

## II. UNPUBLISHED POETRY

### 6. A Rural Meditation, 1766<sup>1</sup>

Behold the beauteous sylvan scenes around,  
Whose varied beauties taught my feet to stray,  
Whose blooming springs, gay verdure paints the ground  
In its enamell'd vivid green array.

But all these lovely scenes give no delight, 5  
Without the mind that views them is at ease,  
Thought sickens, and it cloy upon the sight,  
Nor one of all her varied beauties please.

Here roses smile, dispensing sweets around, 10  
And here the pink which breathes a sweet perfume,  
The lovely violet creeps along the ground,  
And unregarded drop their beauteous bloom.

The feather'd songsters from the neighbouring groves  
Salute my ears with sweetest harmony,  
Their feather'd mates resound<sup>a</sup> their little loves 15  
With all their infant train together by.

With my dear Myra<sup>2</sup> in the jasmine bower,  
With her improving conversation blest,  
There have I spent the happiest of my hours,  
And all my cares and woes were then at rest. 20

Still with my Myra and my Celia<sup>3</sup> blest,  
Why breathes my anxious breast the frequent sigh,  
Ah! why so oft with sudden woe opprest,  
Why thus unhappy tho' such friends are nigh.

a feather'd ^mates^ resound] MS

'Tis for my absent friends the sigh will heave, 25  
 Oh 'tis for them I drop the fruitless tear;  
 Absence I hope will never me bereave  
 Of friends I always hold so justly dear.

But let me not at providence repine  
 Nor seek for perfect happiness below; 30  
 Lord to thy sovereign will may I resign  
 And let me never from thy precepts fly.

### 7. An Elegy, 1766<sup>4</sup>

To pensive melancholy Thought's a prey,  
 To dark corroding care and anxious fear,  
 As late I passed the solitary day,  
 Reflection heaved the sigh and forced the tear.

Say where does happiness on earth reside, 5  
 Say does she visit pleasure's airy round?  
 In flowery vales does happiness abide?  
 Or is the goddess never to be found?

Ah no, she flies from pleasures airy round,  
 Flies from the assemblies<sup>a</sup> of the great and gay, 10  
 Nor can the vale with flowery beauties crown'd  
 Detain the goddess tho' it courts her stay.

What lasting pleasure can we ever know  
 Till we explore it, in its native skies;  
 There happiness in full perfection grows, 15  
 Thither I may my wishes learn to rise.

May resignation ever be my quest,  
 And gentle hope her halcyon wing extend,  
 May generous friendship still expand my breast  
 And calm content on all my days attend. 20

### 8. An Invitation to Myrtilla in the Winter, 1766<sup>5</sup>

Now Winter cloathes with snow the fields around,  
 Of ev'ry plant and flow'r disrobes the plain,  
 In Icy Fetters ev'ry stream is bound<sup>b</sup>  
 And Nature unresisting owns his reign.

a assembly's] MS

b The murmuring streams in icy fetters bound] 5/1

The feather'd Warblers cease to tune their Lays, But joyless fly thro' all the leafless Bow'rs Save the sweet Redbreast on the naked Spray Who cheers with artless Song the wint'ry hours.	5
O come sweet Friendship with thy gentle pow'r, Thy smile can brighten all the shades of woe; O come and cheer this inauspicious hour With pleasures which thy Vor'ries only know.	10
The converse of a friend can give delight When winter strips the groves of every charm, When spring's gay flow'rets cease to please the sight, And blustering boreas loudly spreads alarm. <sup>a</sup>	15
Come then Myrtilla, cheer this lonely plain, And with thy converse, soothe my every care; Then shall the muse attune a sprightly strain, And winter then a pleasing aspect wear. <sup>b</sup>	20

9. An Elegy on the approach of Spring 1767, written in Preston fields  
near Yeovil<sup>6</sup>

Now comes the Queen of seasons, lovely spring! The woods and lawns their wonted charms resume, The feather'd songsters warble on the wing, And every fragrant flower breathes perfume.	
The lovely primrose scents the hedges near, The purple violet creeps along the ground, The daisy and the cowslip now appear, And nature's varied beauties bloom around.	5
Near to the margin of yon purling rill Where elms are pendant o'er my grassy seat, Hard by the foot of yonder sunny hill In these soft shades I seek a kind retreat.	10
The gentle lambs play by their Mother's side, The feather'd songsters warble from the spray; Vain wish, O could these lovely scenes abide, But time rolls on nor will one minute stay.	15

