# A Sweet Nosegay, or

## Pleasant Posy: Containing

## a Hundred and Ten

## Philosophical Flowers

**by Isabella Whitney**

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## *INTRODUCTION*

Isabella Whitney probably was born in the late 1540s, and most of what we know of her life comes from her published works. Her father's name was Geoffrey Whitney, and her mother's identity is not known. Her brother, also Geoffrey Whitney, was a known emblem book writer of the period, and we know she corresponded with him, as several of her extant poems are letters to him. She had at least four other siblings, including a brother Brooke, a sister Anne Baron, and two younger sisters. Isabella, Brooke, and the two younger sisters worked as servants in London for members of the upper class, which was considered a respectable job for members of the middle class (Panofsky v). It is believed that Isabella was born in Cheshire and was raised in the Smithfield district of London (Todd 714). Isabella began her literary career early, at about the age of 18, with the publication of her *Copy of a Letter . . . in Meter by a Young Gentlewoman to her Unconstant Lover*, written sometime between 1566 and 1567 (Panofsky v). In the poem she warns other maidens to protect their hearts and honor from the dangerous wiles of men. It has been speculated that Whitney's motivation for writing this piece was a broken engagement. With four daughters in the family, Isabella's dowry probably fell short of what was promised, and, thus, she may have been jilted by her fiancé (Schleiner 7).

Isabella Whitney distinguished herself among writers as the first Englishwoman to publish her poetry, and she was also one of the first Englishwomen to publish secular works (Travitsky 117). This is particularly noteworthy because she was of the middle class, and there is no evidence that she was formally educated. It is clear, however, that she was aware of the literary conventions of her day, as her works include verse epistles, or letters in the form of poetry, and aphorisms, or maxims (Panofsky xiii).

Her second and last known publication was *A Sweet Nosegay, or Pleasant Posy* (1573). This work is a versification of Hugh Plat's *Flowers of Philosophy* (1572). While Plat's work was aimed at more learned and literary readers, Whitney worked the *Flowers* over for a more popular readership, drawing on her personal experiences, and re-organizing Plat's sentences and ideas (Panofsky vi-xix). The text includes correspondence between acquaintances and relatives referred to in her text as T.B.--probably Thomas Berrie, a literary friend in London; B.W. and G.W.--brothers Brooke and Geoffrey (Fehrenbach 9); A.B.--sister Anne Baron; and C.B., F.W., and T.L.--whose identities are unknown.

Little is known of Isabella Whitney following the publication of *A Sweet Nosegay*. She mentioned in her work that she had lost her position serving a wealthy lady, which had forced her into financial difficulties. Whitney fled London and her literary circle to avoid her creditors (Panofsky xii). It is possible that she married a man named Eldershae, and with him had two children because a Sister Eldershae is mentioned in her brother Geoffrey's will (Fehrenbach 10). Whatever Whitney's fate may have been, her two published works forged a path for subsequent women writers seeking publication. Her works today can be regarded as valuable from both a literary and a historical standpoint.

*Works Cited*

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## ***TEXTUAL INTRODUCTION***

Isabella Whitney's writings have been transcribed and edited from a photo facsimile of the original 1573 edition with reference to a *Draft-in-Progress* from the Brown University Women Writers Project. Because Whitney's original manuscript is not known to exist, the 1573 edition is the earliest known version of this work.

As this edition is intended for use in the classroom, we have conservatively modernized the text. Spelling has been modernized only when such modification does not change the word's meaning or the line's meter. The Renaissance usage of the "i/j", "u/v", and "VV/W" found in the photo facsimile has been regularized where appropriate, for example:

*ioyful* to *joyful*
*loue* to *love*
*IS. VV.* to *IS. W.*

Punctuation of the original publication has been retained, with the exception of apostrophes, which have been added in the case of possessives and missing letters (e.g. *'gree* meaning *agree*). Apostrophes also have been added to clarify meter (e.g. *showest* becomes *show'st*). To avoid confusion, readers should be aware that in Whitney's time, the usage of periods and commas differed from modern usage.

In this edition, the italics and capital letters of the original printing have been retained, as they may denote authorial emphasis, except in the case of several letters which were written in italics with emphasis in standard print. For consistency, this edition has printed these letters in standard print with emphasis in italics. Because the fonts of titles and closings appear to have been decorative rather than indicative of emphasis, and our edition is not reproducing decorations, we have regularized fonts in titles and closings.

In the case of unclear or missing text in the photo facsimile, we have speculated about the author's intention and added the appropriate words, letters, or punctuation in square brackets (e.g. [ ]). Errors such as a letter apparently placed in print upside down by the 1573 compositors have been silently corrected, and abbreviations have been expanded (e.g. & becomes *and*). For annotations, we have drawn on the *Oxford English Dictionary* and a number of other reference sources.

To the worshipful and right virtuous young Gentleman,
GEORGE MAINWARING
Esquire: IS. W.[1] wisheth happy
health with good success in all
his godly affairs.

When I (good *MASTER MAINWARING*) had made this simple Nosegay:[2] I was in mind to bestow the same on some dear friend, of which number I have good occasion to accompt[3] you chief: But weighing with

myself, that although the Flowers bound in the same were good: yet so little of my labor was in them that they were not (as I wished they should) to be esteemed as recompense for the least number of benefits, which I have from time to time (even from our Childhood) hitherto received of you: yet lest by me, you m[igh]t be occasioned to say, as *ANTIPATER* [4] said [b]y *DEMADES* [5] of Athens, that he should never gall him with giving, I would to show myself satisfied, gratify your Gifts, and also by the same, make a confession: that by deeds you have deserved benefits: which [(]as *DIOGENES* [6] said) is more worth than the giving or unworthy receiving of many: But ceasing to seek by benefits (which to do is not allotted me) to acquit your courtesies, I come to present you like the poor man which having no goods, came with his hands full of water to meet the Persian Prince withal, who respecting the good will of the man: did not disdain his simple Gift: even so, I being willing to bestow some Present on you, by the same thinking to make part of amends for the much that you have merited, to perform the duty of a friend, to express the good will that should rest in Country folk, and not having of my own to discharge that I go about (like to that poor Fellow which went into another's ground for his water) did step into another's garden for these Flowers:[7] which I beseech you (as *DARIUS* [8] did,) to accept: and though they be of another's growing, yet considering they be of my own gathering and making up: respect my labor and regard my good will, and not only receive them, but vouchsafe to be a protector of them from the spiteful, which (perhaps) will envye that I either presented you, or gathered them, bef[ore] they had done one, or both: and so might spoil thi[s] Nosegay, and not to let it come so happily unto your hands, as I wish it may. And though the Garden of your godly mind be full fraught with virtuous Flowers, which I know in your infancy to take root, and which all may see now to flourish, with an undoubted hope of their yielding fruit hereafter: yet ordain to smell to these, and when you come into a pestilent air that might infect your sound mind: yet savor to these *SLIPS* [9] in which I trust you shall find safety: And if you take pleasure in them, I shall not only be occasioned to endeavor myself to make a further viage[10] for a more daintier thing (than Flowers are) to present you withal: but also have good hope that you will accept this my labor, for recompense of all that which you are unrecompensed for, as knoweth god: who I beseech give unto you a long and lucky life with increase of all your virtuous studies.

From Abchurch Lane, the
20. of October. 1573.
By your well willing
Countrywoman. IS. W.

---

[1]*IS. W.:* Isabella Whitney
[2]*Nosegay:* bouquet of flowers or herbs
[3]*accompt:* account
[4]*ANTIPATER:* Macedonian general who knew of Demades' greediness
[5]*DEMADES:* Athenian politician who was fined for taking a bribe
[6]*DIOGENES:* celebrated Greek cynic philosopher who according to tradition showed his contempt for the amenities of life by living in a tub
[7]*did step . . . for these Flowers:* The Flowers are a versification of Hugh Plat's 1572 *Flowers of Philosophy*.
[8]*DARIUS:* ruler of Persia who beseeched Alexander the Great to accept his gifts
[9]*SLIPS:* pieces of paper or parchment; cuttings taken from a plant for grafting or rooting
[10]*viage:* voyage

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The Author to the Reader.

