  
 Confirm you selfish and morose,  
 And slowly by contagion gross ;  
 But, glad and able to receive  
 The honour you would long to give,  
 Would hasten on to justify  
 Your hope of her, however high,

Whilst you would happily incur  
Compulsion to keep up with her.

Past price is such a woman, yet  
Not rare, nor hard for *you* to get ;  
And such, in marrying, yields so much  
It could not less than greatly touch  
The heart of him who call'd her Bride,  
With tenderness, and manly pride,  
And soft, protective, fond regard,  
And thoughts to make no duty hard.

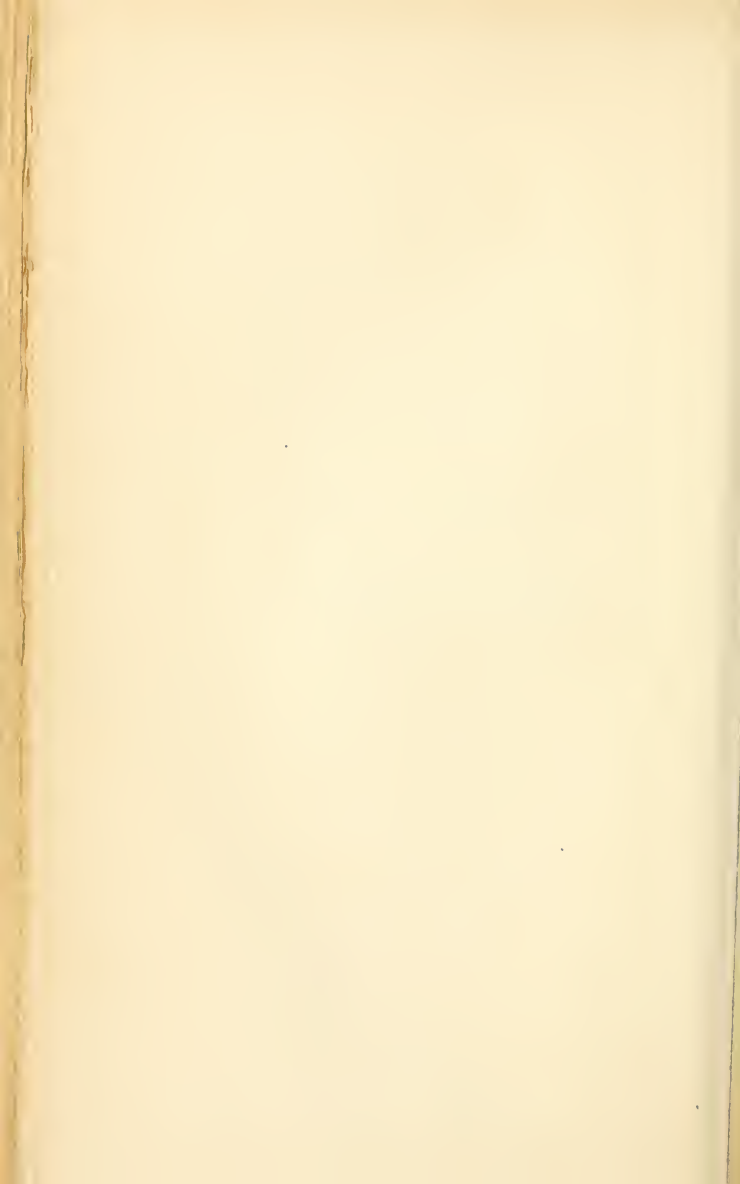
Your love was wild, (but none the less  
Praise be to love, whose wild excess  
Reveals the honour and the height  
Of life, and the supreme delight  
In store for all but him who lies  
Content in mediocrities !)  
To wed with one less loved may be  
Part of divine expediency.  
Many men cannot love ; more yet  
Cannot love such as they can get,

Who still should marry, and do, and find  
Comfort of heart and peace of mind  
More than when love-sick spirits dull  
The force of manhood masterful,  
Which woman's softnesses require,  
And women ever most admire.



II.

Frederick to his Mother.



FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

**Y**OUR letter, Mother, bears the date  
Of six months back, and comes too late.  
My Love, past all conceiving lost,  
A change seem'd good, at any cost,  
From lonely, stupid, silent grief,  
Vain, objectless, beyond relief,  
And like a sea-fog settled dense  
On fancy, feeling, thought, and sense.  
I grew so idle, so despised  
Myself, my powers, by her unprized ;

Honouring my post, but nothing more ;  
And lying, when I lived on shore,  
So late of mornings ; sharp tears stream'd  
For such slight cause,—if only gleam'd,  
Remotely, sorrowfully bright,  
On clouded eyes at sea, the light  
Of English headlands in the sun,—  
That soon I deem'd 'twere better done  
To lay this poor, complaining wraith  
Of unreciprocated faith ;  
And so, with heart still bleeding quick,  
But strengthen'd by the comfort sick  
Of knowing that *she* could not care,  
I turn'd my back on my despair ;  
And told our chaplain's daughter, Jane,—  
A dear, good Girl, who saw my pain,  
And spoke as if she pitied me,—  
How glad and thankful I should be  
If some kind woman, not above  
Myself in rank, would give her love

To one that knew not how to woo.  
 Whereat she, without more ado,  
 Blush'd, spoke of love return'd, and closed  
 With what I meant to have proposed.

And, trust me, Mother, I and Jane  
 Suit one another well. My gain  
 Is very great in this good wife,  
 To whom I'm bound, for natural life,  
 By hearty faith, yet crossing not  
 My faith towards—I know not what!  
 As to the ether is the air,  
 Is her good to Honoria's fair;  
 One place is full of both, yet each  
 Lies quite beyond the other's reach  
 And recognition. Star and star,  
 Rays crossing, closer rivals are,  
 Sequester'd in their separate spheres.  
 And now, except some casual tears,  
 The old grief lives not. If you say,  
 Am I contented? Yea and nay!

For what's base but content to grow  
 With less good than the best we know ?  
 But think me not from sense withdrawn  
 By passion for a hope that's gone,  
 So far as to forget how much  
 A woman is, as merely such,  
 To man's affection. What is best,  
 In each, belongs to all the rest ;  
 And though, in marriage, quite to kiss  
 And half to love the custom is,  
 'Tis such dishonour, ruin bare,  
 The soul's interior despair,  
 And life between two troubles toss'd,  
 To me, who think not with the most ;  
 Whatever 'twould have been before  
 My Cousin's time, 'tis now so sore  
 A treason to the abiding throne  
 Of that sweet love which I have known,  
 I cannot live so, and I bend  
 My mind perforce to comprehend

That He who gives command to love  
 Does not require a thing above  
 The strength he gives. The highest degree  
 Of the hardest grace, humility ;  
 The step t'wards heaven the latest trod,  
 And that which makes us most like God,  
 And us much more than God behoves,  
 Is, to be humble in our loves. .  
 Henceforth for ever therefore I  
 Renounce all partiality  
 Of passion. Subject to control  
 Of that perspective of the soul  
 Which God Himself pronounces good,  
 Confirming claims of neighbourhood,  
 And giving man, for earthly life,  
 The closest neighbour in a wife,  
 I'll serve all. Jane be much more dear  
 Than others as she's much more near !  
 Is one unloveable, and would  
 We love him, let us do him good !

How easy, then, the effect to raise  
 Where nought's amiss but homely ways.  
 I love her; love her! Sweet tears come  
 Of this my self-will's martyrdom;  
 And sweet tears are love's test, for love  
 Is nought without the joy thereof.

Yet, not to lie for God, 'tis true  
 That 'twas another joy I knew  
 When freighted was my heart with fire  
 Of fond, irrational desire  
 For fascinating, female charms,  
 And hopeless heaven in two white arms.  
 "There's nothing half so sweet in life,"  
 As the old song says; and I nor wife  
 Nor Heaven affront, if I profess,  
 That care for heaven with me were less  
 But that I'm utterly imbued  
 With faith of all Earth's good renew'd  
 In realms where no short-coming pains  
 Expectance, and dear love disdains



Time's treason, and the gathering dross,  
 And lasts for ever in the gloss  
 Of melting.

All the bright past seems,  
 Now, but a vision in my dreams,  
 Which shows, albeit the dreamer  
 wakes,

The standard of right life. Life aches  
 To be therewith conform'd ; but, oh,  
 The world's so stolid, dark, and low !  
 That and the mortal element  
 Forbid its beautiful intent,  
 And, like the unborn butterfly,  
 It feels the wings, and wants the sky.

But perilous is the lofty mood  
 Which cannot pull with lowly good !  
 Right life, for me, is life that wends  
 By lowly ways to lofty ends.  
 I well perceive, at length, that haste  
 T'wards heaven itself is only waste ;

And thus I dread the impatient spur  
 Of aught that speaks too plain of Her.  
 There's little here that story tells ;  
 But music talks of nothing else.  
 Therefore, when music breathes, I say,  
 (And busier urge my task,) Away !  
 Thou art the voice of one I knew,  
 But what thou say'st is not yet true ;  
 Thou art the voice of her I loved,  
 And I would not be vainly moved.

Thus love, which did from death set free  
 All things, now dons death's mockery,  
 And takes its place with things that are  
 But little noted. Do not mar  
 For me your peace ! My health is high.  
 The proud possession of mine eye  
 Departed, I am much like one  
 Who had by haughty custom grown  
 To think gilt rooms, and spacious grounds,  
 Horses, and carriages, and hounds,

Fine linen, and an eider bed  
 As much his need as daily bread,  
 And honour of men as much or more ;  
 Till, strange misfortune smiting sore,  
 His pride all goes to pay his debts,  
 A lodging anywhere he gets,  
 And takes his wife and child thereto  
 Weeping, and other relics few,  
 Allow'd, by them that seize his pelf,  
 As precious only to himself.  
 But, soon, kind compensations, all  
 Unlook'd for, ease his cruel fall ;  
 The sun still shines ; the country green  
 Has many riches, poorly seen  
 From blazon'd coaches ; grace at meat  
 Goes well with thrift in what they eat ;  
 And there's amends for much bereft  
 In better thanks for much that's left.

For Jane, dear Mother, what at first  
 You'll see in her is all the worst.

I'll say, at once, in outward make,  
She is not fair enough to wake  
The wish for fair. She bears the bell,  
However, where no others dwell ;  
And features somewhat plainly set,  
And homely manners leave her yet  
The crowning boon and most express  
Of Heaven's inventive tenderness,  
A woman. But I do her wrong,  
Letting the world's eyes guide my tongue !  
For, since 'twas for my peace, I've grown  
More learned in my taste, and own  
A sort of handsomeness that pays  
No homage to the hourly gaze,  
And dwells not on the arch'd brow's height  
And lids which softly lodge the light,  
Nor in the pure field of the cheek  
Flowers, though the soul be still to seek ;  
But shows as fits that solemn place  
Whereof the window is the face :

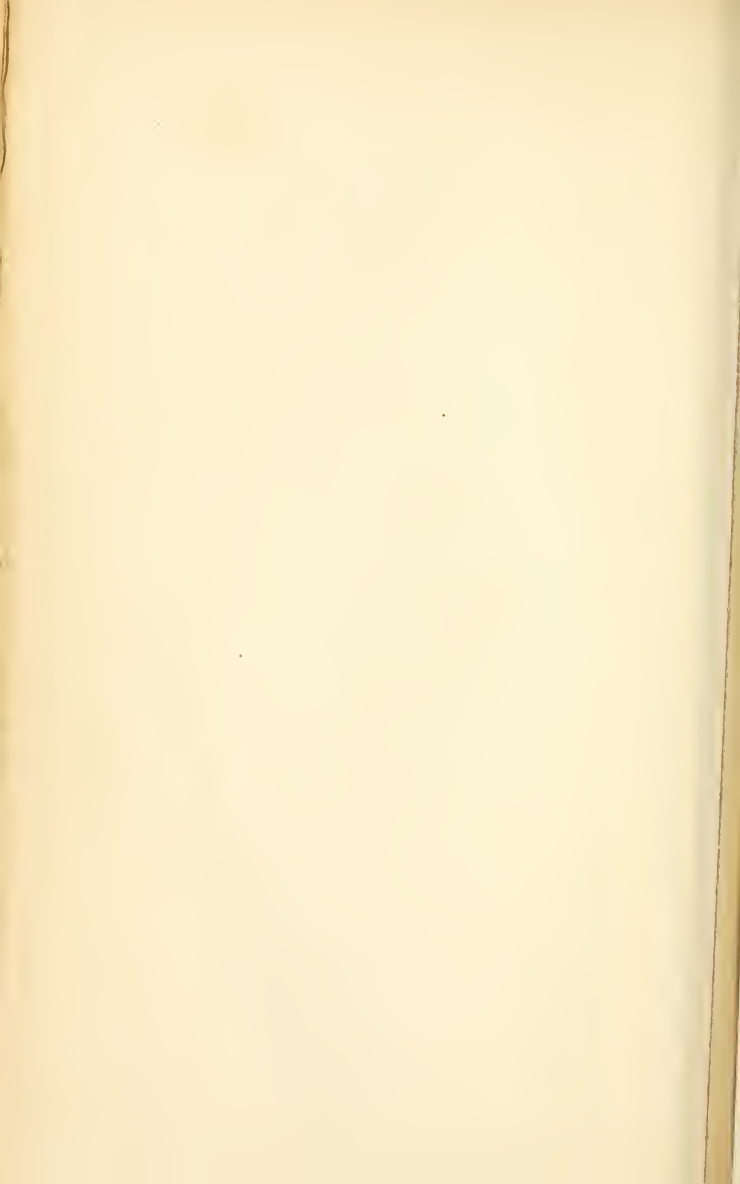
Blankness and leaden outlines mark  
 What time the Church within is dark ;  
 Yet view it on a Sunday night,  
 Or some occasion else for light,  
 And each ungainly line is seen  
 Some special character to mean  
 Of Saint or Prophet, and the whole  
 Blank window is a living scroll.