- a The social converse of a friend sincere | Can give delight when vernal beauties cease; | Stern Winter then a cheerful aspect wears | When gentle Friendship smooths his rugged face.] MS; text above taken from 5/1
- b Come then Mirtilla, bless this lonely dome | And Friendship's gen'rous glow shall warm my heart | With thee shall mirth and blooming pleasure come, | And anxious care at thy approach depart.] MS; text above taken from 5/1

Hence let me learn its nature nor misspend  
 My remnant minutes which on earth are lent;  
 This admonition O may I attend  
 Nor be my festive hours on earth misspent. 20

### 10. To Myrtilla, written in 1767<sup>7</sup>

Deign to accept these Lines, my much lov'd friend,  
 The grateful tribute of a heart sincere,  
 For you my tenderness shall never end,  
 Still shall my heart thy lovely Image bear.

My Dear Myrtilla, when these Lines you view 5  
 O may your Eye let fall one pitying tear;  
 Think on the time when last we bid adieu<sup>a</sup>  
 And say, O was poor hapless Silvia here.

How oft by wild capricious fancy sway'd  
 Scenes of domestic bliss my thoughts employ, 10  
 But soon the dear delusion fleets away  
 And real pain I find for fancy'd Joy.

Then Melancholy blends her sable Dyes  
 And Whispers, "Death may sieze your much lov'd<sup>b</sup> friends."  
 Then starts the ready tear, then heaves the sigh, 15  
 On Earth Alas my woes will never end.

But why these plaints? remember God is wise,  
 Afflictions from his Hand are not in vain;  
 Then cease, O wayward heart, suppress thy sighs,  
 Nor at the Almighty's high decree complain. 20

### 11. Evening, 1767<sup>8</sup>

Now the Sun adawn the Hill,  
 Streaks with Gold the western Sky,  
 All is now serenely still  
 Save the feather'd Warblers nigh.

Let me wander in yon Grove 5  
 Where the Songsters tune their lays,  
 Where the wandering Streamlet flows,  
 Where the flow'rs their bloom displays.

a you adieu] MS

b much ^lov'd^ friends] MS

See the Bees returning Home  
Laden with their waxen store, 10  
Gathering sweets where'er they roam,  
Treasuring for the wintry hour.

But the warblers cease their notes,  
Save Philomel on yonder spray;  
Pensive tunes her warbling throat 15  
And bids adieu to setting Day.

## 12. An Address to Sleep after a Journey, 1768<sup>9</sup>

Come gentle Sleep! My weary eyelids close,  
Tired with the labours of the live-long day,  
Safe in his guardian care, may I repose,  
Who drives my dark distressing fears away.

O! gently soothe each anxious care to rest, 5  
And calm the tumults of my ruffled mind  
And whisper comfort to my troubled<sup>a</sup> breast,  
Be every wish and every care resigned.

Let roving fancy form some pleasing dream,  
My absent friends in fancy let me view, 10  
If tender friendship be the soothing theme,  
I then shall wish the dear delusion true.

Ye balmy slumbers, whither are ye flown?  
Why will ye leave me thus when cares invade?  
O come propitious to my plaintive moan, 15  
And shed your lenient influence on my head.

And now I gently close my willing eyes  
Soft sleep obedient to my call attends,  
I feel its salutary influence nigh,  
O'er all my faculties its power extends. 20

O! may I wake with praises to his name,  
(If 'tis his will my eyes should see the light)  
Whose watchful care preserved my feeble frame,  
Through all the various dangers of the night.

