

THE PICKERING MASTERS

# The Novels and Selected Works of Mary Shelley

Lodore

Edited by  
Fiona Stafford



ROUTLEDGE  


*THE PICKERING MASTERS*  
THE NOVELS AND SELECTED WORKS OF  
MARY SHELLEY

Volume 6. *Lodore*

THE PICKERING MASTERS  
THE NOVELS AND SELECTED WORKS OF  
MARY SHELLEY

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THE NOVELS AND SELECTED WORKS OF  
MARY SHELLEY

VOLUME

6

EDITED BY  
FIONA STAFFORD

LODORE

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## ABBREVIATIONS

- Lyles                    W. H. Lyles, *Mary Shelley: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1975).
- MWSJ                    *The Journals of Mary Shelley, 1814–1844*, eds Paula Feldman and Diana Scott-Kilvert, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).
- MWSL                    *The Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, ed. Betty T. Bennett, 3 vols (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980–88).
- MWS *Matilda etc*      Mary Shelley, *Matilda, Dramas, Reviews & Essays, Prefaces & Notes*, vol. 2, ed. Pamela Clemit, of *The Novels and Selected Works of Mary Shelley* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 1996).
- OED                     *Oxford English Dictionary*.
- Palacio                 Jean de Palacio, *Mary Shelley dans son œuvre: Contribution aux études shelleyennes* (Paris: Editions Klincksieck, 1969).
- Paradise Lost*         John Milton, *Paradise Lost, a Poem in Twelve Books* (1674).
- PBS 1824                *The Posthumous Poems of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (London: John and Henry L. Hunt, 1824).
- PBS 1839<sup>1</sup>              *The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, 4 vols (London: Edward Moxon, 1839).
- PBS 1839<sup>2</sup>              *The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (London: Edward Moxon, 1840 for 1839).
- PBSL                    *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. F. L. Jones, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964).
- Tales of the East*     *Tales of the East*, ed. Henry Weber, 3 vols (Edinburgh: Ballantyne, 1812).



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## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

*Lodore*, 3 vols (London: Richard Bentley, 1835). The first edition ran to 750 copies, and was printed by Ibotson and Palmer in the Strand, perhaps a more reliable firm than J. B. Nicholls and Son, who had printed *Perkin Warbeck* for Colburn and Bentley. In the same year, a New York edition was published by Wallis and Newell, and a Paris edition (with very minor corrections) by A. and W. Galignani. The same edition was also issued, with differences only of title-page, at Brussels, under the imprint of Wahlen. *Lodore* was republished by Bernard in London in 1844 and 1846. (Under the title *The Beautiful Widow*, it was published again in Philadelphia in 1865 and in New York in 1893.) There is no evidence to suggest that Mary Shelley was involved with any edition other than the first, on which the present text is based. No manuscript survives. A guide to the principles of textual treatment may be found in the General Introduction to Volume 1. A list of silent corrections made to the first edition is provided at the end of this volume.

On its first appearance in London, Mary Shelley's new novel was very well received. The opinions expressed in the *Courier* are typical of the general response by the reviewers, in that *Lodore* was welcomed as a departure from the 'wild fictions' of the author's earlier career, and a move towards a 'more natural' and therefore 'more pleasing' kind of writing.<sup>1</sup> Both the *Morning Post* and the *Atlas* singled out the novel's treatment of love as its main strength, while the *New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal* praised it as 'exquisite romance [...] the romance of *sentiment*, not of *incident*.'<sup>2</sup> Leigh Hunt's *London Journal* nevertheless commented that the new novel lacked 'the inventive genius' of *Frankenstein*.<sup>3</sup>

The critical success meant that by October 1835, Mary Shelley was asked by her publisher to embark on another novel. The author herself, however, disappointed by the slow sales, wrote to Ollier in August,

What of *Lodore* – Do you remember that when 700 are sold I am to have £50 –? Will 700 never be sold – I am very unlucky; praised & noticed as it has been. You promised me to look after my interests in this particular and I trust you, because I think you will <find> feel more sympathy with a *poor Author* than a *rich Publisher*. If therefore 701 are sold, have pity on me & let me know, that I may claim a sum, which will pay for my unlucky illness, & do me a world of good.<sup>4</sup>

In March 1837, she was still waiting for her £50.

Mary Shelley had begun work on *Lodore* four years before its publication. Her letters reveal that she was planning the novel in the early months of 1831 and that by 16 January, 1833, she considered it 'nearly finished'.<sup>5</sup> In the same month, she sent the first volume of the manuscript to Charles Ollier with a brief summary of the whole:

<The> A Mother & Daughter are the heroines – The Mother who after safrifising [*sacrificing*] all to the world at first – afterwards makes sacrificses not less entire, for her child – finding all to be Vanity, except the genuine affections of the heart. In the daughter I have tried to pourtray in its simplicity, & all the beauty I could muster, the *devotion* of a young wife for the husband of her choice – The disasters she goes through being described – & their result in awakening her Mother's affection, bringing about the conclusion of the tale.<sup>6</sup>

By November 1833, the novel was ready for the press. Mary Shelley began to send her manuscript to the printers in short sections, in order that she could see the first chapters printed before making her final adjustments to the whole, and thus plan carefully the breaks between the published volumes. She was determined that the 'first Volume *must* conclude as it does for the story's sake', even though this meant that some extra pages had to be added to the third, to ensure that the three volumes were of equal length.<sup>7</sup> Production was halted, however, in April 1834, when some thirty-six pages of the manuscript were lost. Since no copy existed, Mary Shelley was forced to rewrite pages 455–91 of her script (a passage which must occur towards the end of the published novel). Her own work was finished by June, and the complete novel finally printed by 19 August.

