

## Poems from a Gift Book in the Hertfordshire Archives<sup>1</sup>

### To Love & To Be Loved

To love & to be loved, oh still be thine  
A fate which Heav'n & Man alike approve  
To mourn in silence to regret be mine  
Attempting still to hate what still I love

Fair hope is blighted in her spring to me.  
Life is a blank – and weary is my heart  
All nature blooms around – she smiles for thee  
But here her smiles no blessings can impart

Call not these sorrows but an idle jest  
Nor wish me to indulge a merrier strain  
Too true my griefs, & tho' but ill exprest  
Yet speaking I must number them again

But think not that ungrateful to thy love  
In sullen scorn – such sweetness I despise  
No – in my heart that sweetness I approve  
But cannot emulate what most I prize.

### Friendship Is Stronger<sup>2</sup>

Friendship is stronger when we love the friends  
In the first sunshine of life's opening years  
E'er the young mind to disappointment bends  
And the warm hopes of youth are chilled by fears

Friend of my heart I loved thee in that hour  
And still will love thee to my latest breath  
May Heav'n around thy head its blessings shower  
Guard the thro' life, & bless thee at they death

Born for society & formed to please  
Still give delight to those who know thy mind  
Serene & gentle as the summer breeze  
And like it sent by Heav'n to bless Mankind

Angels themselves with approbation see  
A heart so spotless, & a soul so pure  
Angels themselves are proud thy guides to be  
And shield thee from the ills which men endure.

**Oh Sing Again!**<sup>3</sup>

1

Oh sing again! for sweeter is the strain,  
Than that which syrens to Ulysses sung;  
When rapt, enchanted on the sounds he hung,  
Which till that hour were never breath'd in vain

2

The slightest note can draw from memory's store  
Of Hope the cherish'd, but the blighted flower,  
Of Time, the gilded – but neglected hour,  
And scenes of bliss, that must return no more.

3

Thy voice can sooth!<sup>4</sup> then sing again!  
There is such powerful magic in the sound,  
Thoughts long imprison'd, griefs in silence bound  
Rush at the call, and vibrate to the strain.

**After Many a Well Fought Day**<sup>5</sup>

[1]

After many a well fought day –  
When with generous ardour burning  
Soldiers to their home returning  
Chide the long & tardy way

2

Home advancing near & nearer  
Wives & friends to greet them run  
Dear before – but now *far* Dearer  
From the gallant deeds they've done

3

*Some* distracted wild with pleasure  
Hands & hats & ribbands wave –  
*Others* sad the long line measure  
For the friend no prayers could save

4

Is he gone they ask with sorrow  
Is he lost they ask with dread?  
Will he not return tomorrow?  
Is our gallant soldier dead?

5

Yes He's dead but fell with Glory  
Fought his Country's rights to save  
Yes He's dead – but lives in story  
Honour decks the Hero's grave

6

Then with hearts too nearly broken  
To their lonely homes they turn  
Pressing to their lips some token  
From the Friends for whom they mourn

**On Going to Paris & Leaving Off Trains<sup>6</sup>**

Farewell to England & farewell to frocks  
Now France I hail thee with a sweeping train  
Subdued Ile bend my stubborn locks  
And enter on a life of art and pain –

Farewell to childhood & perhaps to peace  
Now life I sail upon thy dangerous stream  
And oh may wisdom with each year encrease  
And prove my Follies but an Infant's dream

**French Man Smile<sup>7</sup>**

French Man smile not thus on me  
I hate your race, I hate your nation  
In vain you bend your supple knee  
I care not for your adulation  
I love a Man of English race

Who never learned to fawn or dance  
He has an English heart & face  
Oh there is no such man in France –

**Gage d'Amour<sup>8</sup> [Token of Love]**

Gage d'amour passe recois la rose flettice  
de ses douceurs pares un instant ton sein  
Elle etoit fraiche encore ce matin!  
Favorite du Printemps elle a brillé un jour  
mais des soupirs ardents et des baisers d'amour  
L'ont fanée – – –  
demain comme moi elle sera oublicé