This harvest time, I harvestless,
and serviceless also:
And subject unto sickness, that
abroad I could not go.
Had leisure good, (though learning lacked)
some study to apply:
To read such Books, whereby I thought
myself to edify.
Sometime the Scriptures I perused,
10 but wanting a Divine:* minister
For to resolve me in such doubts,
as past this head of mine
To understand: I laid them by,
and Histories 'gan* read: began
Wherein I found that follies erst,
in people did exceed.
The which I see doth not decrease,
in this our present time
More pity it is we follow them,
20 in every wicked crime.
I straight were weary of those Books,
and many other mor[e,]
As *VIRGIL*,*OVID* [1], *MANTUAN** from Italy
which many wonders [bor]e.
And to refresh my mazéd [mu]se,
and cheer my bruiséd brain:
And for to try if that my limbs,
had got their strength again
I walkéd out: but suddenly
30 a friend of mine me met:
And said, if you regard your health:
out of this Lane you get.
And shift you to some better air,
for fear to be infect:
With noisome smell and savors ill,
I wish you that respect
And have regard unto your health,
or else perhaps you may:
So make a die,* and then adieu, to die
40 your woeful friends may say.
I thanked him for his carefulness,
and this for answer gave:
I'll neither shun, nor seek for death,
yet oft the same I crave.
By reason of my luckless life,

believe me this is true:
In that (said he) you do amiss,
then bade he me adieu.
For he was hasting out of Town,
50 and could no longer bide:
And I went home all sole alone,
good Fortune[2] was my guide.
And though sh[e e]ver hath denied,
to hoist me on her Wheel:[3]
Yet now she stood me in some stead,
and made me pleasures feel.
For she to *Plat* his Plot me brought,
where fragrant Flowers abound:
The smell whereof prevents each harm,
60 if yet yourself be sound.
Amongst those Beds so bravely decked,
with every goodly Flower:
And Banks and Borders finely framed,
I me reposed one hour.
And longer would, but leisure lacked,
and business bade me hie:* hurry
And come again some other time,
to fill my gazing eye.
Though loath:* yet at the last I went, reluctant
70 but ere* I parted thence: before
A slip I took to smell unto,
which might be my defense.
In stinking streets, or loathsome Lanes
which else might me infect:
And since that time, I each day once
have viewed that brave prospect.
And though the Master of the same,
I yet did never see:
It seems he is a Gentleman,
80 and full of courtesy:
For none that with good zeal doth come,
do anyone resist:
And such as will with or[der] get,
may gather whilst they [lis]t.
Then pity were it to destroy,
what he with pain did plant.
The moderate here may be sufficed,
and he no whit shall want,
And for my part, I may be bold,
90 to come when as I will:
Yea, and to choose of all his Flowers,
which may my fancy fill.
And now I have a Nosegay got,
that would be passing rare:
If that to sort the same aright,
were lotted to my share.
But in a bundle as they be,
(good Reader[)] them accept:
It is the giver: not the gift,
100 thou oughtest to respect.
And for thy health, not for thy eye,
did I this Posy frame:

Because myself did safety find,
   by smelling to the same.
But as we are not all alike,
   nor of complexion one:
So that which helpeth some we see,
   to others good doth none.
I do not say, it did me help,
110 I no infection felt:
But sure I think they kept me free,
   because to them I smelt.
And for because I like them well,
   and good have found thereby:
I for good will, do give them thee,
   first taste and after try.
But if thy mind infected be,
   then these will not prevail:
Sir *Medicus** with stronger Herbs, a doctor
120 thy malady must quell,
For these be but to keep thee sound,
   which if thou use them well:
(Pains of my life) in healthy state
   thy mind shall ever dwell.
Or if that thy complexion,
   with them do not agree:
Refer them to some friend of thine,
   till thou their virtue see.
And this I pray thee, whether thou
130 infected wast afore:
Or whether with thy nature strong,
   they can agree no more.
That thou my Nosegay not misuse,
   But leave it to the rest:
A number may such pleasure find,
   to bear it in their breast.
And if thyself would gather more,
   than I have herein bound:
My counsel is that thou repair,
140 to Master *Plat* his ground.
And gather there what I did not,
   perhaps thyself may light:
On those which for thee fitter are,
   than them which I recite.
Which if thou do, then render thanks,
   to him which sowed the soil:
If not, thou needs must him commend,
   when as thou viewest his toil.
In any wise,* be chary* that manner; careful
150 thou lettest in no Swine:
No Dog to scrape, nor beast that doth
   to raven* still incline. devour
For though he make no spare of them,
   to such as have good skill:
To slip, to shear, or get in time,
   and not his branches kill:
Yet bars he out, such greedy guts,
   as come with spite to toot.* toss
And without skill, both Herb and Flower

160 pluck rashly by the root.
So wishing thee, to find such Flowers,
as may thee comfort bring:
And eke* that he which framed the Plot, also
with virtues still may spring.
I thee commend to mighty *JOVE*,[4]
and thus I thee assure:
My Nosegay will increase no pain,
though sickness none it cure.
Wherefore, if thou it hap to wear
170 and feel thyself much worse:
Promote me for no Sorceress,
nor do me ban or curse.
For this I say the Flowers are good,
which I on thee bestow:
As those which wear them to the stalks,
shall by the sequel know.
One word, and then adieu to thee,
if thou to *Plat* his Plot
Repair: take heed it is a *Maze* [5]
180 to warn thee I forgot.

FINIS. quoth IS. W.

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[1]*VIRGIL*, *OVID:* classical Italian writers
[2] *Fortune:* Fortuna, the ancient Roman goddess of Fortune; the power that randomly distributes good and bad luck
[3]*Wheel:* Wheel of Fortune, an emblem of mutability
[4]*JOVE:* Jupiter, supreme deity of ancient Romans, the god of the heavens
[5]*Maze*: deception; also a pun on *amaze*: at the time people made mazes out of shrubs for entertainment

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T.B.[1] in commendation of the
Author

Marching among the woods of fine delight
Where as the Laurel[2] branch doth bring increase
Seld,* of Ladies fresh, a solemn sight: seldom
I viewed, whose walks betokened all their ease:
And how in friendly wise, it did them please:
While some did twist the Silk of lively hue
Some others slipped the Branch for praises due.

Nor musing did not rest, nor scorn my sight,
nor pressed in haste to break their silence I
10 But as at first, they held their whole delight:
and casting mirth, said Friend that passest by:
did never wreaths of love thee bind perdy* "by God"
As thus: who framed her Plot in Garland wise
So orderly, as best she might devise.

Not yet (quoth I,) but you might force the same
whose face doth stain the color red as Rose:

No *VIRGIL* this, nor *OVID* eke may blame,
For Beauty pressing as the Conduit* flows, channel
was cause that *PARIS*[3] greatest love arose:
20 who loved before, though never touchéd so,
As *OVID* shows, with many writers moe.* more

But Ladies sure, my love consists in this
my whole delight, and pleasure all I take
To deck the wight,* that worthy praises is: person, also warrior
and sure my great good will must never slack
From *WHITNEY*: lo, herein some party take
For in her work is plainly to be seen,
why Ladies place in Garlands Laurel green.

She flattering Fate too much, nor skies doth trust:
30 such labor lieth finished with the life:
She never did accompt* Dame Fortune just, account
that tosseth us with toys and plunges rife:* often
But her defieth, as Author of her strife:
She doth not write the brute or force in Arms,
Nor pleasure takes, to sing of other's harms,

But mustered* hath and wrapped in a pack gathered
a heap of Flowers of Philosophy:
No branch of perfect wisdom here doth lack,
But that the bruiséd mind, refreshed may be,
40 And that it is no fable, you shall see:
For here at large the sequel will declare
To Countryward, her love and friendly care.

The smelling Flowers of an Arbor sweet,
An Orchard picked presented is to thee:
And for her second work, she thought it meet,* appropriate
since Maids with lofty style may not agree:
In hope hereby, something to pleasure thee,
And when her busy care from head shall lurk,
50 She practice will, and promise longer work.

Now happy Dames, if good deserveth well,
her praise for Flowers philosophical:
And let your Branches twinéd that excel
her head adorn: wherein she flourish shall:
And *BERRIE* so, rests always at your call,
The purple blue, the red, the white I have,
To wrap amid your Garlands fresh and brave.

FINIS. THO. BIR.

---

[1]*T.B.:* thought to be Thomas Berrie
[2]*Laurel:* used by ancients as a token of victory or achievement
[3]*Paris:* prince of Troy who kidnaped his love, Helen, from her husband and thus caused the Trojan War

# A Sweet Nosegay,

or pleasant Posy: containing a
hundred and ten Philosophical
Flowers, etc.

The 1 Flower

Such friends as have been absent long
more joyful be at meeting
Than those which ever present are
and daily have their greeting.