Reasons for the ensuing delay in publication are not clear, but by 30 December, Mary Shelley was writing again to Charles Ollier – 'Where is lost *Lodore*? Do let me hear from you!'<sup>8</sup> Advance copies nevertheless began to circulate in March 1835, while the advertisements in the periodical press indicated to the author that her work was at last to appear.<sup>9</sup>

The frustration felt by Mary Shelley over the publication and marketing of *Lodore* was aggravated by the financial difficulties she experienced throughout the period of composition. But if the novel's preoccupation with poverty and wealth were those of the mature Mary Shelley, many of the incidents were drawn from her earlier experiences, as she indicated to Maria Gisborne in November 1835: 'did you recognize any of Shelley's & my early adventures – when we were in danger of being starved in Switzerland – & could get no dinner at an inn in London?'<sup>10</sup>

Other biographical parallels have also interested those readers who have regarded *Lodore* purely as a source of information concerning the Shelleys. Edward Dowden, for example, saw in *Clorinda* a portrait of Emilia Viviani and, in *Cornelia* and *Lady Santerre*, representations of Shelley's first wife, Harriet Westbrook, and her sister, Eliza.<sup>11</sup> *Lodore*, too, has frequently been

seen as an image of Byron, while P. B. Shelley has been observed in the background of Francis Derham, Horatio Saville and Edward Villiers.<sup>12</sup> While elements of different characters and situations may have their origins in Mary Shelley's personal experience, however, the narrative repeatedly diverges from any consistent autobiographical reference, and no direct portraits can be traced (if the young Cornelia draws on Harriet Westbrook, she outlives her prototype and, by the end of the novel, has reached the age of thirty four – just as Mary Shelley had in August 1831).

Perhaps more important, if less frequently discussed, are the literary sources of *Lodore* (even though these are not always easy to separate from biographical influences, given Mary Shelley's extraordinary family and circle of friends). The Italian passages, for example, though clearly indebted to Mary Shelley's personal knowledge of the country, also draw on a long tradition of English literary depictions of Italy and the Italians. Pompeii had been visited by the Shelleys in December 1818, but would have been familiar to readers of the 1830s from the numerous accounts of the excavations and from Edward Bulwer's very successful novel, *The Last Days of Pompeii*, which appeared in the same year as Vesuvius' most recent major eruption, 1834. Even the choice of Cwm Elan in Wales, which has obvious links with the period spent there by Percy Bysshe Shelley in 1811, also reflects independent, literary associations since William Lisle Bowles had made it famous in his long poem of 1798, *Coombe Ellen*. Some of the settings, most obviously the American section, were quite outside the experience of the author or her husband, and for these she must have been indebted to the evidence of friends and to descriptions available in the host of recent travel accounts and novels.

That *Lodore* is heavily allusive is immediately obvious from the chapter epigraphs and direct quotations, which I have attempted to identify throughout. But the text also abounds with echoes, allusions and loose quotations, which are noted only when they have obvious significance to the novel (the various echoes of *Paradise Lost* and *The Tempest*, for example, have clear relevance to the structure and themes). Often, however, Mary Shelley seems to evoke more complicated ideas, for which the identification of any single source might be reductive. The frequent reference to the 'ministrations of nature', for example, recalls a host of Romantic poems and ideas, while the persistent emphasis on love and fellow feeling derives from a vast number of late eighteenth-century philosophical and literary works, in which moral principles had been founded on the idea of sympathy. Some connections of this kind have been made, where the resemblance seems particularly striking, but most should be regarded as probable rather than certain.

Despite some of the uncertainties surrounding Mary Shelley's sources, however, there is sufficient evidence to throw light on her methods of composition. The choice of epigraphs suggests a mixture of the long-familiar and the very recent, for while Shakespeare, Pope and Spenser are all represented, other

tags are chosen from Mary Shelley's current reading. The line from Lord Edward Fitzgerald can be found in Thomas Moore's *Life of Fitzgerald*, which appeared in 1832, that from Walpole's *Letters* in the new edition requested by Mary Shelley from Charles Ollier in November 1833.<sup>13</sup> Her vocabulary, too, mingles the diction of traditional English poetry with very recently imported words, such as the Polish carriage known as a britzska, whose first recorded use (according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*) is 1832, in Catherine Gore's, *The Fair of May Fair*, a novel read by Mary Shelley soon after its publication.<sup>14</sup>

Nor is this topicality confined to the literary allusions. Mary Shelley's original title was 'Lodore: a tale of the present time' and although she subsequently became dissatisfied with the subtitle, the contemporary reference emerges in numerous details. The setting is carefully indicated by the knowledge that Lodore was born towards the end of the American War of Independence and that he is fifty when the action begins: it thus takes place at the period of composition – 1832–3, and there is much internal evidence to confirm its immediacy. The portrait of America, for example, though functioning partly as a pastoral contrast to the pains of civilisation, is also vital to the contemporary political context of *Lodore*, which was largely written during the remarkable year of the First Reform Act. In the first volume, especially, the vexed issues of hereditary peerages and pocket boroughs are implicitly set against the new democracy of the American Republic, which attracted such intense interest from the British reading public in the 1820s and 1830s.

If the tiny details in *Lodore* frequently contain matters of enormous contemporary concern, however, they may also function on a more local level. The passing reference to the lions in the Tower of London would have had more significance to the first readers of *Lodore*, since the menagerie was closed in 1834. So too would Ethel's journey across Blackfriars Bridge have had an additional poignancy to those who were aware that the bridge had been declared unsafe in 1833. Though perhaps less important to the modern reader than the more political, literary or philosophical allusions, these minor references nevertheless suggest an attempt to tie *Lodore* firmly to the early 1830s, in striking contrast to Mary Shelley's earlier novels.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The *Courier*, No 13635 (16 April, 1835).

<sup>2</sup> The *Morning Post*, No 20080 (14 April 1835), 3; the *Atlas*, X, No 469 (10 May 1835), 294–5; the *New Monthly Magazine*, XLIV, pt 2 (June 1835), 236–7.

<sup>3</sup> Leigh Hunt's *London Journal*, No 58 (6 May 1835), 138–9. *Lodore* received over fifteen reviews and notices, according to Lyles and Palacio.

<sup>4</sup> 6 August 1835, *MWSL*, II, p. 251.

<sup>5</sup> *MWSL*, II, p. 183.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

<sup>6</sup> *MWSL*, II, p. 185.

<sup>7</sup> *MWSL*, II, p. 200.

<sup>8</sup> *MWSL*, II, p. 217. Lord Abinger's library contains a copy with an 1834 title-page (Palacio, p. 667).

