

LETTER I[3]

WALT WHITMAN TO W. M. ROSSETTI AND ANNE GILCHRIST

Washington,

December 9, 1869.

DEAR MR. ROSSETTI:

Your letter of last summer to William O'Connor with the passages transcribed from a lady's correspondence, had been shown me by him, and copy lately furnished me, which I have just been rereading. I am deeply touched by these sympathies and convictions, coming from a woman and from England, and am sure that if the lady knew how much comfort it has been to me to get them, she would not only pardon you for transmitting them to Mr. O'Connor but approve that action. I realize indeed of this emphatic and smiling well done from the heart and conscience of a true wife and mother, and one too whose sense of the poetic, as I glean from your letter, after flowing through the heart and conscience, must also move through and satisfy science as much as the esthetic, that I had hitherto received no eulogium so magnificent.

I send by same mail with this, same address as this letter, two photographs, taken within a few months. One is intended for the lady (if I may be permitted to send it her)--and will you please accept the other, with my respects and love? The picture is by some criticised very severely

indeed, but I hope you will not dislike it, for I confess to myself a perhaps capricious fondness for it, as my own portrait, over some scores that have been made or taken at one time or another.

I am still employed in the Attorney General's office. My p. o. address remains the same. I am quite well and hearty. My new editions, considerably expanded, with what suggestions &c. I have to offer, presented I hope in more definite form, will probably get printed the coming spring. I shall forward you early copies. I send my love to Moncuré Conway, if you see him. I wish he would write to me. If the pictures don't come, or get injured on the way, I will try again by express. I want you to loan this letter to the lady, or if she wishes it, give it to her to keep.

WALT WHITMAN.

LETTER II

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

September 3, 1871.

DEAR FRIEND:

At last the beloved books have reached my hand--but now I have them, my heart is so rent with anguish, my eyes so blinded, I cannot read in them. I try again and again, but too great waves come swaying up & suffocate me. I will struggle to tell you my story. It seems to me a death struggle. When I was eighteen I met a lad of nineteen^[4] who loved me then, and always for the remainder of his life. After we had known each other about a year he asked me to be his wife. But I said that I liked him well as my friend, but could not love him as a wife should love & felt deeply convinced I never should. He was not turned aside, but went on just the same as if that conversation had never passed. After a year he asked me again, and I, deeply moved by and grateful for his steady love, and so sorry for him, said yes. But next day, terrified at what I had done and painfully conscious of the dreary absence from my heart of any faintest gleam of true, tender, wifely love,^[5] said no again. This too he bore without desisting & at the end of some months once more asked me with passionate entreaties. Then, dear friend, I prayed very earnestly, and it seemed to me (that) that I should continue to mar & thwart his life so was not right, if he was content to accept what I could give. I knew I could

lead a good and wholesome life beside him--his aims were noble--his heart a deep, beautiful, true Poet's heart; but he had not the Poet's great brain. His path was a very arduous one, and I knew I could smooth it for him--cheer him along it. It seemed to me God's will that I should marry him. So I told him the whole truth, and he said he would rather have me on those terms than not have me at all. He said to me many times, "Ah, Annie, it is not you who are so loved that is rich; it is I who so love." And I knew this was true, felt as if my nature were poor & barren beside his. But it was not so, it was only slumbering--undeveloped. For, dear Friend, my soul was so passionately aspiring--it so thirsted & pined for light, it had not power to reach alone and he could not help me on my way. And a woman is so made that she cannot give the tender passionate devotion of her whole nature save to the great conquering soul, stronger in its powers, though not in its aspirations, than her own, that can lead her forever & forever up and on. It is for her soul exactly as it is for her body. The strong divine soul of the man embracing hers with passionate love--so alone the precious germs within her soul can be quickened into life. And the time will come when man will understand that a woman's soul is as dear and needful to his and as different from his as her body to his body. This was what happened to me when I had read for a few days, nay, hours, in your books. It was the divine soul embracing mine. I never before dreamed what love meant: not what life meant. Never was alive before--no words but those of "new birth" can hint the meaning of what then happened to me.

The first few months of my marriage were dark and gloomy to me within, and sometimes I had misgivings whether I had judged aright, but when I knew

there was a dear baby coming my heart grew light, and when it was born, such a superb child--all gloom & fear forever vanished. I knew it was God's seal to the marriage, and my heart was full of gratitude and joy. It was a happy and a good life we led together for ten short years, he ever tender and affectionate to me--loving his children so, working earnestly in the wholesome, bracing atmosphere of poverty--for it was but just possible with the most strenuous frugality and industry to pay our way. I learned to cook & to turn my hand to all household occupation--found it bracing, healthful, cheerful. Now I think it more even now that I understand the divineness & sacredness of the Body. I think there is no more beautiful task for a woman than ministering all ways to the health & comfort & enjoyment of the dear bodies of those she loves: no material that will work sweeter, more beautifully into that making of a perfect poem of a man's life which is her true vocation.

In 1861 my children took scarlet fever badly: I thought I should have lost my dear oldest girl. Then my husband took it--and in five days it carried him from me. I think, dear friend, my sorrow was far more bitter, though not so deep, as that of a loving tender wife. As I stood by him in the coffin I felt such remorse I had not, could not have, been more tender to him--such a conviction that if I had loved him as he deserved to be loved he would not have been taken from us. To the last my soul dwelt apart & unmated & his soul dwelt apart unmated. I do not fear the look of his dear silent eyes. I do not think he would even be grieved with me now. My youngest was then a baby. I have had much sweet tranquil happiness, much strenuous work and endeavour raising my darlings.

In May, 1869, came the voice over the Atlantic to me--O, the voice of my Mate: it must be so--my love rises up out of the very depths of the grief & tramples upon despair. I can wait--any time, a lifetime, many lifetimes--I can suffer, I can dare, I can learn, grow, toil, but nothing in life or death can tear out of my heart the passionate belief that one day I shall hear that voice say to me, "My Mate. The one I so much want. Bride, Wife, indissoluble eternal!" It is not happiness I plead with God for--it is the very life of my Soul, my love is its life. Dear Walt. It is a sweet & precious thing, this love; it clings so close, so close to the Soul and Body, all so tenderly dear, so beautiful, so sacred; it yearns with such passion to soothe and comfort & fill thee with sweet tender joy; it aspires as grandly as gloriously as thy own soul. Strong to soar--soft & tender to nestle and caress. If God were to say to me, "See--he that you love you shall not be given to in this life--he is going to set sail on the unknown sea--will you go with him?" never yet has bride sprung into her husband's arms with the joy with which I would take thy hand & spring from the shore.

Understand aright, dear love, the reason of my silence. I was obeying the voice of conscience. I thought I was to wait. For it is the instinct of a woman's nature to wait to be sought--not to seek. And when that May & June I was longing so irrepressibly to write I resolutely restrained myself, believing if I were only patient the right opening would occur. And so it did through Rossetti. And when he, liking what I said, suggested my printing something, it met and enabled me to carry into execution what I was brooding over. For I had, and still have, a strong conviction that it was necessary for a woman to speak--that finally and decisively only a

woman can judge a man, only a man a woman, on the subject of their relations. What is blameless, what is good in its effect on her, is good--however it may have seemed to men. She is the test. And I never for a moment feared any hard words against myself because I know these things are not judged by the intellect but by the unerring instincts of the soul. I knew any man could not but feel that it would be a happy and ennobling thing for him that his wife should think & feel as I do on that subject--knew that what had filled me with such great and beautiful thoughts towards men in that writing could not fail to give them good & happy thoughts towards women in the reading. The cause of my consenting to Rossetti's[6] urgent advice that I should not put my name, he so kindly solicitous, yet not altogether understanding me & it aright, was that I did not rightly understand how it might be with my dear Boy if it came before him. I thought perhaps he was not old enough to judge and understand me aright; nor young enough to let it altogether alone. But it has been very bitter & hateful to me this not standing to what I have said as it were, with my own personality, better because of my utter love and faithfulness to the cause & longing to stand openly and proudly in the ranks of its friends; & for the lower reason that my nature is proud and as defiant as thine own and immeasurably disdains any faintest appearance of being afraid of what I had done.

And, my darling, above all because I love thee so tenderly that if hateful words had been spoken against me I could have taken joy in it for thy dear sake. There never yet was the woman who loved that would not joyfully bare her breast to wrest the blows aimed at her beloved.

I know not what fiend made me write those meaningless words in my letter, "it is pleasantest to me" &c., but it was not fear or faithlessness--& it is not pleasantest but hateful to me. Now let me come to beautiful joyous things again. O dear Walt, did you not feel in every word the breath of a woman's love? did you not see as through a transparent veil a soul all radiant and trembling with love stretching out its arms towards you? I was so sure you would speak, would send me some sign: that I was to wait--wait. So I fed my heart with sweet hopes: strengthened it with looking into the eyes of thy picture. O surely in the ineffable tenderness of thy look speaks the yearning of thy man-soul towards my woman-soul? But now I will wait no longer. A higher instinct dominates that other, the instinct for perfect truth. I would if I could lay every thought and action and feeling of my whole life open to thee as it lies to the eye of God. But that cannot be all at once. O come. Come, my darling: look into these eyes and see the loving ardent aspiring soul in them. Easily, easily will you learn to love all the rest of me for the sake of that and take me to your breasts for ever and ever. Out of its great anguish my love has risen stronger, more triumphant than ever: it cannot doubt, cannot fear, is strong, divine, immortal, sure of its fruition this side the grave or the other. "O agonistic throes," tender, passionate yearnings, pinings, triumphant joys, sweet dreams--I took from you all. But, dear love, the sinews of a woman's outer heart are not twisted so strong as a man's: but the heart within is strong & great & loving. So the strain is very terrible. O heart of flesh, hold on yet a few years to the great heart within thee, if it may be. But if not all is assured, all is safe.