Her knowledge and conversing powers,  
 You'll find, are poor. The clock, for hours,  
 Loud clicking on the mantel-shelf,  
 Has all the talking to itself.  
 But to and fro her needle runs  
 Twice, while the clock is ticking once ;  
 And, when a wife is well in reach,  
 Not silence separates, but speech ;  
 And I, contented, read, or smoke  
 And idly think, or idly stroke  
 The winking cat, or watch the fire,  
 In social peace that does not tire ;

Until, at easeful end of day,  
 She moves, and puts her work away,  
 And, saying "How cold 'tis," or "How warm,  
 Or something else as little harm,  
 Comes, used to finding, kindly press'd,  
 A woman's welcome to my breast,  
 With all the great advantage clear  
 Of none else having been so near.

But sometimes, (how shall I deny !)  
 There falls, with her thus sitting by,  
 Dejection, and a chilling shade.  
 Remember'd pleasures, as they fade,  
 Salute me, and, in fading, grow,  
 Like foot-prints in the thawing snow.  
 I feel oppress'd beyond my force  
 With foolish envy and remorse.  
 I love this woman, but I might  
 Have loved some else with more delight ;  
 And strange it seems of God that He  
 Should make a vain capacity.

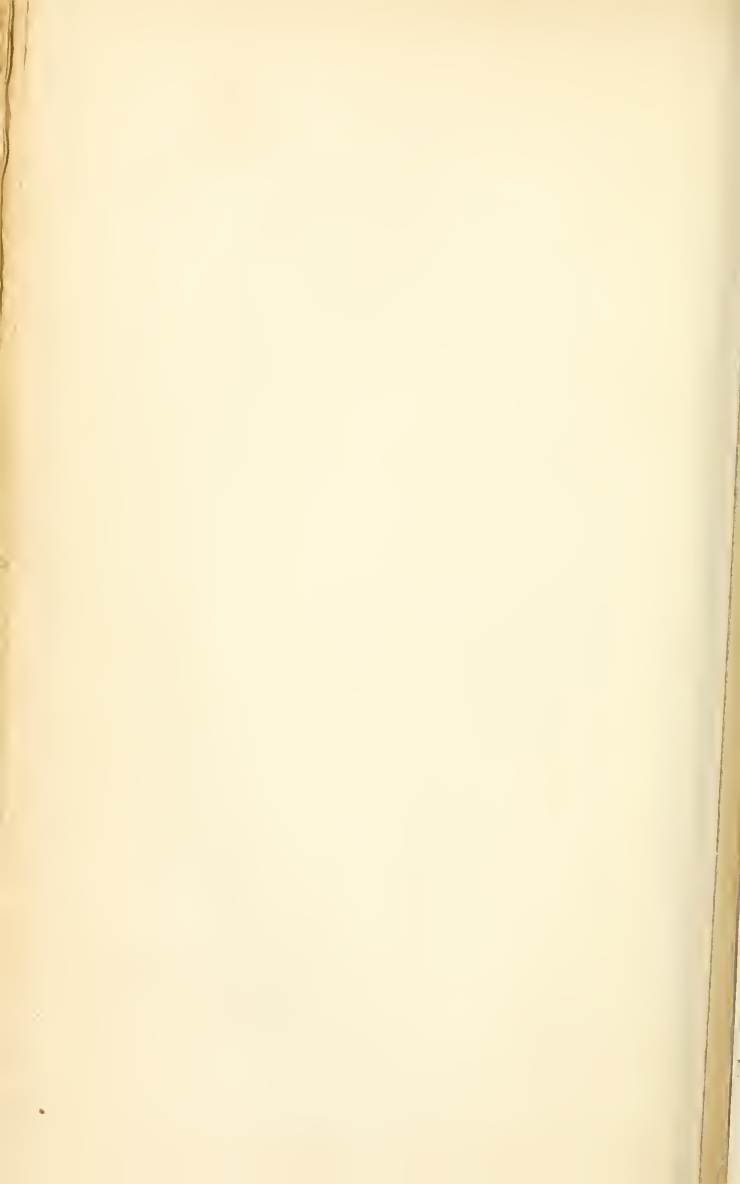
Such times of ignorant relapse,  
'Tis well she does not talk, perhaps.  
The dream, the discontent, the doubt,  
To some injustice flaming out,  
Were't else, might leave us both to moan  
A kind tradition overthrown,  
And dawning promise once more dead  
In the pernicious lowlihead  
Of not aspiring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





III.

Jane to Mrs. Graham.



JANE TO MRS. GRAHAM.

DEAR Mother-in-Law, dear Fred, (you've heard  
I've married him,) sends love, and word

He hopes you'll come and see us soon.

Dear Fred will be on leave all June,

And, for a week, or even more,

We shall be very glad I'm sure.

Dear Fred said *I* must write. He thought

It seem'd so disrespectful not.

I'm sure that's the *last* thing I'd be

To dear Fred's relatives. Both he

And I are well, dear Mrs. Graham,  
 And trust sincerely you're the same.  
 The house is rather small we've got,  
 But dear Fred says that yours is not  
 So large by half ; so you'll not mind.

If you can't leave your Maid behind,  
 Who, Fred says, always goes with you,  
 I'll manage somehow for her too.

You've heard of Uncle John, no doubt.  
 My choice, when first he found it out,  
 Displeased him, till he saw dear Fred,  
 Who, you'll be glad, he thinks well-bred,  
 And an extremely nice young man.  
 When I told Uncle John our plan  
 About you, of his own accord  
 He said, " Well, Jane, you can't afford  
 " To hire a vehicle, my Dear ;  
 " So, while your Mother-in-Law is here,  
 " I'll send my carriage every day.  
 " The turnpikes wont be much to pay."

That's the kind sort of man, you know !

I feel quite sure you'll like him so.

He's well aware your family,

Though you're not rich, is very high,

And therefore he will not neglect,

Though rich himself, all due respect.

I've heard of your dear daughter Grace,  
Who died. I hope to fill her place.

You must not think, now Fred has got

A closer tie, that you will not

Be loved just like you used to be.

For my part, I am glad to see

Affection. When I have but said

Your name, I've known him turn quite red.

If I bewail our nature's taint,

He says he has seen a faultless Saint.

Of course that's you. I think there's none

More kind and just than your dear Son,

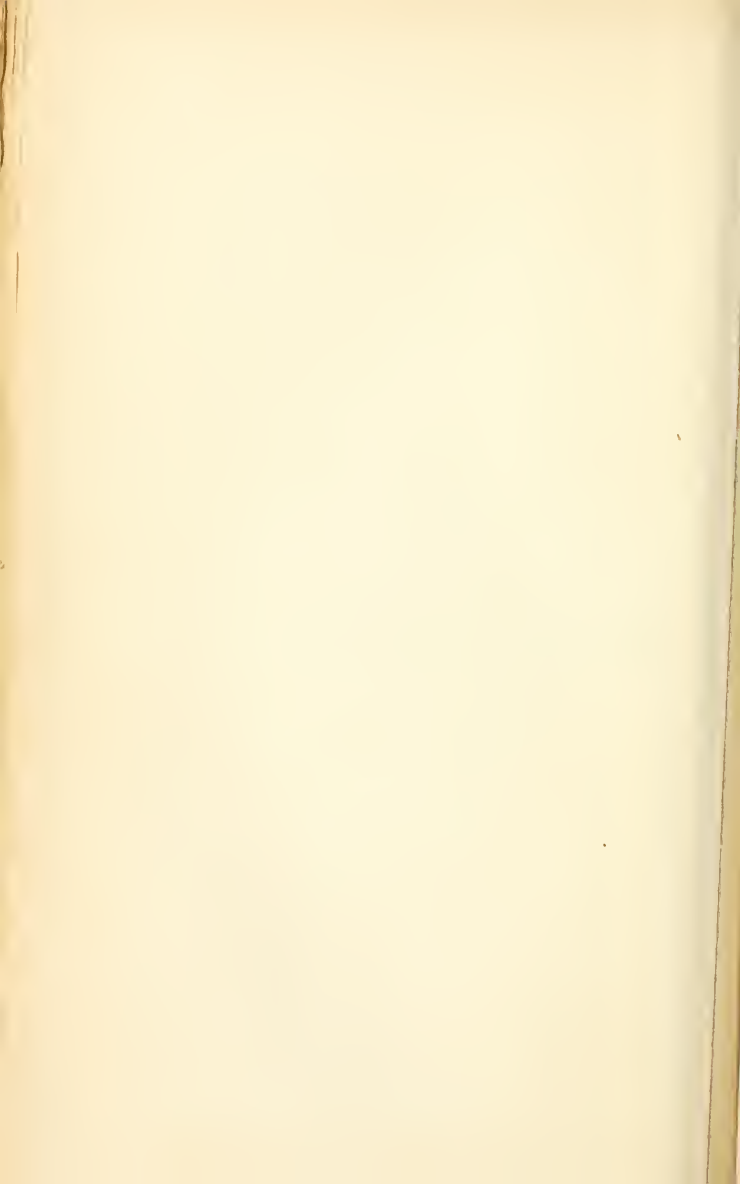
Yet, *between us*, Fred's worldly frame

Must grieve you much, dear Mrs. Graham ;

Who are, I'm sure, from all I've heard,  
A vessel chosen of the Lord.  
But I have hopes of him ; for, oh,  
How can we ever surely know  
But that the very darkest place  
May be the scene of saving grace,  
Which softens even hearts of stone !  
Commending you now to the Throne  
Of Mercy, I remain in all,  
Dear Mrs. Graham, excuse this scrawl,  
In greatest haste, but still the same  
Your most affectionate JANE GRAHAM.

IV.

Lady Clitheroe to Mary Churchill.





LADY CLITHEROE TO MARY CHURCHILL.

I'VE dreadful news, my Sister dear !  
Frederick has married, as we hear,  
Some awful girl. This fact we get  
From Mr. Barton, whom we met  
At Abury once. He used to know,  
At Race and Hunt, Lord Clitheroe,  
Who did not keep him up, of course,  
And yet he writes, (could taste be worse !)  
And tells John he had " seen Fred Graham,  
" Cominander of the Wolf,—the same

“The Mess call’d Joseph,—with his Wife  
 “Under his arm.” He lays his life,  
 “The fellow married her for love,  
 “For there was nothing else to move.  
 “H. is her Shibboleth. ’Tis said  
 “Her Mother was a Kitchen-Maid.”

Poor Fred! What *will* Honoria say?  
 She thought so highly of him. Pray  
 Tell it her gently, for I’m sure  
 That, in her heart, she liked him more  
 Than all her Cousins. I’ve no right,  
 I know you hold, to trust my sight;  
 But Frederick’s state could not be hid!  
 And Felix, coming when he did,  
 Was lucky; for Honoria, too,  
 Was almost gone. How warm she grew  
 On “worldliness” when once I said  
 I fancied that in love poor Fred  
 Had tastes much better than his means!  
 His hand was worthy of a Queen’s,

Said she, and actually shed tears  
 The night he left us for two years,  
 And sobb'd, when ask'd the cause to tell,  
 That "Frederick look'd so miserable."  
 He *did* look very dull, no doubt,  
 But such things girls don't cry about.

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

To *us*. Their nature seems to be  
To enjoy themselves by deputy,  
For, seeking their own benefit,  
Dear, what a mess they make of it !  
A man will work his bones away,  
If but his wife will only play ;  
He does not mind how much he's teased,  
So that his plague looks always pleased ;  
And never thanks her, while he lives,  
For anything, but what he gives !  
It's hard to manage men, we hear !  
Believe me, nothing's easier, Dear.  
The most important step by far  
Is finding what their colours are.  
The next is, not to let them know  
The reason why they love us so.  
The indolent droop of a blue shawl,  
Or grey silk's fluctuating fall,  
Covers the multitude of sins  
In me ; *your* husband, Love, might winee

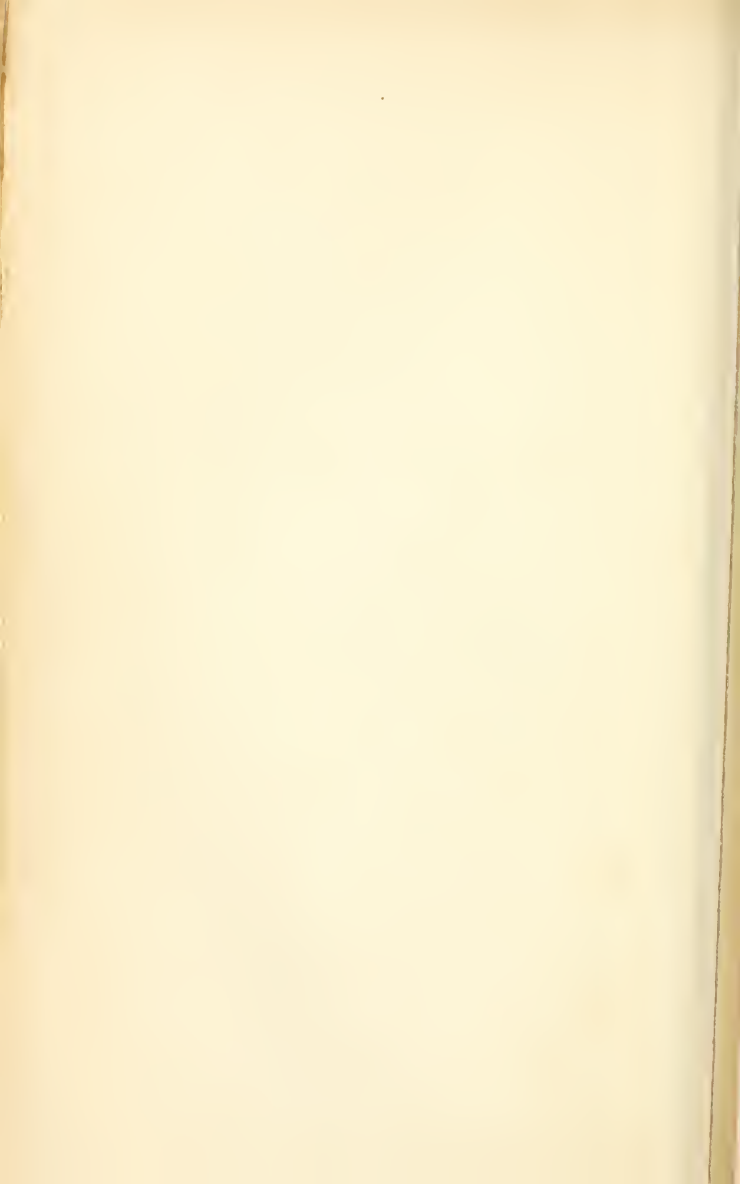
At azure, and be wild at slate,  
And yet do well with chocolate.  
Of course you'd let him fancy he  
Adored you for your piety!