The 2

When perils they are present, then
doth absence keep thee free:
Whereas, if that thou present were
might dangers light on thee.

The 3

The presence of the mind must be
preferred, if we do well:
Above the body's presence: for
it far doth it excel.

The 4

Yet absence, sometimes bringeth harm,
when friends but fickle are:
For new acquaintance purchase place
and old do lose their share.

The 5

What profit things that we possess
do by their presence bring
We can not know: till by their lack,
we feel what harms do spring.

The 6

For to abound in every thing,
and not their use to know:
It is a pinching penury:* poverty
wherefore, thy goods, bestow.

The 7
In saying old, once out of sight,
and also out of mind:
These contraries, that absent friends
much joy at meeting find.

The 8
Well yet, for the Antiquity,
it grew amongst the rest:
And true it proves, by those whose minds
Oblivion hath possessed.

The 9
Care not how many things thou hast
but have a great regard:
That they be good, for quantity,
doth merit no reward.

The 10
Yet so thou must increase thy stock
as clear thine own it be:
And neither fleece* thy friend, nor seek  rob heartlessly
thy neighbor's beggary.*  poverty

The 11
We easily may abuse the great
and chiefest thing of all:
But hard it is to use aright,
such as are trifles small.

The 12
Our ears we must not ever ope,*  open
to each man's accusation:
Nor without trial, trust too much,
to anyone's persuasion.

The 13
A fault right greater seemeth far,
on the accuser's part:
Than it on the Defendant's doth
much more should be his smart.

The 14
Thy Friends admonish secretly,
of crimes to which they swarve:*  stray
But praise them openly, if so be,
their deeds do praise deserve.

The 15
In every check,* use some fair speech  quarrel
for words do sooner pierce
That plainly pass than those which thou
with roughness might rehearse.

The 16
Admonished be with willingness,
and patiently abide

A reprehension, for such faults,
as friends in thee have spied.

The 17

Those precepts which in youthful years
are printed in thy breast:
Will deepest dive, and do more good
than ever shall the rest.

The 18

You must not suffer youth to range
nor stray abroad at will:
For liberty doth lewdness breed,
wherefore prevent that ill.

The 19

The vigor of our youth, no whit* not at all
doth differ from the Flower:
Which for a time doth flourish fair,
and quickly lose his power.

The 20

While thou art young, remember that
thine Age approacheth fast:
And follow thou the steps of such,
whose life doth ever last.

The 21

In youth to thee such learning get
as it may make thee wise:
So people shall in elder years,
come seek thy sage advice.

The 22

The inclinations of our youth,
desires that thence doth spring:
Foreshow what fruit in future time
our ripened age will bring.

The 23

No hope of goodness can be had
of him, who spends his prime,
In living so licentious,
that he respects no crime.

The 24

That mind which sensual appetites
in youth doth blindly guide:
To Age do bodies yield deformed,
because they wandered wide.

The 25

How vain it is for crooked Age
his youth for to require:
So is't for youth that childish years
would willingly desire.

The 26

Old people deem them nearer death
 than those that youthful seem
But youth is proner to his end,
 and less doth life esteem.

The 27

Great cruelty it is for us,
 to use a churlish* check* harsh; rebuke
To any, when adversity,
 hath brought them to a wreck.

The 28

None in adversity hath help,
 except they prospered have
And by these means have purchased friends
 of whom they aid may crave.

The 29

If misery thou would'st not know,
 live dangerless thou must
Or else to taste of troubles great
 thou shalt, though thou were just.

The 30

Prosperity will get thee friends,
 but poverty will try
For then, except they faithful are
 apace* from thee they fly. quickly

The 31

'Tis better with the truth offend,
 than please with flattering words
For truth at length shall keep thee safe
 when t'other cuts like swords.

The 32

To all men be thou liberal,
 but use to flatter none,
Nor be familiar but with few
 which number make but one.

The 33

A fawning* friend will at the length flattering
 a frowning foe approve* prove to be
The hate of such is better sure,
 than their deceitful love.

The 34

She that is an Adulteress
 of evils is a sea:
Her wickedness consumes herself
 and husband doth decay.

The 35

Men do by emulation,
 of others, prove the same

In every ill as custom is,
so commonly we frame.

The 36

Those strokes which mates in mirth do give
do seem to be but light:
Although sometime, they leave a sign
seems grievous to the sight.

The 37

All men thou shalt thine equal make
if thou such plainness use
As thou not fearest, nor yet art feared,
nor art, nor dost abuse.

The 38

Whilst hairs are hidden craftily
Age doth himself bewray:* betray
For will we, nill we,[1] he'll appear,
when youth is chased away.

The 39

Children are likened to the spring
and Striplings* to the Summer. youth
And young men, they are Autumn-like
and old men weary winter.

The 40

Have thou access always to such
let such resort to thee:
As temper all their talk with truth,
and are from envy free.

The 41

When Brethren be at variance,
how should the enemies 'gree?* agree, reconcile
When friends fall out among themselves
who shall their daysmen* be? mediators

The 42

A friendly mind, accompt* it for account
the nearest of thy kin:
When all shall fail, it sticks to thee,
whatever chance hath been.

The 43

Affection is of force so strong,
that other qualities:
He deemeth to be like himself,
and doth no worse surmise.

The 44

Let thine affections ruléd be,
lest that they do thee rule:
For then no strength will thee avail
nor back canst thou recule.* recoil

The 45

The sorrowful do think it death,
to linger in this life:
And wish to be dissolved thereof,
thereby to stint their strife.

The 46

What s'ere* it be that doubtful is, so ever
grants health th'afflicted till:
He utterly denies that he,
to health restore him will.

The 47

The Plowman is accompted small
his reputation none:
Yet of the members in a Realm
of chiefest he is one:

The 48

At dice playing, he that excels
and cunningly can play:
In my conceit, for wickedness,
may bear the price away.

The 49

Prease* not too high, but have regard press or praise
if thou should chance to fall:
From high might kill, from mean* might hurt middle
a low stand sure thou shall.

The 50

The man that is ambitious,
doth lose such honor oft:
As he hath got, when Fortune pleased.
to set him up aloft:

The 51

When Potentates* ambitious are, monarchs
the poor men, they are wracked,* destroyed
When Realms divide within themselves
no cities are unsacked.

The 52

He that is void of any friend,
him company to keep:
Walks in a world of wilderness,
full fraught with dangers deep.

The 53

Judge of a friend ere* friendship be before
but when thou hast him tried:
Then may'st thou trust and eke* believe also
as thou his doings spied.

The 54

The fault which in thy friend, thou seemest
to suffer, or permit:

Thou guilty art, thereof thyself,
not punishing of it.

The 55

So oft as faithful friends depart
so oft to die they seem:
To separate, the grief is great,
but absence is extreme.

The 56

Accompt so ever of thy friend,
as he thy foe may frame
So bear thee, that in enmity,
he thee procure no shame.

The 57

To all men use thou equity,
show faith unto thy friend
In everything that thou pretendst,
do still respect the end.

The 58

By benefits unto thy friend,
show thine ability:
And that thy foes may know the same
thine Injuries let fly.

The 59

All things with friends in common are
at least it should be so
That pleasures might imparted be
so likewise grief, or woe.

The 60

The poor, they have no friends at all
for to participate,
The sorrow and the grief they find
in their most wretched state.

The 61

In loving, each one hath free choice,
or ever they begin,
But in their power it lieth not,
to end when they are in.

The 62

The angry lover flattereth
himself with many lies:
And fondly feedeth on such toys
as fancy doth devise.

The 63

Each lover knoweth what he likes
and what he doth desire,
But seld,* or never doth he know, seldom
what thing he should require.

The 64

In time, may love, by piecemeal* wear  piece by piece
and wither clean away:
But presently to pluck his roots,
in vain you do assay.*  attempt

The 65

The lover's tears, will soon appease
his Lady's angry mood:
But men will not be pacified,
if Women weep a flood.

The 66

As Poets say, the Gods themselves
in love could use no wit:
Then mortal men may be allowed,
such follies to commit.

The 67

The young men when they are in love
may profit gain thereby:
But in the old, it is a fault
for they should love defy.

The 68

If love have given thee a blow,
and that thou art unsound,
Make means that thou a plaster* have,  bandage
of them which gave the wound.

The 69

When secret love once kindled is,
'twill burn with fiercest flame:
The surest way to be beloved,
is first to do the same.

The 70

The lover which doth look aloft,
and doth submission hate:
Shall have a slip* or answered be,  suffer a fall
that he is come too late.