<sup>9</sup> *MWSL*, II, p. 239.

<sup>10</sup> *MWSL*, II, p. 261.

<sup>11</sup> Edward Dowden, *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, 2 vols (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, 1886), II, p. 371.

<sup>12</sup> See e.g. Elizabeth Nitchie, *Mary Shelley* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1953); William St Clair, 'Shelley Unlocked', *The Times*, 7 March 1981.

<sup>13</sup> *MWSL*, II, p. 195.

<sup>14</sup> *MWSL*, II, p. 158.



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*Lodore*

In the turmoil of our lives,  
Men are like politic states, or troubled seas,  
Tossed up and down with several storms and tempests,  
Change and variety of wrecks and fortunes;  
Till, labouring to the havens of our homes,  
We struggle for the calm that crowns our ends.

FORD.<sup>a</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> The original title proposed by Mary Shelley was 'Lodore – a tale of the present time' (*MWSL*, II, p. 196) but by 23 June 1834, when the novel was in the press, she had changed her mind and wrote to Charles Ollier asking him to consult William Godwin, 'He has a very good judgement about Titles, & might make some lucky suggestion. – "A Tale of the Present Times" does not quite please me yet what exchange it for ? –' (*MWSL*, II, p. 206). The name 'Lodore' evokes the famous cataract in the Lake District, to the south of Derwent Water, which had been a tourist attraction since the late 18th century.

Epigraph: John Ford, *The Lover's Melancholy* (1629), V. i. 4–9.

# L O D O R E.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "FRANKENSTEIN."

In the turmoil of our lives,  
Men are like politic states, or troubled seas,  
Tossed up and down with several storms and tempests,  
Change and variety of wrecks and fortunes ;  
Till, labouring to the havens of our homes,  
We struggle for the calm that crowns our ends.  
FORD.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

(SUCCESSOR TO HENRY COLBURN.)

1835.



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## LODORE.

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### CHAPTER I.

Absent or dead, still let a friend be dear,  
A sigh the absent claims, the dead a tear.

POPE.<sup>a</sup>

In the flattest and least agreeable part of the county of Essex, about five miles from the sea, is situated a village or small town, which may be known in these pages by the name of Longfield. Longfield is distant eight miles from any market town, but the simple inhabitants, limiting their desires to their means of satisfying them, are scarcely aware of the kind of desert in which they are placed. Although only fifty / miles from London, few among them have ever seen the metropolis. Some claim that distinction from having visited cousins in Lothbury and viewed the lions in the tower.<sup>b</sup> There is a mansion belonging to a wealthy nobleman within four miles, never inhabited, except when a parliamentary election is going forward. No one of any pretension to consequence resided in this secluded nook, except the honourable Mrs. Elizabeth Fitzhenry; she ought to have been the shining star of the place, and she was only its better angel. Benevolent, gentle, and unassuming, this fair sprig of nobility had lived from youth to age in the abode of her forefathers, making a part of this busy world, only through the kindness of her disposition, and her constant affection for one who was far away.

The mansion of the Fitzhenry family, which looked upon the village green, was wholly incommensurate to our humblest ideas of what belongs to nobility; yet it stood in solitary splendour, the Great House of Longfield. / From time immemorial, its possessors had been the magnates of the village; half of it belonged to them, and the whole voted according to their wishes.<sup>c</sup> Cut off from

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<sup>a</sup> Epigraph: Alexander Pope, 'Epistle to Robert, Earl of Oxford' (1722), ll. 13–14.

<sup>b</sup> A London street on the north side of the Bank of England; by the 18th century it was synonymous with the City. There had been a menagerie in the Tower of London since the 13th century, which had become a major tourist attraction. It was closed in 1834 and the animals were moved to Regent's Park.

<sup>c</sup> Pocket boroughs, in which landowners exercised undue influence over the electorate, were abolished in the First Reform Act of June 1832.

the rest of the world, they claimed here a consideration and a deference, which, with the moderate income of fifteen hundred a-year, they would have vainly sought elsewhere.

There was a family tradition, that a Fitzhenry had sat in parliament; but the time arrived, when they were to rise to greater distinction. The father of the lady, whose name has been already introduced, enjoyed all the privileges attendant on being an only child. Extraordinary efforts were made for his education. He was placed with a clergyman near Harwich,<sup>a</sup> and imbibed in that neighbourhood so passionate a love for the sea, that, though tardily and with regret, his parents at last permitted him to pursue a naval career. He became a brave, a clever, and a lucky officer. In a contested election, his father was the means / of insuring the success of the government candidate, and the promotion of his son followed. Those were the glorious days of the English navy, towards the close of the American war;<sup>b</sup> and when that war terminated, and the admiral, now advanced considerably beyond middle life, returned to the Sabine farm,<sup>c</sup> of which he had, by course of descent, become proprietor, he returned adorned with the rank of a peer of the realm, and with sufficient wealth to support respectably the dignity of the baronial title.

Yet an obscure fate pursued the house of Fitzhenry, even in its ennobled condition. The new lord was proud of his elevation, as a merited reward; but next to the deck of his ship, he loved the tranquil precincts of his paternal mansion, and here he spent his latter days in peace. Midway in life, he had married the daughter of the rector of Longfield. Various fates had attended the offspring of this union; several died, and at the time of his being created a peer, Lord / Lodore found himself a widower, with two children. Elizabeth, who had been born twelve years before, and Henry, whose recent birth had cost the life of his hapless and lamented mother.<sup>d</sup>

But those days were long since passed away; and the first Lord Lodore, with most of his generation, was gathered to his ancestors. To the new-sprung race that filled up the vacant ranks, his daughter Elizabeth appeared a somewhat ancient but most amiable maiden, whose gentle melancholy was not (according to innumerable precedents in the traditions regarding unmarried ladies) attributed to an ill-fated attachment, but to the disasters that had visited her house, and still clouded the fortunes of her family. What these misfortunes originated from, or even in what they consisted, was not exactly known; especially at Longfield, whose inhabitants were no adepts in the gossip of the metropolis. It was believed that Mrs. Elizabeth's brother still lived; that some very strange

<sup>a</sup> A busy port on the Stour estuary in Essex, famous for its traffic with the Continent.