This time last year when I seemed dying I could have no secrets between me

& my dear children. I told them of my love: told them all they could rightly understand, and laid upon them my earnest injunction that as soon as my mother's life no longer held them here, they should go fearlessly to America, as I should have planted them down there--Land of Promise, my Canaan, to which my soul sings, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come & the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." After the 29th of this month I shall be in my own home; dear friend--it is at Brookebank, Haslemere, Surrey. Haslemere is on the main line between Portsmouth & London.

Good-bye, dear Walt,

ANNE GILCHRIST.

Sept. 6.

The new portrait also is a sweet joy & comfort to my longing, pining heart & eyes. How have I brooded & brooded with thankfulness on that one word in thy letter[7] "the comfort it has been to me to get her words," for always day & night these two years has hovered on my lips & in my heart the one prayer: "Dear God, let me comfort him!" Let me comfort thee with my whole being, dear love. I feel much better & stronger now.

LETTER III

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

Brookebank, Shotter Mill

Haslemere, Surrey

October 23, 1871.

DEAR FRIEND:

I wrote you a letter the 6th September & would fain know whether it has reached your hand. If it have not, I will write its contents again quickly to you--if it have, I will wait your time with courage with patience for an answer; but spare me the needless suffering of uncertainty on this point & let me have one line, one word, of assurance that I am no longer hidden from you by a thick cloud--I from thee--not thou from me: for I that have never set eyes upon thee, all the Atlantic flowing between us, yet cleave closer than those that stand nearest & dearest around thee--love thee day & night--last thoughts, first thoughts, my soul's passionate yearning toward thy divine Soul, every hour, every deed and thought--my love for my children, my hopes, aspirations for them, all taking new shape, new height through this great love. My Soul has staked all upon it. In dull dark moods when I cannot, as it were, see thee, still, still always a dumb, blind yearning towards thee--still it comforts me to touch, to press to me the beloved books--like a child holding some hand in the dark--it knows not whose--but knows it is enough--knows it is

a dear, strong, comforting hand. Do not say I am forward, or that I lack pride because I tell this love to thee who have never sought or made sign of desiring to seek me. Oh, for all that, this love is my pride my glory. Source of sufferings and joys that cannot put themselves into words. Besides, it is not true thou hast not sought or loved me. For when I read the divine poems I feel all folded round in thy love: I feel often as if thou wast pleading so passionately for the love of the woman that can understand thee--that I know not how to bear the yearning answering tenderness that fills my breast. I know that a woman may without hurt to her pride--without stain or blame--tell her love to thee. I feel for a certainty that she may. Try me for this life, my darling--see if I cannot so live, so grow, so learn, so love, that when I die you will say, "This woman has grown to be a very part of me. My soul must have her loving companionship everywhere & in all things. I alone & she alone are not complete identities--it is I and she together in a new, divine, perfect union that form the one complete identity."

I am yet young enough to bear thee children, my darling, if God should so bless me. And would yield my life for this cause with serene joy if it were so appointed, if that were the price for thy having a "perfect child"--knowing my darlings would all be safe & happy in thy loving care--planted down in America.

Let me have a few words directly, dear Friend. I shall get them by the middle of November. I shall have to go to London about then or a little later--to find a house for us--I only came to the old home here from which I have been absent most four years to wind up matters and prepare for a

move, for there is nothing to be had in the way of educational advantages here--it has been a beautiful survey for the children, but it is not what they want now. But we leave with regret, for it is one of the sweetest, wildest spots in England, though only 40 miles from London.

Good-bye, dear friend,

ANNE GILCHRIST.

LETTER IV[8]

WALT WHITMAN TO ANNE GILCHRIST

Washington, D. C.

November 3, 1871.

(TO A. G., EARL'S COLNE, HALSTED, ESSEX, ENG.)

I have been waiting quite a while for time and the right mood, to answer your letter in a spirit as serious as its own, and in the same unmitigated trust and affection. But more daily work than ever has fallen to me to do the present season, and though I am well and contented, my best moods seem to shun me. I wish to give to it a day, a sort of Sabbath, or holy day, apart to itself, under serene and propitious influences, confident that I could then write you a letter which would do you good, and me too. But I must at least show without further delay that I am not insensible to your love. I too send you my love. And do you feel no disappointment because I now write so briefly. My book is my best letter, my response, my truest explanation of all. In it I have put my body and spirit. You understand this better and fuller and clearer than any one else. And I too fully and clearly understand the loving letter it has evoked. Enough that there surely exists so beautiful and a delicate relation, accepted by both of us with joy.

LETTER V

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

27 November '71.

DEAR FRIEND.

Your long waited for letter brought me both joy & pain; but the pain was not of your giving. I gather from it that a long letter[9] which I wrote you Sept. 6th after I had received the precious packet, a letter in which I opened all my heart to you, never reached your hands: nor yet a shorter one[10] which, tortured by anxiety & suspense about its predecessor, I wrote Oct. 15, it, too, written out of such stress & intensity of painful emotion as wrenches from us inmost truth. I cannot face the thought of these words of uttermost trust & love having fallen into other hands. Can both be simply lost? Could any man suffer a base curiosity, to make him so meanly, treacherously cruel? It seems to cut and then burn me.

I was not disappointed at the shortness of your letter & I do not ask nor even wish you to write save when you are inwardly impelled & desirous of doing so. I only want leave and security to write freely to you. Your book does indeed say all--book that is not a book, for the first time a man complete, godlike, august, standing revealed the only way possible, through the garment of speech. Do you know, dear Friend, what it means for a woman, what it means for me, to understand these poems? It means for her

whole nature to be then first kindled; quickened into life through such love, such sympathy, such resistless attraction, that thenceforth she cannot choose but live & die striving to become worthy to share this divine man's life--to be his dear companion, closer, nearer, dearer than any man can be--for ever so. Her soul stakes all on this. It is the meaning, the fulfilment, the only perfect development & consummation of her nature--of her passionate, high, immortal aspirations--her Soul to mate with his for ever & ever. O I know the terms are obdurate--I know how hard to attain to this greatness, the grandest lot ever aspired to by woman. I know too my own shortcomings, faults, flaws. You might not be able to give me your great love yet--to take me to your breast with joy. But I can wait. I can grow great & beautiful through sorrow & suffering, working, struggling, yearning, loving so, all alone, as I have done now nearly three years--it will be three in May since I first read the book, first knew what the word love meant. Love & Hope are so strong in me, my soul's high aspirations are of such tenacious, passionate intensity, are so conscious of their own deathless reality, that what would starve them out of any other woman only makes them strike out deeper roots, grow more resolute & sturdy, in me. I know that "greatness will not ripen for me like a pear." But I could face, I could joyfully accept, the fiercest anguish, the hardest toil, the longest, sternest probation, to make me fit to be your mate--so that at the last you should say, "This is the woman I have waited for, the woman prepared for me: this is my dear eternal comrade, wife--the one I so much want." Life has no other meaning for me than that--all things have led up to help prepare me for that. Death is more welcome to me than life if it means that--if thou, dear sailor, thou sailing upon thy endless cruise, takest me on board--me, daring, all with

thee, steering for the deep waters, bound where mariner has not yet dared to go: hand in hand with thee, nestled close--one with thee. Ah, that word "enough" was like a blow on the breast to me--breast that often & often is so full of yearning tenderness I know not how to draw my breath. The tie between us would not grow less but more beautiful, dear friend, if you knew me better: if I could stand as real & near to you as you do to me. But I cannot, like you, clothe my nature in divine poems & so make it visible to you. Ah, foolish me! I thought you would catch a glimpse of it in those words I wrote--I thought you would say to yourself, "Perhaps this is the voice of my mate," and would seek me a little to make sure if it were so or not. O the sweet dreams I have fed on these three years nearly, pervading my waking moments, influencing every thought & action. I was so sure, so sure if I waited silently, patiently, you would send me some sign: so full of joyful hope I could not doubt nor fear. When I lay dying as it seemed, [I was] still full of the radiant certainty that you would seek me, would not lose [me], that we should as surely find one another there as here. And when the ebb ceased & life began to flow back into me, O never doubting but it was for you. Never doubting but that the sweetest, noblest, closest, tenderest companionship ever yet tasted by man & woman was to begin for us here & now. Then came the long, long waiting, the hope deferred: each morning so sure the book would come & with it a word from you that should give me leave to speak: no longer to shut down in stern silence the love, the yearning, the thoughts that seemed to strain & crush my heart. I knew what that means--"if thou wast not gifted to sing thou wouldst surely die." I felt as if my silence must kill me sometimes. Then when the Book came but with it no word for me alone, there was such a storm in [my] heart I could not for weeks read in it. I wrote that long

letter out in the Autumn fields for dear life's sake. I knew I might, and must, speak then. Then I felt relieved, joyful, buoyant once more. Then again months of heart-wearying disappointment as I looked in vain for a letter-O the anguish at times, the scalding tears, the feeling within as if my heart were crushed & doubled up--but always afterwards saying to myself "If this suffering is to make my love which was born & grew up & blossomed all in a moment strike deep root down in the dark & cold, penetrate with painful intensity every fibre of my being, make it a love such as he himself is capable of giving, then welcome this anguish, these bitter deferments: let its roots be watered as long as God pleases with my tears."

ANNE GILCHRIST.

50 Marquis Road

London

Camden Sqr. N. W.

LETTER VI

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

50 Marquis Road, Camden Sqre.

London, N. W.,

January 24, '72.