There, now I've said enough, my Dear,  
To make you hate me for a year.  
You need not write to tell me so.  
Yours fondly, MILDRED CLITHEROE.



V.

Jane to her Mother.





JANE TO HER MOTHER.

**D**EAR Mother, Frederick's all, and more,  
A great deal, than you say, I'm sure ;  
And, as you write, of course I see  
How glad and thankful I should be  
For such a husband. Yet, to tell  
The truth, I am so miserable !  
There surely must be some mistake.  
What *could* he see in me to take  
His fancy ! I remember, though,  
He never said he loved me. No,

I'm no more fit for Frederick's wife  
Than Queen of England. If my life  
Could serve his very slightest whim,  
I'm sure I'd give it up for him  
With pleasure; but what *shall* I do!  
I find that he's so great and true  
That everything seems false and wrong  
I've done and thought my whole life long;  
And so, though he is often kind,  
And never really cross, my mind  
Is all so dull and dead with fear  
That Yes and No, when he is near,  
Is much as I can say. He's quite  
Unlike what most would call polite,  
And yet, when first I saw him come  
To tea in Aunt's fine drawing-room,  
He made me feel so common. Oh,  
How dreadful if he thinks me so!  
It's no use trying to behave  
To him. His eye, so kind and grave,

Sees through and through me ! Could not you,  
 Without his knowing that I knew,  
 Ask him to scold me now and then ?  
 Mother, it's such a weary strain  
 The way he has of treating me  
 As if 'twas something fine to be  
 A woman ; and appearing not  
 To notice any faults I've got,  
 But leaving me to mend, or bear  
 The guilt unblamed. I'm quite aware,  
 Of course, he knows I'm plain, and small,  
 Stupid, and ignorant, and all  
 Awkward and mean. As Frederick these.  
 I see the beauty which he sees  
 When often he looks strange awhile,  
 And recollects me with a smile.  
 I wish he had that fancied Wife,  
 With me for Maid, now ! all my life  
 To dress her out for him, and make  
 Her beauty lovelier for his sake.

To have her rate me till I cried ;  
 Then see her seated by his side,  
 And driven off proudly to the Ball ;  
 Then to stay up for her, whilst all  
 The servants were asleep ; and hear  
 At dawn the carriage rolling near,  
 And let them in ; and hear her laugh,  
 And boast he said that none was half  
 So beautiful, and that the Queen,  
 Who danced with him the first, had seen  
 And noticed her, and ask'd who was  
 That lady in the golden gauze !  
 And then to go to bed, and lie  
 In a sort of heavenly jealousy,  
 Until 'twas broad day, and I guess'd  
 She slept, nor knew how she was bless'd.

Mother, I look and feel so ill ;  
 And soon I shall be uglier still,  
 You know. But I have heard that men  
 Never think women ugly then.

Pray write and tell me if that's true.  
 And pardon me for teasing you  
 About my silly feelings so.

    Please, Mother, never let him know  
 A word of what I write. I'd not  
 Complain, but for the fear I've got  
 Of going wild, as I've heard tell  
 Of some one shut up in a cell,  
 With no one else to talk to. He,  
 Finding that he was loved by me  
 The most, might think himself to blame ;  
 And I should almost die for shame.

    When I get up,—that's now at seven,  
 And 'tis not light,—my heart's like heaven  
 At times ; for I've a foolish whim  
 That Fred loves me as I love him,  
 And, though I'm neither fair nor wise,  
 Love, somehow, makes a woman nice.  
 But daylight makes the glass reflect  
 The fact ; and then I recollect

That often in the night things seem  
Which are not, though we do not dream.

If being good would serve—but oh,  
The thought's ridiculous, you know.  
Why, I myself, I never could  
See what's in women's being good.  
They've nothing in the world to do  
But as it's just their nature to.  
Now, when the men, you know, do right,  
They have to try with all their might.  
They're so much nobler! As for us,  
We don't deserve the least the fuss  
They make about us.

Mother, mind  
You must not think that he's unkind.  
Why, I would rather Frederick  
Should hate me, beat me with a stick,  
Than stop at home all day and coo,  
As Aunt likes Uncle John to do.

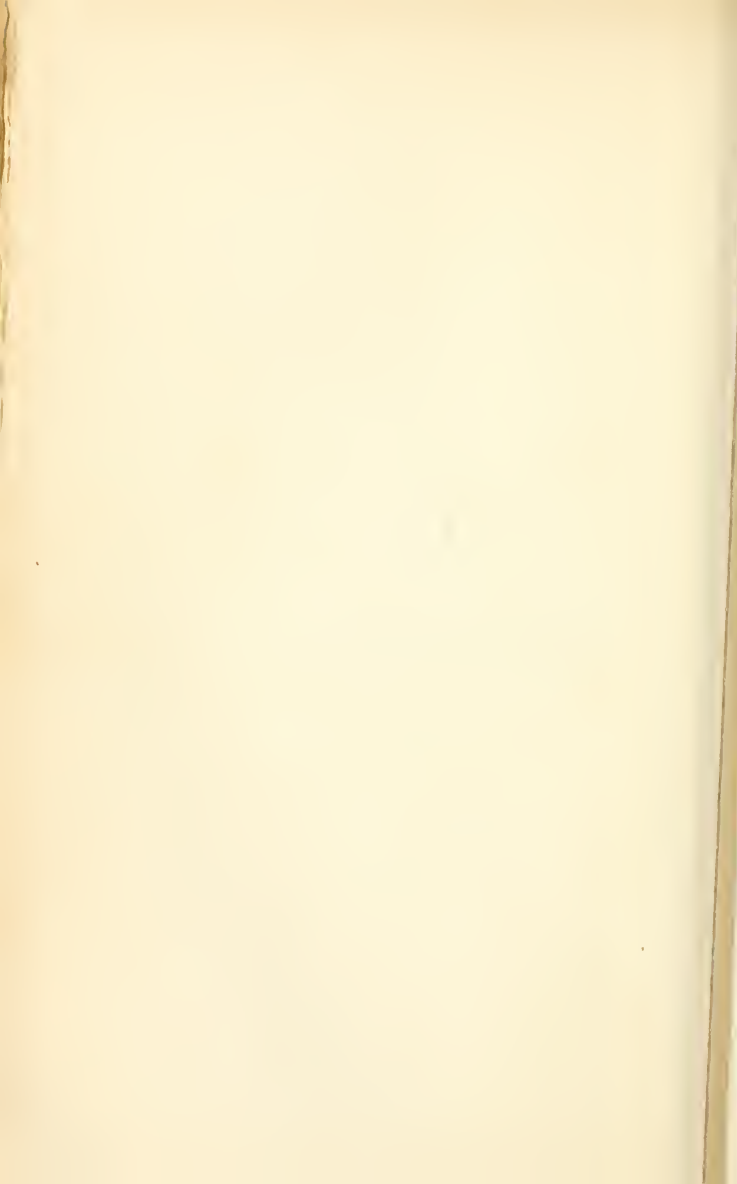
I'm never prouder, after all,  
Than when he stands, so stern and tall,  
Before the fire. With busy lives,  
Men can't love like their idle wives !  
And, oh, how dull, whilst they were out,  
Had women nought to cry about !





VI.

Dr. Churchill to Frederick.



DR. CHURCHILL TO FREDERICK.

**D**EAR Nephew, we have heard your news  
From strangers! Be assured we use  
Not lightly to relax our love  
Where once 'tis bound ; and I approve  
Your reasons, whatsoe'er they be,  
For silence. Yield no less to me  
For saying I wish, with all my heart,  
Your happiness, and on the part  
Of Mary, who is still at home,  
Whenever you may choose to come

And bring your Wife, you both will find  
A welcome cousinly and kind.

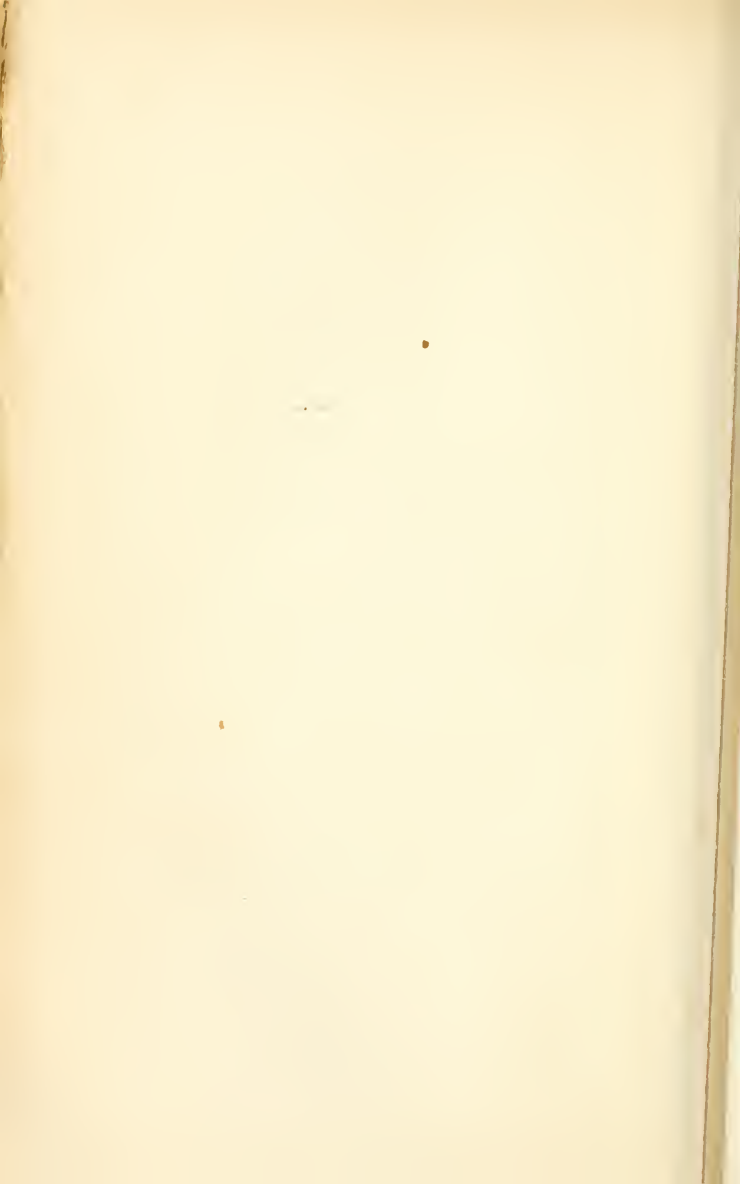
As an old man, a relative,  
And churchman, I make free to give  
My blessing, burthen'd with the truth  
For want of which the fragile youth  
Of wedlock suffers shocks and fears,  
That swell the heart with needless tears.  
I'll not suppose that rarest chance  
Has fall'n which makes a month's romance.  
Few, if 'twere known, wed whom they would ;  
And this, like all God's laws, is good.  
For nought's so sad the whole world o'er  
As much love which has once been more.

Glorious for warmth and light is love ;  
But worldly things in the rays thereof  
Extend their shadows, every one  
False as the image which the sun  
At noon or eve dwarfs or protracts.  
A perilous lamp to light men's acts !

By Heaven's kind, impartial plan,  
Well wived is he that's truly man,  
If but the woman's womanly,  
As sure I am your choice must be.  
Lust of the eyes and pride of life  
Perhaps she's not. The better wife !  
If it be thus, if you have known  
(As who has not?) some heavenly one  
Whom the dull background of despair  
Help'd to show forth supremely fair ;  
If Memory, still remorseful, shapes  
Young Passion bringing Eschol grapes  
To travellers in the Wilderness,  
This truth will make regret the less :  
Mighty in love as graces are,  
God's ordinance is mightier far ;  
And he who is but just and kind  
And patient, shall for guerdon find,  
Before long, that the body's bond  
Is all else utterly beyond



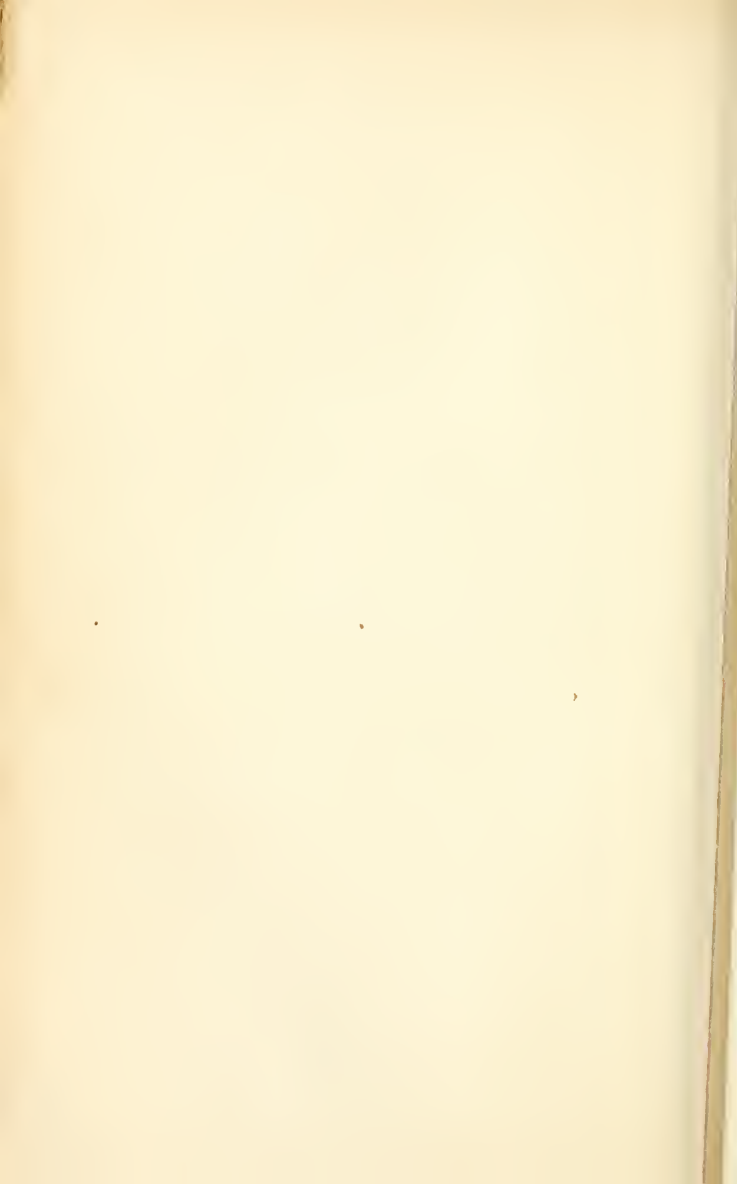
Profanity ; but, having this,  
'Tis honour now, and future bliss.  
Life, as a child, is put to play  
Love's simple gamut day by day.  
If on this humble task he dwells,  
Not flying off to something else,  
But as the Master bids, devotes  
To these few oft-repeated notes,  
His practice, till such comes to be  
His subtle, smooth celerity  
That from his easy hand they are flung  
Like bead-rows by a touch unstrung,  
The Master, after many days,  
Beyond hope speaks, "Now go thy ways ;  
" And, in thy safe and finish'd art,  
" Take, with the chime of heaven, thy part."