– – –

Fais une tombe pour douce rose flettice  
fais une tombe pour malheureuse amie  
mets les tout deux au fond de ton coeur  
Et qu'Amitié au moins les arosent de ses pleurs

**To a Lanky Cur I Lov'd At that Time<sup>9</sup>**

Dreams of delight my youthful fancy drew  
Love, how ideal, – friendship, how untrue –  
No more this stubborn soul shall bend for you  
Your boasted power is over

To the greenwood I'll repair  
There unbind my yellow hair.  
Breathing in<sup>a</sup> my native air  
Come follow me – Dog Rover –

No fond illusion this proud heart shall swell  
No shepherd shall his plaintive story tell  
Or teach it on some tender theme to dwell  
Such soft tales prosper never

But health shalt teach our hearts to beat  
And nature deck our savage seat  
While calm in this secure retreat<sup>b</sup>  
We'll<sup>c</sup> leave the world for ever

In summer heats on moss grown banks we'll<sup>d</sup> lie<sup>10</sup>  
And smile to think of human vanity  
Enjoying well our native liberty

Come follow me – Dog Rover.<sup>e</sup>

But<sup>a</sup> oh if Memory return  
And teach our hearts<sup>b</sup> again to burn  
Of what avail a life so stern<sup>11</sup>  
Our joys will then be over<sup>c</sup>

**Oh that Angels Wings<sup>12</sup>**

1

Oh that Angels wings might bear me  
Through the cloudless realms of air  
Wild Etherial strains should chear me  
Sounds celestial charm my care –

2

Far from Man & far from sorrow  
To some purer sphere Ide hie  
Where no frowning black tomorrow  
Clouds the present with a sigh

3

O'er his steps unseen Ide hover  
Who a spirits heart could bind  
Ariels silken scarf should cover  
Love in sorrows chains confin'd

4

When the western wave is shining  
Bright beneath the setting ray  
On some silvery cloud reclining  
Lingering hours Ide chace away

5

But on roseate wings of morning  
Never more must Ariel rise  
Fancies gentle Empire scorning  
Man is grown untimely wise

6

[illegible] to Earth in sorrow pining  
Lower cares his mind employe  
all his thoughts to earth confining  
[illegible] to visionary joy –<sup>13</sup>

**From Hippolitus by Euripides<sup>14</sup>**

Strophe 2

My mind is no longer chaste and pure  
and hope dies within me – since that I  
have beheld. I have beheld the most  
shining star of Grecian Athens – driven  
by the wrath of his Father into another  
Land – oh ye sands of the shore beneath  
the City and ye forests of the Mountain  
Where thou Hippolitus used to go  
up with your swift Hounds slaying  
the wild beasts with Diana around  
the venerable Dictinna –

**On a Story of a Poor Girl Returned to Her Parents<sup>15</sup>**

Oh if this hand could strike the warbling Lyre  
What theme what subject should my Music inspire  
Not modern friendship Odes to love or sleep  
Desponding shepherds or forsaken sheep  
But Virtue's brightest gem unspoilt by art  
The manly virtues of a feeling heart  
These should with honest zeal my Muse Inspire  
And Faulklands name should echo to my Lyre  
While vice and folly stigmatize our race  
and English morals English Men disgrace.  
Scorning the vulgar errors of the age  
He dares alone in virtues cause engage  
While some oh shame to human nature seek  
To lure the wretched and betray the weak  
With [illegible] like malice & detested art  
To work upon the unsuspecting heart  
Faulkland has dared a worthier aim to show  
and sav'd a victim from despair & woe  
received a Parents thanks in transport given  
And felt the sanction of approving heaven

**Winged with hope<sup>16</sup>**

Winged with hope & flushed with joy,  
See yon wanton blue-eyed boy

Arch his smile, & keen his dart  
Aim at Laura's youthful heart!  
How could he his wiles disguise  
How deceive such watchful Eyes?  
How so pure a breast inspire  
& Set so young a Mind on fire?