The 71

Who s'ere they be, the laws of love
hath guided for a season:
It is a doubt, that never more.
they will be ruled by reason.

The 72

The cough it is so cumbersome,
that none the same can hide:
So love full fraught with foolish toys
may easily be espied.

The 73

The foremost step to wisdom is,
from love to keep thee free:

The second for to love so close,
that none the same may see.

The 74

An old man when he is in love,
of him this may we deem:
Of all hard haps* and chances fell, luck
he hath the most extreme.

The 75

The love of wicked persons must,
be got by wicked means:
Make thine accompt, when thou hast done
and give the devil the gains.

The 76

Affection fond deceives the wise
and love make men such noddies* fools
That to their selves they seem as dead
yet live in other bodies,

The 77

A virtuous man, that hath the fear
of God: before his eyes:
Is sure in safety for to walk,
for all his enemies.

The 78

No credit give, or not too much,
to that which thou dost hear,
If that out of a troubled mind
thou spyest it to appear.

The 79

The bow that ever standeth bent
too far will never cast
The mind which evermore is slack,
doth badly prove at last.

The 80

Such minds, as are disposéd well
brings wanderers to the way:
And ready are with helping hand,
to such as go astray.

The 81

Of worldly things, the chiefest is
a well contented mind:
That doth despise for to aspire,
nor gapeth* gifts to find. desires

The 82

If thou dost ill, it forceth not
what mind thou show'st thereto,
Because thy mind cannot be seen,
but that which thou dost do.

The 83
A loathsome sight God knows it is
a fickle mind to see:
It should be pure for to reject,
that vile impurity.

The 84
Our years and days wax worse and worse
more grievous is our sorrow:
He that's unfit to mend today,
will worser be tomorrow.

The 85
The present day we cannot spend
as we the same should do
Except to count it as our last,
we frame ourselves unto.

The 86
As ours do please some other men,
so theirs do us delight:
Which shows our ill contented mind
that often works us spite.

The 87
He that with his own weapon is
dispatchéd of his life:
Twice slain he is because himself
was killed with his own knife.

The 88
Those promises which are forgot,
be not for aye* neglect ever
They may performéd be at last,
and have their full effect:

The 89
A miserable grief it is,
by him to have a harm
On whom we dare not once complain
nor can ourselves him charm.

The 90
Their sight is weak that waxeth dim
to see another blind
And very little comfort shall,
th'afflicted by them find.

The 91
A pleasure ill, and profit none
it is, delight to make,
In th'use of any neighbor's goods
for which they pains did take.

The 92
He is not much deceived, whose suit
full quickly hath denial

Nor can he say, that he had cause,
to linger for the trial.

The 93
Full hard it is, and hazard great
to keep for any while:
A thing that each one lusteth for
for some will thee beguile.

The 94
Do not accompt that for thine own,
which may from thee be take:
But much esteem such treasure, as
will never thee forsake.

The 95
The day doth dally so with us:
that we can never know:
For what to wish, from what to fly
what works us weal* or woe. well

The 96
He doth not soon to ruin come
that fears it ere it fall:
But may provide it to prevent,
if Fortune grant he shall.

The 97
Ask nothing of thy neighbor, that
thou wouldst not let him have:
Nor say him nay, of that which thou
wouldst get, if thou didst crave.

The 98
If that thou minded are to give
ask not if they will have it
For so, they either must deny
or seem that they do crave it.

The 99
It glorious is, to give all things
to him that nought doth crave:
So likewise let him nothing get
that everything would have.

The 100
Whilst that thou hast free liberty
to do what likes thee best:
Thou soon mayest see into thyself
what disposition rest.

The 1001[2]
That Lawyer, which is chose to plead
for rich and mighty men:
Must either let the truth go by,
or lose their friendship then.

The 1002
A little gold in law will make,
thy matter better speed:
Than if thou broughtest of love as much
as might in kindreds breed.

The 1003
Gold savors well, though it be got
with occupations vile:
If thou hast gold, thou welcome art,
though virtue thou exile.

The 1004
Such poor folk as to law do go,
are driven oft to curse:
But in meanwhile, the Lawyer thrusts
the money in his purse.

The 1005
A hasty tongue, which runs at large
not knowing any measure,
It is a wicked thing that makes
the mind repent at leisure.

The 1006
Two eyes, two ears, and but one tongue
Dame nature hath us framed
That we might see, and hear much more
than should with tongue be named.

The 1007
Keep well thy tongue, and keep thy friend
ill used, it causeth foes
In uttering things, commit to thee
thou faithful friends dost lose.

The 1008
Seek not each man to please, for that
is more than God bids do:
Please thou the best and never care,
what wicked say thereto.

The 1009
Of wicked men to be dispraised,
for praise do it accompt:
If they commend, then art thou mad
so doth their credit mount.

The 1010
When as the wicked are in midst
of all their jollity:
Misfortune standeth at the door,
and scorns the same to see.

FINIS.

A sovereign receipt.* prescription, recipe

*The Juice of all these Flowers take,*
*and make thee a conserve:*[3]
*And use it first and last: and it*
*will safely thee preserve.*
*By Is. W. Gent.*

A farewell to the Reader

Good Reader now you tasted have,
and smelt of all my Flowers:
The which to get some pain I took,
and travailed* many hours. labored
I must request you spoil them not,
nor do in pieces tear them:
But if thyself do loathe the scent,
give others leave to wear them.
I shall no whit be discontent,
for nothing is so pure:
But one, or other will mislike
thereof we may be sure.
If he for whom I gathered them,
take pleasure in the same:
And that for my presumption,
my Friends do not me blame.
And that the savor take effect,
in such as I do know:
And bring no harm to any else,
in place where it shall go.
And that when I am distant far,
it worn be for my sake:
That some may say, God speed her well
that did this Nosegay make.
And eke that he who ought the Plot,
wherein they same did grow:
Fume not to see them borne about,
and wish he did me know.
And say in rage were she a man,
that with my Flowers doth brag,
She well should pay the price, I would
not leave her worth a rag.
If as I say, no harms do hap,* happen
but that this well may speed:
My mind is fully satisfied,
I crave none the other meed.* reward
So wishing thee no worse than those,
of whom I think none ill:
I make an end and thee commend,
the living Lord until.

FINIS. IS. W.

---

[1] *will we, nill we:* willy-nilly: whether one wishes to or not; willingly or unwillingly

[2]*1001:* read as one hundred one
[3]*conserve:* a medicinal or confectionary preservation in sugar of some part of a plant (e.g. the flower or leaves)

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# Certain familiar Epistles and friendly Letters by the Author: with Replies.

To her Brother. G. W.

Good Brother when a vacant time
doth cause you hence to ride:
And that the fertile fields do make,
you from the City bide.
Then cannot I once from you hear
nor know I how to send:
Or where to harken of your health
and all this would be kenned.* learned
And most of me, for why I least,
of Fortune's favor find:
No yielding year she me allows,
nor goods hath me assigned.
But still to friends I must appeal
(and next our Parents dear.)
You are, and must be chiefest staff
that I shall stay on here.
Wherefore mine own good brother grant
me when that you are here:
To see you oft and also hence,
I may have knowledge where
A messenger to hark unto,
that I to you may write:
And eke of him your answers have
which would my heart delight.
Receive of me, and eke accept,
a simple token here:
A smell of such a Nosegay as
I do for present bear.
Unto a virtuous Lady, which
till death I honor will:

The loss I had of service hers,
I languish for it still.

Your loving (though luckless)
Sister, IS. W.

To her Brother. B. W.

Good Brother *Brooke*, I often look,
to hear of your return:
But none can tell, if you be well,
nor where you do sojourn:
Which makes me fear, that I shall hear
your health appairéd* is: impaired
And oft I dread, that you are dead,
or something goeth amiss.
Yet when I think, you cannot shrink,
but must with Master be:
I have good hope, when you have scope,
you will repair to me.
And so the fear, and deep despair,
that I of you then had
I drive away: and wish that day
wherein we may be glad.
Glad for to see, but else for me:
will be no joy at all:
For on my side, no luck will bide,
nor happy chance befall.
As you shall know, for I will show,
you more when we do speak,
Than will I write, or yet recite,
within this Paper weak.
And so I end, and you commend,
to him that guides the skies:
Who grant you health, and send you wealth,
no less than shall suffice.

Your loving Sister. Is. W.

An order prescribed, by IS. W.
to two of her younger Sisters
serving in London.