<sup>b</sup> The American War of Independence (1776–83).

<sup>c</sup> cf. Horace (Quintus Horatius Flaccus, 65–8 BC), who in c.33 BC received from his patron, Maecenas, the Sabine farm celebrated in many of his poems.

<sup>d</sup> These details indicate that Elizabeth was born c.1770 and Lodore c.1782.

circumstances had attended his career in / life, was known; but conjecture fell lame when it tried to proceed beyond these simple facts: it was whispered, as a wonder and a secret, that though Lord Lodore was far away, no one knew where, his lady (as the *Morning Post* testified in its lists of fashionable arrivals and fashionable parties)<sup>a</sup> was a frequent visitor to London. Once or twice the bolder gossips, male or female, had resolved to sound (as they called it) Mrs. Elizabeth on the subject. But the fair spinster, though inoffensive to a proverb, and gentle beyond the wont of her gentle sex, was yet gifted with a certain dignity of manner, and a quiet reserve, that checked these good people at their very outset.

Henry Fitzhenry was spoken of by a few of the last generation, as having been a fine, bold, handsome boy – generous, proud, and daring; he was remembered, when as a youth he departed for the continent, as riding fearlessly the best hunter in the field, and attracting the admiration of the village maidens at church by his tall elegant figure and dark eyes; or, when he chanced / to accost them, by a nameless fascination of manner, joined to a voice whose thrilling silver tones stirred the listener's heart unaware. He left them like a dream, nor appeared again till after his father's death, when he paid his sister a brief visit. There was then something singularly grave and abstracted about him. When he rode, it was not among the hunters, though it was soft February weather, but in the solitary lanes, or with lightning speed over the moors, when the sun was setting and shadows gathered round the landscape.

Again, some years after, he had appeared among them. He was then married, and Lady Lodore accompanied him. They stayed but three days. There was something of fiction in the way in which the appearance of the lady was recorded. An angel bright with celestial hues, breathing heaven, and spreading a halo of calm and light around, as it winged swift way amidst the dusky children of earth: such ideas seemed to appertain to the beautiful apparition, remembered / as Lord Lodore's wife. She was so young, that time played with her as a favourite child; so ethereal in look, that the language of flowers could alone express the delicate fairness of her skin, or the tints that sat upon her cheek: so light in motion, and so graceful. To talk of eye or lip, of height or form, or even of the colour of her hair, the villagers could not, for they had been dazzled by an assemblage of charms before undreamt of by them. Her voice won adoration, and her smile was as the sudden withdrawing of a curtain displaying paradise upon earth. Her lord's tall, manly figure, was recollected but as a back-ground – a fitting one – and that was all they would allow to him – for this resplendent image. Nor was it remembered that any excessive attachment was exhibited between them. She had appeared indeed but as a vision – a creature from another sphere, hastily gazing on an unknown world,

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<sup>a</sup> The *Morning Post*, founded in 1772, was a fashionable Gazette published each day in London. The paper had carried a puff for *Perkin Warbeck* in May 1830.

and lost before they could mark more than that void came again, and she was gone. /

Since that time, Lord Lodore had been lost to Longfield. Some few months after Mrs. Elizabeth visited London on occasion of a christening, and then after a long interval, it was observed, that she never mentioned her brother, and that the name of his wife acted as a spell, to bring an expression of pain over her sedate features. Much talk circulated, and many blundering rumours went their course through the village, and then faded like smoke in the clear air. Some mystery there was – Lodore was gone – his place vacant: he lived; yet his name, like those of the dead, haunted only the memories of men, and was allied to no act or circumstance of present existence. He was forgotten, and the inhabitants of Longfield, returning to their obscurity, proceeded in their daily course, almost as happy as if they had had their lord among them, to vary the incidents of their quiet existence with the proceedings of the “Great House.”

Yet his sister remembered him. In her heart / his image was traced indelibly – limned in the colours of life. His form visited her dreams, and was the unseen, yet not mute, companion of her solitary musings. Years stole on, casting their clouding shadows on her cheek, and stealing the colour from her hair, but Henry, but Lodore, was before her in bright youth – her brother – her pride – her hope. To muse on the possibility of his return, to read the few letters that reached her from him, till their brief sentences seemed to imply volumes of meaning, was the employment that made winter nights short, summer days swift in their progress. This dreamy kind of existence, added to the old-fashioned habits which a recluse who lives in a state of singleness is sure to acquire, made her singularly unlike the rest of the world – causing her to be a child in its ways, and inexpert to detect the craftiness of others.

Lodore, in exile and obscurity, was in her eyes, the first of human beings; she looked forward to the hour, when he would blaze upon / the world with renewed effulgence, as to a religious promise. How well did she remember, how in grace of person, how in expression of countenance, and dignity of manner, he transcended all those whom she saw during her visit to London, on occasion of the memorable christening: that from year to year this return was deferred, did not tire her patience, nor diminish her regrets. He never grew old to her – never lost the lustre of early manhood; and when the boyish caprice which kept him afar was sobered, so she framed her thoughts, by the wisdom of time, he would return again to bless her and to adorn the world. The lapse of twelve years did not change this notion, nor the fact that, if she had cast up an easy sum in arithmetic, the parish register would have testified, her brother had now reached the mature age of fifty. /

## CHAPTER II.

Settled in some secret nest,  
 In calm leisure let me rest;  
 And far off the public stage,  
 Pass away my silent age.