**'Twas Because To Raise the Flame<sup>17</sup>**

'Twas because to raise the flame  
Love bethought of friendship's name  
Under this false guise he told her  
How he lived but to behold her,  
How could she his faults discover?  
When he often vow'd to love her  
How could she her heart defend  
When he took the name of friend  
Love Might poison every dart  
But Constancy had bound her heart.

**Hope a Glimmering Star Appear'd<sup>18</sup>**

Hope a glimmering star appear'd  
Love once more the prospect cheer'd  
Innocence again believed  
Trusting much, & much deceived  
Soon suspicion's serpent tooth  
Fed upon her blooming youth –  
Tell me blue-eyed boy, she cried  
Wilt thou ever quit my side  
Canst thou, wilt thou, bid adieu  
To one who long has cherish'd you?

**Ah What Means That Frowning Brow<sup>19</sup>**

Ah what means that frowning brow  
Pouting lip, and drooping bow,  
Why disordered dost thou leave me  
Child – I fear thou hast deceived me  
Where is now thy kiss of rose?  
Where thy warm impassioned vows?  
Canst thou, wilt thou, bid adieu  
To one who long has cherish'd you –

**Love Grew Pale & Half Opprest<sup>20</sup>**

Love grew pale & half opprest  
Sunk in silence on her breast  
Now I know thee tyrant boy  
Who can worlds of bliss destroy  
Yet oh speak tho' all in vain  
Speak and bless me once again  
Better twice a dupe to prove  
Than view the alter'd looks of love.

**Vain Thy Anger, Vain Thy Care<sup>21</sup>**

Vain thy anger, vain thy care  
Love that promised once so fair  
Led by youth and beauty's power  
Is but like a summer flower  
Chill'd upon thy breast he lies  
Careless of thy wrath, or sighs –  
Never scorn or sad upbraiding  
Called again – that floweret fading  
Sorrow lost – reproaches vain –  
Love will never come again  
Soon despair with ruthless dart  
Took possession of her heart  
Bursting grief her bosom fired –  
And love, & hope, with life expired –

**Hard As It Is Through Life's Rough Seas To Steer<sup>22</sup>**

Hard as it is through life's rough seas to steer  
without a friend our gloomy path to cheer  
Hard as it is to tear *one* from the heart  
Who could such comfort to its griefs impart  
Yet shall that task be mine, nor think I jest  
When thus I pluck thy friendship from my breast  
There is a string when touched that wakes my ire  
Boils up my blood, & sets my soul on fire.  
Pride is the ruling passion of that soul  
No chain can bind it, & no power controul  
It snaps each tie to feeling hearts allied  
And ev'n affection must give way to pride  
At some lone rock round which the billows roar

Struck by the tempest from its neighboring shore  
Alone collected with itself elate  
Stands unappalled before the storms of fate  
So pleasure friendships censure I defy  
Nor mark the glances of the angry Eye  
Kingdoms may fall and empires divide  
But love itself shall bow its neck to pride.

**A Little Lamb There Was That From Its Birth<sup>23</sup>**

A Little Lamb there was that from its birth  
Had cropp'd the dantiest Fruits & flowers of Earth  
Fed by the shepherds – by its friends carest –  
Of every joy & happiness possess –  
Till wandering from its Fold it chanc'd to stray  
Through error's flowery but deceitful way –<sup>24</sup>  
Chaff'd were its limbs to kindlier usage bred  
mock'd at and scorn'd it droop'd its weary head  
and all its pleasure all its spirits fled –  
young Boy!<sup>25</sup> if thou this little Lamb should see  
Bid it return – it must not follow thee  
Trust not its bleatings nor its looks of love  
For Lamb that could from its own Master rove  
Ne'er long will faithful to another prove.