Good Sisters mine, when I
shall further from you dwell:
Peruse these lines, observe the rules
which in the same I tell.
So shall you wealth possess,
and quietness of mind:
And all your friends to see the same,
a treble* joy shall find. three-fold

1. In mornings when you rise,
forget not to commend:

Yourselves to God, beseeching him
     from dangers to defend.
Your souls and bodies both,
     your Parents and your friends:
Your teachers and your governors
     so pray you that your ends,
May be in such a sort,
     as God may pleaséd be:
To live to die, to die to live,
20 with him eternally.

2. Then justly do such deeds,
     as are to you assigned:
All wanton toys, good sisters now
     exile out of your mind,
I hope you give no cause,
     whereby I should suspect:
But this I know too many live,
     that would you soon infect.
If God do not prevent,
30 or with his grace expel:
I cannot speak, or write too much,
    because I love you well.

3. Your business soon dispatch,
     and listen to no lies:
Nor credit every feignéd tale,
     that many will devise.
For words they are but wind.
     yet words may hurt you so:
As you shall never brook* the same, endure
40 if that you have a foe.
God shield you from all such,
      as would by word or Bill.[1]
Procure your shame, or never cease
      till they have wrought you ill.

4. See that you secrets seal,
     tread trifles underground:
If to rehearsal oft you come,
     it will your quiet wound.
Of laughter be not much,
50 nor over solemn seem:
For then be sure they'll compt* you light account
     or proud will you esteem.
Be modest in a mean,
    be gentle unto all:
Though cause they give of contrary
     yet be to wrath no thrall.
Refer you all to him,
     that sits above the skies:
Vengeance is his, he will revenge,
60 you need it not devise.

5. And sith* that virtue guides, since
     where both of you do dwell:
Give thanks to God, and painful be

to please your rulers well.
For fleeting is a foe,
experience hath me taught:
The rolling stone doth get no moss
yourselves have heard full oft.
Your business being done,
70 and this my scroll perused,
The day will end, and that the night
by you be not abused.
I something needs must write,
take pains to read the same:
Henceforth my life as well as Pen
shall your examples frame.

6. Your Masters gone to Bed,
your Mistresses at rest.
Their Daughters all who haste about
80 to get themselves undressed.
See that their Plate be safe,
and that no Spoon do lack,
See Doors and Windows bolted fast
for fear of any wrack.* damage, evil people
Then help if need there be,
to do some household thing:
If not to bed, referring you,
unto the heavenly King.
Forgetting not to pray
90 as I before you taught,
And giving thanks for all that he,
hath ever for you wrought.
Good Sisters when you pray,
let me remembered be:
So will I you, and thus I cease,
till I yourselves do see.

IS. W.

---

[1]*Bill:* written statement of charges against someone

---

To her Sister Mistress A. B.

Because I to my Brethren wrote,
and to my Sisters two:
Good Sister Anne, you this might wot,* know
if so I should not do
To you or ere I parted hence,
You vainly had bestowed expense.[1]

Yet is it not for that I write,
for nature did you bind:
To do me good: and to requite,

10 hath nature me inclined:
Wherefore good Sister take in gree,* favor
These simple lines that come from me.

Wherein I wish you Nestor's[2] days,
in happy health to rest:
With such success in all assays,
as those which God hath blessed:
Your Husband with your pretty Boys,
God keep them free from all annoys.

And grant if that my luck it be,
20 to linger here so long:
Till they be men: that I may see,
for learning them so strong:
That they may march amongst the best,
Of them which learning have possessed.

By that time will my agéd years
perhaps a staff require:
And quakingly as still in fears,
my limbs draw to the fire:
Yet joy I shall them so to see,
30 If any joy in age there be.

Good Sister so I you commend,
to him that made us all:
I know you housewifery intend,
though I to writing fall:
Wherefore no longer shall you stay,
From business, that profit may.

Had I a Husband, or a house,
and all that 'longs thereto
Myself could frame about to rouse,
40 as other women do:
But till some household cares me tie,
My books and Pen I will apply.

Your loving Sister. IS. W.

---

[1]*bestowed expense:* Anne may have paid for some of Isabella's education.
[2]*Nestor's:* King Nestor of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* was the oldest and wisest Greek in the Trojan war.

---

To her Cousin. F. W.

Good Cousin mine, I hope in health
and safety you abide.
And sore I long, to hear if yet
you are to wedlock tied.
If so you be, God grant that well
both you and she it spend:
If not when s'ere it haps,* I wish happens

that God much joy you send.
And when you to the Country come
10 or thither chance to send:
Let me you see, or have some scroll,
that shall of you be penned.
And this accompt as nature binds
and merits yours deserve:
I Cousin am, and faithful Friend,
not minding once to swerve.
So wishing you as happy health,
as ever man possessed:
I end, and you commit to him
20 that evermore is blessed.

Your poor Kinswoman, IS. W.

A careful complaint by the
unfortunate Author.

Good *DIDO*[1] stint thy tears,
and sorrows all resign
To me: that born was to augment,
misfortune's luckless line.
Or being still the same,
good *DIDO* do thy best:
In helping to bewail the hap,* chance, fortune
that furthereth mine unrest.
For though thy Trojan mate,
10 that Lord *AENEAS*[2] hight:* is called, promised
Requiting ill thy steadfast love,
from *Carthage* [3] took his flight.
And foully broke his oath,
and promise made before:
Whose falsehood finished thy delight,
before thy hairs were hoar.* white
Yet greater cause of grief
compels me to complain:
For Fortune fell converted hath,
20 My health to heaps of pain.
And that she swears my death,
too plain it is (alas)
Whose end let malice still attempt,
to bring the same to pass.
O *DIDO* thou hadst lived,
a happy Woman still,
If fickle fancy had not thralled* enslaved
thy wits: to retchless* will. reckless
For as the man by whom,
30 thy deadly dolors* bred: sorrows
Without regard of plighted troth,* betrothal
from *CARTHAGE* City fled.
So might thy cares in time,
be banished out of thought:
His absence might well salve* the sore, heal

that erst* his presence wrought. first
For fire no longer burns,
than Faggots* feed the flame: kindling twigs
The want of things that breed annoy,
40 may soon redress the same.
But I unhappy most,
and gripped with endless griefs:
Despair (alas) amid my hope,
and hope without relief.
And as the sweltering heat,
consumes the War away:
So do the heaps of deadly harms,
still threaten my decay.
O Death delay not long,
50 thy duty to declare:
The *Sisters three* [4] dispatch my days
and finish all my care.

Is. W.

---

[1]*DIDO:* Queen Dido of Carthage, who married Aeneas to prevent him from leaving for the Trojan War, then killed herself when he left.
[2]*AENEAS:* Trojan hero of Virgil's *Aeneid* who abandoned Dido
[3]*Carthage:* North African city, in mythology founded by Dido
[4]*Sisters three:* The Three Fates of classical mythology were sister goddesses who controlled human destiny.

---

In answer to comfort her, by showing
his haps to be harder.

Friend IS. be now content, and let my sorrows quell
the extreme rage, and care thou restest in:
For wailing sprites, ne* furies fierce in hell: nor
nor grisly souls, that still in woe have been:
Have ever felt like storms that I sustain,
frownst so I am, and dulled in deep despair,
That sure (me thinks), my extreme raging pain:
might gain thee health: and set thee free from fear.
For DIDO, thou, and many thousands more,
10 which living feel the pangs of extreme care,
Though tottered much; and torn in pieces small:
whomever gripping death doth never spare.
Nor he, that falsely, Carthage City fled,
so fraught with wiles, nor the such sorrows taste
By thousand parts, as I who rightly said:
do pine as WAX before the fire wastes.
I freeze to ICE, I heat with parching SUN,
and torn with teen,* thus languishing in pain, grief
Do feel my sorrows ever fresher run:
20 to flowing cares, that endless sorrows gain.
For what, for whom, and why this evil works

friend IS. W, time, nor silence, may it show
But once ere many days, my care that lurks,
shall blown be, and thou the same shalt know.
Till then, with silly DIDO be content,
and rip* no more, thy wrongs in such excess: disclose
Thy FORTUNE rather, wills thee to lament,
with speedy wit, till hope may have redress.

FINIS. T. B.[1]

---

[1]*T.B.:* Thomas Berrie, a literary friend in London, to whom she responds in the next poem

---

A Reply to the same.[1]

The bitter force of *Fortune's* frowardness,* perversity
is painted out by B.[2] his changéd hue:
Report bewrays,* that tyrant's doubleness. exposes
which I by trial, prove (alas) too true.
constrained I am, on thy mishaps to rue:* grieve
As oft as I consider thine estate,
Which differs far, from that thou wast of late.

