

Marx Hardy Machiavelli Joyce Austen
Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm
Garnett Engels Byron Schiller
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka
Cotton Dostoyevsky Hall
Baum Henry Kipling Doyle Willis
Leslie Dumas Flaubert Nietzsche Turgenev Balzac
Stockton Vatsyayana Crane
Burroughs Verne
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Busch
Homer Tolstoy Whitman
Darwin Thoreau Twain
Potter Zola Lawrence Dickens Plato Scott
Kant Freud Jowett Stevenson Andersen Burton Harte
London Descartes Cervantes Wells Hesse
Poe Aristotle Wells Voltaire Cooke
Hale James Hastings Shakespeare Chambers Irving
Bunner Richter Chekhov da Shaw Wodehouse
Doré Dante Swift Pushkin Alcott
Newton



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Mary Powell & Deborah's Diary

Anne Manning

Imprint

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INTRODUCTION

In the Valhalla of English literature Anne Manning is sure of a little and safe place. Her studies of great men, in which her imagination fills in the hiatus which history has left, are not only literature in themselves, but they are a service to literature: it is quite conceivable that the ordinary reader with no very keen *flair* for poetry will realise John Milton and appraise him more highly, having read *Mary Powell* and its sequel, *Deborah's Diary*, than having read *Paradise Lost*. In *The Household of Sir Thomas More* she had for hero one of the most charming, whimsical, lovable, heroic men God ever created, by the creation of whose like He puts to shame all that men may accomplish in their literature. In John Milton, whose first wife Mary Powell was, Miss Manning has a hero who, though a supreme poet, was "gey ill to live with," and it is a triumph of her art that she makes us compunctious for the great poet even while we appreciate the difficulties that fell to the lot of his women-kind. John Milton, a Parliament man and a Puritan, married at the age of thirty-four, Mary Powell, a seventeen-year-old girl, the daughter of an Oxfordshire squire, who, with his family, was devoted to the King. It was at one of the bitterest moments of the conflict between King and Parliament, and it was a complication in the affair of the marriage that Mary Powell's father was in debt five hundred pounds to Milton. The marriage took place. Milton and his young wife set up housekeeping in lodgings in Aldersgate Street over against St. Bride's Churchyard, a very different place indeed from Forest Hill, Shotover, by Oxford, Mary Powell's dear country home. They were together barely a month when Mary Powell, on report of her father's illness, had leave to revisit him, being given permission to absent herself from her husband's side from mid-August till Michaelmas. She did not return at Michaelmas; nor for some two years was there a reconciliation between the bride and groom of a month. During those two years Milton published his pamphlet, *On the Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, begun while his few-weeks-old bride was still with him. In this pamphlet he states with violence his opin-

ion that a husband should be permitted to put away his wife "for lack of a fit and matchable conversation," which would point to very slender agreement between the girl of seventeen and the poet of thirty-four. This was that Mary Powell, who afterwards bore him four children, who died in childbirth with the youngest, Deborah (of the *Diary*), and who is consecrated in one of the loveliest and most poignant of English sonnets.

Methought I saw my late-espoused Saint
Brought to me like Alkestis from the grave,
Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave,
Rescued from death by force, though pale and faint.
Mine, as whom washed from spot of child-bed taint
Purification in the Old Law did save;
And such, as yet once more, I trust to have
Full sight of her in Heaven without restraint,
Came vested all in white, pure as her mind:
Her face was veiled, yet to my fancied sight
Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shined
So clear, as in no face with more delight.
But oh! as to embrace me she inclined,
I waked; she fled; and Day brought back my Night.

It is a far cry from the woman so enshrined to the child of seventeen years who was without "fit and matchable conversation" for her irritable, intolerant poet-husband.