**Why Are Hills & Vallies Green<sup>26</sup>**

Why are hills & vallies green  
Why the azure skies serene  
'Tis because fair spring appears  
Spring who dries the wintry tears  
Spring who warms the chilling blast  
Spring who tells of pleasures past  
In her genial breast she bears  
All that man to Earth endears  
Seeds for every blowing flower  
Thoughts for every passing hour  
Hope in pleasure's garland drest  
Sleep the twilight of the breast  
Every man may chuse his dower  
Every man must bless her power  
To disappointments frown she brings

Conscience clear as chrystal springs  
To poverty's contemptuous blow  
Health that bids the spirits flow  
To grief of heart, to pleasure blind,  
She brings the opiates of the mind  
The fanning breeze the murmuring streams  
Refreshing sleep and waking dreams  
To love unmindful of her joys  
Whose shaft the bloom of youth destroys  
Who scorns what seasons can impart  
And aims alone to fix the heart  
To love, to pining love she brings  
The flower of hope on zephyrs wings  
The shades of vows, the blush of youth  
The dreams of constancy and truth –  
To some she bears the tidings sweet  
That hearts the hearts they love shall meet  
That friendship's kiss shall soon restore  
The playful smile that play'd before.  
But chiefly in her arms I see  
The cause of grateful joy to thee  
Her arms, her rosy arms entwine  
What soon may prove a staff to thine  
A blooming girl from Heav'n she bears  
To share thy love, to soothe thy cares  
And may she gain thy matchless worth  
That Heav'n and Man may bless her birth  
Thus spring to all some comfort brings  
And cheers the gloom that sorrow flings  
And may she oft returning shed  
Her choicest blessings round thy head  
And may she too My heart improve  
And make me worthier of thy love –

*Poems from a Gift Book in the Hertfordshire Archive*

1. *Poems from a Gift Book*: From the manuscript reproduced by gracious permission of the Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies Office, D/Elb F64. This collection dates well after 1812. Lamb includes a note: 'Dear Mrs. Howe, Miss M copied some for me pray excuse the faults – for I only could find them in Mama's old Book I never write now – I cannot – and these can only be pretty from their having been done at the moment – those [scrawl] are the only later ones I have – & these I remember for I hate to write them down.' Miss Howe may have been a close friend of Lamb's grandmother, the Dowager Lady Spencer, Mrs Howe must have survived her friend, Lamb's grandmother, who died 18 March 1814. The tone of Lamb's note is indicative of the period after the Byron fiasco and probably much later, the 1820s, most likely.
2. *Friendship Is Stronger*: Lamb marked this poem with the symbol of a cross, indicating it was 'written before I was fifteen or just after.' See p. 18 of the book of poems in Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies Office, D/Elb F64.
3. *Oh Sing Again*: This poem is marked 'Q7', which indicates a 'later' poem, according to a note in the back of the book to the probable recipient, Mrs. Howe, a close friend of Lamb's grandmother, the Dowager Lady Spencer. See page 50 of the book of poems in Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies Office, D/Elb F64. The poem is also dated 1812.
4. *can sooth!*: these two words have substituted for an earlier phrase: *and thine alone*.
5. *After Many a Well Fought Day*: This poem is marked 'For a Swedish Tune'. A slightly different version of this poem was published in Isaac Nathan's *Fugitive Pieces*, p. 174. Nathan set this lyric and sold it as sheet music.
6. *On Going to Paris & Leaving Off Trains*: Lamb marked this poem with the symbol of a cross, indicating it was 'written before I was fifteen or just after.' See p. 18 of the book of poems in Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies Office, D/Elb F64. 'Train' refers to that part of a gown that trails behind the wearer.
7. *French Man Smile*: Lamb marked this poem with the symbol of a cross, indicating it was 'written before I was fifteen or just after' see p. 18 of the book of poems in Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies Office, D/Elb F64.
8. *Gage d'amour*: This poem is marked 'Q7', which indicates a 'later' poem, according to a note in the back of the book to the probable recipient, Mrs Howe, a close friend of Lamb's grandmother, the Dowager Lady Spencer. See p. 50 of the book of poems in Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies Office, D/Elb F64. The poem is also dated 1813, and is annotated, 'These are much the prettiest – but the drawing is affected' (p. 11). A literal translation by Ms Néhal Abuelata to whom the editors are indebted:

This pledge of love has received the shriveled rose  
 whose gentleness bejewels your breast for a moment  
 She was still fresh this morning!  
 Springtime's favorite, she once shone  
 But the breathings of passion and the kisses of love  
 Have wilted it -----  
 tomorrow, she will be forgotten, as I have  
 Prepare a grave for the gentle shriveled rose  
 Prepare a grave for the unfortunate friend  
 Bury them both in the depths of your heart  
 And may they at least be washed down by the flowers of Friendship

9. *To a Lanky Cur I Lov'd At That Time*: Lamb marked this poem with the symbol of a cross, indicating it was 'written before I was fifteen or just after'. See page 18 of the book of poems in Hertfordshire Archives, D/Elb F64. She has written the first part of the verse on p. 13 and completed it on p. 12. Above the poem's beginning on p. 13 is a drawing of a flying fairy figure, with a note: 'I went as Ariel to the masquerade'. A different version of this poem, 'Dreams Of Delight My Youthful Fancy Drew', is found in the gift book Lamb made for her cousin, Georgiana, Lady Morpeth. In that text, which has been collated with this one as a textual variant, Lamb sets the poem's context: 'When William gave Clara a dog named Rover & yet appeard indifferent to her at times, she went into the country & wrote this'. Castle Howard Manuscripts, J18/71/1.
10. *on moss grown banks we'll lie*: immediately after this line are some cancelled words in the Castle Howard version of the poem: 'enjoying pleasantly'. Castle Howard Manuscripts, J18/71/1.
11. *a life so stern*: immediately after this line is a cancelled line in the Castle Howard version of the poem: 'Our joys will soon be over'. Castle Howard Manuscripts, J18/71/1.
12. *Oh that Angels Wings*: Lamb marked this poem with the symbol of a cross, indicating it was 'written before I was fifteen or just after'. See p. 18 of the book of poems in Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies Office, D/Elb F64. She has written the first part of the verse on p. 19 and completed it on p. 18 under the note.
13. *But on roseate. . . visionary joy*: A note on this poem says, 'I have forgot the two last verses so excuse them'. See p. 18 of the book of poems in Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies Office, D/Elb F64.
14. *From Hippolitus by Euripides*: Lamb here translates the second strophe of the Chorus in Euripides' *Hippolytus* (428 BC) that is sung just after Hippolytus's final exit, and just before news of his death is received. She annotates her translation: 'I have sent you this to show you my improvement in writing the Greek. I did not construe it alone – by any means – W[illiam] assisted me – almost 3 parts'. See p. 20 of Lamb's book of poems, Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies Office, D/Elb F64.
15. *On a Story of a Poor Girl... Parents*: Lamb marked this poem with the symbol of a cross, indicating it was 'written before I was fifteen or just after'. See p. 18 of the book of poems in Hertfordshire. It is also marked 'by Caroline Ponsonby'.
16. *Winged with Hope*: This poem is marked 'Q7', which indicates a 'later' poem, according to a note in the back of the book to the probable recipient, Mrs Howe, a close friend of Lamb's grandmother, the Dowager Lady Spencer. See p. 50 of the book of poems in Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies Office, D/Elb F64. The poem is accompanied by a drawing of a cherub hatching out of an egg, labeled 'L'amour', and with the following caption: 'un rayon d'Espérance le fit naître' [a ray of hope gave it birth]. It would appear that the next four poems are linked to this one.
17. *'Twas because to raise the flame*: Poem is accompanied by a drawing of a woman and child, seated by an urn which is labelled 'L'Amitié' [Friendship]. A caption below the drawing reads: 'Il se cache sous le voile de l'amitié' (Literally: 'He (or 'it') is hidden under the veil of friendship').
18. *Hope a glimmering star appear'd*: Poem is accompanied by a drawing of a woman holding a cherub, seated. Caption below the drawing reads: 'l'innocence le recoit dans ses [bris?]. [Literally: 'Innocence receives him (or 'it') in its wreckage']'. Lamb has made a note on the facing page: 'I Cannot make l'innocence look innocent – this time in my Gd Mothers Book I did so but I cannot pray excuse it'. See page 28 of the book of poems in Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies Office, D/Elb F64.