Where be thy wonted* lively looks become? customary
or what mischance, hath dimmed thy beauty so
There is no God that deals such doubtful doom
No *Jupiter*[3] hath brought thee down so low:
thy hapless fate, hath wrought thy overthrow
For as *Saturnus*[4] reaves* the *Berry's* joy, spoils
So Fortune strives, to further thine annoy.

O Fortune false, O thrice unsteady joys
why doth not man mistrust thy subtle shows
Whose proffers* prove in time to be but toys offers
as this the fruit that from your blossom grows
then may you rightly be compared with those
whose painted speech, professeth friendship still
but time bewrays the meaning to be ill.

For time that shows, what erst I could not see
Hath brought about, that I suspected least:
Complaining still on our simplicity
Who headlong runs, as doth that careless beast
till hunter's snares, have laid his limbs to rest
For when we least mistrust and dread deceit
Then are we snared, with unsuspected bait.

As lately unto thee it did befall,
whose hap enforceth me to rue thy chance
For thou that flourished erst at beauty's stall:

Hath felt the force of froward *Fortune's* lance
Compelled to furnish out misfortune's dance
See here the surety that belongeth aye,* continually
To mortal joys whereon the world doth stay

But live in hope that better hap may light,
For after storms Sir *Phoebus** force is seen sun
So when *Saturnus* hath declared his might:
And *Winter* stints to turn the world to teen
then pleasant *Ver** shall clothe the ground in green spring
And lusty *MAY* shall labor to restore,
the things that *Winter's* spit had spoiled before

Then shall the *Berry* cleave her wonted hue,
and eke my B. that long hath tasted pain
When Fortune doth her former grace renew
shall hoisted be to happy state again
In . . . . . .[5]
Delighting oft among his friends and Kin,
To tell what danger erst his life was in.

Which happy sight of mortal creatures, who
shall more rejoice, than I thy friend to see
And while dame fortune, yielded not thereto
but doth proceed: to prove her spite on thee
yet shall thou not so ill belovéd be,
But that thy Fame, forever flourish shall,
If IS. her Pen, may promise ought at all.

Farewell.

---

[1]*A Reply to the same.:* The third stanza contained an apparent printer's error which we corrected. The indentation pattern was reversed on lines 2 and 3.
[2]*B.:* Thomas Berrie
[3]*Jupiter:* ruler of Roman gods, identified with Greek Zeus
[4]*Saturnus:* Jupiter's father
[5]*In. . . .:* There appears to be a line omitted from the printed text.

---

IS. W. to C. B. in bewailing
her mishaps.

If heavy hearts might serve to be
a sacrifice for sin:
Or else, if sorrows might suffice,
for what so ere hath been:
Then mine Oblation,* it were made, offering
Which long have lived in Mourner's trade.

The dreary day in dole* (alas) sorrow, grief
continually I spend:

The noisome nights, in restless Bed,
10 I bring unto his end:
And when the day appears again,
Then fresh begin my plaints* amain.* complaints; anew

But this I fear. will sooner cease:
the number of my sin:
Than make amends, for former miss,
that I have livéd in:
Because I take not patiently
Correction in adversity.

Wherefore (my God) give me that gift,
20 As he did JOB[1] until:
That I may take with quietness,
whatsoever is his will:
Then shall my luckless life soon end,
Or froward Fortune shall amend.

And for because your sound advice,
may ease me in distress:
For that two wits may compass more
than one, you must confess:
And that, that burden doth not dear,* weigh heavily
30 which friend will sometime help to bear.

Therefore, in this perplexity,
To you dear friend I write:
You know mine endless misery,
you know, how some me spite:
With counsel cure, for fear of wrack,
And help to bear, that breaks my back:

So wishing you in health to bide,
and troubles not to taste
And giving 'tendance for your aid,
40 which I require in haste
I cease: and humbly me commend,
To the conducting of my Friend,

Your unfortunate Friend. IS. W.

---

[1] *JOB:* In the Old Testament Job was favored by God until Satan convinced God to test Job's loyalty. He is the personification of long-suffering patience.

---

In answer by C. B.
to IS. W.

Your lamentable letter read,
and finding by the same:
That you my skilless counsel crave,

to bring you to some frame:
Such as it is, I ready pressed,
Both am, and will, to do my best.

And where as thou in sorrow soust* soused: immersed or drunk
dost pine thyself away:
I wish thee for to conquer care,
10 lest she bring thy decay:
Those fretting fits, that thou art in,
Offends the Lord, augmenteth sin.

The heavy heart: and mind oppressed,
he never doth reject:
And at what hour we lament,
he doth us still respect.
Yet that for sin thou shouldst thee kill,
Would both thy soul and body spill.

But 'tis not altogether sin,
20 that makes you sorrow this:
It is because that Fortune she,
doth frown on you iwis* certainly
Wherefore if you my counsel like,
Turn off your tears, and cease to sike.* sigh

Impart thy woes, and give to me,
the greatest of the same:
Pluck strength thee to: and cherish thee,
to modest mirth now frame:
Then friends and you may work so well,
30 That *Fortune* shall your foes expel.

If evil words and other wants,
have brought thee to this woe:
Remember how that Christ himself,
on earth was even so:
Thy Friends that have thee known of long,
Will not regard thy enemy's tongue.

The virtue that hath ever been,
within thy tender breast:
Which I from year to year, have seen,
40 in all thy deeds expressed:
Doth me persuade thy enemies lie,
And in that quarrel would I die.

That wisdom which thou dost possess,
is rare for to be found:
Thy courtesy to everyone,
so greatly doth abound.
That those which thoroughly thee do know,
Will thee defend from any foe.

Wherefore as erst I write to thee,
50 pluck up that heart of thine:
And make accompt for friendship, or
for service: else of mine.

I will not fail for friend or foe,
Thy virtues they do bind me so.

Thus wishing God to be your guide,
and grant you Nestor's life:
With health and haps, so good as erst,
had any maid or wife.
I end and rest in what he may,
60 Your friend unto my dying day.

By me C. B.

To my Friend Master T.L. whose good
nature: I see abused.

Did not Dame *Ceres*[1] tell to you?
nor fame unto you show?
What sturdy forms have been abroad
and who hath played the shrew.
I thought that Goddess in your fields
had helpéd with your crop:
Or else the fame till you had known,
her trump would never stop.
But since I see their silentness,
10 I cease the same to write:
Lest I therefore might be condemned
to do it for a spite.
But this I wish that you my friend
go choose some virtuous wife:
With whom in fear of God do spend,
the residue of your life
For whilst you are in single state
none hath that right regard:
They think all well that they can win,
20 and 'compt it their reward.
With sorrow I too oft have seen,
when some would fleece* you much rob heartlessly
And oft in writing would I say
good friend beware of such.
But all my words they were as wind
my labor ill was spent:
And in the end for my good will,
most cruelly was shent.* shamed
If I were boxed and buffeted,* beaten
30 good will shall never cease:
Nor hand, nor tongue, shall so be charmed
to make me hold my peace.
Wherefore I warn you once again
be wary of yourself:
For some have sworn to like you well
so long as you have pelf.* wealth
If warnings still you do reject,
too late yourself shall rue:* grieve
Do as you list, I wish you well,
40 and so I say adieu.

Your well willer.  IS. W.