DEAR FRIEND:

I send you photographs of my oldest and youngest children, I wish I had some worth sending of the other two. That of myself done in 1850 is a copy of a daguerrotype. The recent one was taken just a week or so before I broke down in my long illness & when I was struggling against a terrible sense of inward prostration; so it has not my natural expression, but I think you will like to have [it] rather than none, & the weather here is too gloomy for there to be any chance of a good one if I were to try again. Your few words lifted a heavy weight off me. Very few they are, dear friend: but knowing that I may give to every word you speak its fullest, truest meaning, the more I brood over them the sweeter do they taste. Still I am not as happy & content as I thought I should be if I could only know my words reached you & were welcome to you,--but restless, anxious, impatient, looking so wistfully towards the letters each morning--above all, longing, longing so for you to come--to come & see if you feel happy beside me: no more this painful struggle to put myself into words, but to let what I am & all my life speak to you. Only so can you

judge whether I am indeed the woman capable of rising to the full height of great destiny, of justifying & fulfilling your grand thoughts of women. And see my faults, flaws, shortcomings too, dear Friend. I feel an earnest wish you should do this too that there may be the broad unmovable foundation-rock of perfect truth and candour for our love. I do not fear. I believe in a large all-accepting, because all-comprehending, love, a boundless faith in growth & development--in your judging "not as the judge judges but as the sunshine falling around me." To have you in the midst of us! we clustered round you, shone upon, vivified, strengthened by your presence, surrounding you with an atmosphere of love & cheerful life.

When I wrote to you in Nov. I was in lodgings in London, having just accomplished the difficult task of finding a house for us in London, where rents are so high. And I have succeeded better than I anticipated, for we find this a comfortable, dear, little home--small, indeed, but not so small as to interfere with health or comfort, and at rent that I may safely undertake. My Husband was taken from us too young to be able to have made any provision for his children. I have a little of my own--about £80 a year; & for the rest depend upon my Mother, whose only surviving child I am. And she, by nature generous & self-denying as well as prudent, has never made anything but a pleasure of this & as long as she was able to see to her own affairs, was such a capital manager that she used to spare me about £150 out of an income of £350. But now though she retains her faculties in a wonderful degree for her years (just upon 86), she is no longer able to do this & has put the management of the whole into my hands. And I, feeling that she needs, and ought to have, now an easier scale of expenditure at Colne, have to manage a little more cleverly still

to make a less sum serve for us. But I succeed capitally, dear friend--do not want a better home, never get behind hand & find it no hardship, but quite the contrary to have to spend a good deal of time & pains in domestic management. And then, just to help me through at the right moment, dear Percy[11] obtained in November a good opening in some large copper & iron mining & smelting works in South Wales at a salary upon which he can comfortably live; & he likes his work well--writes very cheerfully--lodges in a farmhouse in the midst of grand scenery, within a walk of the sea. So this enables me to give the girls a turn in education, for hitherto they have had hardly any teaching but mine. And I chose this part because there is a capital day school for them handy. And Herby[12] walks in to the best drawing school in London & is very diligent and happy at his work. His bent is unmistakably strong. It was well I have had to be so busy this autumn & winter, dear Walt, for I suffered keenly, sometimes overwhelmingly, through the delay in my letters' reaching you. What caused it? And when did you get the Sept. & Oct. letters & did you get the two copies that I, baffled & almost despairing, sent off in Nov.? Good-bye, dear Friend.

ANNIE GILCHRIST.

LETTER VII[13]

WALT WHITMAN TO ANNE GILCHRIST

(Washington, D. C.)

Feb. 8 '72.

I send by same mail with this my latest piece copied in a newspaper--and write you just a line. I suppose you only received my former letters (two)--I ought to have written something about your children (described to me in your letter of last summer--[July 23d] which I have just been reading again.) Dear boys and girls--how my heart goes out to them.

Did I tell you that I had received letters from Tennyson, and that he cordially invites me to visit him? Sometimes I dream of coming to Old England, on such visit.--& thus of seeing you & your children----But it is a dream only.

I am still living here in employment in a Government office. My health is good. Life is rather sluggish here--yet not without the sunshine. Your letters too were bright rays of it. I am going on to New York soon, to stay a few weeks, but my address will still be here. I wrote lately to Mr. Rossetti quite a long letter. Dear friend, best love & remembrance to you & to the young folk.

LETTER VIII

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

50 Marquis Rd.

Camden Sq. N. W.

April 12th, '72.

DEAR FRIEND:

I was to tell you about my acquaintanceship with Tennyson, which was a pleasant episode in my life at Haslemere. Hearing of the extreme beauty of the scenery thereabouts & specially of its comparative wildness & seclusion, he thought he would like to find or build a house, to escape from the obtrusive curiosity of the multitudes who flock to the Isle of Wight at certain seasons of the year. He is even morbidly sensitive on this point & will not stir beyond his own grounds from week's end to week's end to avoid his admiring or inquisitive persecutors. So, knowing an old friend of mine, he called on me for particulars as to the resources of the neighbourhood. And I, a good walker & familiar with every least frequent spot of hill & dale for some miles round, took him long ambles in quest of a site. Very pleasant rambles they were; Tennyson, under the influence of the fresh, outdoor, quite unconstrained life in new scenery & with a cheerful aim, shaking off the languid ennuyé air, as of a man to whom nothing has any longer a relish--bodily or mental--that too often hangs about him. And we found something quite to his mind--a coppice of 40

acres hanging on the south side two thirds of the way up a hill some 1000 ft. high so as to be sheltered from the cold & yet have the light, dry, elastic hill air--& with, of course, a glorious outlook over the wooded weald of Sussex so richly green & fertile & looking almost as boundless as the great sweep of sky over it--the South Downs to Surrey Hills & near at hand the hill curving round a fir-covered promontory, standing out very black & grand between him & the sunset. Underfoot too a wilderness of beauty--fox gloves (I wonder if they grow in America) ferns, purple heath &c &c. I don't suppose I shall see much more of him now I have left Haslemere, though I have had very friendly invitations; for I am a home bird--don't like staying out--wanted at home and happiest there. And I should not enjoy being with them in the grand mansion half so much as I did pic-nicing in the road & watching the builders as we did. It is pleasant to see T--with children--little girls at least--he does not take to boys but one of my girls was mostly on his knee when they were in the room & he liked them very much. His two sons are now both 6 ft. high. I have received your letters of March 20 from Brooklyn: but the one you speak of as having acknowledged the photograph never came to hand--a sore disappointment to me, dear Friend. I can ill afford to lose the long & eagerly watched for pleasure of a letter. If it seems to you there must needs be something unreal, illusive, in a love that has grown up entirely without the basis of personal intercourse, dear Friend, then you do not yourself realize your own power nor understand the full meaning of your own words, "whoso touches this, touches a man"--"I have put my Soul & Body into these Poems." Real effects imply real causes. Do you suppose that an ideal figure conjured up by her own fancy could, in a perfectly sound, healthy woman of my age, so happy in her children, so busy & content,

practical, earnest, produce such real & tremendous effect--saturating her whole life, colouring every waking moment--filling her with such joys, such pains that the strain of them has been well nigh too much even for a strong frame, coming as it does, after twenty years of hard work?

Therefore please, dear Friend, do not "warn" me any more--it hurts so, as seeming to distrust my love. Time only can show how needlessly. My love, flowing ever fresh & fresh out of my heart, will go with you in all your wanderings, dear Friend, enfolding you day and night, soul & body, with tenderness that tries so vainly to utter itself in these poor, helpless words, that clings closer than any man's love can cling. O, I could not live if I did not believe that sooner or later you will not be able to help stretching out your arms towards me & saying "Come, my Darling." When you get this will you post me an American newspaper (any one you have done with) as a token it has reached you--& so on at intervals during your wanderings; it will serve as a token that you are well, & the postmark will tell me where you are. And thus you will feel free only to write when you have leisure & inclination--& I shall be spared [the] feeling I have when I fancy my letters have not reached you--as if I were so hopelessly, helplessly cut off from you, which is more than I can stand. We all read American news eagerly too. The children are so well & working on with all their might. The school turns out more what I desire for them than I had ventured to hope. Good-bye, dearest Friend.

ANN GILCHRIST.

LETTER IX

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

50 Marquis Rd.

Camden, Sgre.

June 3d, 1872.

DEAR FRIEND:

The newspapers have both come to hand & been gladly welcomed. I shall realize you on the 26th sending living impulses into those young men, with results not to cease--their kindled hearts sending back response through glowing eyes that will be warmer to you than the June sunshine. Perhaps, too, you will have pleasant talks with the eminent astronomers there.

Prof. Young, who is so skilful a worker with that most subtle of tidings from the stars, the spectroscope--always, it seems hitherto bringing word of the "vast similitude that interlocks all," nay, of the absolute identity of the stuff they are made of with the stuff we are made of. The news from Dartmouth that too, is a great pleasure.