A good many serious writers have conjectured and wondered over this little tragedy of Milton's young married life: but since all must needs be conjecture one is obliged to say that Miss Manning, with her gift of delicate imagination and exquisite writing, has conjectured more excellently than the historians. She does not "play the sedulous ape" to Milton or Mary Powell: but if one could imagine a gentle and tender Boswell to these two, then Miss Manning has well proved her aptitude for the place. Of Mary Powell she has made a charming creature. The diary of Mary Powell is full of sweet country smells and sights and sounds. Mary Powell herself is as sweet as her flowers, frank, honest, loving and tender. Her diary catches for

us all the enchantment of an old garden; we hear Mary Powell's bees buzz in the mignonette and lavender; we see her pleached garden alleys; we loiter with her on the bowling-green, by the fish ponds, in the still-room, the dairy and the pantry. The smell of aromatic box on a hot summer of long ago is in our nostrils. We realise all the personages—the impulsive, hot-headed father; the domineering, indiscreet mother; the cousin, Rose Agnew, and her parson husband; little Kate and Robin of the Royalist household—as well as John Milton and his father, and the two nephews to whom the poet was tutor—and a hard tutor. Miss Manning's delightful humour comes out in the two pragmatistical little boys. But Mary herself dominates the picture. She is so much a thing of the country, of gardens and fields, that perforce one is reminded of Sir Thomas Overbury's *Fair and Happy Milkmaid*:—

"She doth all things with so sweet a grace it seems ignorance will not suffer her to do ill, being her mind is to do well. . . . The garden and bee-hive are all her physic and chirugery, and she lives the longer for it. She dares go alone and unfold sheep in the night and fears no manner of ill because she means none: yet to say truth she is never alone, for she is still accompanied by old songs, honest thoughts and prayers, but short ones. . . . Thus lives she, and all her care is that she may die in the spring-time, to have store of flowers stuck upon her winding-sheet."

The last remnants of Forest Hill, Mary Powell's home, were pulled down in 1854. A visitor to it three years before its demolition tells us:—

"Still the rose, the sweet-brier and the eglantine are reddest beneath its casements; the cock at its barn-door may be seen from any of the windows. . . . In the kitchen, with its vast hearth and overhanging chimney, we discovered tokens of the good living for which the old manor-house was famous in its day. . . . The garden, in its massive wall, ornamental gateway and old sun-dial, retains some traces of its manorial dignities." The house indeed is gone, but the sweet country remains, the verdant slopes and the lanes with their hedges full of sweet-brier that stretch out towards Oxford. And there is the church in which Mary Powell prayed. I should have liked to quote another of Miss Manning's biographers, the Rev.

Dr. Hutton, who tells us of old walls partly built into the farmhouse that now stands there, and of the old walnut trees in the farmyard, and in a field hard by the spring of which John Milton may have tasted, and the church on the hill, and the distant Chilterns.

Milton's cottage at Chalfont St. Giles's is happily still in a good state of preservation, although Chalfont and its neighbourhood have suffered a sea-change even since Dr. Hutton wrote, a decade ago. All that quiet corner of the world, for so long green and secluded,—a "deare secret greenesse"—has now had the light of the world let in upon it. Motor-cars whizz through that Quaker country; money-making Londoners hurry away from it of mornings, trudge home of evenings, bag in hand; the jerry-builder is in the land, and the dust of much traffic lies upon the rose and eglantine wherewith Milton's eyes were delighted. The works of our hands often mock us by their durability. Years and ages and centuries after the busy brain and the feeling heart are dust, the houses built with hands stand up to taunt our mortality. Yet the works of the mind remain. Though Forest Hill be only a party-wall, and Chalfont a suburb of London, the Forest Hill of Mary Powell, the Chalfont of Milton, yet live for us in Anne Manning's delightful pages.

Miss Manning did not wish her *Life* to be written, but we do get some glimpses of her real self from herself in a chance page here and there of her reminiscences.

Here is one such glimpse:—

"I must confess I have never been able to write comfortably when music was going on. I think I have always written to most purpose coming in fresh from a morning walk when the larks were singing and lambs bleating and distant cocks in farmyards crowing, and a distant dog barking to an echo which answered his voice, and when the hedges and banks were full of wild flowers with quaint and pretty names.

"Next to that, I have found the best time soon after early tea, when my companions were all in the garden, and likely to remain there till moonlight."

Not very much by way of a literary portrait, and yet one can fill it in for oneself, can place her in old-world Reigate, fast, alas! becom-

ing over-built and over-populated like all the rest of the country over which falls the ever-lengthening London shadow. As one ponders upon Forest Hill for Mary Powell's sake—is not Shotover as dear a name as Shottery?—and Chalfont for Milton's sake, one thinks on Reigate surrounded by its hills for Anne Manning's sake, and keeps the place in one's heart.