VII.

Frederick to his Mother.



FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

**M**OTHER, on my returning home  
Last night, I went to my wife's room,  
Who, whispering me that our alarms  
Were over, put into my arms  
Your Grandson. And I give you joy  
Of what, I'm told, is a fine boy.  
Their notion that he's just like me  
Is neither fact nor flattery!  
To you I'll own the little wight  
Fill'd me, unfatherly, with fright,

So grim it gazed, and, out of the sky,  
 There came, minute, remote, the cry,  
 Piercing, of original pain.

I put the wonder back to Jane,  
 Who proffer'd, as in kindly course,  
 Untried amends for strange divorce.  
 It guess'd at once, by great good luck,  
 The clever baby, how to suck!  
 Yet Jane's delight seem'd dash'd, that I,  
 Of strangers still by nature shy,  
 Was not familiar quite so soon  
 With her small friend of many a moon.

But when the new-made Mother smiled,  
 She seem'd herself a little child,  
 Dwelling at large beyond the law  
 By which, till then, I judged and saw,  
 And that fond glow which she felt stir  
 For it, suffused my heart for her;  
 To whom, from the weak babe, and thence  
 To me, an influent innocence,

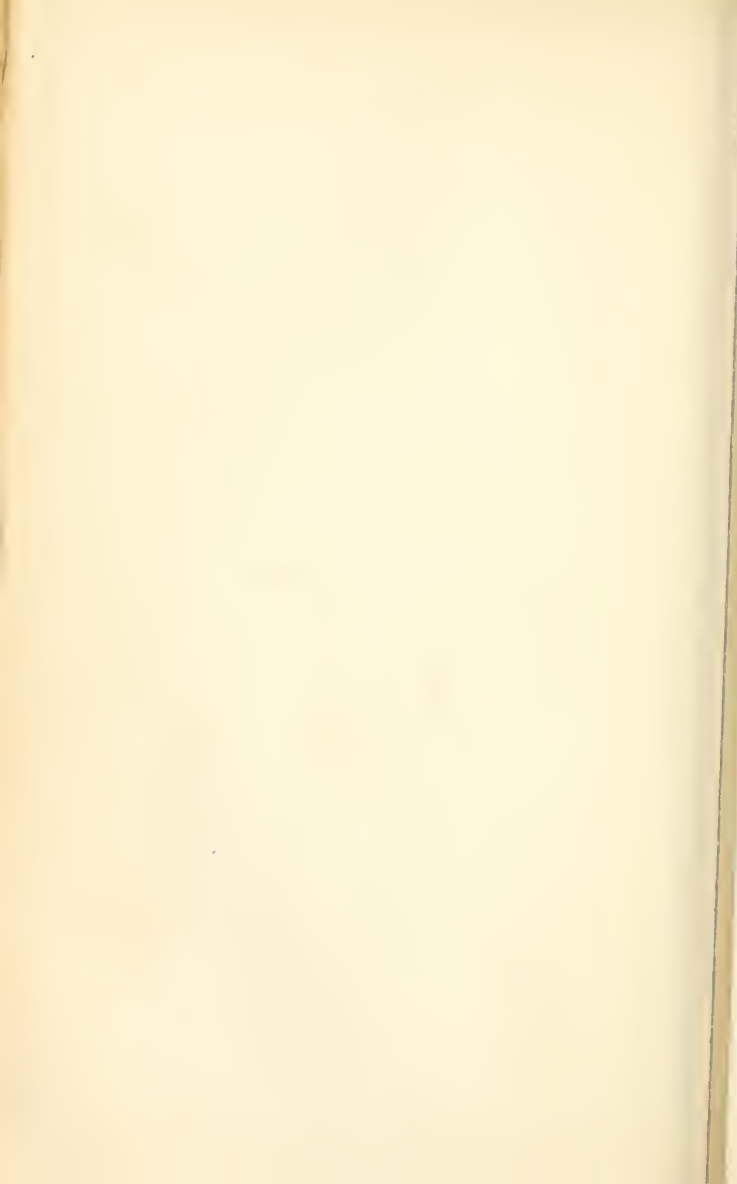
Happy, reparative of life,  
 Came, and she was indeed my wife,  
 As there, lovely with love she lay,  
 Brightly contented all the day  
 To hug her sleepy little boy  
 In the reciprocated joy  
 Of touch, the childish sense of love,  
 Ever inquisitive to prove  
 Its strange possession, and to know  
 If the eyes' report be really so.

She wants his name to be like  
     mine,

But I demur, at twenty-nine,  
 To being call'd "Old Frederick."  
 Her father's, Richard, would be "Dick;"  
 So John has now been fix'd upon,  
 After her childless Uncle John,  
 Who owns the Grimsley Powder-Mill,  
 And, perhaps, may put him in his  
     Will.

'Tis also settled, since the mind,  
As Jane has heard, may be refined,  
In babyhood, by sights that lull  
The senses with the Beautiful,  
That John must be refined at once.  
No fault of ours if he's a dunce!  
She covets, in the shower-bath's place,  
A marble image of a Grace,  
Or, if that costs too much, a cast;  
But we are both agreed, at last,  
'Twill do to pin a certain shawl,  
Too gay to wear, against the wall,  
And let him learn to kick and coo  
At lovely stripes of red and blue.  
And, since Nurse says that, now-a-days,  
Boys learn, at school, such wicked ways,  
Our John's to be brought up at home.  
Nor must he take to sea, but some  
Less perilous and restless life,  
Which will not part him from his wife;

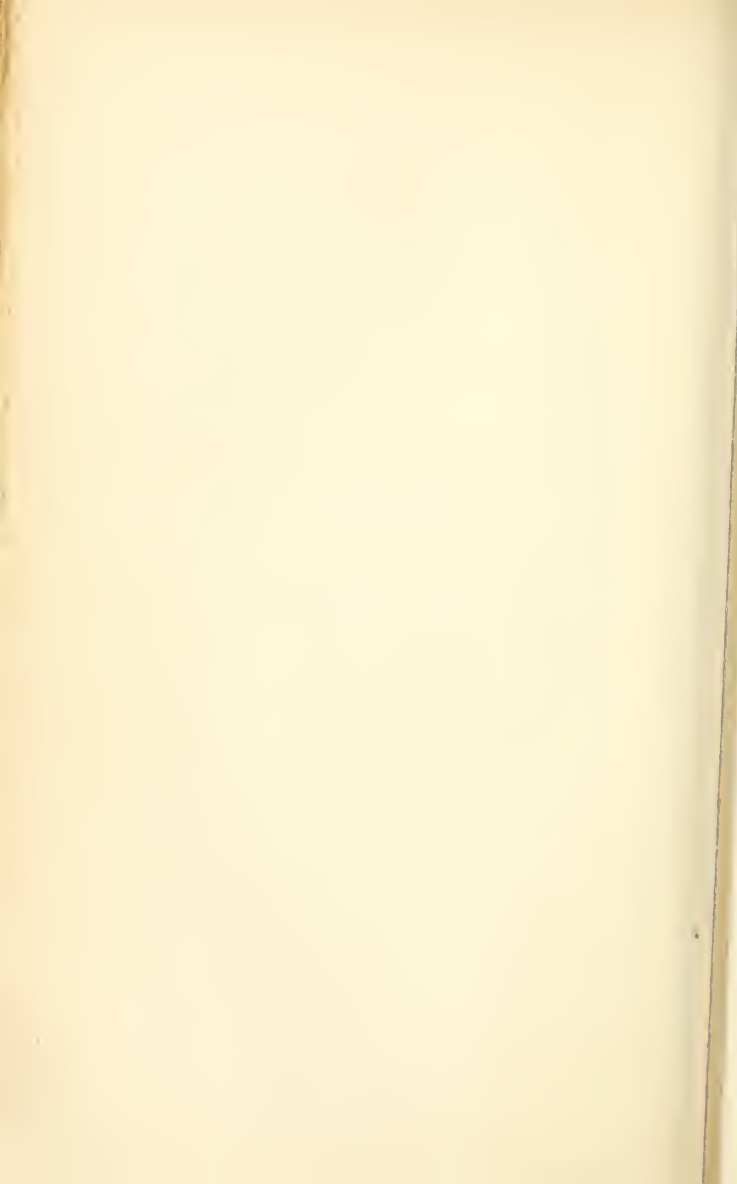
The Law might give his talents play!  
It's clear he's clever from the way  
He looks about, and frowns, and winks,  
Which shows that he observes and thinks.





VIII.

Jane to Mrs. Graham.



JANE TO MRS. GRAHAM.

**D**ÉAR Mother,—such, if you'll allow,  
In *love*, not *law*, I'll call you now,—  
I hope you're well. I write to say  
Frederick has got, besides his pay,  
A good appointment in the Docks ;  
Also to thank you for the frocks  
And shoes for baby. I, D.v.,  
Shall wean him soon. Fred goes to sea  
No more. I *am* so glad ; because,  
Though kinder husband never was,

He seems still kinder to become  
 The more he stays with me at home.  
 When we've been parted, I see plain  
 He's dull till he gets used again  
 To marriage. Do not tell him, though ;  
 I would not have him know I know,  
 For all the world.

How good of you

Not, as I've heard some mothers do,  
 To hate his wife ! I try to mind  
 All your advice ; but sometimes find  
 I do not well know how. I thought  
 To take it about dress ; so bought  
 A gay new bonnet, gown, and shawl ;  
 But Frederick was not pleased at all ;  
 For, though he smiled, and said, " How  
                   smart !"

I feel, you know, what's in his heart.  
 But I shall learn ! I fancied long  
 That care in dress was very wrong,

Till Frederick, in his startling way,  
When I began to blame, one day,  
The Admiral's Wife, because we hear  
She spends two hours, or something near,  
In dressing, took her part, and said  
How all things deck themselves that wed ;  
How birds and plants grow fine to please  
Each other in their marriages ;  
And how (which certainly is true—  
It never struck me—did it you ?)  
Dress was, at first, Heaven's ordinance,  
And has much Scripture countenance.  
For Eliezer, we are told,  
Adorn'd with jewels and with gold  
Rebecca. In the Psalms, again,  
How the King's Daughter dress'd ! And, then,  
The Good Wife in the Proverbs, she  
Made herself clothes of tapestry,  
Purple, and silk : and there's much more  
I had not thought about before !

It's strange how well Fred understands  
A Book I don't see in his hands  
At all, except at Church.

Do you know,  
Since Baby came, he loves me so !  
I'm really useful, now, to Fred ;  
And none could do so well instead.  
It's nice to fancy, if I died,  
He'd miss me from the Darling's side !  
Also, there's something now, you see,  
On which we talk, and quite agree ;  
On which, without pride too, I can  
Hope I am wiser than a man.  
I should be happy now, if quite  
Convinced that Frederick was right  
About religion ; but he's odd,  
And very seldom speaks of God ;  
And, though I trust his prayers are  
said,  
Because he goes so late to bed,

I doubt his calling. Glad to find  
 A text adapted to his mind,  
 I show'd him Thirty-three and four  
 Of Chapter seven, first of Cor.,  
 Which seems to allow, in Man and Wife,  
 A little worldliness of life.  
 He smiled, and said that he knew all  
 Such things as that without Saint Paul !  
 And once he said, when I with pain  
 Had got him just to read Romaine,  
 " Men's creeds should not their hopes condemn.  
 " Who wait for heaven to come to them  
 " Are little like to go to heaven,  
 " If logic's not the devil's leaven !"  
 I cried at such a wicked joke,  
 And he, surprised, went out to smoke.  
 But to judge him is not for me,  
 Who sin myself so dreadfully  
 As half to doubt if I should care  
 To go to heaven, and he not there.