It has been what seems to me a very long while since last writing, because it has been a troubled time within & what I wrote I tore up again, believing it was best, wisest so. You said in your first letter that if you had leisure you could write one that "would do me good & you too"; write that letter dear Friend after you have been to Dartmouth[14]--for I

sorely need it. Perhaps the letters that I have sent you since that first, have given you a feeling of constraint towards me because you cannot respond to them. I will not write any more such letters; or, if I write them because my heart is so full it cannot bear it, they shall not find their way to the Post. But do not, because I give you more than friendship, think that it would not be a very dear & happy thing to me to have friendship only from you. I do not want you to write what it is any effort to write--do not ask for deep thoughts, deep feelings--know well those must choose their own time & mode--but for the simplest current details--for any thing that helps my eyes to pierce the distance & see you as you live & move to-day. I dearly like to hear about your Mother--want to know if all your sisters are married, & if you have plenty of little nephews & nieces--I like to hear anything about Mr. O'Connor[15] & Mr. Burroughs,[16] towards both of whom I feel as toward friends. (Has Mr. O'Connor succeeded in getting practically adopted his new method of making cast steel? Percy[17] being a worker in the field of metallurgy makes me specially glad to hear about this.) Then, I need not tell you how deep an interest I feel in American politics & want to know if you are satisfied with the result of the Cincinnati Convention & what of Mr. Greeley?[18] & what you augur as to his success--I am sure dear friend, if you realize the joy it is to me to receive a few words from you--about anything that is passing in your thoughts & around--how beaming bright & happy the day a letter comes & many days after--how light hearted & alert I set about my daily tasks, it would not seem irksome to you to write. And if you say, "Read my books, & be content--you have me in them," I say, it is because I read them so that I am not content. It is an effort to me to turn to any other reading; as to highest literature what I felt three years ago is

more than ever true now, with all their precious augmentations. I want nothing else--am fully fed & satisfied there. I sit alone many hours busy with my needle; this used to be tedious; but it is not so now--for always close at hand lie the books that are so dear, so dear, I brooding over the poems, sunning myself in them, pondering the vistas--all the experience of my past life & all its aspirations corroborating them--all my future & so far as in me lies the future of my children to be shaped modified vitalized by & through these--outwardly & inwardly. How can I be content to live wholly isolated from you? I am sure it is not possible for any one,--man or woman, it does not matter which, to receive these books, not merely with the intellect critically admiring their power & beauty, but with an understanding responsive heart, without feeling it drawn out of their breasts so that they must leave all & come to be with you sometimes without a resistless yearning for personal intercourse that will take no denial. When we come to America I shall not want you to talk to me, shall not be any way importunate. To settle down where there are some that love you & understand your poems, somewhere that you would be sure to come pretty often--to have you sit with me while I worked, you silent, or reading to yourself, I don't mind how: to let my children grow fond of you--to take food with us; if my music pleased you, to let me play & sing to you of an evening. Do your needlework for you--talk freely of all that occupied my thoughts concerning the children's welfare &c--I could be very happy so. But silence with the living presence and silence with all the ocean in between are two different things. Therefore, these years stretch out your hand cordially, trustfully, that I may feel its warm grasp.

Good-bye, my dearest friend.

ANNIE GILCHRIST.

LETTER X

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

50 Marquis Rd.

Camden Sq. London

July 14, '72.

The 3d July was my rejoicing day, dearest Friend,--the day the packet from America reached me, scattering for a while the clouds of pain and humiliation & filling me through & through with light & warmth; indeed I believe I am often as happy reading, as you were writing, your Poems. The long new one "As a Strong Bird" of itself answers the question hinted in your preface & nobly fulfils the promise of its opening lines. We want again & again in fresh words & from the new impetus & standpoint of new days the vision that sweeps ahead, the tones that fill us with faith & joy in our present share of life & work--prophetic of the splendid issues. It does not need to be American born to believe & passionately rejoice in the belief of what is preparing in America. It is for humanity. And it comes through England. The noblest souls the most heroic hearts of England were called to be the nucleus of the race that (enriched with the blood & qualities of other races & planted down in the new half of the world reserved in all its fresh beauty & exhaustless riches to be the arena) is to fulfil, justify, outstrip the vision of the poets, the quenchless aspirations of all the ardent souls that have ever struggled forward upon this earth. For me, the most precious page in the book is that which

contains the Democratic Souvenirs. I respond to that as one to whom it means the life of her Soul. It comforts me very much. You speak in the Preface of the imperious & resistless command from within out of which "Leaves of Grass" issued. This carried with it no doubt the secret of a corresponding resistless power over the reader wholly unprecedented, unapproached in literature, as I believe, & to be compared only with that of Christ. I speak out of my own experience when I say that no myth, no "miracle" embodying the notion of a direct communication between God & a human creature, goes beyond the effect, soul & body, of those Poems on me: & that were I to put into Oriental forms of speech what I experienced it would read like one of those old "miracles" or myths. Thus of many things that used to appear to me incomprehensible lies, I now perceive the germ of truth & understand that what was called the supernatural was merely an inadequate & too timid way of conceiving the natural. Had I died the following year, it would have been the simple truth to say I died of joy. The doctor called it nervous exhaustion falling with tremendous violence on the heart which "seemed to have been strained": & was much puzzled how that could have come to pass. I left him in his puzzle--but it was none to me. How could such a dazzling radiance of light flooding the soul, suddenly, kindling it to such intense life, but put a tremendous strain on the vital organs? how could the muscles of the heart suddenly grow adequate to such new work? O the passionate tender gratitude that flooded my breast, the yearnings that seemed to strain the heart beyond endurance that I might repay with all my life & soul & body this debt--that I might give joy to him who filled me with such joy, that I might make his outward life sweeter & more beautiful who made my inner life so divinely sweet & beautiful. But, dear friend, I have certainly to see that this is not to

be so, now: that for me too love & death are folded inseparably together:
Death that will renew my youth.

I have had the paper from Burlington[19]--with the details a woman likes so to have. I wish I had known for certain whether you went on to Boston & were enjoying the music there. My youngest boy has gone to spend his holiday with his brother in South Wales & he writes me such good news of Per., that he is "looking as brown as a nut & very jolly"; his home in a "clean airy old farm house half way up a mountain in the midst of wild rough grand scenery, sea in sight near enough to hear the sound of it about as loud as the rustling of leaves"--so the boys will have a good time together, and the girls are going with me for the holiday to their grandmother at Colne. W. Rossetti does not take his till October this year. I suppose it will be long & long before this letter reaches you as you will be gone to California--may it be a time full of enjoyment--full to the brim.

Good-bye, dearest Friend,

ANNIE GILCHRIST.

What a noble achievement is Mr. Stanley's:[20] it fills me with pleasure that Americans should thus have been the rescuer of our large-hearted, heroic traveller. We have just got his letters with account of the five races in Central Africa copied from N. Y. Herald, July 29.

LETTER XI

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

50 Marquis Road

Camden Sqre.

Novr. 12, 1872.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

I must write not because I have anything to tell you--but because I want so, by help of a few loving words, to come into your presence as it were--into your remembrance. Not more do the things that grow want the sun.

I have received all the papers--& each has made a day very bright for me.

I hope the trip to California has not again had to be postponed--I realize well the enjoyment of it, & what it would be to California & the fresh impulses of thought & emotion that would shape themselves, melodiously, out of that for the new volume.

My children are all well. Beatrice is working hard to get through the requisite amount of Latin, &c. that is required in the preliminary examination--before entering on medical studies. Percy, my eldest, whom I have not seen for a year, is coming to spend Xmas with us.

Good-bye, dearest Friend.

ANNIE GILCHRIST.

LETTER XII

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

50 Marquis Road

Camden Sq. London

Jan. 31, '73.

DEAREST FRIEND:

Shall you never find it in your heart to say a kind word to me again? or a word of some sort? Surely I must have written what displeased you very much that you should turn away from me as the tone of your last letter & the ten months' silence which have followed seem to express to me with such emphasis. But if so, tell me of it, tell me how--with perfect candour, I am worthy of that--a willing learner & striver; not afraid of the pain of looking my own faults & shortcomings steadily in the face. It may be my words have led you to do me some kind of injustice in thought--I then could defend myself. But if it is simply that you are preoccupied, too busy, perhaps very eagerly beset by hundreds like myself whose hearts are so drawn out of their breasts by your Poems that they cannot rest without striving, some way or other, to draw near to you personally--then write once more & tell me so & I will learn to be content. But please let it be a letter just like the first three you wrote: & do not fear that I shall take it to mean anything it doesn't mean. I shall never do that again, though it was natural enough at first, with the deep unquestioning

belief I had that I did but answer a call; that I not only might but ought, on pain of being untrue to the greatest, sweetest instincts & aspirations of my own soul, to answer it with all my heart & strength & life. I say to myself, I say to you as I did in my first letters, "This voice that has come to me from over the Atlantic is the one divine voice that has penetrated to my soul: is the utterance of a nature that sends out life-giving warmth & light to my inward self as actually as the Sun does to my body, & draws me to it and shapes & shall shape my course just as the sun shapes the earth's." "Interlocked in a vast similitude" indeed are these inner & outer truths of our lives. It may be that this shaping of my life course toward you will have to be all inward--that to feed upon your words till they pass into the very substance & action of my soul is all that will be given to me & the grateful, yearning, tender love growing ever deeper & stronger out of that will have to go dumb & actionless all my days here. But I can wait long, wait patiently; know well, realize more clearly indeed that this wingless, clouded, half-developed soul of me has a long, long novitiate to live through before it can meet & answer yours on equal terms so as fully to satisfy you, to be in very truth & deed a dear Friend, a chosen companion, a source of joy to you as you of light & life to me. But that is what I will live & die hoping & striving for. That covers & includes all the aspirations all the high hopes I am capable of. And were I to fall away from this belief it would be a fall into utter blackness & despair, as one for whom the Sun in Heaven is blotted out.

Good-bye, dearest Friend.

ANNIE GILCHRIST.

LETTER XIII

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

50 Marquis Road

Camden Sq. N. W.

May 20th, '73.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

Such a joyful surprise was that last paper you sent me with the Poem celebrating the great events in Spain--the new hopes the new life wakening in the breasts of that fine People which has slumbered so long, weighed down & tormented with hideous nightmares of superstition. Are you indeed getting strong & well again? able to drink in draughts of pleasure from the sights & sounds & perfumes of this delicious time, "lilac time"--according to your wont? Sleeping well--eating well, dear friend?