Mary Powell, with its sequel, *Deborah's Diary*—Deborah was the young thing whom to bring into the world Mary Powell died—is one of the most fragrant books in English literature. One thinks of it side by side with John Evelyn's *Mrs. Godolphin*. Miss Manning had a beautiful style—a style given to her to reconstruct an idyll of old-world sweetness. Limpid as flowing water, with a thought of syllabubs and new-made hay in it, it is a perpetual delight. This mid-Victorian, dark-haired lady, with the aquiline nose and high colour, although she may not have looked it, possessed a charming style, in which tenderness, seriousness, gaiety, humour, poetry, appear in the happiest atmosphere of sweetness and light.

KATHARINE TYNAN.

April 1908

THE MAIDEN AND MARRIED LIFE

OF

MARY POWELL

AFTERWARDS MISTRESS MILTON

JOURNALL

Forest Hill, Oxon, May 1st, 1643.

. . . Seventeenth Birthdaye. A Gypsie Woman at the Gate woulde faine have tolde my Fortune; but *Mother* chased her away, saying she had doubtlesse harboured in some of the low Houses in *Oxford*, and mighte bring us the Plague. Could have cried for Vexation; she had promised to tell me the Colour of my Husband's Eyes; but *Mother* says she believes I shall never have one, I am soe sillie. *Father* gave me a gold Piece. Dear *Mother* is chafed, methinks, touching this Debt of five hundred Pounds, which *Father* says he knows not how to pay. Indeed, he sayd, overnichte, his whole personal Estate amounts to but five hundred Pounds, his Timber and Wood to four hundred more, or thereabouts; and the Tithes and Messuages of *Whateley* are no great Matter, being mortgaged for about as much moore, and he hath lent Sights of Money to them that won't pay, so 'tis hard to be thus prest. Poor *Father!* 'twas good of him to give me this gold Piece.

May 2nd, 1643.

Cousin *Rose* married to Master *Roger Agnew*. Present, *Father*, *Mother*, and *Brother* of *Rose*. *Father*, *Mother*, *Dick*, *Bob*, *Harry*, and I;

Squire *Paice* and his Daughter *Audrey*; an olde Aunt of Master *Roger's*, and one of his Cousins, a stiffe-backed Man with large Eares, and such a long Nose! Cousin *Rose* looked bewtifulle—pitie so faire a Girl should marry so olde a Man—'tis thoughte he wants not manie Years of fifty.

May 7th, 1643.

New Misfortunes in the Poultrie Yarde. Poor *Mother's* Loyalty cannot stand the Demands for her best Chickens, Ducklings, etc., for the Use of his Majesty's Officers since the King hath beene in *Oxford*. She accuseth my *Father* of having beene wonne over by a few faire Speeches to be more of a Royalist than his natural Temper inclineth him to; which, of course, he will not admit.

May 8th, 1643.

Whole Day taken up in a Visit to *Rose*, now a Week married, and growne quite matronlie already. We reached *Sheepscote* about an Hour before Noone. A long, broade, strait Walke of green Turf, planted with Hollyoaks, Sunflowers, etc., and some earlier Flowers already in Bloom, led up to the rustically Porch of a truly farm-like House, with low gable Roofs, a long lattice Window on either Side the Doore, and three Casements above. Such, and no more, is *Rose's* House! But she is happy, for she came running forthe, soe soone as she hearde *Clover's* Feet, and helped me from my Saddle all smiling, tho' she had not expected to see us. We had Curds and Creame; and she wished it were the Time of Strawberries, for she sayd they had large Beds; and then my *Father* and the Boys went forthe to looke for Master *Agnew*. Then *Rose* took me up to her Chamber, singing as she went; and the long, low Room was sweet with Flowers. Sayd I, "*Rose*, to be Mistress of this pretty Cottage, 'twere hardlie amisse to marry a Man as olde as Master *Roger*." "Olde!" quoth she, "deare *Moll*, you must not deeme him olde; why, he is but fortytwo; and am not I twenty-three?" She lookt soe earneste and hurte, that I coulde not but falle a laughing.

May 9th, 1643.

Mother gone to *Sandford*. She hopes to get Uncle *John* to lend *Father* this Money. *Father* says she may try. 'Tis harde to discourage her with an ironicalle Smile, when she is doing alle she can, and more than manie Women woulde, to help *Father* in his Difficultie; but suche, she sayth somewhat bitterlie, is the lot of our Sex. She bade *Father* mind that she had brought him three thousand Pounds, and askt what had come of them. Answered; helped to fille the Mouths of nine healthy Children, and stop the Mouth of an easie Husband; soe, with a Kiss, made it up. I have the Keys, and am left *Mistresse* of alle, to my greate Contentment; but the Children clamour for Sweetmeats, and *Father* sayth, "Remember, *Moll*, Discretion is the better Part of Valour."