SENECA. – *Marvell's Trans.*<sup>a</sup>

Twelve years previous to the opening of this tale, an English gentleman, advanced to middle age, accompanied by an infant daughter, and her attendant, arrived at a settlement in the district of the Illinois in North America.<sup>b</sup> It was at the time when this part of the country first began to be cleared, and a new comer, with some show of property, was considered a welcome acquisition. Still the settlement was too young, and the people were too busy in securing for themselves the necessaries of life, for much attention to be paid to any thing / but the “overt acts”<sup>c</sup> of the stranger – the number of acres which he bought, which were few, the extent of his clearings, and the number of workmen that he employed, both of which were, proportionately to his possession in land, on a far larger scale than that of any of his fellow colonists. Like magic, a commodious house was raised on a small height that embanked the swift river – every vestige of forest disappeared from its immediate vicinity, replaced by agricultural cultivation, and a garden bloomed in the wilderness. His labourers were many, and golden harvest shone in his fields, while the dark forest, or untilled plain, seemed yet to set at defiance the efforts of his fellow settlers; and at the same time comforts of so civilized a description, that the Americans termed them luxuries, appeared in the abode and reigned in the domestic arrangements of the Englishman, although to his eye every thing was regulated by the strictest regard to republican plainness and simplicity.

He did not mingle much in the affairs of the / colony, yet his advice was

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<sup>a</sup> Epigraph: Andrew Marvell, ‘The Second Chorus from Seneca’s Tragedy Thyestes’, ll. 4–7. Mary Shelley had originally chosen Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s ‘Ode to Tranquillity’ for the epigraph, and wrote to Charles Ollier 25 November 1833, asking him to supply the relevant verses ‘as you find them but adapted’ (*MWSL*, II, p. 196). Reasons for the subsequent change are not known.

<sup>b</sup> In the central part of the North American Continent. The first settlers were French Canadians in 1720, but the main period of settlement was the first half of the 19th century, when many immigrants were attracted by the fertile soil of the central plains. The areas to the north and south of the state were densely wooded. The constitution of the state was not formed until 1847.

<sup>c</sup> In law, an ‘overt act’ is such that can be clearly proved to have been done.

always to be commanded, and his assistance was readily afforded. He superintended the operations carried on on his own land; and it was observed that they differed often both from American and English modes of agriculture. When questioned, he detailed practices in Poland and Hungary, and gave his reasons why he thought them applicable to the soil in question. Many of these experiments of course failed; others were eminently successful. He did not shun labour of any sort. He joined the hunting parties, and made one on expeditions that went out to explore the neighbouring wilds, and the haunts of the native Indians. He gave money for the carrying on necessary public work, and came forward willingly when called upon for any useful purpose. In any time of difficulty or sorrow – on the overflowing of the stream, or the failure of a crop, he was earnest in his endeavours to aid and to console. But with all this, there was an insurmountable barrier between him and the other inhabitants of the / colony. He never made one at their feasts, nor mingled in the familiar communications of daily life; his dwelling, situated at the distance of a full mile from the village, removed him from out of the very hearing of their festivities and assemblies. He might labour in common with others, but his pleasures were all solitary, and he preserved the utmost independence as far as regarded the sacred privacy of his abode, and the silence he kept in all concerns regarding himself alone.

At first the settlement had to struggle with all the difficulties attendant on colonization. It grew rapidly, however, and bid fair to become a busy and large town, when it met with a sudden check. A new spot was discovered, a few miles distant, possessing peculiar advantages for commerical purposes. An active, enterprising man engaged himself in the task of establishing a town there on a larger scale and with greater pretensions. He succeeded, and its predecessor sunk at once into insignificance. It was matter / of conjecture among them whether Mr. Fitzhenry (so was named the English stranger) would remove to the vicinity of the more considerable town, but no such idea seemed to have occurred to him. Probably he rejoiced in an accident that tended to render his abode so entirely secluded. At first the former town rapidly declined, and many a log hut fell to ruin; but at last, having sunk into the appearance and name of a village, it continued to exist, bearing few marks of that busy enterprising stir which usually characterizes a new settlement in America. The ambitious and scheming had deserted it – it was left to those who courted tranquillity, and desired the necessaries of life without the hope of great future gain. It acquired an almost old-fashioned appearance. The houses began to look weather-worn, and none with fresh faces sprung up to shame them. Extensive clearings, suddenly checked, gave entrance to the forests, without the appendages of a manufacture or a farm. / The sound of the axe was seldom heard, and primeval quiet again took possession of the wild. Meanwhile Mr. Fitzhenry continued to adorn his dwelling with imported conveniences, the result of European art, and to spend much time and labour in making his surrounding land assume somewhat of the appearance of pleasure-ground.

He lived in peace and solitude, and seemed to enjoy the unchanging tenor of his life. It had not always been so. During the first three or four years of his arrival in America, he had evidently been unquiet in his mind, and dissatisfied with the scene around him. He gave directions to his workmen, but did not overlook their execution. He took great pains to secure a horse, whose fiery spirit and beautiful form might satisfy a fastidious connoisseur. Having with much trouble and expense got several animals of English breed together, he was perpetually seen mounted and forcing his way amid the forest land, or galloping over the / unincumbered country. Sadness sat on his brow, and dwelt in eyes, whose dark large orbs were peculiarly expressive of tenderness and melancholy,

“Pietosi a riguardare, a mover parchi.”<sup>a</sup>

Often, when in conversation on uninteresting topics, some keen sensation would pierce his heart, his voice faltered, and an expression of unspeakable wretchedness was imprinted on his countenance, mastered after a momentary struggle, yet astounding to the person he might be addressing. Generally on such occasions he would seize an immediate opportunity to break away and to remain alone. He had been seen, believing himself unseen, making passionate gestures, and heard uttering some wild exclamations. Once or twice he had wandered away into the woods, and not returned for several days, to the exceeding terror of his little household. He evidently sought loneliness, there to combat unobserved with the / fierce enemy that dwelt within his breast. On such occasions, when intruded upon and disturbed, he was irritated to fury. His resentment was expressed in terms ill-adapted to republican equality – and no one could doubt that in his own country he had filled a high station in society, and been educated in habits of command, so that he involuntarily looked upon himself as of a distinct and superior race to the human beings that each day crossed his path. In general, however, this was only shown by a certain loftiness of demeanour and cold abstraction, which might annoy, but could not be resented. Any ebullition of temper he was not backward to atone for by apology, and to compensate by gifts.