William Rossetti is coming to see me Thursday, before starting for his holiday trip to Naples. His father was a Neapolitan, so he narrowly escaped a lifelong dungeon for having written some patriotic songs--he fled in disguise by help of English friends & spent the rest of his life here. So this, his first visit to Naples, will be specially full of interest & delight to our friend. He is also in great spirits at having discovered a large number of hitherto unknown early letters of Shelley's. Of modern English Poets Shelley is the one he loves & admires incomparably

the most. Perhaps this letter will just reach you on your birthday. What can I send you? What can I tell you but the same old story of a heart fast anchored--of a soul to whom your soul is as the sun & the fresh, sweet air, and the nourishing, sustaining earth wherein the other one breathes free & feeds & expands & delights itself. There is no occupation of the day however homely that is not coloured, elevated, made more cheerful to me by thoughts of you & by thoughts you have given me blent in & suffusing all: No hope or aim or practical endeavour for my dear children that has not taken a higher, larger, more joyous scope through you. No immortal aspiration, no thoughts of what lies beyond death, but centre in you. And in moods of pain and discouragement, dear Friend, I turn to that Poem beginning "Whoever you are holding me now in hand," and I don't know but that that one revives and strengthens me more than any. For there is not a line nor a word in it at which my spirit does not rise up instinctively and fearlessly say--"So be it." And then I read other poems & drink in the draught that I know is for me, because it is for all--the love that you give me on the broad ground of my humanity and womanhood. And I understand the reality & preciousness of that. Then I say to myself, "Souls are not made to be frustrated--to have their greatest & best & sweetest impulses and aspirations & yearnings made abortive. Therefore we shall not be 'carried diverse' forever. This dumb soul of mine will not always remain hidden from you--but some way will be given me for this love, this passion of gratitude, this set of all the nerves of my being toward you, to bring joy & comfort to you. I do not ask the When or the How."

I shall be thinking of your great & dear Mother in her beautiful old age,

too, on your birthday--happiest woman in all the world that she was & is:
forever sacred & dear to America & to all who feed on the Poems of her
Son.

Good-bye, my best beloved Friend.

ANNIE GILCHRIST.

I suppose you see all that you care to see in the way of English
newspapers. I often long to send you one when there is anything in that I
feel sure would interest you, but am withheld by fearing it would be quite
superfluous or troublesome even.

LETTER XIV

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

Earls Colne

Halstead

August 12, 1873.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

The paper has just been forwarded here which tells me you are still suffering and not, as I was fondly believing, already quite emerged from the cloud of sickness. My Darling, let me use that tender caressing word once more--for how can I help it, with heart so full & no outlet but words? My darling--I say it over & over to myself with voice, with eyes so full of love, of tender yearning, sorrowful, longing love. I would give all the world if I might come (but am held here yet awhile by a duty nothing may supersede) & soothe & tend & wait on you & with such cheerful loving companionship lift off some of the weight of the long hours & days & perhaps months that must still go over while nature slowly, imperceptibly, but still so surely repairs the mischief within: result of the tremendous ordeal to your frame of those great over-brimming years of life spent in the Army Hospitals. You see dear Friend, a woman who is a mother has thenceforth something of that feeling toward other men who are dear to her. A cherishing, fostering instinct that rejoices so in tending, nursing, caretaking & I should be so happy it needs must diffuse a

reviving, comforting, vivifying warmth around you. Might but these words
breathed out of the heart of a woman who loves you with her whole soul &
life & strength fulfil their errand & comfort the sorrowful heart, if
ever so little--& through that revive the drooping frame. This love that
has grown up, far away over here, unhelped by the sweet influences of
personal intercourse, penetrating the whole substance of a woman's life,
swallowing up into itself all her aspirations, hopes, longings, regardless
of Death, looking earnestly, confidently beyond that for its fruition,
blending more or less with every thought & act of her life--a guiding star
that her feet cannot choose but follow resolutely--what can be more real
than this, dear Friend? What can have deeper roots, or a more immortal
growing power? But I do not ask any longer whether this love is believed
in & welcomed & precious to you. For I know that what has real roots
cannot fail to bear real flowers & fruits that will in the end be sweet &
joyful to you; and that if I am indeed capable of being your eternal
comrade, climbing whereon you climb, daring all that you dare, learning
all that you learn, suffering all that you suffer (pressing closest then)
loving, enjoying all that you love & enjoy--you will want me. You will not
be able to help stretching out your hand & drawing me to you. I have
written this mostly out in the fields, as I am so fond of doing--the
serene, beautiful harvest landscape spread around--returned once more as I
have every summer for five & twenty years to this old village where my
mother's family have lived in unbroken succession three hundred years,
ever since, in fact, the old Priory which they have inhabited, ceased to
be a Priory. My Mother's health is still good--wonderful indeed for 88,
though she has been 30 years crippled with rheumatism. Still she enjoys
getting out in the sunshine in her Bath chair, & is able to take pleasure

in seeing her friends & in having us all with her. Her father was a hale man at 90. These eastern counties are flat & tame, but yet under this soft, smiling, summer sky lovely enough too--with their rich green meadows & abundant golden corn crops, now being well got in. Even the sluggish little river Colne one cannot find fault with, it nourishes such a luxuriant border of wild flowers as it creeps along--& turns & twists from sunshine into shade & from shade into sunshine so as to make the very best & most of itself. But as to the human growth here, I think that more than anywhere else in England perhaps it struggled along choked & poisoned by dead things of the past, still holding their place above ground. Carlyle calls the clergy "black dragoons"--in these rural parishes they are black Squires, making it their chief business to instruct the labourer that his grinding poverty & excessive toil, & the Squire's affluence & ease are equally part of the sacred order of Providence. When I have been here a little I wish myself in London again, dearly as I love outdoor life & companionship with nature. For though the same terrible & cruel facts are there as here, they are not choked down your throat by any one, as a beautiful & perfect ideal. Even in England light is unmistakably breaking through the darkness for the toilers.

I did not see William Rossetti before I came down, but heard he had had a very happy time in Italy & splendid weather all the while. Mr. Conway & his wife are going to spend their holiday in Brittany. Do not think me childish dear friend if I send a copy of this letter to Washington as well as to Camden. I want it so to get to you--long & so long to speak with you--& the Camden one may never come to hand--or the Washington one might remain months unforwarded--it is easy to tear up.

I hope it will find you by the sea shore!--getting on so fast toward
health & strength again--refreshed & tranquillized, soul & body. Good-bye,
beloved Friend.

ANNIE GILCHRIST.

LETTER XV[21]

WALT WHITMAN TO ANNE GILCHRIST

I must write

friend once more at

Since I last wrote, clouds have darkened over me, and still remain.

On the night of 3d January last I was paralyzed, left side, and have remained so since. Feb. 19 I lost a dear dear sister, who died in St. Louis leaving two young daughters. May 23d, my dear inexpressibly beloved mother died in Camden, N. J. I was just able to get from Washington to her dying bed & sit there. I thought I was bearing it all stoutly, but I find it affecting the progress of my recovery since and now. I am still feeble, palsied & have spells of great distress in the head. But there are points more favourable.

I am up & dressed every day, sleep & eat middling well & do not change much yet, in flesh & face, only look very old.

Though I can move slowly very short distances, I walk with difficulty & have to stay in the house nearly all the time. As I write to-day, I feel that I shall probably get well--though I may not.

Many times during the past year have I thought of you & your children. Many times indeed have I been going to write, but did not. I have just

been reading over again several of this & last year's letters from you & looking at the pictures sent in the one of Jan. 24, '72. (Your letters of Jan. 24, June 3 & July 14, of last year and of Jan. 31, and May 20, this year, with certainly one other, maybe two) all came safe. Do not think hard of me for not writing in reply. If you could look into my spirit & emotion you would be entirely satisfied & at peace. I am at present temporarily here at Camden, on the Delaware river, opposite Philadelphia, at the house of my brother, and I am occupying, as I write, the rooms wherein my mother died. You must not be unhappy about me, as I am as comfortably situated as can be--& many things--indeed every thing--in my case might be so much worse. Though my plans are not definite, my intention as far as anything is on getting stronger, and after the hot season passes, to get back to Washington for the fall & winter.

My post office address continues at Washington. I send my love to Percy & all your dear children.

The enclosed ring I have just taken from my finger, & send to you, with my love.

FROM THOMAS B. HARNED'S COLLECTION]

LETTER XVI

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

Earls Colne

Sept. 4, 1873.

I am entirely satisfied & at peace, my Beloved--no words can say how divine a peace.

Pain and joy struggle together in me (but joy getting the mastery, because its portion is eternal). O the precious letter, bearing to me the living touch of your hand, vibrating through & through me as I feel the pressure of the ring that pressed your flesh--& now will press mine so long as I draw breath. My Darling! take comfort & strength & joy from me that you have made so rich & strong. Perhaps it will yet be given us to see each other, to travel the last stage of this journey side by side, hand in hand--so completing the preparation for the fresh start on the greater journey; me loving and blessing her you mourn, now for your dear sake--then growing to know & love her in full unison with you.

I hope you will soon get to the sea--as soon as you are strong enough, that is--& if you could have all needful care & comfort & a dear friend with you there. For I believe you would get on faster away from Camden--& that it tends so to keep the wound open & quivering to be where the blow fell on you--where every object speaks of her last hours & is laden with

heart-stirring associations; though I realize, dearest Friend, that in the midst of the poignant sorrow come immortal sweet moments--communings, rapt anticipations. But these would come the same in nature's great soothing arms by the seashore, with her reviving, invigorating breath playing freely over you. If only you could get just strong enough prudently to undertake the journey. When my eyes first open in the morning, often such tender thoughts, yearning ineffably, pitying, sorrowful, sweet thoughts flow into my breast that longs & longs to pillow on itself the suffering head (with white hair more beautiful to me than the silvery clouds which always make me think of it.) My hands want to be so helpful, tending, soothing, serving my whole frame to support his stricken side--O to comfort his heart--to diffuse round him such warm sunshine of love, helping time & the inborn vigour of each organ that the disease could not withstand the influences, but healthful life begin to flow again through every part. My children send their love, their earnest sympathy. Do not feel anyways called on to write except when inwardly impelled. Your silence is not dumb to me now--will never again cloud or pain, or be misconstrued by me. I can feast & feast, & still have wherewithal to satisfy myself with the sweet & precious words that have now come & with the feel of my ring, only send any old paper that comes to hand (never mind whether there is anything to read in it or not) just as a sign that the breath of love & hope these poor words try to bear to you, has reached you. And just one word literally that, dearest, when you begin to feel you are really getting on--to make me so joyful with the news.