a to ^my^ troubled] MS

13. A Reflection wrote in 1768<sup>10</sup>

How pleasing is the view of Nature's Charms,  
 The verdant Fields with springing Corn array'd,  
 The Hedges whiten'd o'er with fragrant blossoms,  
 What sweet Delights these rural Scenes afford.  
 These o'er the Heart diffuse a tranquil Joy 5  
 And lead the restless Mind to Meditation  
 On the vast Wonders of creating Skill.  
 There's not a painted Insect or a flow'r  
 But speaks the sovereign Hand of Nature's Lord.  
 O How superior are the harmless Joys 10  
 Of Meditation in a sweet refinement  
 (Far from the tumults of a restless World)  
 To all the Joys that Grandeur can bestow.  
 Whilst by the busy and unthinking Crowd  
 Forgot and sunk in sweet Obscurity, 15  
 Here may I read in Nature's open Volume  
 Beneficence unbounded, wide diffus'd  
 O'er all the vast Creation and adore.  
 Dear Native Fields!<sup>a</sup> 'twas here my Infant Eye  
 First op'd on Nature's Beauties, first experienc'd 20  
 The providential Care of Nature's Lord.  
 Beneath the Shelter of a Parent's Wing  
 I ventur'd into Life a helpless Stranger;<sup>11</sup>  
 What kind<sup>b</sup> Indulgence have I always known,  
 What anxious tenderness have I experienc'd, 25  
 What kind paternal Care! O my full heart  
 Cannot express the Gratitude I feel!  
 O may I never never grieve the Heart  
 Of my indulgent Parent by my follies,  
 Nor let the flow'rs his kindness try'd to plant 30  
 For<sup>c</sup> my young Mind be choak'd with noxious weeds.  
 But shall I grateful to my earthly Parent  
 Father divine!<sup>d</sup> to thee no Homage pay  
 Who gives<sup>e</sup> me Friends and Health<sup>f</sup> and every Blessing?  
 O warm this flinty<sup>g</sup> heart and bid it glow 35  
 With Love divine and humble Gratitude.  
 And Oh if I am spar'd to riper Age<sup>h</sup>

- a Fields] MS; Fields!] 5/5/iii  
 b sweet] 5/1; 5/5/iii  
 c In] 5/5/iii  
 d divine] 5/5/iii  
 e giv'st] 5/5/iii  
 f Health and Friends] 5/5/iii  
 g icy] 5/1; 5/5/iii  
 h years] 5/1; 5/5/iii

May I still grow in humble<sup>a</sup> Resignation,  
 May sweet Content calm every rising Sigh,<sup>b</sup>  
 And may my thoughts, my Heart, be fix'd on high. 40  
 Then will each scene a pleasing Aspect wear  
 And I shall rise superior to each Care,  
 Ev'n ghastly<sup>c</sup> Death shall prove a welcome friend  
 To waft my soul to Joys that never end.<sup>12</sup>

#### 14. Ode on the Approach of Winter, 1769<sup>13</sup>

Gentle Fancy! Pleasing pow'r,  
 Beam o'er my Mind one vivid ray,  
 Tell me Oh whither dost thou stray?  
 Direct my steps to Thy sequester'd Bower;  
 Must I in vain still breathe my Sighs 5  
 Now dreary Winter spreads his reign?  
 Hast thou left these lonely plains  
 And fled to gentler climes and milder Skies?

Oh simple Maid, to vainly hope  
 That roving Power could be confin'd 10  
 Within the Limits of thy Mind.  
 Oh no! she scorns such bounds and must have bolder scope  
 In the wide expanded Mind  
 Where Genius wanders unconfin'd. 15  
 The lovely Nymph delights to stray  
 Where Judgment governs every flight,  
 And never trusts her from his sight  
 Lest she should lose fair Reason's sacred way.

Then since to fancy I unheeded sue  
 I'll humbler grow and seek the rural Maid 20  
 That loves to wander in the Shade.

O sweet Contentment! Thee I woo  
 In russet vest array'd;  
 Far from Grandeur's dazzling ray,  
 From lofty Domes, 25  
 From gilded Rooms,

She bends her unregarded way  
 To the humble lonely Village  
 Where the Swains employ'd in Tillage  
 Unknown to grandeur spend the peaceful Day.<sup>d</sup> 30

- a cheerful] 5/5/iii  
 b every ^rising^ Sigh] MS  
 c gastly] MS; ghastly] 5/1  
 d their peaceful Days] MS; their peaceful Days] 5/1

Come heavenly Nymph with brow serene,  
 Bring sacred friendship in thy train  
     And every care beguile;  
 Your gladsome presence gilds the darkest scene,  
     Dresses in livelier hues the plain, 35  
 And bids ev'n Winter mid'st his horrors<sup>a</sup> smile.  
     I ask no more – if these sweet pow'rs,  
     Content and Friendship, bless my hours,  
     I'll view with pity all the rich and great,  
 And gratefully enjoy my humbler, happier estate. 40

### 15. A Winters Walk, 1770<sup>14</sup>

While o'er my native fields I musing stray,  
     And view kind Nature's variegated charms;  
 I envy not the rich, the great, the gay,  
     Superior bliss my peaceful bosom warms.