He *must* be right ; and I dare say  
 I soon shall understand his way.  
 To other things, once strange, I've grown  
 Accustom'd, nay, to like. I own  
 'Twas long before I grew well used  
 To sit, while Frederick read or mused  
 For hours, and scarcely spoke. When he,  
 For all that, held the door to me,  
 Picked up my handkerchief, and rose  
 To set my chair ; with other shows  
 Of honour, such as men, 'tis true,  
 To sweethearts and fine ladies do,  
 It almost seem'd an unkind jest ;  
 But now I like these ways the best.  
 They somehow help to make me good ;  
 And I don't mind his quiet mood.  
 If Frederick *does* seem dull awhile,  
 There's Baby. You should see him smile !  
 I'm pretty and nice to him, sweet Pet,  
 And he will learn no better yet ;



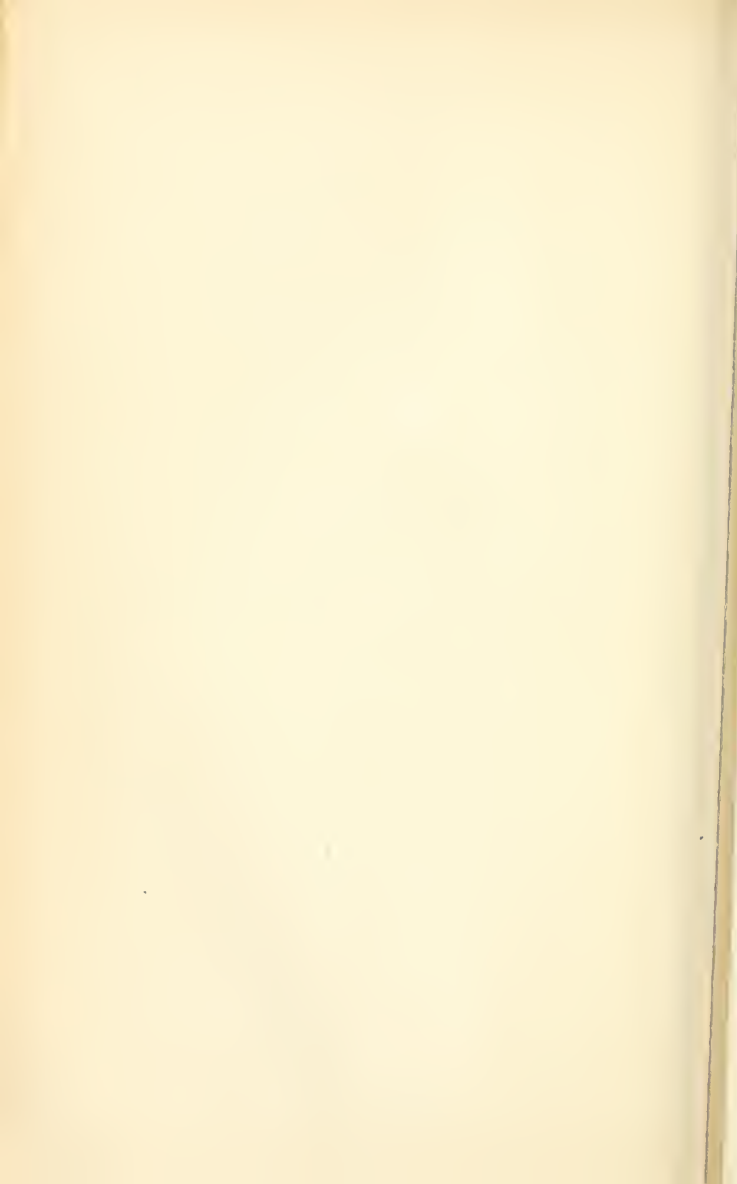
And when he's big and wise, you know,  
There'll be new babes to think me so.  
Indeed, now little Johnny makes  
A busier time of it, and takes  
Our thoughts off one another more,  
I'm happy as need be, I'm sure !



BOOK III.



RACHEL.



I.

Jane to Mrs. Graham.



JANE TO MRS. GRAHAM.

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

She look'd so beautiful and kind !  
And so much like the wife my mind  
Was fond of picturing for Fred,  
Those wretched years we first were wed,  
Before I guess'd, or use could prove  
The sort of things my husband loved ;  
And how just living with me was,  
In some strange way, the dearest cause  
For liking, and, instead of charms,  
Was being accustom'd to my arms ;  
And even how my getting ill,  
And nervous, cross, and uglier still,  
And bringing him all kinds of care,  
Affected him like growing fair ;  
And how, by his brave fingers press'd,  
The blister, that would burn my breast  
And only make his own to smart,  
Drew the proud flesh from either's heart ;  
And so, for all indignities  
Of life in health and in disease,



His friendliness got more and more !

Of this great joy to make quite sure,  
I ask'd once, (when he could not see,)  
Why such things made him fond of me ?  
He kiss'd me and said, the honour due  
To the weaker vessel surely grew  
With the vessel's weakness !

I'll go on,

However, about Mrs. Vaughan.

Visiting, yesterday, she said,  
The Admiral's Wife, she learn'd that Fred  
Was very ill ; she begg'd to be,  
If possible, of use to me.  
What could she do ? Last year, Fred's

Aunt

Died, leaving her, who had not a want,  
Her fortune. Half was his, she thought ;  
But Fred, she knew, would ne'er be brought  
To take his rights at second-hand !  
Yet something might, she hoped, be plann'd

With me, which even Frederick,  
 As favour done to *her*, would like.  
 What did I think of putting John  
 To school and college? Mr. Vaughan,  
 When John was old enough, could give  
 Preferment to her relative,  
 In Government or Church. I said  
 I felt quite sure that dearest Fred  
 Would be so thankful. Would we come,  
 And make ourselves, then, quite at home,  
 Next month, at High-Hurst? Change of air  
 Both he and I should need, and there  
 At leisure we could talk, and fix  
 Our plans, as John was nearly six.

It seemed so rude to think and doubt,  
 So I said, Yes. In going out,  
 She said, "How odd of Frederick, Dear,"  
 (I wish'd he had been there to hear,)  
 "To send no cards, or tell me what  
 "A nice new Cousin I had got!"  
 Wasn't that kind?

When Fred grew strong,  
 I had, I found, done very wrong.  
 For the first time, his voice and eye  
 Were angry. But, with folks so high  
 As Fred and Mrs. Vaughan and you,  
 It's hard to guess what's right to do!  
 And he wont teach me.

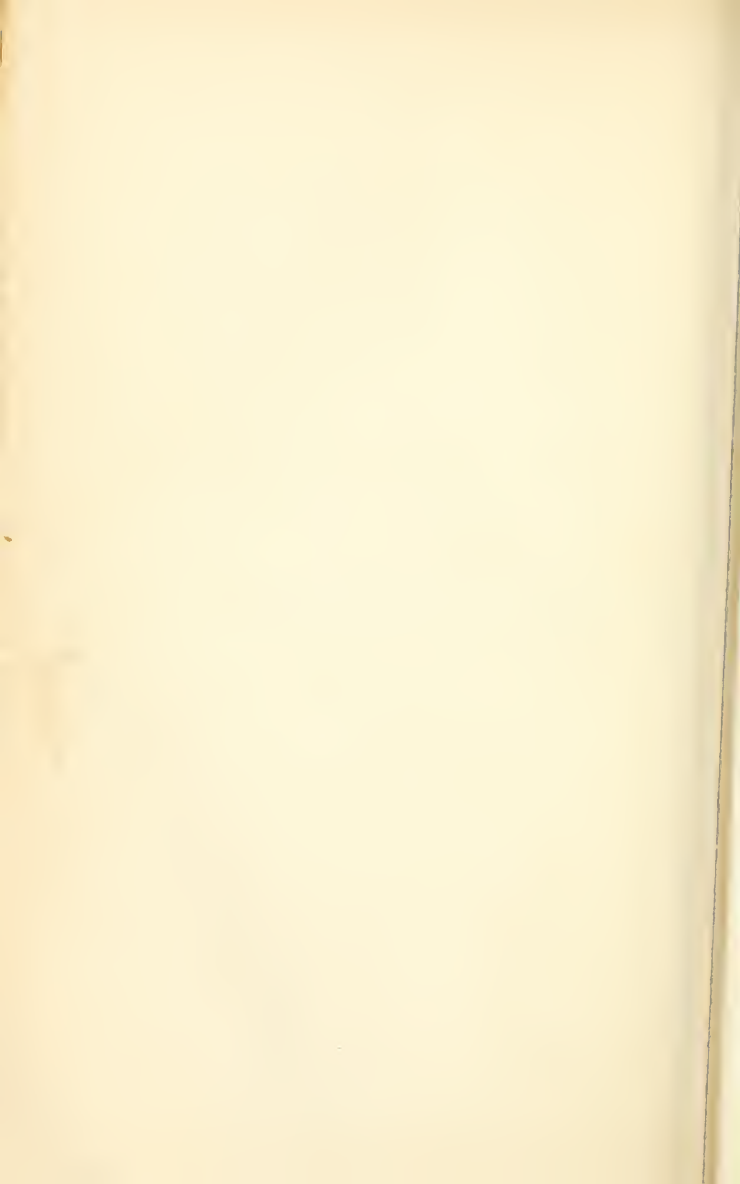
Dear Fred wrote,  
 Directly, such a lovely note,  
 Which, though it undid all I'd done,  
 Was, both to me and Mrs. Vaughan,  
 So kind! His words, I can't say why,  
 Like soldiers' music, made me cry.

Do, Mother, ask dear Fred to go  
 Without me! I can't leave, you know,  
 The babes. Besides, 'twere folly stark  
 For *me* to go to High-Hurst Park.  
 I'm not so awkward as I was;  
 But, all confused, and just because  
 By chance he call'd me "Love" to-day,  
 I made such haste out of his way

I overset my chair ; whereat  
Fred laugh'd, and on the spitting cat  
The fire-screen tumbled ; so I tried  
These risks no more, and stood and cried,  
And hid for shame my burning face,  
To hear he liked " that kind of grace."  
Fancy if such a thing was done  
Where ladies move like Mrs. Vaughan !  
But dearest Fred *should*, once a year,  
Just get a sight of his own sphere.

II.

Lady Clitheroe to Mary Churchill.



LADY CLITHEROE TO MARY CHURCHILL.

**D**EAR Saint, I'm still at High-Hurst Park.

The house is fill'd with folks of mark.

Honoria suits a good estate

Much better than I hoped. How fate

Pets her with happiness and pride !

And such a loving lord, beside !

But, between us, Sweet, everything

Has limits, and to build a wing

To this old house, when Courtholm stands

Empty upon his Berkshire lands,

And all that Honor might be near  
 Papa, was buying love *too* dear.  
 And yet, to see mild Mrs. Vaughan  
 Shining on all she looks upon,  
 You'd think that none could stand more  
                   high  
 Than others in her charity ;  
 And to behold her courtly lord  
 Converse with her across the board,  
 'Twould seem that part of perfect life  
 Was not to covet one's own wife.  
 The hypocrites !

                  Love, there are two  
 Guests here, whose names will startle you,  
 Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Graham !  
 I thought he stay'd away for shame.  
 He and his wife were ask'd, you know,  
 And would not come, four years ago.  
 You recollect Miss Smythe found out  
 Who she had been, and all about



The Chaplain and the Powder-Mill,  
 And how the fine Aunt tried to instil  
*Haut ton*, and how, at last, poor Jane  
 Had got so shy and *gauche* that, when  
 The Dockyard gentry came to sup,  
 She always had to be lock'd up;  
 And some one wrote to John and said  
 Her mother was a Kitchen-Maid.  
 Dear Mary, you'll be charm'd to know  
 It *must* be all a fib. But, oh,  
 She *is* the oddest little Pet  
 On which my eyes were ever set!  
 She's so *outrée* and natural  
 That, when she first arrived, we all  
 Wonder'd, as when a robin comes  
 In through the window to eat crumbs  
 At breakfast with us. She has sense,  
 Humility, and confidence;  
 And, save in dressing just a thought  
 Gaye in colours than she ought,

(To-day she looks a cross between  
Gipsy and Fairy, red and green,)  
All that she does is somehow well.  
And yet one never quite can tell  
What she *might* do or utter next.  
Lord Clitheroe is much perplex'd ;  
Her husband, every now and then,  
Looks nervous ; all the other men  
Are charm'd. Yet she has neither grace,  
Nor one good feature in her face.  
Her eyes, indeed, flame in her head,  
Like very altar-fires to Fred,  
Whose step she follows everywhere,  
Like a tame duck, to the despair  
Of Colonel Holmes, who does his part  
To break her funny little heart.  
Honor's enchanted. 'Tis her view  
That people, if they're good and true,  
And treated well, and let alone,  
Will kindly take to what's their own,

And always be original,  
 Like children. (Honor's just like all  
 The rest of us ! But, thinking so,  
 It's well she miss'd Lord Clitheroe,  
 Who hates originality,  
 Though he puts up with it in me !)

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

She came at all she ever knew  
 By lapping milk, as kittens do.

Talking of kittens, by the bye,  
 You've much more influence than I  
 With dear Honoria. Get her, Dear,  
 To be a little more severe  
 With those sweet children. They've the run  
 Of all the house. When school was done,  
 Maude burst in, while the Earl was there,  
 With "Oh, Mamma, do be a bear!"  
 They come on with the fruit, and climb  
 In people's laps, and all the time  
 Eat, and we ladies have to rise,  
 Lest Frank should die of strawberries.

And there's another thing, my Love,  
 I wish you'd show you don't approve,  
 (But perhaps you do!) Though all confess  
 Her tact is absolute in dress,  
 She does not get her things so *good*  
 As, with her fortune now, she should.

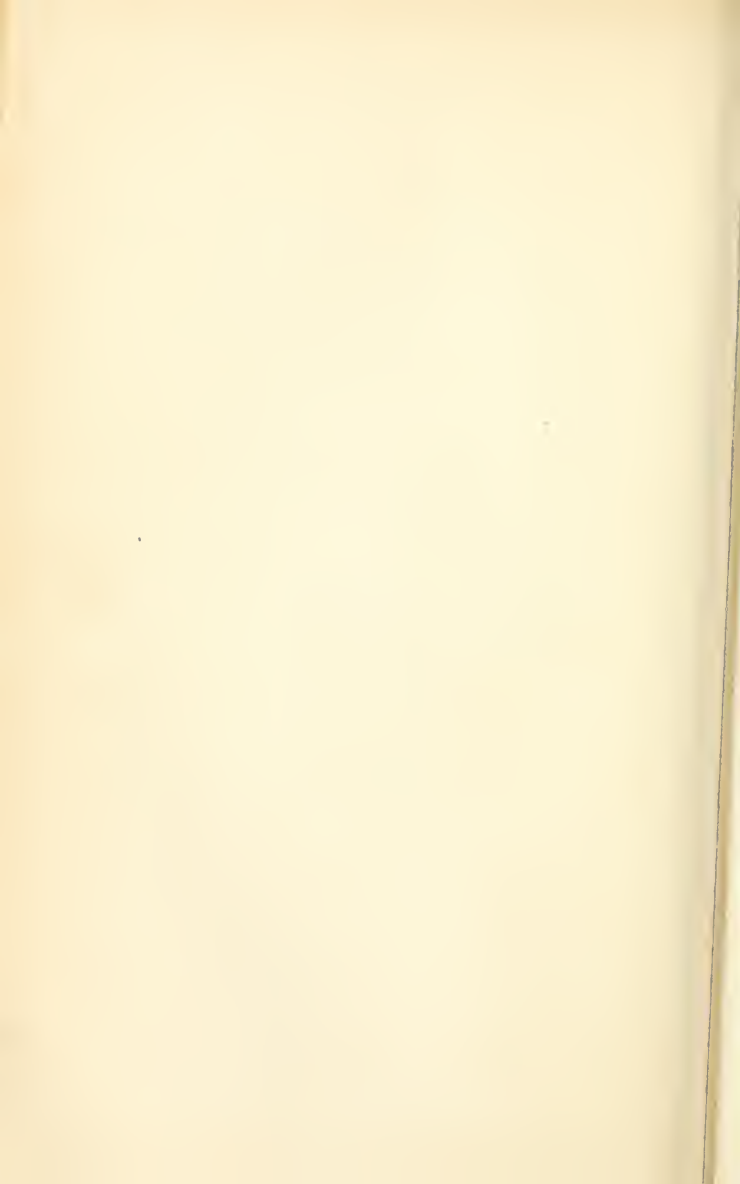
I feel quite certain, between us,  
She cheats her husband, (she did thus  
With dear Papa,) and has no end  
Of pin-money, full half to spend  
On folks who think themselves in this  
Paid takers of her tolls to Bliss.