Good-bye, dearest Friend,

ANNE GILCHRIST.

Back again in Marquis Road.

LETTER XVII

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

50 Marquis Rd.

Camden Sq.

Nov. 3, '73 London

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

All the papers have reached me--3 separate packets (with the handwriting on them that makes my heart give a glad bound). I look through them full of interest & curiosity, wanting to realize as I do, in things small as well as things large, my Land of Promise--the land where I hope to plant down my children--so strong in the faith that they, & perhaps still more those that come after them will bless me for that (consciously or unconsciously, it doesn't matter which) I should set out with a cheerful heart on that errand if I knew the first breath I drew on American soil would be my last in life. I searched hopeful for a few words telling of improvement in your health in the last paper. But perhaps it does not follow from there being no much mention that there is no progress. May you be steadily though ever so slowly gaining ground, my Darling! Now that I understand the nature of the malady (a deficient flow of blood to the brain, if it has been rightly explained to me) I realize that recovery must be very gradual: as the coming on of it must have been slow & insidious. And perhaps that, & also even from before the war time with its

tremendous strain, emotional & physical, is part of the price paid for the greatness of the Poems & for their immortal destiny--the rapt exaltation the intensity of joy & sorrow & struggle--all that went to give them their life-giving power. For I have felt many times in reading them as if the light and heat of their sacred fire must needs have consumed the vital energies of him in whose breast it was generated, faster than even the most splendid physique could renew itself. For our sakes, for humanity's sake, you suffer now, I do not doubt it, every bit as much as the soldier's wounds are for his country's sake. The more precious, the more tenderly cherished, the more drawing the hearts that understand with ineffable yearnings, for this.

My children all continue well in the main, I am thankful to say, though Beatrice (the eldest girl) looks paler than I could wish and is working her brains too much and the rest of her too little just at present, with the hope of getting through the Apothecaries Hall exam. in Arts next Sept., which involves a good bit of Latin and mathematics. This is all women can do in England toward getting into the medical profession & as the Apoth. Hall certificate is accepted for the preliminary studies at Paris & Zurich, I make no doubt it is also at Philadelphia & New York; so that she would be able to enter on medical studies, the virtual preliminary work, when we come. For she continues steadfastly desirous to win her way into that field of usefulness, & I believe is well fitted to work there, with her grave, earnest, thoughtful, feeling nature & strong bodily frame. She is able to enjoy your Poems & the vistas; broods over them a great deal. Percy is bending his energies now to mastering the processes that go to the production of the very best quality of copper

such as is used for telegraph wires &c. No easy matter, copper being the most difficult, in a metallurgical point of view, of all the metals to deal with & the Company in whose employ he is having hitherto been unsuccessful in this branch. His looks, too, do not quite satisfy me--it is partly rather too long hours of work--but still more not getting a good meal till the end of it. It is so hard to make the young believe that the stomach shares the fatigue of the rest of the body and that there is not nervous energy enough left for it to do all its principal work to perfection after a long, exhausting day. But I hope now I, or rather his own experience and I together, have convinced him in time, and he promises me faithfully to arrange for a good meal in the middle of the day however much grudging the time. My little artist Herby is still chiefly working from the antique, but tries his hand at home occasionally with oils & to life & has made an oil sketch of me which, though imperfect in drawing &c., gives far more the real character & expression of my face than the photographs. Have you heard, I wonder, of William Rossetti's approaching marriage? It is to take place early in the New Year. The lady is Lucy Brown, daughter of one of our most eminent artists (he was the friend who first put into my hand the "Selections" from your Poems). Lucy is a very sweet-tempered, cultivated, lovable woman, well fitted, I should say, to make William Rossetti happy. They are to continue in the old home, Euston Sq., with Mrs. Rossetti & the sisters, who are one and all fond of Lucy. I am glad he is going to be married for I think he is a man capable both of giving and receiving a large measure of domestic happiness. I hope the dear little girls at St. Louis are well. And you, my Darling, O surely the sun is piercing through the dark clouds once more and strength & health and gladness returning. O fill yourself with happy thoughts for you have

filled others with joy & strength & will do so for countless generations,
& from these hearts flows back, and will ever flow, a steady current of
love & the beautiful fruits of love.

When you next send me a paper, if you feel that you are getting on ever so
little, dearest friend, just a dash under the word London. I have looked
back at all your old addresses & I see you never do put any lines, so I
shall know it was not done absently but really means you are better. And
how that line will gladden my eyes, Darling!

Love from us all. Good-bye.

ANNE GILCHRIST.

LETTER XVIII

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

50 Marquis Rd.

Camden Sq., N. W.

Dec. 8, 1873.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

The papers with Prof. Young's speech came safely & I read it, my hand in yours, happy and full of interest. Are you getting on, my Darling? When I know that you no longer suffer from distressing sensations in the head & can move without such effort and difficulty, a hymn of thankfulness will go up from my heart. Perhaps this week I shall get the paper with the line on it that is to tell me so much--or at least that you are well on your way towards it. And what shall I tell you about? The quiet tenor of our daily lives here? but that is very restricted, though, I trust, as far as it goes, good & healthful. O the thoughts and hopes that leap from across the ocean & the years! But they hide themselves away when I want to put them into words. Do not think I live in dreams. I know very well it is strictly in proportion as the present & the past have been busy shaping & preparing the materials of a beautiful future, that it really will be beautiful when it comes to exist as a present, seeing how it needs must be entirely a growth from all that has preceded it & that there are no sudden creations of flowers of happiness in men & women any more than in the

fields. But if the buds lie ready folded, ah, what the sunshine will do!
What fills me with such deep joy in your poems is the sense of the large complete acceptiveness--the full & perfect faith in humanity--in every individual unit of humanity--thus for the first time uttered. That alone satisfies the sense of justice in the soul, responds to what its own nature compels it to believe of the Infinite Source of all. That too includes within its scope the lot as well as the man. His infinite, undying self must achieve and fulfil itself out of any & all experiences. Why, if it takes such ages & such vicissitudes to compact a bit of rock--fierce heat, & icy cold, storms, deluges, crushing pressure & slow subsidences, as if it were like a handful of grass & all sunshine--what would it do for a man!

Dec. 18.

The longed-for paper has come to hand. O it is a slow struggle back to health, my Darling! I believe in the main it is good news that is come--and there is the little stroke I wanted so on the address. But for all that, I feel troubled & conscious--for I believe you have been a great deal worse since you wrote--and that you have still such a steep, steep hill to climb.

Perhaps if my hand were in yours, dear Walt, you would get along faster. Dearer and sweeter that lot than even to have been your bride in the full flush & strength and glory of your youth. I turn my face to the westward sky before I lie down to sleep, deep & steadfast within me the silent

aspiration that every year, every month & week, may help something to prepare and make fitter me and mine to be your comfort and joy. We are full of imperfections, short-comings but half developed, but half "possessing our own souls." But we grow, we learn, we strive--that is the best of us. I think in the sunshine of your presence we shall grow fast--I too, my years notwithstanding. May the New Year lead you out into the sunshine again--shed out of its days health & strength, so that you tread the earth in gladness again. This with love from us all. Good-bye, dearest Friend.

ANNE GILCHRIST.

Herby was at a Conversation last night where were many distinguished men & beautiful women. Among the works of art displayed on the walls was a fine photograph of you.

19th, afternoon.

And now a later post has brought me the other No. of the Graphic with your own writing in it--so full of life and spirit, so fresh & cheerful & vivid, dear Friend, it seems to scatter all anxious sad thoughts to the winds. And are you then really back at Washington, I wonder, or have you only visited it in spirit, & written the recollection of former evenings?

I shall have none but cheerful thoughts now. I shall reread it

carefully--read it to the young folk at tea to-night.

LETTER XIX

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

50 Marquis Rd.

Camden Sq.

London

26 Feb., 1874.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

Glad am I when the time comes round for writing to you again--though I can't please myself with my letters, poor little echoes that they are of the loving, hoping, far-journeying thoughts so busy within. It has been a happy time since I received the paper with the joyful news you were back at Washington, well on your way to recovery, able partially to resume work--scenting from afar the fresh breeze & sunshine of perfect health--by this time, not from afar, perhaps. The thought of that makes dull days bright & bright days glorious to me too. I note in the New York Graphic that a new edition of "Leaves of Grass" was called for--sign truly that America is not so very slowly & now absorbing the precious food she needs above all else? Perhaps, dear Friend, even during your lifetime will begin to come the proof you will alone accept--that "your country absorbs you as affectionately as you have absorbed it." I have had two great pleasures since I last wrote you. One is that Herby has read with a large measure of responsive delight "Leaves of Grass" quite through, so that he now sees

you with his own eyes & has in his heart the living, growing germs of a loving admiration that will grow with his growth & strengthen every fibre of good in him. Also he read & took much pride in my "letters," now shown him for the first time. Percy has had a fortnight's holiday with us, and looks better in health, though still not altogether as I could wish. He says he is getting such good experience he would not care just yet to change his post even for better pay. Music is his greatest pleasure--he seems to get more enjoyment out of that than out of literature, & is acquiring some practical skill.