19. *Ah what means that frowning brow*: Poem is accompanied by a drawing of a two winged cherubic figures, one comforting the other. Caption below the drawing reads: 'Le Constance lui coupe lles aîsles.' (Literally: 'Constancy cuts off his (or 'its') wings').
20. *Love grew pale & half opprest*: Poem is accompanied by a drawing of a winged cherubic figure wrapped in a serpent and surrounded by grotesque images hovering in the air. Caption below the drawing reads: 'des soupçons cruels de dechirent'. [Literally: 'Cruel suspicions tear him (or 'it') apart'].
21. *Vain thy anger, vain thy care*: Poem is accompanied by a drawing of a serpent-like demon holding a torch as it hangs in the air over the lifeless body of a figure supine on a rock, whom the demon is stabbing through the heart. Caption below the drawing reads: 'Le desespoir met fin a ses jours.' (Literally: 'Despair puts an end to his (or 'its') days').
22. *Hard as it is through life's rough seas to steer*: Lamb marked this poem with the symbol of a cross, indicating it was 'written before I was fifteen or just after'. See p. 18 of the book of poems in Hertfordshire. Poem is accompanied by a drawing of a Pan-like figure with pointed ears and a long tail, grinning, while figures dance by ones, twos and threes in the background. Caption below the drawing reads: 'by Car. Ponsonby in a Passion to Caroline de St. Jules'. The latter name refers to Lamb's illegitimate cousin, born just three months before herself, in August 1785. There is also a shadowy scribble under the drawing: 'Why are hills and valleys', which is the beginning of a subsequent poem (see below).
23. *A Little Lamb there was that from its birth*: This poem is marked 'Q7', which indicates a 'later' poem, according to a note in the back of the book to the probable recipient, Mrs. Howe, a close friend of Lamb's grandmother, the Dowager Lady Spencer. See page 50 of the book of poems in Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies Office, D/Elb F64. The poem is dated 1812, but another version of the poem is found in the West Sussex Archives dated May 1811. Written on small notepaper, it contains a drawing of a Lamb on a leash and a dedication 'To [Indecipherable because it has been written over in Ink to disguise the Characters]'. This poem may have been dedicated to Sir Godfrey Vassal Webster, with whom Lamb had an affair starting in 1810 that erupted into a fight with Webster's mother, Lady Holland, in 1811. Bessborough Papers, West Sussex Records Office, C1 D4 Folder 161. Text reproduced by kind permission of the Earl of Bessborough.
24. *but deceitful way*: between this line and the next, in the version in the West Sussex Archives, four lines intervene: 'Ah little Lamb thy Shepherd thee forsaking / And all the hearts that so much lov'd thee breaking / Turn e'er too late & seek thy peaceful home, / For grief attends on those that early learn to roam—'. Bessborough Papers, West Sussex Records Office, C1 D4 Folder 161. Text reproduced by kind permission of the Earl of Bessborough.
25. *young Boy!*: In the version in the West Sussex Archives, this phrase is rendered as 'Young Knight', a possible allusion to Sir Godfrey Vassal Webster. Bessborough Papers, West Sussex Records Office, C1 D4 Folder 161. Text reproduced by kind permission of the Earl of Bessborough.
26. *Why are hills & vallies green*: Poem is dedicated 'To G[ran]d Mama'. A note at the end indicates that it was written on the occasion of 'the birth of my little Cousin Georgiana Howard'. See p. 49 of the book of poems in Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies Office, D/Elb F64.