What tho' stern Winter spreads his dreary reign,<sup>b</sup> 5  
     And shivering Nature droops at his embrace:  
 What tho' the Warblers shun these lonely plains,<sup>c</sup>  
     And rude cold Winds fair Nature's charms deface.

Yet ev'n in Winter Nature's charms can please,  
     Some gleams of Sunshine cheer the wintry hours; 10  
 The rural Scenes diffuse a heartfelt Ease  
     And animate faint Nature's drooping pow'rs.

The Redbreast, social Bird, for shelter flies  
     To Man, but Ah! to some he flies in vain!  
 In vain he shuns the rage of Stormy Skies, 15  
     They hear unmov'd his sweetly plaintive strain.

Welcome, sweet Warbler, to my lonely Cot,  
     Nor there in vain shall thou thy wild notes sing;  
 The Redbreast's crumbs shall never be forgot,  
     Lucinda<sup>15</sup> daily shall thy Dinner bring. 20

O hoary Winter! Teach an artless Maid  
     To catch some portion of poetic fire!  
 To sing thy plains in snowy white array'd,  
     And tune to peaceful themes my infant Lyre.

a sorrows] 5/1

b reing] 5/6

c this lonely plain] 5/6

- What tho' no flow'rets deck thy hedges gay, 25  
Nor softly murmuring flows the tinkling rill,  
Yet the bright Chrystal glitters on the spray,  
And bleating flocks range o'er the neighbouring hill.
- When sweet Content inspires the tranquil breast,  
Cold Winter smiles as kind as balmy Spring: 30  
When the wild Passions gently sink to rest,  
The circling Seasons still new pleasures bring.
- But ah how prone is my unthankful mind  
To think the absent blessing still the best,  
To slight the present and still seek to find 35  
New Joys, which are<sup>a</sup> no pleasures when possest.
- Father of Light! Beam down a gracious ray,  
And raise my heart, and raise my wishes high,  
Teach me to trace the bright the starry<sup>b</sup> way  
That leads to realms where pleasures never die. 40

16. On Solitude, 1770<sup>16</sup>

- All Hail sweet Solitude! Reflection's friend,  
O wrap thy Vot'ry in thy deepest Shade,  
And softly pleasing meditation lend  
Thy heart, improving thy delightful Aid.
- Here from the Din of busy Crowds remov'd 5  
Far from the trivial pleasures of the gay,  
Lost in sweet Meditation let me rove  
And o'er the Sylvan scenes in Silence stray.
- What are the highest pleasures of the gay,  
The laugh of Mirth, the gaudy pomp of pow'r? 10  
One smile<sup>c</sup> of true Contentment far outweighs  
Those glittering idle pageants of an hour.
- What tho' the gay deride and Grandeur scorn  
The pensive Hermit's solitary Cell,  
More real bliss its humble Walls adorn 15  
Than all the pleasures which in Grandeur dwells.

a yields] 5/6  
b bright ^the^ starry] MS  
c grain] 5/1

Here in this secret,<sup>a</sup> this secure recess,<sup>b</sup>  
 O let me muse my numerous follies o'er;  
 May Penitence unfeign'd my heart possess  
 And fill my Soul with her celestial Lore. 20

Attend, my Soul, attend the heavenly Voice  
 That softly whispers to thy mental Ear,  
 Make Wisdom's pleasant Ways thy early Choice,  
 Fix not thy Heart nor thy Affections here.

Then will sweet Solitude or social Joys 25  
 Delight, but not engage my nobler part,  
 While grateful Praise my every pow'r employs  
 To him who warms to Love this icy Heart.