After *Mother* had left, went into the Paddock, to feed the Colts with Bread; and while they were putting their Noses into *Robin's* Pockets, *Dick* brought out the two Ponies, and set me on one of them, and we had a mad Scamper through the Meadows and down the Lanes; I leading. Just at the Turne of *Holford's Close*, came shorte upon a Gentleman walking under the Hedge, clad in a sober, genteel Suit, and of most beautifulle Countenance, with Hair like a Woman's, of a lovely pale brown, long and silky, falling over his Shoulders. I nearlie went over him, for *Clover's* hard Forehead knocked agaynst his Chest; but he stooede it like a Rock; and lookinge firste at me and then at *Dick*, he smiled and spoke to my Brother, who seemed to know him, and turned about and walked by us, sometimes stroaking *Clover's* shaggy Mane. I felte a little ashamed; for *Dick* had sett me on the Poney just as I was, my Gown somewhat too shorte for riding; however, I drewe up my Feet and let *Clover* nibble a little Grasse, and then got rounde to the neare Side, our new Companion stille between us. He offered me some wild Flowers, and askt me theire Names; and when I tolde them, he sayd I knew more than he did, though he accounted himselfe a prettie fayre Botaniste: and we went on thus, talking of the Herbs and Simples in the Hedges; and I sayd how prettie some of theire Names were, and that, methought, though Adam had named alle the Animals in Paradise, perhaps Eve had named alle the Flowers. He lookt earnestlie at me, on this, and muttered "prettie." Then *Dick* askt of him News from *London*, and he spoke, methought, reservedlie; ever

and anon turning his bright, thoughtfull Eyes on me. At length, we parted at the Turn of the Lane.

I askt *Dick* who he was, and he told me he was one Mr. *John Milton*, the Party to whom *Father* owed five hundred Pounds. He was the Sonne of a *Buckinghamshire* Gentleman, he added, well connect-ed, and very scholarlike, but affected towards the Parliament. His Grandsire, a zealous Papiste, formerly lived in *Oxon*, and disinherited the Father of this Gentleman for abjuring the *Romish* Faith.

When I found how faire a Gentleman was *Father's* Creditor, I became the more interested in deare *Mother's* Successes.

May 13th, 1643.

Dick began to harpe on another Ride to *Sheepscote* this Morning, and persuaded *Father* to let him have the bay Mare, soe he and I started at aboute Ten o' the Clock. Arrived at Master *Agnew's* Doore, found it open, no one in Parlour or Studdy; soe *Dick* tooke the Horses rounde, and then we went strait thro' the House, into the Garden behind, which is on a rising Ground, with pleached Alleys and turfen Walks, and a Peep of the Church through the Trees. A Lad tolde us his Mistress was with the Bees, soe we walked towards the Hives; and, from an Arbour hard by, hearde a Murmur, though not of Bees, issuing. In this rusticall Bowre, found *Roger Agnew* reading to *Rose* and to Mr. *Milton*. Thereupon ensued manie cheerfull Salutations, and *Rose* proposed returning to the House, but Master *Agnew* sayd it was pleasanter in the Bowre, where was Room for alle; soe then *Rose* offered to take me to her Chamber to lay aside my Hoode, and promised to send a Junkett into the Arbour; whereon Mr. *Agnew* smiled at Mr. *Milton*, and sayd somewhat of "neat-handed *Phillis*."