To-day (Feb. 25th) is my birthday, dearest Friend--a day my children always make very bright & happy to me: and on it they make me promise to "do nothing but what I like all day." So I shall spend it with you--partly in finishing this letter, partly reading in the book that is so dear to me--for that is indeed my soul coming into the presence of your soul--filled by it with strength & warmth & joy. In discouraged moods, when oppressed with the consciousness of my own limitations, failures, lack of many beautiful gifts, I say to myself, "What sort of a bird with unfledged wings are you that would mate with an eagle? Can your eyes look the sun in the face like his? Can you sustain your long, lifelong flights upward? Can you rest in dizzy rocks overhanging dark, tempestuous abysses? Is your heart like his, a great glowing sun of Love?" Then I answer, "Give me Time." I can bide my time--a long, long growing & unfolding time. That he draws me with such power, that my soul has found the meaning of itself in him--the object of all its deep, deathless aspirations in comradeship with him, means, if life is not a mockery clean ended by death, that the germs are in me, that through cleaving & loving & ever striving up & on I

shall grow like him--like but different--the correlative--what his soul needs & desires; and if when I reach America he is not so drawn towards me,--if seeing how often I disappoint myself, needs must that he too is disappointed, still I can hold bravely, lovingly on to this inextinguishable faith & hope--with the added joy of his presence, sometimes winning from him more & more a dear friendship, yielding him some joy & comfort--for he too turns with hope, with yearning, towards me--bids me be "satisfied & at peace!" So I am, so I will be, my darling. Surely, surely, sooner or later I shall justify that hope, satisfy that yearning. This is what I say to myself & to you this 46th birthday. Have I said it over & over again? That is because it is the undercurrent of my whole life. The Tribune with Proctor's "Lecture on the Sun" (& a great deal besides that interests me) came safe. A masterly lecture. And two days ago came the Philadelphia paper with Prof. Morton's speech--deeply interesting. And as I read these things, the feeling that they have come from, & been read by, you turns them into Poems for me.

Good-bye, my dearest Friend.

ANNE GILCHRIST.

W. Rossetti's marriage is to be the end of next month. Had a pleasant chat with Mr. Conway, who took supper with us a week or two ago.

LETTER XX

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

March 9th, 1874.

With full heart, with eyes wet with tears of joy & I know not what other deep emotion--pain of yearning pity blent with the sense of grandeur--dearest Friend, have I read and reread the great, sacred Poem just come to me.[22] O august Columbus! whose sorrows, sufferings, struggles are more to be envied than any triumph of conquering warrior--as I see him in your poem his figure merges into yours, brother of Columbus. Completer of his work, discoverer of the spiritual, the ideal America--you too have sailed over stormy seas to your goal--surrounded with mocking disbelievers--you too have paid the great price of health--our Columbus.

Your accents pierce me through & through.

Your loving ANNIE.

LETTER XXI

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

50 Marquis Rd.

Camden Sq.

May 14, 1874.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

Two papers have come to hand since I last wrote, one containing the memoranda made during the war--precious records, eagerly read & treasured & reread by me.

How the busy days slip by one so like another, yet each with its own fresh & pleasant flavour & scent, as like and as different as the leaves on a tree, or the plants in the hedgerows. Days they are busy with humble enough occupations, but lit up for me not only with the light of hope, but with the half-hidden joy of one who knows she has found what she sought and laid such strong hold upon it that she fears nothing, questions nothing--no life, or death, nor in the end, in her own imperfections, flaws, shortcomings. For to be so conscious of these, and to love and understand you so, are proofs [that] the germs of all are in her, & perhaps in the warmth & joyous sunshine of your presence would grow fast. Anyhow, distance has not baffled her, and time will not. A great deal of needlework to be done at this time of year; for my girls have not time for

any at present; it is not a good contrast or the right thing after longish hours of study--much better household activity of any sort. If they would but understand this in schools & colleges for girls & young women. No healthier or more cheerful occupation as a relief from study, could be found than household work--sweeping, scrubbing, washing, ironing, cooking--in the variety of it, & equable development of the muscles, I should think equal to the most elaborate gymnastics. I know very well how I have felt, & still feel, the want of having been put to these things when a girl. Then the importance afterwards of doing them easily & well & without undue fatigue, to all who aim to give practical shape to their ardent belief in equality & fair play for all. In domestic life under one roof, at all events, it is already feasible to make the disposals without ignominious distinctions--not all the rough bodily work, never ending, leisure all to the other; but a wholesome interchange and sharing of these. Not least too among the advantages of taking an active share in these duties is the zest, the keen relish, it gives to the hours not too easily secured for reading & music. Besides, I often think that just as the Poem Nature is made up half of rude, rough realities and homely materials & processes, so it is necessary for women to construct their Poem, Home, on a groundwork of homeliest details & occupations, providing for the bodily wants & comforts of their household, and that without putting their own hands to this, their Poem will lack the vital, fresh, growing, nature-like quality that alone endures, and that of this soil will grow, with fitting preparation & culture, noble & more vigorous intellectual life in women, fit to embody itself in wider spheres afterwards--if the call comes.

This month of May that comes to you so laden with great and sorrowful & beautiful & tender memories, and that is your birth-month too, I cannot say that I think of you more than at any other time, for there is no month nor day that my thoughts do not habitually & spontaneously turn to you, refer all to you--yet I seem to come closer because of the Poems that tell me of what relates to that time; but most of all when I think of your beloved Mother, because then I often yearn, more than I know how to bear, to comfort you with love and tender care and silent companionship. May is in a sense (& a very real one) my birth-month too, for in it were your Poems first put into my hand. I wish I were quite sure that you no longer suffer in your head, and that you can move about without effort or difficulty--perhaps before long there will be a paper with some paragraph about your health, for though we say to ourselves no news is good news, it is a very different thing to have the absolute affirmation of good news.

My children are all well and hearty, I am thankful to say, & working industriously. Grace means to study the best system of kindergarten teaching--I fancy she is well suited for kindergarten teaching & that it is very excellent work.

Herby is still drawing from the antique in the British Museum. I hope he will get into the Academy this summer. He is going to spend his holidays with his brother in South Wales--and we as usual at Colne, but that will not be till August.

Did I tell you William Rossetti and his bride were spending their honeymoon at Naples? & have found it bitterly cold there, I learn. Mr. &

Mrs. Conway & their children are well. Eustace is coming to spend the afternoon with Herby to-morrow.

Good-bye, my dearest Friend.

ANNIE GILCHRIST.

LETTER XXII

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

50 Marquis Rd.

Camden Sq.

July 4, 1874.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

Are you well and happy, and enjoying this beautiful summer? London is, in one sense, a sort of big prison at this time of year: but still at a wide open window, with the blue sky opening to me & a soft breeze blowing in & the Book that is so dear--my life-giving treasure--open on my lap, I have very happy times. No one hundreds of years hence will find deeper joy in these poems than I--breathe the fresh, sweet, exhilarating air of them, bathe in it, drink in what nourishes & delights the whole being, body, intellect & soul, more than I. Nor could you, when writing them, have desired to come nearer to a human being & be more to them forever & forever than you are & will be to me. O I take the hand you stretch out each day--I put mine into it with a sense of utter fulfilment: I ask nothing more of time and of eternity but to live and grow up to that companionship that includes all.

6th. This very morning has come the answer to my question. First I only saw the Poem--read it so elate--soared with it to joyous heights, said to

myself: "He is so well again, he is able to take the journey into Massachusetts & speak the kindling words." Then I turned over and my joy was dashed. My Darling; such patience yet needed along the tedious path! Oh, it makes me long, with passionate longings, with yearnings I know not how to bear, to come, to be your loving, cheerful companion, the one to take such care, to do all for you--to beguile the time, to give you of my health as you have done to tens of thousands. I do not doubt, either, but that you will get well. I feel sure, sure, it will be given me to see you; and perhaps a very slow, gradual recovery is safest--is the only way in this as in other matters to thoroughness; & a very speedy rally would be specious, treacherous, in the end, leading you to do what you were not yet fit for. I believe if I could only make you conscious of the love, the enfolding love, my heart breathes out toward you it would do you physical good; many-sided love--Mother's love that cherishes, that delights so in personal service, that sees in sickness & suffering such dear appeals to an answering, limitless tenderness--wife's love--ah, you draw that from me too, resistlessly--I have no choice--comrade's love, so happy in sharing all, pain, sorrow, toil, effort, enjoyments, thoughts, hopes, aims, struggles, disappointment, beliefs, aspirations. Child's love, too, that trusts utterly, confides unquestioningly. Not more spontaneously, & wholly without effort or volition on my part, does the sunlight flow into my eyes when I open them in the morning than does the sense of your existence enter like bright light into my awaking soul. And then I send to you thoughts--tender, caressing thoughts--that would fain nestle so close--ah, if you could feel them, take them in, let them lie in your breast, each morning.

My children are all well, dear Friend. Herbert is going to spend his holidays with his brother in Wales--& we shall all go to Colne as usual the end of this month & remain there through August and September; so if you think of it, address any paper you may send [to] Earls Colne, Halstead, because I should get it a day sooner. But it does not signify if you forget & send it here; it will be forwarded all right. Beatrice has just got through one of the Govern. Exams. in elementary mathematics; and I hope Herby has got into the Academy, but do not know for certain yet. He works away zealously and with great delight in his work. William Rossetti and his wife are coming to dine with us Wednesday--they look so well and happy, it does one good to see them. The Conways are going to Ostend, I think, for their holiday, & when they come back [are] going to move into a larger house. I heard an American lady, Miss Whitman, sing at a concert the other day, who delighted me, fascinated me--I longed to kiss her after each song, though some of them were poor enough Verdi stuff--but she contrived to impart genuineness & beauty to them. I hope you will hear her when she returns to America, which will be soon, I believe.

Good-bye, dearest Friend. Beatrice, Herby & Grace join their love with mine. I had the sweet little Bridal Poem all safe, & by the bye I liked that Springfield paper very much.

Your loving ANNIE.