There was no tinge of misanthropy in Fitzhenry’s disposition. Even while he shrunk from familiar communication with the rude and unlettered, he took an interest in their welfare. His benevolence was active, his compassion readily afforded. It was quickness of feeling, and not / apathy, that made him shy and retired. Sensibility checked and crushed, an ardent thirst for sympathy which could not be allayed in the wildernesses of America, begot a certain appearance of coldness, altogether deceptive. He concealed his sufferings – he abhorred

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<sup>a</sup> The line means ‘Full of tenderness in looking, sober in movement’.

that they should be pryed into; but this reserve was not natural to him, and it added to the misery which his state of banishment occasioned.

“Quiet to quick bosoms is a hell.”<sup>a</sup>

And so was it with him. His passions were powerful, and had been ungoverned. He writhed beneath the dominion of *sameness*; and tranquillity, allied to loneliness, possessed no charms. He groaned beneath the chains that fettered him to the spot, where he was withering in inaction. They caused unutterable throes and paroxysms of despair. Ennui, the dæmon, waited at the threshold of his noiseless refuge, and drove away the stirring hopes and enlivening expectations, which form the better part of / life. Sensibility in such a situation is a curse: men become “cannibals of their own hearts;”<sup>b</sup> remorse, regret, and restless impatience usurp the place of more wholesome feeling: every thing seems better than that which is; and solitude becomes a sort of tangible enemy, the more dangerous, because it dwells within the citadel itself. Borne down by such emotions, Fitzhenry was often about to yield to the yearnings of his soul, and to fly from repose into action, however accompanied by strife and wretchedness; to leave America, to return to Europe, and to face at once all the evils which he had journeyed so far to escape. He did not – he remained. His motives for flight returned on him with full power after any such paroxysm, and held him back. He despised himself for his hesitation. He had made his choice, and would abide by it. He was not so devoid of manliness as to be destitute of fortitude, or so dependent a wretch as not to have resources in himself. He would cultivate these, and obtain / that peace which it had been his boast that he should experience.

It came at last. Time and custom accomplished their task, and he became reconciled to his present mode of existence. He grew to love his home in the wilderness. It was all his own creation, and the pains and thought he continued to bestow upon it, rendered it doubly his. The murmur of the neighbouring river became the voice of a friend; it welcomed him on his return from any expedition; and he hailed the first echo of it that struck upon his ear from afar, with a thrill of joy.

Peace descended upon his soul. He became enamoured of the independence of solitude, and the sublime operations of surrounding nature. All further attempts at cultivation having ceased in his neighbourhood, from year to year nothing changed, except at the bidding of the months, in obedience to the varying seasons; – nothing changed, except that the moss grew thicker and greener upon the logs that supported his roof, / that the plants he cultivated

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<sup>a</sup> George Noel Gordon, sixth Baron Byron (1788–1824), *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, III (1816), l. 370.

<sup>b</sup> Francis Bacon, first Baron Verulam and Viscount St Albans (1561–1626), ‘Of Frenship’ in *The Essayes or Counsell, Civill and Moral* (1597–1625).

increased in strength and beauty, and that the fruit-trees yielded their sweet produce in greater abundance. The improvements he had set on foot displayed in their progress the taste and ingenuity of their projector; and as the landscape became more familiar, so did a thousand associations twine themselves with its varied appearances, till the forests and glades became as friends and companions.

As he learnt to be contented with his lot, the inequalities of humour, and singularities of conduct, which had at first attended him, died away. He had grown familiar with the persons of his fellow-colonists, and their various fortunes interested him. Though he could find no friend, tempered like him, like him nursed in the delicacies and fastidiousness of the societies of the old world; – though he, a china vase, dreaded too near a collision with the brazen ones around;<sup>a</sup> yet, though he could not give his confidence, or unburthen the treasure of his / soul, he could approve of, and even feel affection for several among them. Personal courage, honesty, and frankness, were to be found among the men; simplicity and kindness among the women. He saw instances of love and devotion in members of families, that made him sigh to be one of them; and the strong sense and shrewd observations of many of the elder settlers exercised his understanding. They opened, by their reasonings and conversation, a new source of amusement, and presented him with another opiate for his too busy memory.

Fitzhenry had been a patron of the fine arts; and thus he had loved books, poetry, and the elegant philosophy of the ancients. But he had not been a student. His mind was now in a fit state to find solace in reading, and excitement in the pursuit of knowledge. At first he sent for a few books, such as he wished immediately to consult, from New York, and made slight additions to the small library of classical literature he had originally brought with him / on his emigration. But when once the desire to instruct himself was fully aroused in his mind, he became aware how slight and inadequate his present library was, even for the use of one man. Now each quarter brought chests of a commodity he began to deem the most precious upon earth. Beings with human forms and human feelings he had around him; but, as if made of coarser, half-kneaded clay, they wanted the divine spark of mind and the polish of taste.<sup>b</sup> He had pined for these, and now they were presented to him. Books became his friends: they, when rightly questioned, could answer to his thoughts. Plato could elevate, Epictetus calm, his soul.<sup>c</sup> He could revel with

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<sup>a</sup> Alluding to Aesop Fab. 290 where two vases are swept away in a flood and the clay vase fears being smashed by the metal vase. Taken from William Godwin's version, 'The Two Jars', in *Fables, Ancient and Modern* (1805), II, pp. 112–16.

<sup>b</sup> cf. Genesis 2:7; the classical myth of Prometheus, variously described as fashioning man from clay and stealing fire from heaven, and already explored by Mary Shelley in *Frankenstein*.

<sup>c</sup> Plato (c.427–347 BC), the famous Greek philosopher; Epictetus (AD c.55–c.135), Stoic philosopher who emphasised endurance and abstinence.

Ovid in the imagery presented by a graceful, though voluptuous imagination; and hang enchanted over the majesty and elegance of Virgil. Homer was as a dear and revered friend – Horace a pleasant companion.<sup>a</sup> English, Italian, German, and French, all yielded their stores in turn; and the abstruse sciences were often a relaxation / to a mind, whose chief bane was its dwelling too entirely upon one idea. He made a study, also, of the things peculiarly befitting his present situation; and he rose in the estimation of those around, as they became aware of his talents and his knowledge.