As we went alonge, I tolde *Rose* I had seene her Guest once before, and thought him a comely, pleasant Gentleman. She laught, and sayd, "Pleasant? why, he is one of the greatest Scholars of our Time, and knows more Languages than you or I ever hearde of." I made Answer, "That may be, and yet might not ensure his being pleasant, but rather the contrary, for I cannot reade *Greeke* and *Latin*,

Rose, like you." Quoth *Rose*, "But you can reade *English*, and he hath writ some of the loveliest *English* Verses you ever hearde, and hath brought us a new Composure this Morning, which *Roger*, being his olde College Friend, was discussing with him, to my greate Pleasure, when you came. After we have eaten the Junkett, he shall beginne it again." "By no Means," said I, "for I love Talking more than Reading." However, it was not soe to be, for *Rose* woulde not be foyled; and as it woulde not have been good Manners to decline the Hearing in Presence of the Poet, I was constrayned to suppress a secret Yawne, and feign Attention, though, Truth to say, it soone wandered; and, during the last halfe Hour, I sat in a compleat Dreame, tho' not unpleasant one. *Roger* having made an End, 'twas diverting to heare him commending the Piece unto the Author, who as gravely accepted it; yet, with nothing fullesome about the one, or misproud about the other. Indeed, there was a sedate Sweetnesse in the Poet's Wordes as well as Lookes; and shortlie, waiving the Discussion of his owne Composures, he beganne to talke of those of other Men, as *Shakspeare*, *Spenser*, *Cowley*, *Ben Jonson*, and of *Tasso*, and *Tasso's* Friend the Marquis of *Villa*, whome, it appeared, Mr. *Milton* had Knowledge of in *Italy*. Then he askt me, woulde I not willingly have seene the Country of *Romeo* and *Juliet*, and prest to know whether I loved Poetry; but finding me loath to tell, sayd he doubted not I preferred Romances, and that he had read manie, and loved them dearly too. I sayd, I loved *Shakspeare's* Plays better than *Sidney's* *Arcadia*; on which he cried "Righte," and drew nearer to me, and woulde have talked at greater length; but, knowing from *Rose* how learned he was, I feared to shew him I was a sillie Foole; soe, like a sillie Foole, held my Tongue.

Dinner; Eggs, Bacon, roast Ribs of Lamb, Spinach, Potatoes, savoury Pie, a *Brentford* Pudding, and Cheesecakes. What a pretty Housewife *Rose* is! *Roger's* plain Hospitalitie and scholarlie Discourse appeared to much Advantage. He askt of News from Paris; and Mr. *Milton* spoke much of the *Swedish* Ambassadour, *Dutch* by Birth; a Man renowned for his Learning, Magnanimity, and Misfortunes, of whome he had seene much. He tolde *Rose* and me how this Mister *Van der Groot*e had beene unjustlie caste into Prison by his Countrymen; and how his good Wife had shared his Captivitie, and had tried to get his Sentence reversed; failing which, she contrived

his Escape in a big Chest, which she pretended to be full of heaveie olde Bookes. Mr. *Milton* concluded with the Exclamation, "Indeede, there never was such a Woman;" on which, deare *Roger*, whome I beginne to love, quoth, "Oh yes, there are manie such,—we have two at Table now." Whereat, Mr. *Milton* smiled.

At Leave-taking pressed Mr. *Agnew* and *Rose* to come and see us soone; and *Dick* askt Mr. *Milton* to see the Bowling Greene.

Ride Home, delightfulle.

May 14th, 1643.

Thought, when I woke this Morning, I had been dreaminge of St. *Paul* let down the Wall in a Basket; but founde, on more closely examining the Matter, 'twas *Grotius* carried down the Ladder in a Chest; and methought I was his Wife, leaninge from the Window above, and crying to the Souldiers, "Have a Care, have a Care!" 'Tis certayn I shoulde have betraied him by an Over-anxietie.

Resolved to give *Father* a *Sheepscote* Dinner, but *Margery* affirmed the Haunch woulde no longer keepe, so was forced to have it drest, though meaninge to have kept it for Companie. Little *Kate*, who had been out alle the Morning, came in with her Lap full of Butter-burs, the which I was glad to see, as *Mother* esteemes them a sovereign Remedie 'gainst the Plague, which is like to be rife in *Oxford* this Summer, the Citie being so overcrowded on account of his Majestie. While laying them out on the Stille-room Floor, in bursts *Robin* to say Mr. *Agnew* and Mr. *Milton* were with *Father* at the Bowling Greene, and woulde dine here. Soe was glad *Margery* had put down the Haunch. Twas past One o' the Clock, however, before it coulde be sett on Table; and I had just run up to pin on my Carnation Knots, when I hearde them alle come in discoursing merrilie.