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[1]*Ceres:* Roman goddess of harvest and corn

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Another Letter sent to IS. W. by
one:  to whom she had written
her unfortunate state.[1]

Your Letters (Cousin) scarcely seen,
I catched into my hand:
In hope thereby some happy news,
from you to understand,
But when I had surveyed the same,
and weighed the tenor well
A heavy heap of sorrows did,
my former joys expel.
[I] do rejoice, as doth the Swan,[2]
10 who ready for to die,
with burial song salutes, her hard
and doleful destiny.
Indeed, I see and know too well,
how fortune spites your wealth:
And as a tyrant Goddess, doth
disdain your happy health.
whose poison serpentine I trust,
in time shall wasted be,
For time amends the greatest miss,
20 and sets the captive free.
Wherefore (good Cousin) as before,
so now my barren quill
Disdaineth not in simple sort,
to utter his good will.
And to discharge the duty that,
belongeth to a friend,
whose wealth, I would to God were such,
as might your case amend
But luck preventing every mean,
30 that might your harms redress
Denieth power to me that do,
a friendly mind possess
Yet Cousin, rest in perfect hope,
to see the happy day,
That shall unload your heapéd grief,
and drive your cares away
And since the counsel of the Gods
surpass the human wit.
Remember what the proverb saith:
40 *hereafter comes not yet.*
And ponder well the Shipman's case,
whose death, the tossing tide

Doth threaten oft: assaulting sore
his shaken Ship with pride
Yet when NEPTUNUS[3] stayeth,
and calms the Seas again.
His joys more ample are by far,
than theirs that did complain
He tells at home with jocund* mind  cheery
50 among his friends and kin
The danger great, and deep despair,
that erst his life was in:
Triumphing over Neptune's spite,
whose force he felt before:
And joys to view the Seas, when he
obtainéd hath the shore
So when the floods, of Fortune's spite
that swell with foaming rage
Shall sti[n]t their struggling strife, and when
60 their malice shall assuage*  be appeased
Then may you gain, and long enjoy
the Haven of good hap:
For Nurses chide full oft, before
they lull their child in lap.
And take delight perhaps to tell,
what troubles erst I knew,
whose bare rehearsal might enforce,
a stony heart to rue.
why should we then, with such disdain:
70 endure the chastisement
whereby, perhaps, the Gods in us,
some further harms prevent
And since no creature may deserve,
Dame Juno's[4] graces well,
why should we grudge, and blame the gods,
whose goodness doth excel
whereas our duty bindeth us,
their doings to allow:
whose actions all, are for the best,
80 when we perceive not how
we rather should with quiet mind,
abide the dated time,
wherein the Gods shall us accompt,
as worthy for to climb.
which after trial shall betide,
to those that suffer smart:
For: *he doth ill deserve the sweet,*
*that tasteth not the tart*
which argueth those that for awhile,
90 doth bide the brunt of pain
To be the owners of good hap,
when Fortune turns again
whose number, I beseech the Gods
yourself may furnish out,
And that his eyes may see you placed,
amid that happy rout*  group
whose great good will shall never die:
although the want of time
Hath done me wrong, and ever doth:

in shortening of my rhyme.

Your most loving Cousin. G. W.

---

[1]*Another Letter . . . :* Because a printer needed to conserve space and paper, this poem does not appear in stanzas in the original publication. Instead, the font was small and each couplet was written as one line.
[2]*Swan:* The swan is said to sing most beautifully on its death bed.
[3]*NEPTUNUS:* Roman god of the sea
[4]*Juno's:* Roman queen of the gods, guardian of women

---

IS. W. being weary of writing,
sendeth this for Answer.

No less than thanks, I render unto you,
What[?][1] though it be a Beggar's bare reward
Accept the same: (for Cousin) this is true,
'tis all I have: my haps they are so hard:
None beareth life, is so from Fortune barred,
But this I know, and hope it once to find
God can, and will, exalt the humble mind.

This simple verse: content you for to take
for answer of your loving letter large,
For now I will my writing clean forsake
till of my griefs, my stomach I discharge:
and till I row, in Lady Fortune's barge.
Good Cousin write not nor any more reply,
But give me leave, more quietness to try.

Your Cousin IS. W.

---

[1]*[?]:* There appears to be a question mark or another punctuation mark here.