Study and occupation restored to his heart self-complacency, which is an ingredient so necessary to the composition of human happiness. He felt himself to be useful, and knew himself to be honoured. He no longer asked himself, “Why do I live?” or looked on the dark, rapid waves, and longed for the repose that was in their gift. The blood flowed equably in his veins; a healthy temperance regulated his hopes and wishes. He could again bless God for the boon of existence, and look forward to future years, if not with eager anticipation, yet with a calm reliance upon the power of good, wholly remote from despair. /

### CHAPTER III.

*Miranda.* – Alack! what trouble  
Was I then to you!

*Prospero.* – O, a cherubim  
Thou wast, that did preserve me!

THE TEMPEST.<sup>b</sup>

Such was the Englishman who had taken refuge in the furthest wilds of an almost untenanted portion of the globe. Like a Corinthian column, left single amidst the ruder forms of the forest oaks, standing in alien beauty, a type of civilization and the arts, among the rougher, though perhaps not less valuable, growth of Nature’s own. Refined to fastidiousness, sensitive to morbidity, the stranger was respected without / being understood, and loved though the intimate of none.

Many circumstances have been mentioned as tending to reconcile Fitzhenry to his lot; and yet one has been omitted, chiefest of all; – the growth and

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<sup>a</sup> Fitzhenry enjoys the standard classical poets – Ovid (Publius Ovidius Naso, 43 BC–AD 18); Virgil (Publius Vergilius Maro, 70–19 BC; Horace; Homer, the poet of c.8th century BC to whom the Greeks attributed *The Iliad*, *The Odyssey* and the *Homeric Hymns*.

<sup>b</sup> Epigraph: *The Tempest*, I. ii. 151–3.

development of his child was an inexhaustible source of delight and occupation. She was scarcely three years old when her parent first came to the Illinois. She was then a plaything and an object of solicitude to him, and nothing more. Much as her father loved her, he had not then learned to discover the germ of the soul just nascent in her infant form; nor to watch the formation, gradual to imperceptibility, of her childish ideas. He would watch over her as she slept, and gaze on her as she sported in the garden, with ardent and unquiet fondness; and, from time to time, instil some portion of knowledge into her opening mind: but this was all done by snatches, and at intervals. His affection for her was the passion of his soul; but her society was not an occupation / for his thoughts. He would have knelt to kiss her footsteps as she bounded across the grass, and tears glistened in his eyes as she embraced his knees on his return from any excursion; but her prattle often wearied him, and her very presence was sometimes the source of intense pain.

He did not know himself how much he loved her, till she became old enough to share his excursions and be a companion. This occurred at a far earlier age than would have been the case had she been in England, living in a nursery with other children. There is a peculiarity in the education of a daughter, brought up by a father only, which tends to develop early a thousand of those portions of mind, which are folded up, and often destroyed, under mere feminine tuition. He made her fearless, by making her the associate of his rides; yet his incessant care and watchfulness, the observant tenderness of his manner, almost reverential on many points, springing from the difference of sex, tended / to soften her mind, and make her spirit ductile and dependent. He taught her to scorn pain, but to shrink with excessive timidity from any thing that intrenched on the barrier of womanly reserve which he raised about her. Nothing was dreaded, indeed, by her, except his disapprobation; and a word or look from him made her, with all her childish vivacity and thoughtlessness, turn as with a silken string, and bend at once to his will.

There was an affectionateness of disposition kneaded up in the very texture of her soul, which gave it its "very form and pressure."<sup>a</sup> It accompanied every word and action; it revealed itself in her voice, and hung like light over the expression of her countenance.

Her earliest feeling was love of her father. She would sit to watch him, guess at his thoughts, and creep close, or recede away, as she read encouragement, or the contrary, in his eyes and gestures. Except him, her only companion was her servant; and very soon she distinguished / between them, and felt proud and elate when she quitted her for her father's side. Soon, she almost never quitted it. Her gentle and docile disposition rendered her unobtrusive, while her inexhaustible spirits were a source of delightful amusement. The goodness of

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<sup>a</sup> *Hamlet*, III. ii. 24 (loosely quoted).

her heart endeared her still more; and when it was called forth by any demand made on it by him, it was attended by such a display of excessive sensibility, as at once caused him to tremble for her future happiness, and love her ten thousand times more. She grew into the image on which his eye doated, and for whose presence his heart perpetually yearned. Was he reading, or otherwise occupied, he was restless, if yet she were not in the room; and she would remain in silence for hours, occupied by some little feminine work, and all the while watching him, catching his first glance towards her, and obeying the expression of his countenance, before he could form his wish into words. When he left her for any of his longer excursions, her little heart / would heave, and almost burst with sorrow. On his return, she was always on the watch to see, to fly into his arms, and to load him with infantine caresses.

There was something in her face, that at this early age gave token of truth and affection, and asked for sympathy. Her large brown eyes, such as are called hazel, full of tenderness and sweetness, possessed within their depths an expression and a latent fire, which stirred the heart. It is difficult to describe, or by words to call before another's mind, the picture so palpable to our own. The moulding of her cheek, full just below the eyes, and ending in a soft oval, gave a peculiar expression, at once beseeching and tender, and yet radiant with vivacity and gladness. Frankness and truth were reflected on her brow, like flowers in the clearest pool; the thousand nameless lines and mouldings, which create expression, were replete with beaming innocence and irresistible attraction. Her small chiselled nose, her mouth so delicately curved, gave / token of taste. In the whole was harmony, and the upper part of the countenance seemed to reign over the lower and to ennoble it, making her usual placid expression thoughtful and earnest; so that not until she smiled and spoke, did the gaiety of her guileless heart display itself, and the vivacity of her disposition give change and relief to the picture. Her figure was light and airy, tall at an early age, and slender. Her rides and rambles gave elasticity to her limbs, and her step was like that of the antelope, springy and true. She had no fears, no deceit, no untold thought within her. Her matchless sweetness of temper prevented any cloud from ever dimming her pure loveliness: her voice cheered the heart, and her laugh rang so true and joyous on the ear, that it gave token in itself of the sympathizing and buoyant spirit which was her great charm. Nothing with her centred in self; she was always ready to give her soul away: to please her father was the unsleeping law of all her actions, while his approbation imparted / a sense of such pure but entire happiness, that every other feeling faded into insignificance in the comparison.