### 17. The Morning in April<sup>17</sup>

First of the train which welcomes the approach  
 Of cheerful morn, the Redbreast, lonely Bird,  
 In bashful gentle harmony proclaims  
 That louder Minstrels are prepar'd to sing 5  
 The swift approach of Sol with Orient beams,  
 Peeping o'er hills and Trees and Eastern mountains;  
 The numerous Songsters of the hill<sup>c</sup> and vale  
 Conspire to sing in artless harmony  
 And welcome in the glad return of Day;  
 Each Day like youth, improving as it comes 10  
 To form the Glory of the rising year,  
 Till gentle May, the sweetest vernal month,  
 Like a gay nymph comes tripping o'er the plain,  
 Dress'd in the beauteous vesture of the Spring.  
 Now the Gay Lark with quivering pinion soars 15  
 And warbles forth his Great Creator's praise;<sup>d</sup>  
 Aspiring high in Ether clear and strong,  
 In melting harmony does loud<sup>e</sup> proclaim  
 The power and glory of the Almighty King.  
 Then as abash'd he falls in humble Silence<sup>f</sup> 20  
 And hides his head beneath some shelt'ring Clod  
 On hill or vale as if compelled to own

a in ^this^ secret] 5/5/iii

b retreat] 5/1

c hills] MS

d pow'r/praise] MS

e he/loud] MS

f silence/falls] MS

This Song unequal to the mighty theme,<sup>a</sup>  
 Confessing inability to tell  
 The mighty power of his Creator God. 25  
 The mellow<sup>b</sup> Blackbird and the noisy<sup>c</sup> Thrush  
 With all the music of the flowery vale  
 Conspire to fill the Soul with pure delight;  
 Each vocal minstrel bears a useful part  
 In the grand chorus, harmony divine. 30  
 Sent to the *Poor* the rich like fools disdain  
 The charming music of the echoing grove;  
 Nor hill nor vale can make them greet their Bed.  
 Ungratefully like Brutes they lie and snare  
 Nor taste the fragrance of the balmy Air, 35  
 Nor listen to the music of the Grove,  
 A Concert by our bounteous Maker sent  
 To cheer the heart of Industry and Thrift,<sup>d</sup>  
 Thrice happy if it lead them to their God.  
 They need not envy Kings their regal state, 40  
 Nor sleepy Drones upon a downy Bed;  
 Ungrateful Luxury attends them there  
 Nor will they wake to hear these notes divine.  
 Sleep on, enjoy what stupid Morpheus<sup>18</sup> gives;  
 Sweetest of all the feather'd train appears. 45  
 Poor Philomela,<sup>19</sup> melancholy Bird,  
 By moon light warbling thy love labor'd Songs,  
 In shady covert warbling notes divine.  
 Transported, charm'd, delighted may we hear<sup>20</sup>  
 Thy varied notes in soft preludiums flow; 50  
 It warms the heart with pleasure, fills the Ear  
 To hear thy Tale of Complicated Woe.  
 But soon, too soon, alas, must now away  
 When Summer heats prevent thy amorous Song.  
 Oh! could we hear thee<sup>e</sup> all the livelong Day, 55  
 Or could we hear thee all the Season long,  
 Just so is Youth and Beauty snatch'd away  
 Just as we see their form or hear their voice;  
 Ev'n so is all the Glory they display,  
 They're<sup>f</sup> quickly gone – why should we then rejoice? 60

- a Then as abash'd he falls in humble silence/falls | As if compell'd to own his Songs unequal lay/  
 mighty theme | With deep humility he hides his head | Beneath some humble Clod on hill or vale]  
 MS; lines 20–3 taken from alternative lines written to the side on the MS and marked by an asterisk  
 b sonorous/mellow] MS  
 c noisy/melliflous] MS  
 d Toil/Thrift] MS  
 e thee] omitted from MS  
 f Their] MS

Death and decay await<sup>a</sup> the Sons of Men,  
 Swift like the Seasons must we pass away;  
 Although we live to threescore years and ten,  
 Tis short, Ah! short as is the month of May.

### 18. To a Myrtle<sup>21</sup>

Withering dying plant, in thee<sup>b</sup>  
 An emblem of myself I see.  
 Changed like thine this faded form,  
 Once with health's gay lustre warm,  
 Late erect in youthful bloom, 5  
 Round these shed'st a sweet perfume.  
 Now thy feeble stalk reclined  
 Bends before each breeze of wind;  
 Thus the heart oppress'd with woe  
 Shrinks beneath the slightest blow. 10  
 See thy faded leaves around,  
 Robb'd of beauty strew the ground,  
 Spring no more with verdure gay  
 Shall adorn each naked spray.  
 Thus my dearest wishes o'er 15  
 Hope with me exists no more.

### 19. To a Mother, on the Death of an Infant<sup>22</sup>

Perfection dwells not in a world like this,  
 Look upward thro' the melancholy gloom,  
 See your dear Infant, in the abodes of bliss,  
 Improved and smiling in immortal bloom.