At Dinner Mr. *Milton* askt *Robin* of his Studdies; and I was in Payne for the deare Boy, knowing him to be better affected to his out-doore Recreations than to his Booke; but he answered boldlie he was in *Ovid*, and I lookt in Mr. *Milton's* Face to guesse was that goode Scholarship or no; but he turned it towards my *Father*, and sayd he was trying an Experiment on two young Nephews of his

owne, whether the reading those Authors that treat of physical Subjects mighte not advantage them more than the Poets; whereat my *Father* jested with him, he being himselfe one of the Fraternitie he seemed to despise. But he uphelde his Argumente so bravelie, that *Father* listened in earneste Silence. Meantime, the Cloth being drawne, and I in Feare of remaining over long, was avised to withdrawe myself earlie, *Robin* following, and begging me to goe downe to the Fish-ponds. Afterwards alle the others joyned us, and we sate on the Steps till the Sun went down, when, the Horses being brought round, our Guests tooke Leave without returning to the House. *Father* walked thoughtfullie Home with me, leaning on my Shoulder, and spake little.

May 15th, 1643.

After writing the above last Night, in my Chamber, went to Bed and had a most heavenlie Dreame. Methoughte it was brighte, brighte Moonlighte, and I was walking with Mr. *Milton* on a Terrace,—not *our* Terrace, but in some outlandish Place; and it had Flights and Flights of green Marble Steps, descending, I cannot tell how farre, with Stone Figures and Vases on every one. We went downe and downe these Steps, till we came to a faire Piece of Water, still in the Moonlighte; and then, methoughte, he woulde be taking Leave, and sayd much aboute Absence and Sorrowe, as tho' we had knowne eache other some Space; and alle that he sayd was delightfulle to heare. Of a suddain we hearde Cries, as of Distresse, in a Wood that came quite down to the Water's Edge, and Mr. *Milton* sayd, "Hearken!" and then, "There is some one being slaine in the Woode, I must goe to rescue him;" and soe, drewe his Sword and ran off. Meanwhile, the Cries continued, but I did not seeme to mind them much; and, looking stedfastlie downe into the cleare Water, coulde see to an immeasurable Depth, and beheld, oh, rare! Girls sitting on glistening Rocks, far downe beneath, combing and braiding their brighte Hair, and talking and laughing, onlie I coulde not heare aboute what. And their Kirtles were like spun Glass, and their Bracelets Coral and Pearl; and I thought it the fairest Sight that Eyes coulde see. But, alle at once, the Cries in the Wood af-

frighted them, for they started, looked upwards and alle aboute, and began swimming thro' the cleare Water so fast, that it became troubled and thick, and I coulde see them noe more. Then I was aware that the Voices in the Wood were of *Dick* and *Harry*, calling for *me*; and I soughte to answer, "Here!" but my Tongue was heavie. Then I commenced running towards them, through ever so manie greene Paths, in the Wood; but still, we coulde never meet; and I began to see grinning Faces, neither of Man nor Beaste, peeping at me through the Trees; and one and another of them called me by Name; and in greate Feare and Paine I awoke!

. . . Strange Things are Dreames. Dear *Mother* thinks much of them, and sayth they oft portend coming Events. My *Father* holdeth the Opinion that they are rather made up of what hath alreadie come to passe; but surelie naught like this Dreame of mine hath in anie Part befallen me hithertoe?

. . . What strange Fable or Masque were they reading that Day at *Sheepscoote*? I mind not.

May 20th, 1643.

Too much busied of late to write, though much hath happened which I woulde fain remember. Dined at *Shotover* yesterday. Met *Mother*, who is coming Home in a Day or two; but helde short Speech with me aside concerning Housewifery. The *Agnews* there, of course: alsoe Mr. *Milton*, whom we have seene continuallie, lately; and I know not how it shoulde be, but he seemeth to like me. *Father* affects him much, but *Mother* loveth him not. She hath seene little of him: perhaps the less the better. *Ralph Hewlett*, as usuall, forward in his rough endeavours to please; but, though no Scholar, I have yet Sense enough to prefer Mr. *Milton's* Discourse to his. . . . I wish I were fonder of Studdy; but, since it cannot be, what need to vex? Some are born of one Mind, some of another. *Rose* was alwaies for her Booke; and, had *Rose* beene no Scholar, Mr. *Agnew* woulde, may be, never have given her a second Thoughte: but alle are not of the same Way of thinking.