She has her faults, but I must say  
She's handsomer, in her quiet way,  
Than ever ! This odd wife of Fred  
Adores his old Love in his stead.



III.

Jane to Mrs. Graham.





JANE TO MRS. GRAHAM.

**M**OTHER, at last, we are really come  
To High-Hurst. Johnny stays at home.  
We settled that it must be so,  
For he has been to Aunt's, at Stowe,  
And learn'd to leave his h's out ;  
And people like the Vaughans, no doubt,  
Would think this dreadful. I, at first,  
Half fear'd this visit to the Hurst.  
Fred must, I knew, be so distress'd  
By aught in me unlike the rest

Who come here. But I find the place  
Delightful ; there's such ease and grace  
And kindness, and all seem to be  
On such a high equality.  
They have not got to think, you know,  
How far to make the money go.  
But Frederick says it's less the expense  
Of money, than of sound good sense,  
Quickness to care what others feel,  
And thoughts with nothing to conceal ;  
Which I'll teach Johnny. Mrs. Vaughan  
Was waiting for us on the Lawn,  
And kiss'd and call'd me "Cousin." Fred  
Neglected his old friends, she said.  
He laugh'd, and redd'n'd up at this.  
She was, I think, a flame of his ;  
But I'm not jealous ! Luncheon done,  
I left him, who had just begun  
To talk about the chance of war,  
With an old Lady, Lady Carr,—

A Countess, but I'm more afraid,  
 A great deal, of the Lady's maid,—  
 And went with Mrs. Vaughan to see  
 The pictures, which appear'd to be  
 Of sorts of horses, boors, and cows  
 Call'd Wouvermans, and Cuyps, and Dows.  
 And, then, she took me up, to show  
 Her bedroom, where, long years ago,  
 A Queen slept. 'Tis all tapestries  
 Of Cupids, Gods, and Goddesses ;  
 And black, carved oak. A curtain'd door  
 Leads, thence, into her bright boudoir,  
 Where even her husband may but come  
 By favour. He, too, has his room,  
 Kept sacred to his solitude.  
 Did I not think the plan was good ?  
 She ask'd me ; but I said how small  
 Our house was, and that, after all,  
 Though Fred would never say his prayers  
 At night, till I was safe upstairs,

I thought it wrong to be so shy  
Of being good when I was by.  
“ Oh, you should humour him !” she said,  
With her sweet voice and smile ; and led  
The way to where the children ate  
Their dinner, and Miss Williams sate.  
She’s only Nursery-Governess,  
Yet they consider her no less  
Than Lord or Lady Carr, or me.  
Just think how happy she must be !  
The Ball-Room, with its painted sky,  
Where heavy angels seem to fly,  
Is a dull place ; its size and gloom  
Make them prefer, for drawing-room,  
The Library, all done up new  
And comfortable, with a view  
Of Salisbury Spire between the boughs.

When she had shown me through the house,  
(I wish I could have let her know  
That she herself was half the show,

She *is* so handsome and so kind,)  
 She had the children down, who had dined,  
 And, taking one in either hand,  
 Show'd me how all the grounds were plann'd.  
 The lovely garden gently slopes  
 To where a curious bridge of ropes  
 Crosses the Avon to the Park.  
 We rested by the stream, to mark  
 The brown backs of the hovering trout.  
 Frank tickled one, and took it out  
 From under a stone. We saw his owls,  
 And awkward Cochin China fowls,  
 And shaggy pony in the croft ;  
 And then he dragg'd us to a loft,  
 Where pigeons, as he push'd the door,  
 Fann'd clear a breadth of dusty floor,  
 And set us coughing. I confess  
 I trembled for my nice silk dress.  
 I cannot think how Mrs. Vaughan  
 Ventured with that which she had on,—

A mere white wrapper, with a few  
Plain trimmings of a tranquil blue,  
But, oh, so pretty ! Then the bell  
For dinner rang. I look'd quite well,  
("Quite charming" were the words Fred said,)  
In the new gown that I've had made  
At Salisbury. In the drawing-room  
Was Mr. Vaughan, just then come home.  
I thought him rather cold, but find  
That he's at heart extremely kind.  
He's Captain of the Yeomanry,  
And Magistrate, and has to see  
About the paupers and the roads ;  
And Fred says he has written odes  
On Mrs. Vaughan, to send her praise,  
Like Laura's, down to distant days.  
So she deserves ! What cause there is,  
I know not, though, for saying this,  
But that she looks so kind and young,  
And every word's a little song.

I *am* so proud of Frederick,  
He's so high-bred and lordly-like  
With Mrs. Vaughan ! He's not quite so  
At home with me ; but that, you know,  
I can't expect, or wish. 'Twould hurt,  
And seem to mock at my desert.  
Not but that I'm a duteous wife  
To Fred ; but in another life,  
Where all are fair that have been true,  
I hope I shall be graceful too,  
Like Mrs. Vaughan. And, now, Good-bye.  
That happy thought has made me cry.





IV.

Honoria Vaughan to Dr. Churchill.



HONORIA VAUGHAN TO DR. CHURCHILL.

**D**EAREST Papa, at last we are come,  
The tiresome season over, home!

How honourable it seems to me!

I am sick of town society,

The Opera, and the flatteries

Of cynic, disrespectful eyes!

Frederick is here. Tell Mrs. Fife;

Who adored him. He has brought his wife.

She *is* so nice; but Felix goes

Next Sunday with her to the Close,

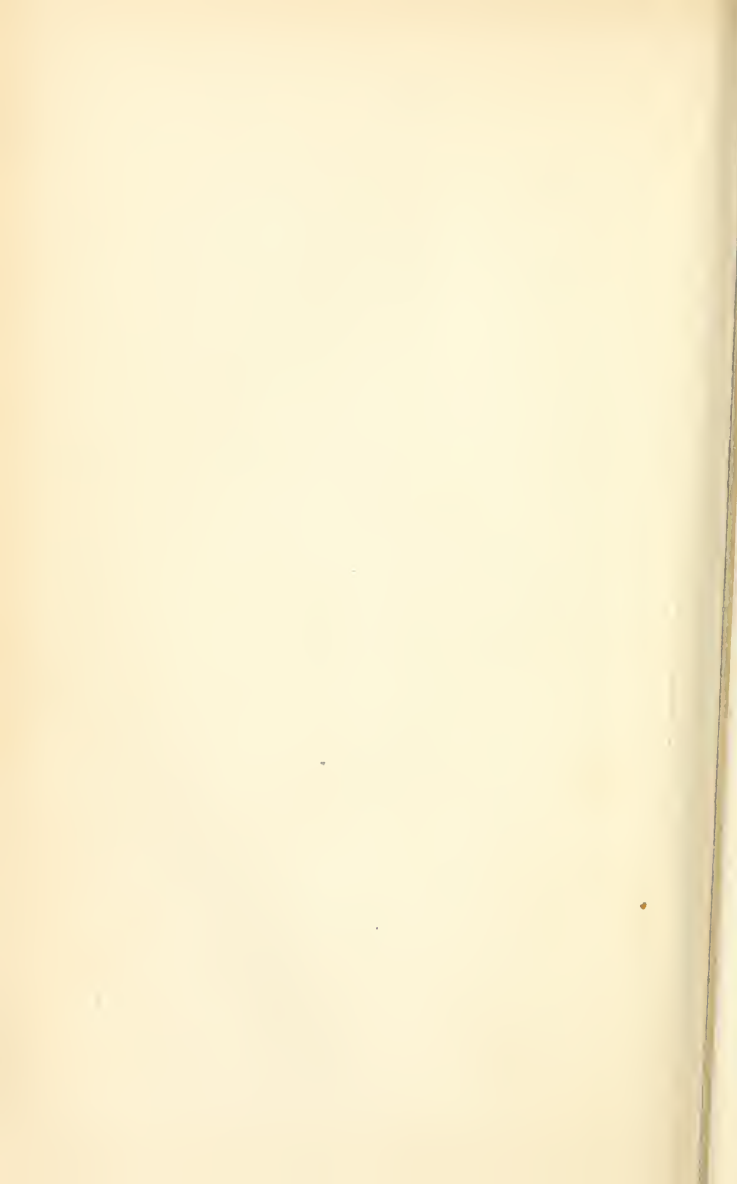
And you will judge her. She the first  
Has made me jealous, though the Hurst  
Is lit so oft with loveliness,  
And, when in town, where I was less  
Constrain'd in choice, I always ask'd  
The prettiest. Felix really bask'd  
Like Puss in fire-shine, when the room  
Was all aflame with female bloom ;  
And, since I praised and did not pout,  
His little, lawless loves went out  
With the last brocade. 'Tis not the same,  
I find, with Mrs. Frederick Graham !  
I must not have her stopping here  
More than a fortnight once a year.  
My husband says he never saw  
Such proof of what he holds for law  
That beauty is love which can be seen.  
Whatever he by this may mean,  
Were it not fearful if he fell  
In love with her on principle !

Felix has spoken only twice :  
 Once on Savoy, and once on this  
 Shameful Reform Bill ; and on each  
 He made a most successful speech ;  
 And both times I, of course, was there  
 And heard him cheer'd. But, (how unfair!)  
 Whenever, wishing to explain  
 His meaning, he got up again,  
 They call'd out "Order" and "Oh, oh!"  
 He abused the Newspapers, and so  
 The "Times" left out the cries of "Hear."  
 The very Opposition cheer  
 Dear Felix ; and at what he said  
 The Arch-Radical turn'd white and red.  
 I saw him with my opera-glass.  
 Yet they allow'd the law to pass  
 The second reading. Should this cheat  
 Succeed next spring, we lose our seat !  
 Nor shall I grieve. The wisest say  
 There's near at hand an evil day ;

And, though, if Felix chose to stir,  
 I am sure he might be Minister,  
 I tell him, they serve England most  
 Who keep, at whatsoever cost,  
 Their honour; and, when best and first  
 Have flung their strength to last and worst,  
 And ruling means, from hour to hour  
 Cajoling those who have the power,  
 A gentleman should stay at home,  
 And let his rulers sometimes come  
 And blush at his high privacy.  
 Felix, I know, agrees with me,  
 Although he calls me, "Fierce white cat!"  
 And says, 'tis not yet come to that.

Yesterday, he and I fell out ;  
 Can you believe it? 'Twas about  
 The cost at which he says I dress'd  
 Last season. *I* came off the best ;  
 And you, Papa, by both stand task'd  
 Instead, as you shall learn : I ask'd,

Would he, at one house, think it nice  
To see me in the same dress twice ?  
Of course he kiss'd me, and said, "No !"  
And then I proved, *he* made me go  
To Lady Lidderdale's three fêtes  
And both her dances ! *Magistrates*  
Ought to know better than to try  
A charge dismiss'd ; and he and I  
Had talk'd this over once before !  
Forgiv'n, he vow'd to offend no more.  
But, oh, he actually says  
*You* caution'd him against my ways.  
We both are shock'd Papa could be  
So cruel and unfatherly ! .





V.

Frederick to his Mother.



FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

COULD any, whilst there's any woe,  
Be wholly blest, the Vaughans were so !  
Each is, and is aware of it,  
The other's endless benefit ;  
But, though their daily ways reveal  
The depth of private joy they feel,  
'Tis not their bearing each to each  
That does abroad their secret preach,  
But such a lovely good-intent  
To all within their government

And friendship, as, 'tis well discern'd,  
 Each of the other must have learn'd ;  
 For no mere faith of neighbourhood  
 Ever begot so fair a mood.

Honoria, made more dove-like mild  
 With added loves of lord and child,  
 Is else unalter'd. Years, that wrong  
 The rest, touch not her beauty, young  
 With youth that seems her natal clime,  
 And no way relative to time.  
 All in her presence generous grow,  
 As in the sunshine flowers blow ;  
 As colours, each superb to sight,  
 When all combined are only light,  
 Her many noble virtues miss  
 Proud virtue's blazon, and are bliss ;  
 The standards of the depth are furl'd ;  
 The powers and pleasures of the world  
 Pay tribute ; and her days are all  
 So high, pure, sweet, and practical,

She almost seems to have, at home,  
 What's promised of the life to come.

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

The sunny charm about this home  
 Makes all to shine who thither come.  
 My own dear Jane has caught its  
 grace,

And does an honour to the place.  
 Across the lawn I lately walk'd  
 Alone, and watch'd where moved and  
 talk'd,

Gentle and goddess-like of air,  
 Honoria and some stranger fair.

I chose a path away from these ;  
 When one of the two Goddesses,  
 With my wife's voice, but softer, said,  
 " Will you not walk with us, dear Fred ?"

She moves, indeed, the modest peer  
 Of all the proudest ladies here.  
 'Tis wonderful she should not be  
 Put out by such fine company.  
 We daily dine with men who stand  
 Among the leaders of the land,  
 And women beautiful and wise,  
 With England's greatness in their eyes.  
 To high, traditional good-sense,  
 And knowledge wide without pretence,  
 And human truth exactly hit  
 By quiet and conclusive wit,  
 Listens my little, homely dove,  
 Mistakes the points, and laughs for love.  
 You should have seen the vain delight,  
 After we went upstairs last night,

With which she stood and comb'd her hair,  
 And call'd me much the wittiest there !