Think with what rapture you will meet her there, 5  
 And bend adoring at the eternal throne,  
 Accomplished every wish and every care,  
 And cent'ring all your bliss in God alone.

Then what his hand bestowed and what resumed  
 You'll own from full conviction right and best, 10  
 For nobler ends the lovely floweret bloomed  
 Than merely to adorn a mother's breast.

a awaits] MS

b plant in thee] MS

Though no kind hand bind up this broken heart,  
No voice the sound of sympathy impart,  
Tho' my too ready tears unnoticed flow, 15  
And this sad heart in secret hoards its woe,  
Yet ah thou great Unseen! might I but dare  
To have in thy paternal love a share,  
That not in judgment but in mercy meant  
Sorrow and sadness to my soul was sent, 20  
From life's destructive snares to set me free  
And teach my soul to find its rest in Thee.

## 20. Soliloquy<sup>23</sup>

Why, Gracious God! Am I so richly blest,  
Why is thy bounty lavished thus on me?  
Each day, each hour, brings some new mercy with it,  
Or else confirms or heightens those I have.  
While thousands groan oppres'd with various woes, 5  
Each peaceful evening, but renews the sound,  
And tells me I am happy. – But my soul,  
Think on the mighty debt thou owest thy God  
For these perpetual favours – and shall I,  
Surrounded with my wishes, blest beyond 10  
Whole millions more deserving, shall I still  
Pass heedless thro' these days and nights of peace,  
Regardless of my generous Benefactor?  
No! let a grateful heart improve each comfort  
And that appear by everything I do. 15  
Is God so kind and can I dare offend,  
Since that would turn my mercies into judgments?  
Then they'd enhance my guilt; forbid it, Lord,  
And bid me to express my thoughts to thee  
By doing all thy will. 20

## 21. On the Birth of an Infant<sup>24</sup>

Sweet blossom of future delight  
To thy Mother's fond bosom how dear,  
Mays't thou all her sufferings requite  
And repay with a smile every tear.  
  
Oh mays't thou to manhood arrive, 5  
Be virtue thy pleasure and fame;  
In thee may thy Grandsire survive,  
Nor thou be unworthy the name.

engaged in a pamphlet war that year with John Wesley over the latter's condemnation of the American cause. As the 'Ode to Liberty' reveals, Mary Steele, like Jane Attwater, Mary Scott and Caleb Evans, was staunchly anti-war and pro-liberty. See Attwater to Steele, 20 February 1775, letter 54, above; C. Evans, *A Letter to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, occasioned by his Calm Address to the American Colonies* (London: Edward & Charles Dilly, 1775); C. Evans, *British Constitutional Liberty. A Sermon, Preached in Broadmead, Bristol, November 5, 1775* (Bristol: W. Pine, 1775).

10. *Lines on the Death of Anne Steele*: This poem was inserted by Evans at the beginning of *Miscellaneous Pieces, in Verse and Prose, by Theodosia* (Bristol: W. Pine [and others], 1780), pp. xii–xvii, just after his life of Anne Steele; no MS exists of the poem. Evans provided the following preface to the poem:

The insertion of the following lines may perhaps need some apology, as they are merely the effusions of a heart deeply penetrated with a sense of its own loss; written at different times, for its private relief, and contain nothing more concerning the dear deceased than has been already said in the preceding pages. –

But it is the last, the only expression of gratitude and affection, that can ever be paid to her memory by one whom she fondly loved, and who in losing her, has lost one of her chief sources of happiness in this world; this thought alone has occasioned their publication, and it is hoped will be a sufficient excuse for it to every feeling mind. (p. xii)

Shortly after Anne Steele's death on 11 November 1778, Evans commenced a correspondence with Mary Steele that lasted for several years. According to Herbert McLachlan, Mary Scott also composed a poem, 'To the Memory of Theodosia'; unfortunately, that poem, which he viewed when writing his articles on the Scott family, is no longer extant. See McLachlan, 'The Taylors and Scotts', p. 76.