. . . A few Lines received from *Mother's* "spoilt Boy," as *Father* hath called Brother *Bill*, ever since he went a soldiering. Blurred and misspelt as they are, she will prize them. Trulie, we are none of us grate hands at the Pen; 'tis well I make this my Copie-booke.

. . . Oh, strange Event! Can this be Happinesse? Why, then, am I soe feared, soe mazed, soe prone to weeping? I woulde that *Mother* were here. Lord have Mercie on me a sinfuller, sillie Girl, and guide my Steps arighte.

. . . It seemes like a Dreame, (I have done noughte but dreame of late, I think,) my going along the matted Passage, and hearing Voices in my *Father's* Chamber, just as my Hand was on the Latch; and my withdrawing my Hand, and going softlie away, though I never paused at disturbing him before; and, after I had beene a full Houre in the Stille Room, turning over ever soe manie Trays full of dried Herbs and Flower-leaves, hearing him come forthe and call, "*Moll*, deare *Moll*, where are you?" with I know not what of strange in the Tone of his Voice; and my running to him hastilie, and his drawing me into his Chamber, and closing the Doore. Then he takes me round the Waiste, and remains quite silent awhile; I gazing on him so strangelie! and at length, he says with a Kind of Sigh, "Thou art indeed but young yet! scarce seventeen,—and fresh, as Mr. *Milton* says, as the earlie May; too tender, forsooth, to leave us yet, sweet Child! But what wilt say, *Moll*, when I tell thee that a well-esteemed Gentleman, whom as yet indeed I know too little of, hath craved of me Access to the House as one that woulde win your Favour?"

Thereupon, such a suddain Faintness of the Spiritts overtooke me, (a Thing I am noe way subject to,) as that I fell down in a Swound at *Father's* Feet; and when I came to myselve again, my Hands and Feet seemed full of Prickles, and there was a Humming, as of *Rose's* Bees, in mine Ears. *Lettice* and *Margery* were tending of me, and *Father* watching me full of Care; but soe soone as he saw me open mine Eyes, he bade the Maids stand aside, and sayd, stooping over me, "Enough, deare *Moll*; we will talk noe more of this at present." "Onlie just tell me," quoth I, in a Whisper, "who it is." "Guesse," sayd he. "I cannot," I softlie replied, and, with the Lie, came such a Rush of Blood to my Cheeks as betraied me. "I am sure you have though," sayd deare *Father*, gravelie, "and I neede not say it is Mr. *Milton*, of

whome I know little more than you doe, and that is not enough. On the other Hand, *Roger Agnew* sayth that he is one of whome we can never know too much, and there is somewhat about him which inclines me to believe it." "What will *Mother* say?" interrupted I. Thereat *Father's* Countenance changed; and he hastilie answered, "Whatever she likes: I have an Answer for her, and a Question too;" and abruptly left me, bidding me keepe myselfe quiet.

But can I? Oh, no! *Father* hath sett a Stone rolling, unwitting of its Course. It hath prostrated me in the first Instance, and will, I misdoubt, hurt my *Mother*. *Father* is bold enow in her Absence, but when she comes back will leave me to face her Anger alone; or else, make such a Stir to shew that he is not governed by a Woman, as wille make Things worse. Meanwhile, how woulde I have them? Am I most pleased or payned? dismayed or flattered? Indeed, I know not.

. . . I am soe sorry to have swooned. Needed I have done it, merelie to heare there was one who sought my Favour? Aye, but one soe wise! so thoughtfulle! so unlike me!

Bedtime: same Daye.

. . . Who knoweth what a Daye will bring forth? After writing the above, I sate like one stupid, ruminating on I know not what, except on the Unlikelihood that one soe wise woulde trouble himselfe to seeke for aught and yet fail to win. After abiding a long Space in mine owne Chamber, alle below seeming still, I began to wonder shoulde we dine alone or not, and to have a hundred hot and cold Fitts of Hope and Feare. Thought I, if *Mr. Milton* comes, assuredlie I cannot goe down; but yet I must; but yet I will not; but yet the best will be to conduct myselfe as though nothing had happened; and, as he seems to have left the House long ago, maybe he hath returned to *Sheepscote*, or even to *London*. Oh that *London*! Shall I indeede ever see it? and the rare Shops, and the Play-houses, and *Paul's*, and the *Towre*? But what and if that ever comes to pass? Must I leave Home? dear *Forest Hill*? and *Father* and *Mother*, and the Boys? more espe-