In the first year of exile and despair, Fitzhenry looked forward to the long drawn succession of future years, with an impatience of woe difficult to be borne. He was surprised to find, as he proceeded in the quiet path of life which he had selected, that instead of an increase of unhappiness, a thousand pleasures smiled around him. He had looked on it as a bitter task to forget that he

had a name and country, both abandoned for ever; now, the thought of these seldom recurred to his memory. His forest home became all in all to him. Wherever he went, his child was by his side, to cheer and enliven him. When he looked on her, and reflected that within her frame dwelt spotless innocence and filial piety, that within that lovely “bower of flesh,”<sup>a</sup> not one thought or feeling resided that was not akin to heaven in its purity and sweetness, he, as by infection, acquired / a portion of the calm enjoyment, which she in her taintless youth naturally possessed.

Even when any distant excursion forced him to absent himself, her idea followed him to light him cheerily on his way. He knew that he should find her on his return busied in little preparations for his welcome. In summer time, the bower in the garden would be adorned; in the inclement season of winter the logs would blaze on the hearth, his chair be drawn towards the fire, the stool for Ethel at his feet, with nothing to remind him of the past, save her dear presence, which drew its greatest charm, not from that, but from the present. Fitzhenry forgot the thousand delights of civilization, for which formerly his heart had painfully yearned. He forgot ambition, and the enticements of gay vanity; peace and security appeared the greatest blessings of life, and he had them here.

Ethel herself was happy beyond the knowledge of her own happiness. She regretted nothing / in the old country. She grew up among the grandest objects of nature, and they were the sweet influences to excite her to love and to a sense of pleasure. She had come to the Illinois attended by a black woman and her daughter, whom her father had engaged to attend her at New York,<sup>b</sup> and had been sedulously kept away from communication with the settlers – an arrangement which it would have been difficult to bring about elsewhere, but in this secluded and almost deserted spot the usual characteristics of the Americans were scarcely to be found.<sup>c</sup> Most of the inhabitants were emigrants from Scotland, a peaceable, hard-working population.<sup>d</sup>

Ethel lived alone in their lonely dwelling. Had she been of a more advanced age when taken from England, her curiosity might have been excited by the singularity of her position; but we rarely reason about that which has remained unchanged since infancy; taking it as a part of the immutable order of things, we yield without / a question to its controul.<sup>e</sup> Ethel did not know that she was

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<sup>a</sup> cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, III. ii. 81–2.

<sup>b</sup> Ethel’s servant is not a slave – an issue of great topical significance, since slavery was abolished throughout the British colonies in 1833.

<sup>c</sup> The ‘manners’ of the Americans were a popular subject for British writers of the period; see e.g. Frances Trollope, *The Domestic Manners of the Americans* (London, 1832) and Captain Basil Hall, *Travels in North America in the Years 1827 and 1828* (Edinburgh, 1829).

<sup>d</sup> Emigration from Scotland had been underway since the mid-18th century, but Fitzhenry’s arrival in America c.1820 coincides with the notorious ‘Clearances’ when thousands of people were evicted from Sutherland to make way for sheep pastures.

<sup>e</sup> cf. the sceptical philosophy developed by David Hume (1711–76) in his *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739), pt IV, sect. ii ‘Of Scepticism with regard to the senses’.

alone. Her attendants she was attached to, and she idolized her father; his image filled all her little heart. Playmate she had none, save a fawn and a kid, a dog grown old in her service, and a succession of minor favourites of the animal species.<sup>a</sup>

It was Fitzhenry's wish to educate his daughter to all the perfection of which the feminine character is susceptible. As the first step, he cut her off from familiar communication with the unrefined, and, watching over her with the fondest care, kept her far aloof from the very knowledge of what might, by its baseness or folly, contaminate the celestial beauty of her nature. He resolved to make her all that woman can be of generous, soft, and devoted; to purge away every alloy of vanity and petty passion – to fill her with honour, and yet to mould her to the sweetest gentleness: to cultivate her tastes and enlarge her mind, yet so to controul her acquirements, as to render her / ever pliant to his will. She was to be lifted above every idea of artifice or guile, or the caballing spirit of the worldling – she was to be single-hearted, yet mild. A creature half poetry, half love – one whose pure lips had never been tainted by an untruth – an enthusiastic being, who could give her life away for the sake of another, and yet who honoured herself as a consecrated thing reserved for one worship alone. She was taught that no misfortune should penetrate her soul, except such as visited her affections, or her sense of right; and that, set apart from the vulgar uses of the world, she was connected with the mass only through another – that other, now her father and only friend – hereafter, whosoever her heart might select as her guide and head. Fitzhenry drew his chief ideas from Milton's Eve,<sup>b</sup> and adding to this the romance of chivalry, he satisfied himself that his daughter would be the embodied ideal of all that is adorable and estimable in her sex. /

The instructor can scarcely give sensibility where it is essentially wanting, nor talent to the unpercipient block. But he can cultivate and direct the affections of the pupil, who puts forth, as a parasite,<sup>c</sup> tendrils by which to cling, not knowing to what – to a supporter or a destroyer. The careful rearer of the ductile human plant can instil its own religion, and surround the soul by such a moral atmosphere, as shall become to its latest day the air it breathes. Ethel, from her delicate organization and quick parts, was sufficiently plastic in her father's hands. When not with him, she was the playmate of nature. Her birds and pet animals – her untaught but most kind nurse, were her associates: she

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<sup>a</sup> cf. Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), 'I din'd too all alone, attended by my servants [...] My Dog who was now grown very old and crazy, and had found no Species to multiply his Kind upon, sat always at my Right Hand, and two Cats [...]', *The Norton Critical Edition*, ed. Michael Shinagel (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975), pp. 116–17.

<sup>b</sup> cf. *Paradise Lost*, IV. 634–6; VIII. 471–4, 501–5. In the second chapter of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), Mary Wollstonecraft takes the contradictions inherent in Milton's portrayal of Eve as the starting point for her attack on male tyranny.

<sup>c</sup> Climbing plant. cf. Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, chap. 2.