11. *each dear instructive sentence*: In her spiritual autobiography addressed to her father (prose 2 above), Mary Steele is more specific about her aunt's last 'admonitions'. She writes, 'The Hour my Soul had shudder'd at so long came – & Death depriv'd me of my Dearest Aunt – whose Instructive Admonitions whose partial fondness, whose sympathetic tenderness I had enjoy'd from the earliest hour of Remembrance' (above, p. 189). Mary was having spiritual difficulties at this time (as she develops more fully in the remainder of her autobiography) with the Calvinistic doctrines of the sovereignty of God, election and predestination.
12. "Now parting pangs ... hearts no more": taken from Anne Steele's epitaph for her father on the Steele family tomb in the Broughton churchyard.
13. *If happy minds ... By thyself inspir'd*: Steele is adapting some lines from Anne Steele's poem based on Psalm 26:7, 'Desiring to Praise God for the experience of his Goodness' (Volume 2, poem 270): 'Not e'en those happy minds can trace, / With all their powers renew'd, refin'd, / The boundless glories of thy grace, / O thou omnipotently kind!'

## II. Unpublished Poetry

1. *A Rural Meditation, 1766*: STE 5/1 (transcribed by Mary Steele Tomkins). All manuscript copy-texts used in this volume are autographs by Mary Steele, unless otherwise noted.
2. *Myra*: Mary Scott (1751–93) of Milborne Port, Somerset, Mary's close friend (see her poetry and letters in Volume 4). Besides the above poem and poem 1 in this volume, 'To Miss Scott on reading "The Female Advocate"', numerous poems passed between

the two friends. For the other poems by Mary Steele to Mary Scott, see poems 26, 38, 41, 54, 61 and 100 below. Mary Scott's poems to Mary Steele can be found in Volume 4, poems 7–9.

3. *Celia*: Miss Williams, friend of Mary Steele and Mary Scott (and apparently a fellow poet), died of smallpox in September 1772 (see Steele's tributes to her, poems 41 and 46 above). Williams appears in one of William Steele's letters to Mary Steele (see letter 28 above), and also in Scott's *The Female Advocate*, ll. 103–10. The reference in the next stanza to Scott and Williams being 'absent friends' suggests that the three girls may have attended the same boarding school in Hackney, possibly the location for this poem. They probably knew each other through various family or church connections, for Miss Williams was a resident of Yeovil, Somerset, about 4 miles from Scott's home at Milborne Port. It is not improbable that the three girls knew each other from an early age, prior to boarding school. At the time of the above poem, Mary Steele was thirteen and Mary Scott fifteen.
4. *An Elegy, 1766*: STE 5/1 (transcribed by Mary Steele Tomkins).
5. *An Invitation to Myrtilia in the Winter, 1766*: STE 3/3/6 (transcribed by Anne Steele); also 5/1 (transcribed by Mary Steele Tomkins, with substantive variants from 3/3/6). 'Myrtilia' is Steele's close friend and relation Jane Attwater (1753–1843) of Bodenham, Wiltshire. These first few poems were of high enough quality that Mary's aunt, Mary Wakeford of Bradford, after a visit to Broughton in January 1767, recorded in her diary that she had 'an agreeable chat with my Sister [Anne Steele] about Polly Steele's dawning genius which is remarkable, and her hopefully serious turn'. In 1769, Mary Wakeford would compose two poems to Mary, both concerning her niece's desire to be a poet (poems 68–9 in Volume 4). See Selina Bompas's transcription of Wakeford's diary in STE 11/1/ii.
6. *An Elegy on the approach ... near Yeovil*: STE 5/1 (transcribed by Mary Steele Tomkins). Yeovil was where Mary's mother, Mary Bullock Steele (1713–62), was buried; Mary's uncle, George Bullock, lived at Yeovil, and Mary visited him at least once a year. During these visits she also visited Mary Scott and Miss Williams. This poem was written in the year prior to Mr Steele's remarriage in 1768. Mary was probably on break from boarding school. A Preston Road still exists in Yeovil.
7. *To Myrtilia, written in 1767*: STE 5/5/i.
8. *Evening, 1767*: STE 5/5/i; also 5/1 (transcribed by Mary Steele Tomkins).
9. *An Address to Sleep after a Journey, 1768*: STE 5/1 (transcribed by Mary Steele Tomkins).
10. *A Reflection wrote in 1768*: STE 5/14/i, attached to a letter from Mary Steele to Mary Scott, 19 May 1769 (see letter 3 above); also 5/1 (titled 'A Meditation', transcribed by Mary Steele Tomkins); a fragment (ll. 16–44) also appears in 5/5/iii.
11. *I ventur'd into Life a helpless Stranger*: Probably a reference to the death of her mother in 1762. Other references in the poem suggest that it may have been written about the time of Mr Steele's marriage to Martha Goddard (1734–91) of Pershore. The poem may have served as Mary's way of dealing with her emotions about an event to which, as detailed in a letter from Mr Steele to his new wife on 25 April 1768 (STE 4/4/ii), she was not particularly receptive.
12. *May sweet Content ... never end*: For some reason, Steele ends this poem, of which the first 38 lines are in blank verse, with three heroic couplets.
13. *Ode on the Approach of Winter, 1769*: STE 5/5/iii; also 5/1 (transcribed by Mary Steele Tomkins).