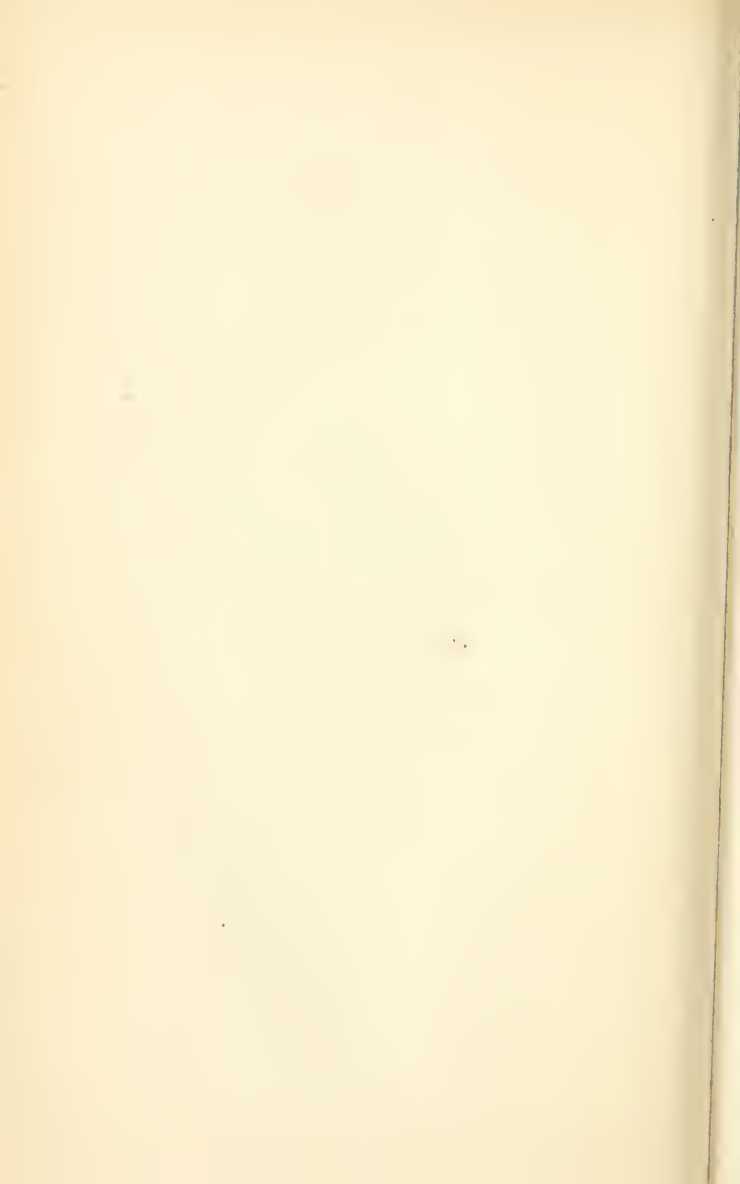
With reckless loyalty, dear Wife,  
 She lays herself about my life !  
 The joy I might have had of yore  
 I have not ; for 'tis now no more,  
 With me, the lyric time of youth,  
 And glad sensation of the truth ;  
 Yet, beyond hope or purpose blest,  
 In my rash choice, let be confess'd  
 The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

I kiss'd the kind, warm neck that slept,  
 And from her side, this morning stepp'd,  
 To bathe my brain from drowsy night  
 In the sharp air and golden light.  
 The dew, like frost, was on the pane.  
 The year begins, though fair, to wane.  
 There is a fragrance in its breath  
 Which is not of the flowers, but death,

And green above the ground appear  
 The lilies of another year.  
 I wandered forth, and took my path  
 Among the bloomless aftermath ;  
 And heard the steadfast robin sing,  
 As if his own warm heart were spring,  
 And watch'd him feed where, on the yew,  
 Hung sugar'd drops of crimson dew ;  
 And then return'd, by walls of peach  
 And pear-trees bending to my reach,  
 And rose-beds with the roses gone,  
 To bright-laid breakfast. Mrs. Vaughan  
 Was there, none with her. I confess  
 I love her rather more than less !  
 But she alone was loved of old ;  
 Now love is twain, nay, manifold ;  
 For, somehow, he whose daily life,  
 Adjusts itself to one true wife,  
 Grows to a nuptial, near degree  
 With all that's fair and womanly.

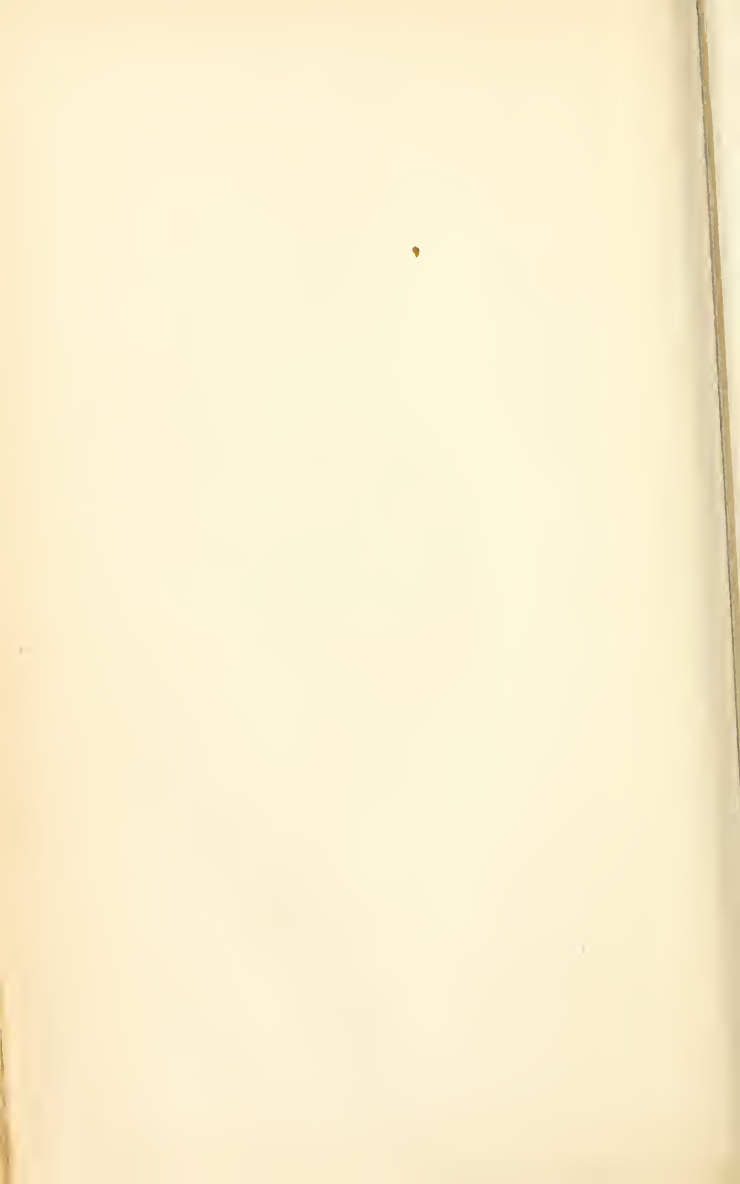


Therefore, as more than friends, we met  
Without constraint, without regret ;  
The wedded yoke that each had donn'd  
Seeming a sanction, not a bond.



VI.

Mrs. Graham to Frederick.



MRS. GRAHAM TO FREDERICK.

**A** MAN'S taskmasters are enough !  
Add not yourself to the host thereof.  
This did you ever from the first,  
As now, in venturing to the Hurst.  
You won, my child, from weak surprise,  
A vigour to be doubly wise  
In wedlock : with success, then, cease,  
Nor risk the triumph and the peace.  
'Tis not pure faith that hazards even  
The adulterous hope of change in heaven.

Your love lacks joy, your letter says.  
 Yes ; love requires the focal space  
 Of recollection, or of hope,  
 E'er it can measure its own scope.  
 Too soon, too soon, comes Death to show  
 We love more deeply than we know !  
 The rain, that fell upon the height  
 Too gently to be call'd delight,  
 Within the dark vale reappears,  
 As a wild cataract of tears ;  
 And love in life should strive to see  
 Sometimes what love in death would be !  
 (Easier to love, we so should find,  
 It is, than to be just and kind !)  
     She's cold. Put to the coffin-lid.  
 What distance for another did,  
 That death has done for her ! The good,  
 Once gazed upon with heedless mood,  
 Now fills with tears the famish'd eye,  
 And turns all else to vanity.

'Tis sad to see, with death between,  
 The good we have pass'd, and have not seen!  
 How strong appear the words of all!  
 The looks of those that live appal.  
 They are the ghosts, and check the breath;  
 There's no reality but death,  
 And hunger for some signal given  
 That we shall have our own in heaven!  
 But this the God of love lets be  
 A horrible uncertainty.

How great her smallest virtue seems,  
 How small her greatest fault! Ill dreams  
 Were those that foil'd with loftier grace  
 The homely kindness of her face.  
 'Twas here she sat and work'd, and there  
 She comb'd and kiss'd the children's hair;  
 Or, with one baby at her breast,  
 Another taught, or hush'd to rest.  
 Praise does the heart no more refuse  
 To the divinity of use.

Her humblest good is hence most high  
 In the heavens of fond memory ;  
 And love says Amen to the word,  
 A prudent wife is from the Lord.  
 Her worst gown's kept, ('tis now the best,  
 As that in which she oftenest dress'd,)  
 For memory's sake more precious grown  
 Than she herself was for her own.  
 Poor wife! foolish it seem'd to fly  
 To sobs instead of dignity,  
 When she was hurt. Now, more than all,  
 Heart-rending and angelical  
 That ignorance of what to do,  
 Bewilder'd still by wrong from you.  
 (For what man ever yet had grace  
 Ne'er to abuse his power and place?)  
     No magic of her voice or smile  
 Raised in a trice a fairy isle,  
 But fondness for her underwent  
 An unregarded increment,



Like that which lifts, through centuries,  
The coral reef within the seas,  
Till, lo! the land where was the wave.  
Alas! 'tis everywhere her grave.



VII.

Frederick to his Mother.



FREDERICK TO HIS MOTHER.

**A**T Jane's desire, lest High-Hurst Park  
Should make our cottage cold and dark,  
After three weeks we came away,  
To spend at home our Wedding-Day.  
Twelve wedding-days gone by, and none  
Yet kept, to keep them all in one,  
She and myself, (with John and Grace  
On donkeys,) visited the place  
I first drew breath in, Knatchley Wood.  
Bearing the basket, stuff'd with food,

Milk, loaves, hard eggs, and marmalade,  
I halted where the wandering glade  
Divides the thicket. There I knew,  
It seem'd, the very drops of dew  
Below the unalter'd eglantine.  
Nothing had changed since I was nine!  
In the green desert, down to eat  
We sat, our rustic grace at meat  
Good appetite, through that long climb  
Hungry two hours before the time.  
And there Jane took her stitching out,  
And John for birds' nests look'd about,  
And Grace and Baby, in between  
The warm blades of the breathing green,  
Dodged grasshoppers; and I no less,  
In conscientious idleness,  
Enjoy'd myself, under the noon  
Stretch'd, and the sounds and sights of June  
Receiving, with a drowsy charm,  
Through muffled ear and folded arm.

And then, as if I sweetly dream'd,  
I half remember'd how it seem'd  
When I, too, was a little child  
About the wild wood roving wild.  
Pure breezes from the far-off height  
Melted the blindness from my sight,  
Until, with rapture, grief, and awe,  
I saw again as then I saw.  
As then I saw I saw again  
The harvest waggon in the lane,  
With high-hung tokens of its pride  
Left in the elms on either side ;  
The daisies coming out at dawn  
In constellations on the lawn ;  
The glory of the daffodil ;  
The three black windmills on the hill,  
Whose magic arms, flung wildly by,  
Sent magic shadows past the rye.  
Within the leafy coppice, lo,  
More wealth than miser's dreams could show,

The blackbird's warm and woolly brood,  
Five golden beaks agape for food ;  
The Gipsies, all the summer seen  
Native as poppies to the Green ;  
The winter, with its frosts and thaws  
And opulence of hips and haws ;  
The lovely marvel of the snow ;  
The Tamar, with its altering show  
Of gay ships sailing up and down,  
Among the fields and by the Town.  
And, dearer far than anything,  
Came back the songs you used to sing.  
(Ah, might you sing such songs again,  
And I, your child, but hear as then,  
With conscious profit of the gulf  
Flown over from my present self!)  
And, as to men's retreating eyes,  
Beyond high mountains higher rise,  
Still farther back there shone to me,  
The dazzling dusk of infancy.



Thither I look'd, as, sick of night,  
 The Alpine shepherd looks to the height,  
 And does not see the day, 'tis true,  
 But sees the rosy tops that do.

Meantime Jane stitch'd, and fann'd the flies  
 From my repose, with hush'd replies  
 To Grace, and smiles when Baby fell.  
 Her countenance love visible  
 Appear'd, love audible her voice.  
 Why in the past alone rejoice,  
 Whilst here was wealth before me cast  
 Which, as you say, if 'twere but past  
 Were then most precious! Question vain  
 When ask'd again and yet again,  
 Year after year; yet now, for no  
 Cause, but that heaven's bright winds will blow  
 Not at our beck, but as they list,  
 It brought that distant, golden mist  
 To grace the hour, firing the deep  
 Of spirit and the drowsy keep

Of joy, till, spreading uncontain'd  
 The holy power of seeing gain'd  
 The outward eye, this owning even  
 That where there's love and truth there's heaven.

Debtor to few, far-separate hours  
 Like this, that truths for me are powers,  
 (Ah, happy hours, 'tis something yet  
 Not to forget that I forget !)  
 I know their worth, and this, the chief,  
 I count not vain because 'twas brief.

And now a cloud, bright, huge, and calm,  
 Rose, doubtful if for bale or balm ;  
 O'ertopping crags, portentous towers  
 Appear'd at beck of viewless powers  
 Along a rifted mountain range.  
 Untraceable and swift in change,  
 Those glittering peaks, disrupted, spread  
 To solemn bulks, seen overhead ;  
 The sunshine quench'd, from one dark form  
 Fuemd the appalling light of storm.