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**The Author (though loath[1] to leave the City) upon her Friend's procurement, is constrained to depart: wherefore (she feigneth as she would die) and maketh her WILL and Testament, as followeth: With large Legacies of such Goods and riches which she most abundantly hath left behind her: and thereof maketh London sole executor to see her Legacies performed.**

```
            A communication which the Author had
             to London, before she made her Will.

        The time is come I must depart,
             from thee Ah famous City:
        I never yet to rue my smart,
             did find that thou hadst pity.
        Wherefore small cause there is, that I
             should grieve from thee go:
        But many Women foolishly,
             like me, and other more.
        Do such a fixéd fancy set,
10           on those which least deserve,
        That long it is ere wit we get,
             away from them to swarve.*                    stray
        But time with pity oft will tell
             to those that will her try:
        Whether it best be more to mell,*                  blend in
             or utterly defy.
        And now hath time me put in mind,
             of thy great cruelness:
        That never once a help would find,
20           to ease me in distress.
        Thou never yet, wouldst credit give
             to board me for a year:
        Nor with Apparel me relieve
             except thou payéd were
        No, no, thou never didst me good,
             nor ever wilt I know:
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Yet am I in no angry mood,
but will, or ere I go
In perfect love and charity.
30 my Testament here write:
And leave to thee such Treasury,
as I in it recite.
Now stand aside and give me leave
to write my latest Will:
And see that none you do deceive,
of that I leave them till.

The manner of her
Will, and what she left to London:
and to all those in it: at her departing.

I whole in body, and in mind,
but very weak in Purse:
Do make, and write my Testament
for fear it will be worse.
And first I wholly do commend,
my Soul and Body eke:
To God the Father and the Son,
so long as I can speak.
And after speech: my Soul to him,
10 and Body to the Grave:
Till time that all shall rise again,
their Judgment for to have.
And then I hope they both shall meet.
to dwell for aye in joy:
Whereas I trust to see my Friends
released, from all annoy.
Thus have you heard touching my soul,
and body what I mean:
I trust you all will witness bear,
20 I have a steadfast brain.
And now let me dispose such things,
as I shall leave behind:
That those which shall receive the same,
may know my willing mind.
I first of all to London leave
because I there was bred:
Brave buildings rare, of Churches store,
and Paul's* to the head.
Between the same: fair streets there be,
30 and people goodly store:
Because their keeping craveth cost,
I yet will leave him more.
First for their food, I Butchers leave,
that every day shall kill:
By Thames you shall have Brewers store,
and Bakers at your will.
And such as orders do observe,
and eat fish thrice a week:

St. Paul's Cathedral

I leave two Streets, full fraught therewith,
40 they need not far to seek.
Watling Street, and Canwick street,
I full of Woolen leave:
And Linen store in Friday street,
if they me not deceive.
And those which are of calling such,
that costlier they require:
I M[e]rcers* leave, with silk so rich, cloth merchants
as any would desire.
In Cheap[2] of them, they store shall find
50 and likewise in that street:
I Goldsmiths leave, with Jewels such,
as are for Ladies meet.
And Plate to furnish Cupboards with,
full brave there shall you find:
With Pearl of Silver and of Gold,
to satisfy your mind.
With Hoods, Bongraces,[3] Hats or Caps,
such store are in that street:
As if on th'one side you should miss
60 the other serves you for't.
For Nets[4] of every kind of sort,
I leave within the pawn:
French Ruffs,[5] high Pearls, Gorgets* and Sleeves collars, necklaces
of any kind of Lawn.* fabric
For Purse or Knives, for Comb or Glass,
or any needful knack
I by the Stocks* have left a Boy, marketplace
will ask you what you lack.
I Hose do leave in Burchin Lane,
70 of any kind of size:
For Women stitched, for men both Trunks
and those of Gascoyne[6] guise.
Boots, Shoes or Pantables* good store, parts of slippers
Saint Martin's[7] hath for you:
In Cornwall,* there I leave you Beds, a road
and all that 'longs thereto.
For Women shall you Tailors have,
by Bow,* the chiefest dwell: a street
In every Lane you some shall find,
80 can do indifferent well.
And for the men, few Streets or Lanes,
but Bodymakers[8] be:
And such as make the sweeping Cloaks,
with Gardes[9] beneath the Knee.
Artillery at the Temple Bar,[10]
and Dagges* at Tower hill: daggers
Swords and Bucklers of the best,
are nigh the Fleet* until. a street
Now when thy folk are fed and clad
90 with such as I have named:
For dainty mouths, and stomachs weaks
some Junckets[11] must be framed.
Wherefore I 'Pothecaries* leave, pharmacists
with Banquets in their Shop:
Physicians also for the sick,

Diseases for to stop.
Some Roisters* still, must 'bide in thee. rowdy persons
and such as cut it out:
That with the guilltless quarrel will,
100 to let their blood about.
For them I cunning Surgeons leave,
some Plasters* to apply. bandages
That Ruffians may not still be hanged,
nor quiet persons die.
For Salt, Oatmeal, Candles, Soap,
or what you else do want:
In many places, Shops are full,
I left you nothing scant.
If they that keep what I you leave,
110 ask Money: when they sell it:
At Mint, there is such store, it is
impossible to tell it.
At Steelyard[12] store of Wines there be,
your dulled minds to glad:
And handsome men, that must not wed
except they leave their trade.
They oft shall seek for proper Girls,
and some perhaps shall find:
(That need compels, or lucre* lures[)] riches
120 to satisfy their mind.
And near the same, I houses leave,
for people to repair:
To bathe themselves, so to prevent
infection of the air.
On Saturdays I wish that those,
which all the week do drug:
Shall thither trudge, to trim them up
on Sundays to look smug.
If any other thing be lacked
130 in thee, I wish them look:
For there it is: I little brought
but nothing from thee took.
Now for the people in thee left,
I have done as I may:
And that the poor, when I am gone,
have cause for me to pray.
I will to prisons portions leave,
what though but very small:
Yet that they may remember me,
140 occasion be it shall:
And first the Counter[13] they shall have,
lest they should go to wrack:* ruin
Some Coggers,* and some honest men, deceivers
that Sergeants draw a back.
And such as Friends will not them bail,
whose coin is very thin:
For them I leave a certain hole,
and little ease within.
The Newgate[14] once a Month shall have
150 a sessions* for his share: court date
Lest being heaped, Infection might
procure a further care.

And at those sessions some shall 'scape,
with burning near the Thumb:[15]
And afterward to beg their fees,
till they have got the sum.

And such whose deeds deserveth death,
and twelve have found the same:
They shall be drawn up Holborn[16] hill,
160 to come to further shame:
Well, yet to such I leave a Nag
shall soon their sorrows cease:
For he shall either break their necks
or gallop from the press.* crowd
The Fleet,[17] not in their circuit is,
yet if I give him naught:
It might procure his curse, ere I
unto the ground be brought.
Wherefore I leave some Papist* old Roman Catholics
170 to under prop his roof:
And to the poor within the same,
a Box[18]for their behoof.
What makes you standersby to smile.
and laugh so in your sleeve:
I think it is, because that I
to Ludgate[19] nothing give.
I am not now in case to lie,
here is no place of jest:
I did reserve, that for myself,
180 if I my health possessed.
And ever came in credit so
a debtor for to be.
When days of payment did approach,
I thither meant to flee.
To shroud myself amongst the rest,
that choose to die in debt:
Rather than any Creditor,
should money from them get.
Yet 'cause I feel myself so weak
190 that none me credit dare:
I here revoke: and do it leave,
some *Bankrupts* to his share.
To all the Bookbinders by Paul's[20]
because I like their Art:
They every week shall money have,
when they from Books depart.
Amongst them all, my Printer must,
have somewhat to his share:
I will my Friends these Books to buy
200 of him, with other ware.
For Maidens poor, I Widowers rich,
do leave, that oft shall dote:
And by that means shall marry them,
to set the Girls afloat.
And wealthy Widows will I leave,
to help young Gentlemen:
Which when you have. in any case
be courteous to them then:

And see their Plate and Jewels eke
210 may not be marred with rust.
Nor let their Bags* too long be full, money-bags, purses
for fear that they do burst.
To every Gate under the walls,
that compass thee about:
I Fruit wives[21] leave to entertain
such as come in and out.
To Smithfield* I must something leave a street
my Parents there did dwell:
So careless for to be of it,
220 none would accompt it well.
Wherefore it thrice a week shall have,
of Horse and neat* good store, oxen
And in his 'Spital,* blind and lame, hospital
to dwell for evermore.
And Bedlam[22] must not be forgot,
for that was oft my walk:
I people there too many leave,
that out of tune do talk.
At Bridewell[23] there shall Beadles* be, guards
230 and Matrons that shall still
See Chalk[24] well chopped, and spinning plied,
and turning of the Mill.
For such as cannot quiet be,
but strive for House or Land:
At Th'inns of Court,[25] I Lawyers leave
to take their cause in hand.
And also leave I at each Inn
of Court, or Chancery:* an equity court
Of Gentlemen, a youthful rout,* crowd
240 full of Activity:
For whom I store of Books have left,
at each Bookbinder's stall:
And part of all that London hath
to furnish them withal.
And when they are with study cloyed:* wearied
to recreate their mind:
Of Tennis Courts, of dancing Schools,
and fence[26] they store shall find.
And every Sunday at the least,
250 I leave to make them sport.
In diverse places Players,* that actors
of wonders shall report.
Now London have I (for thy sake)
within thee, and without:
As comes into my memory,
disperséd round about
Such needful things, as they should have
here left now unto thee:
When I am gone, with conscience
260 let them disperséd be.
And though I nothing naméd have,
to bury me withal:
Consider that above the ground,
annoyance be I shall.
And let me have a shrouding Sheet

to cover me from shame:
And in oblivion bury me
and never more me name.
Ringings[27] nor other Ceremonies,
270 use you not for cost:
Nor at my burial, make no feast,
your money were but lost.
Rejoice in God that I am gone,
out of this vale so vile.
And that of each thing, left such store,
as may your wants exile.
I make thee sole executor, because
I loved thee best.
And thee I put in trust, to give
280 the goods unto the rest.
Because thou shalt a helper need,
In this so great a charge,
I wish good Fortune, be thy guide, lest
thou shouldst run at large.
The happy days and quiet times,
they both her Servants [b]e.
Which well will serve to fetch and bring,
such things as need to thee.
Wherefore (good London) not refuse,
290 for helper her to take:
Thus being weak, and weary both
an end here will I make.
To all that ask what end I made,
and how I went away:
Thou answer may'st like those which here,
no longer tarry may.
And unto all that wish me well,
or rue that I am gone:
Do me commend, and bid them cease
300 my absence for to moan.
And tell them further, if they would,
my presence still have had:
They should have sought to mend my luck;
which ever was too bad.
So fare thou well a thousand times,
God shield thee from thy foe:
And still make thee victorious,
of those that seek thy woe.
And (though I am persuade) that I
310 shall never more thee see:
Yet to the last, I shall not cease
to wish much good to thee.
This, xx.* of October[,] I, — twentieth
in ANNO DOMINI:* — in the year of our Lord
A Thousand: v. hundred seventy three* — 1573
as Almanacs descry.* — describe
Did write this Will, with mine own hand
and it to London gave:
In witness of the standersby,
320 whose names if you will have.
Paper, Pen and Standish* were: — ink pot
at that same present by:

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With Time, who promised to reveal,
     so fast as she could hie
The same: lest of my nearer kin,
     for anything should vary:
So finally I make an end
     no longer can I tarry.
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**FINIS. by IS. W.**

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[1]***loath:*** **reluctant**
[2]***Cheap:*** **Cheapside is a street in the inexpensive commercial district of London.**
[3]***Bongraces:*** **hoods worn to keep women's faces from sunburn**
[4]***Nets:*** **may refer to an expensive lace that could be pawned**
[5]***Ruffs:*** **a decorative collar especially popular during the reigns of Elizabeth and James I of England**
[6]***Gascoyne:*** **province of Southern France**
[7]***Saint Martin's:*** **a street by Saint Martin's Cathedral**
[8]***Bodymakers:*** **may be the people who made the foundations of garments**
[9]***Gardes:*** **garters, bands worn around the calf to keep stockings from falling down**
[10]***Temple Bar:*** **a marker separating the City of London from the Greater London area**
[11]***Junckets:*** **sweetened, flavored curds; delicacies**
[12]***Steelyard:*** **a tavern within the precincts of the Steelyard where wine was sold**
[13]***Counter:*** **Counter, a city prison for debtors and minor offenders**
[14]***Newgate:*** **prison for felons and debtors**
[15]***Thumb:*** **branding as punishment**
[16]***Holborn:*** **place of execution**
[17]***Fleet:*** **London prison**
[18]***Box:*** **prisoners were allowed a box to beg money with**
[19]***Ludgate:*** **debtors' prison**
[20]***Bookbinders by Paul's:*** **booksellers' stalls were in the courtyard of St. Paul's Cathedral**
[21]***Fruit wives:*** **women who sold fruit, sometimes a cover for prostitution**
[22]***Bedlam:*** **house for the mentally insane**
[23]***Bridewell:*** **a prison and workhouse for idle persons and women of ill repute**
[24]***Chalk:*** **white limestone, commonly found in Southeast England**
[25]***Th'inns of Court:*** **Established in the fifteenth century, they were the four sets of buildings in London (the Inner Temple, the Middle Temple, Lincoln's Inn, and Gray's Inn) belonging to the four legal societies which had the exclusive right of admitting persons to practice at the bar.**
[26]***fence:*** **fencing school**
[27]***Ringings:*** **bells rung for services for the dead; rings worn in memory of the dead**

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