14. *A Winters Walk, 1770*: STE 5/5/iii; also 5/1 (transcribed by Mary Steele Tomkins, with stanzas numbered); and 5/6 (transcribed by Martha or Anne Steele, Mary Steele's half-sisters), from which the punctuation has primarily been taken.
15. *Lucinda*: Lucy Kent (1746–1806), the daughter of Josiah Kent and his first wife, Martha (d. 1747). They were relations of John Kent (1707–96), a lay preacher in the Broughton church, who married Sarah Etheredge (d. 1791), granddaughter of Henry Steele and William Steele IV's first cousin. Hence, Lucy was a relation of Mary Steele. Her father worked for William Steele, and at some point, most likely after the death of the first Mrs Steele in 1762, became a permanent resident at Broughton House, assisting in house duties and the care of young Mary, for Anne Steele's health would not have allowed her to perform the duties of a surrogate mother. Another possibility is that Lucy arrived in 1769 to assist the second Mrs Steele in caring for her new daughter, Anne. Lucy Kent, like many of the women in the Steele circle, never married. Living in another household was not uncommon for a single woman, who often served as a companion to a married woman or, in some cases, as a personal servant. Martha Steele, Mary's youngest half-sister, also never married, living all of her adult life with her sister, Anne. For Mary Steele's tribute to Lucy Kent, see poems 117 and 126 above. For more on spinsterhood, see O. Hufton, 'Women without Men: Widows and Spinsters in Britain and France in the Eighteenth Century', *Journal of Family History*, 9 (1984), pp. 355–76; B. Hill, *Women Alone: Spinsters in England 1660–1850* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001).
16. *On Solitude, 1770*: STE 5/5/iii; also 5/1 (transcribed by Mary Steele Tomkins, with stanzas numbered). At the end of 5/5/iii, Steele has added, 'written at Yeovil'.
17. *The Morning in April*: STE 5/5/vii. This poem most likely dates from the late 1760s.
18. *Morpheus*: Greek god of sleep and dreams.
19. *Philomela*: In Greek mythology, Philomela, daughter of Pandion, was turned into a nightingale after exacting her revenge on Tereus of Thrace.
20. *delighted may we hear*: At this point the poem switches from blank verse to quatrains of iambic pentameter lines rhyming *abab cdcd*, with the last three quatrains using only four rhymes.
21. *To a Myrtle*: STE 5/1 (transcribed by Mary Steele Tomkins); in 5/17 a draft of the first eight lines can be found on a loose folium (undated) taken from one of Mary Steele's pocket diaries.
22. *To a Mother, on the Death of an Infant*: STE 5/1. This poem appears in three quatrains on the recto, with the remaining lines (13–22) on the verso, like a formal response to the opening quatrains. The child is unidentified.
23. *Soliloquy*: STE 5/1.
24. *On the Birth of an Infant*: STE 5/1. The child is unidentified, though most likely it is one of the children of Gay Thomas Attwater (1736–92), Jane Attwater's older brother, who lived near Bodenham.
25. *To a Dormouse*: STE 5/1.
26. *To —*: STE 5/1. The recipient of the poem is unidentified, though it may be Mary Scott.
27. *To Myrtilla*: STE 5/1, transcribed by Mary Steele Tomkins.
28. *Tommy ... Sally*: Thomas Attwater (b. 1767) and Sarah Attwater (b. 1765), young children of Gay Thomas Attwater.
29. *Elegy, written July 21<sup>st</sup> 1770*: STE 5/2. William Steele's letter to Mary Steele, 23 July 1770 (see letter 13 above), reveals that Mary had recently returned from a visit to Weymouth and was now about to leave her uncle's residence at Yeovil, where she had been since early June (she had also spent time in Exeter). Before returning to Broughton, she