Straight to the zenith, black with bale,  
 The Gipsies' smoke rose deadly pale ;  
 And one wide night of hopeless hue  
 Hid from the heart the recent blue.  
 And soon, with thunder crackling loud,  
 A flash within the formless cloud  
 Show'd vague recess, projection dim,  
 Lone sailing rack, and shadowy rim.

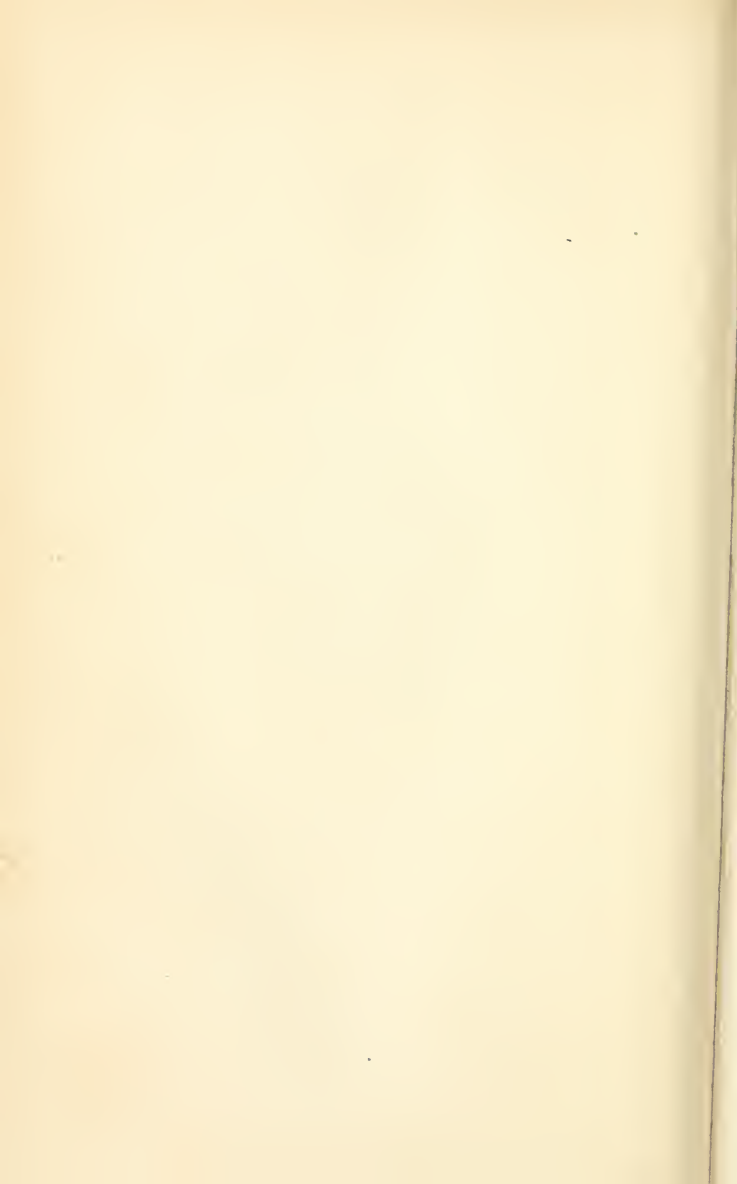
We stood, safe group'd beneath a shed.  
 Grace hid behind Jane's gown for dread,  
 Who told her, fondling with her hair,  
 "The naughty thunder, God took care  
 "It should not hurt good little girls."  
 At this Grace re-arranged her curls ;  
 But John, disputing, seem'd to me  
 Too much for Jane's theology,  
 Who bade him watch the tempest. Now  
 A blast made all the woodland bow ;  
 Against the whirl of leaves and dust  
 Kine dropp'd their heads ; the tortured gust

Jagg'd and convulsed the ascending smoke  
 To mockery of the lightning's stroke.  
 The blood prick'd, and a blinding flash  
 And close, co-instantaneous crash  
 Humbled the soul, and the rain all round  
 Resilient dimm'd the whistling ground,  
 Nor flagg'd in force from first to last,  
 Till, sudden as it came, 'twas past,  
 Leaving a trouble in the copse  
 Of brawling birds and tinkling drops.

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

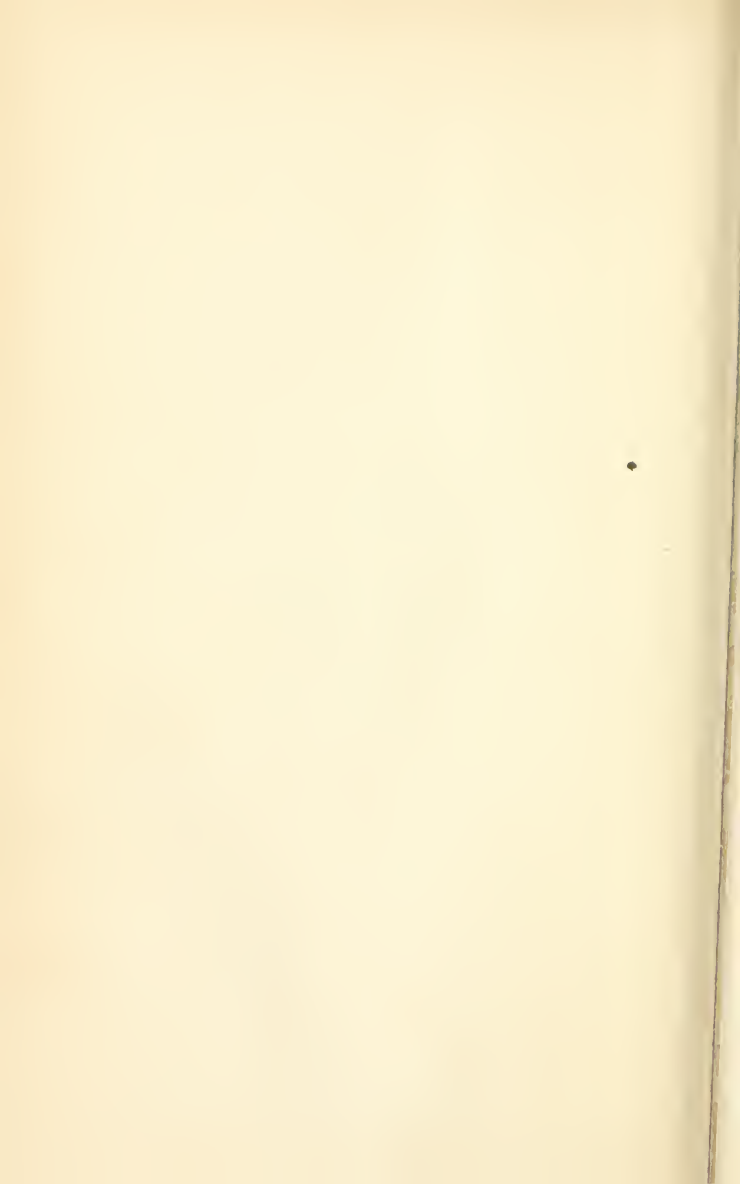
With this adventure, we return'd.  
 The roads the feet no longer burn'd.  
 A wholesome smell of rainy earth  
 Refresh'd our spirits, tired of mirth.

The donkey-boy drew friendly near  
My wife, and, touch'd by the kind cheer  
Her countenance show'd, or sooth'd perchance  
By the soft evening's sad advance,  
As we were, stroked the flanks and head  
Of the ass, and, somewhat thick-voiced, said,  
"To 'ave to wop the donkeys so  
" 'Ardens the 'art, but they wont go  
" Without !" My wife, by this impress'd,  
As men judge poets by their best,  
When now we reach'd the welcome door,  
Gave him his hire, and sixpence more.



VIII.

Jane to Mrs. Graham.





JANE TO MRS. GRAHAM.

**D**EAR Mother, I just write to say  
We've pass'd a most delightful day,  
As, no doubt, you have heard from Fred.  
(Once, you may recollect, you said,  
True friendship neither doubts nor doats,  
And does not read each other's notes ;  
And so we never do !) I'll miss,  
For Fred's impatient, all but this :  
We spent,—the children, he, and I,—  
Our wedding anniversary

In the woods, where, while I tried to keep  
The flies off, so that he might sleep,  
He actually kiss'd my foot,—  
At least, the beautiful French boot,  
Your gift,—and, laughing with no cause  
But pleasure, said I really was  
The very nicest little wife ;  
And that he prized me more than life.  
When Fred once says a thing, you know,  
You feel so sure it must be so,  
It's almost dreadful ! Then on love,  
And marriage, and the world above,  
We talk'd ; for, though we seldom name  
Religion, both now think the same.  
Oh, Mother, what a bar's removed  
To loving and to being loved !  
For no agreement really is  
In anything when none's in this.  
Why, once, if dear, dear Frederick press'd  
His wife against his hearty breast,

The interior difference seem'd to tear  
 My own, until I could not bear  
 The trouble. Oh, that dreadful strife,  
 It show'd indeed that faith is life.  
 Fred never felt this. If he did,  
 I'm sure it could not have been hid ;  
 For wives, I need not say to you,  
 Can feel just what their husbands do,  
 Without a word or look. But then  
 It is not so, you know, with men.

And now I'll tell you how he talk'd,  
 While in the Wood we sat or walk'd.  
 He told me that "The Sadducees  
 " Inquired not of true marriages  
 " When they provoked that dark reply,  
 " Which now costs love so many a sigh.  
 " In vain would Christ have taught such clods  
 " That Cæsar's things are also God's !"  
 I can't quite think that happy thought,  
 It seems so novel, does it not ?

Fred only means to say, you know,  
 It *may*, for aught we are told, be so.  
 ' *He* thinks that joy is never higher  
 Than when love worships its desire  
 Far off. His words were : " After all,  
 " Hope's mere reversal may befall  
 " The partners of His glories who  
 " Daily is crucified anew :  
 " Splendid privations, martyrdoms  
 " To which no weak remission comes,  
 " Perpetual passion for the good  
 " Of them that feel no gratitude,  
 " Far circlings, as of planets' fires,  
 " Round never to be reach'd desires,  
 " Whatever rapturously sighs  
 " That life is love, love sacrifice."  
 And then, as if he spoke aloud  
 To some one looking from a cloud,  
 " All I am sure of heaven is this,  
 " Howe'er the mode, I shall not miss

" One true delight which I have known.  
 " Not on the changeful earth alone  
 " Shall loyalty remain unmoved  
 " T'wards everything I ever loved.  
 " So Heaven's voice calls, like Rachel's voice  
 " To Jacob in the field, ' Rejoice !  
 " ' Serve on some seven more sordid years,  
 " ' Too short for weariness or tears ;  
 " ' Serve on ; then, oh Beloved, well-tried,  
 " ' Take me for ever for thy bride ! ' "

You see, though Frederick sometimes shocks  
 One's old ideas, he's orthodox.  
 Was it not kind to talk to me  
 So really confidentially ?

Soon silent, as before, he lay,  
 But I felt giddy all the day,  
 And now my head aches ; so farewell !

*Postscript.*— I've one thing more to tell :  
 Fred's teaching Johnny algebra !  
 The rogue already treats mamma

As if he thought her, in his mind,  
Rather silly, but very kind.  
Is not that nice? It's so like Fred!  
Good-bye! for I'm to go to bed,  
Because I'm tired, or ought to be.  
That's Frederick's way of late. You see  
He really loves me after all.  
He's growing quite tyrannical!

THE END.

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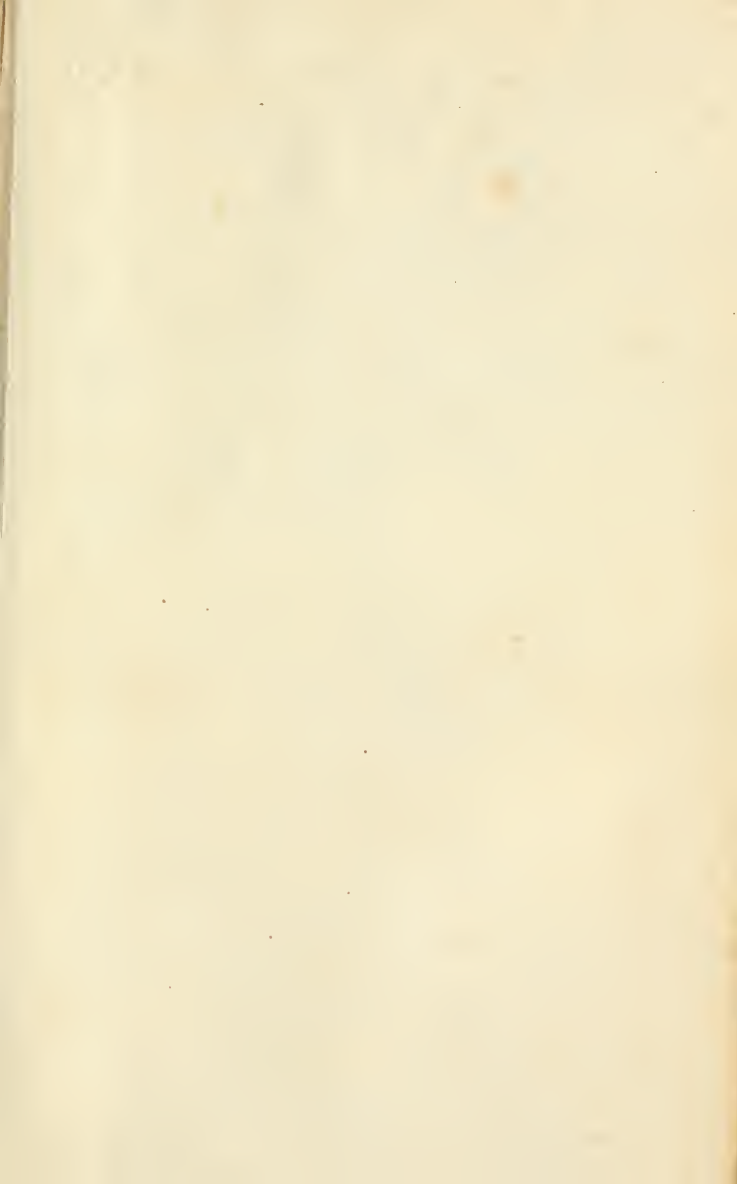
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