LETTER XXIII

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

Earls Colne

Sept. 3, 1874.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

The change down here has refreshed me more than usual and I find my Mother still wonderful for her years (the 89th), able to get out daily in her Bath chair for two or three hours--to enjoy our being with her, and suffering little or no pain from rheumatism now. I hope you have had as glorious a summer & harvest as we have, and that you are able to be much out of doors and absorb the health-giving influences, dear Friend. Such mornings! So fresh and invigourating. I have been before breakfast mostly in a beautiful garden (the old Priory garden) with my beloved Poems and the dew-laden flowers and liquid light and sweet, fresh air; & the sparkle of the pond & delicious greenness of the meadows beyond & rustling trees, and had a joyful time with you, my Darling--sometimes with thoughts that lay hold on "the solid prizes of the Universe," sometimes so busy building up a home in America, thinking, dreaming, hoping, loving, groping among dim shadows, straining wistful eyes into the dim distance--then to my poems again--ah! not groping then, but hand in hand with you, breathing the air you breathe, with eyes ardently fixed in the same direction your eyes look, heart beating strong with the same hopes, aspirations, yours

beats with. It does not need to be American to love America and to believe in the great future of humanity there; it is curious to be human, still more English to do that. I love & believe in & understand her in & through you: but was always drawn towards her, always a believer, though in a vaguer way, that a new glorious day for men & women was dawning there, and recognized a new, distinctive American quality, very congenial to me, even in American virtues, which you not perhaps rate highly or retard as decisively national, not adequately or commandingly so, at any rate. Did I ever tell you the cousin of mine[23] who owns the priory here fought for two years in the Secession war in the army of the Potomac when Burnside & McClellan were at the head? John Cowardine was Major in a Cavalry regiment--was at Vicksburg, Frederickburg, &c. Never wounded, or but slightly--had a good deal of outpost duty, being just the right sort of a man for that, & has letters of approval from his generals of which he is not a little proud. Before that fought under the Stars & Stripes in Mexico & has had a curiously adventurous career, which he commenced by running away from a military college, where he was being prepared for a cadetship, & enlisting as a private--getting out of that by & bye and working his way before the mast as a sailor--then mining in California--then in Australia, riding steeplechases, keeper of the Melrose hounds, market gardening, hotel keeping, then on his way back to California, cast ashore on one of the Navigator Islands, where he remained for six months, the only white man among savages, who were friendly & made much of him--now, come into a good estate, married to a woman who seems to suit him well & is healthy, cheerful rich & handsome, he has fallen into indifferent health & considerable depression of spirits. Perhaps he finds the atmosphere of Squirearchical gentility very stagnant, the bed of roses

stifling--perhaps, too, the severe privations he has at different times undergone have injured him. I often think he was perhaps one of those your eyes rested on with pride & admiration--"handsome, tan-faced, dressed in blue." He is the very ideal of a soldier in appearance & bearing--has now some fine children, of whom he is very fond.

It was just this time of year I received the precious letter and ring that put peace and joy, and yet such pain of yearning, into my heart--pain for you, my Darling. O sorrowing helpless love that waits, and must wait, useless, afar off, while you suffer. But trying every day of my life to grow fitter, more capable of being your comfort and joy and true comrade--never to cease trying this side death or the other--rejoicing in my children more than I ever rejoiced in them before, now that in and through you I for the first time see and understand humanity (myself included)--its divine nature, its possibilities, nay, its certainties. How I do long for you to see my children, dear Friend, and for them to see and love you as they will love you, and all their nature unfold and grow more vigorously and joyously under your influence. Gracie, of whom you have photographs, grows fast,--is such a fine, blooming girl. I hope soon to send you one of Beatrice too. They have been enjoying their visit here and are now gone home. Gracie for school, Beatrice for the examination at Apoth. Hall she is hoping to get through. Then she is coming here to be with my Mother, & I going back to London. We mean now one or other of us always to be with my Mother here. Herby has had such a happy time with his brother in Wales--& is looking as brown as a nut & full of health & life--he had a swim in the sea every day. He did succeed in getting into the Academy, & will begin work there Oct. 1st! Be sure, dear Friend, if

there is a word about your health in any paper to send it me--that is what I search for so eagerly--to have the joyful news you are getting on--but even if it is but so very very slowly, still I would rather know the truth? I do not like thinking of you mistakenly. I want to send you the thoughts, the yearnings, that belong to you, the cherishing love that enfolds you most tenderly of all when you suffer. O if I could send it! and the cheerful companionship, beguiling the time while strength creeps back. I hope your little nieces at St. Louis are well.

Good-bye, my dearest Friend. Herby, the only one here with me, would like to join his love with mine.

ANNIE GILCHRIST.

I go back the beginning of October.

Sep. 14th.

LETTER XXIV

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

50 Marquis Rd.

Camden Sq. London

Dec. 9, 1874.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

It did me much good to get your Poem--beautiful, earnest, eloquent words from the soul whose dear companionship mine seeks with persistent longing--wrestling with distance & time. It seems to me, too, from your having spoken the Poem yourself I may conclude you have made fair progress. What I would fain know is whether you have recovered the use of the left side so far as to get about pretty freely and to have as much open-air life as you need & like; and also whether you have quite ceased to suffer distressing sensations in the head. If you can say yes to the first question, will you in sign of it put a dash under the word London, and if yes to the second under England, when you next send me a paper? Unless indeed the paper itself contain a notice of your health. But if it does not, that would be an easy way of gladdening me with good news, if good news there is. I wish I could send you good letters, dearest Friend, making myself the vehicle of what is stirring around me in life & thought that would interest you; for there is plenty. But that is very hard to do--though I watch, hear, read eagerly, full of interest. Everything stirs

in me a cloud of questions, makes me want to see its relationship to what I hold already. I am forever brooding, pondering, sifting, testing--but that is not the bent of mind that enables one to reproduce one's impressions in compact & lively form. So please, dear Friend, be indulgent, as indeed I know you will be, of these poor letters of mine with their details of my children & their iterated and reiterated expressions of the love and hope and aspiration you have called into life within me--take them not for what they are, but for all they have to stand for. Beatrice is at Colne (having got well through the exam. we were anxious about in the autumn) and is a very great comfort to my Mother--as I well knew she would be; for a more affectionate, devoted, care-taking nature does not breathe--with a strong active mental life of her own too. So, though missing her sorely, I am well satisfied she should be there; and the country life and rest are doing her a world of good. My artist boy is working away cheerily at the R. Academy, his heart in his work. Percy is coming to spend Xmas with us--he, too, continues well content with his work and in good health. Gracie is blooming. The Rossettis have had a heavy affliction this first year of their married life in the premature death of her only brother--a young man of considerable promise--barely 20.

The Conways are well. I feel more completely myself than I have done since my illness--so you see, dear friend, if it has taken me quite four years to recover the lost ground, one must not be discouraged if two do not accomplish it in your case. I hope your little nieces[24] at St. Louis are well--and the brothers you are with, and that you have many dear friends round you at Camden.

I think my thoughts fly to you on strongest and most joyous wings when I am out walking in the clear, cold, elastic air I enjoy so much.

Good-bye, my dearest Friend.

ANNIE GILCHRIST.

A cheerful Christmas, a New Year of which each day brings its share of restorative influence, be yours.

LETTER XXV

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

50 Marquis Rd.

Camden Sq.

Dec. 30, 1874.

I see, my dearest Friend, I must not look for those dashes under the words I thought were going to convey a joyful confirmation of my hopes. I see how the dark clouds linger. Full of pain & indignation. I read the paragraph--but fuller still of yearning tenderness & trust and hope. I believe, my dear love, that what you need to help on your recovery is a woman's tender, cherishing love and care, and that in that warm, genial atmosphere the spring of life will be quickened once more and flow full and strong through all its channels as of old, gradually, not quickly, even so. I dare say: but with plenty of patience; with utmost intelligent care of all conditions favourable to health, of diet, of abundant oxygen in the rooms you inhabit, of as much outdoor life as possible, of happy, cheerful companionship, & all the homely everyday domestic joys which are so helpful in their influences. America is doing what nations in all times have done towards that which is profoundly new & great, that which discredits their old ideals and offers them strange fruits & flowers from another world than that they have been content to dwell in all their lives. But for all that I do not believe the precious seed is lying dormant even now--everywhere a few in whose hearts it is treasured &

yields a noble growth. Since it is America that has produced you nourished your soul and body, she is silently, unnoticed, producing men & women who will justify you, who will understand the meaning of all and respond with a love that will quicken & exalt humanity as Christ's influence once did. Still it is inscrutable to me that the heart of America is not now passionately drawn toward the great heart that beats & glows in these Poems--that "Drum Taps," at any rate, are not as dear to her as the memory of her dead heroes, sons, brothers, husbands. It must be that they really do not reach the hands of the American people at large--that the professedly literary, cultivated class asking for nothing better than the pretty sing-song sentimentalities which "join them in their nonsense," or else slavishly prostrating their judgments before the models of the past (so perfect for their day, so wholly inadequate for ours), raise their voices so loud in newspapers & magazines as to prevent or everywhere check the circulation.

Jan. 1. The New Year has come in bleakly & keenly to the inner as well as to the outer sense, with the papers full of the details of the dark fate of the emigrant ship & of the terrible railway accidents. Percy was not able to join us at Xmas (through business) but I am expecting him to-night. My mother bears up against the cold wonderfully--& even continues to go out in her chair. Bee's letters are very bright & cheerful--she & indeed all my children enjoy the cold much, provided they have plenty of out-door exercise--above all skating, which they are now enjoying. I too like it, but am so haunted by the thought of the increased misery it brings to our hundreds of thousands of ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-housed. I trust the family circle round you & your nieces at St. Louis

& all near & dear to you are well, and that you have felt the warm grasp of many loving friends this wintry, cloudy time, my dearest--and that there may breathe out of these poor words a warm, bright glow of love and hope & unrestricted trust in the future.

A. GILCHRIST.

LETTER XXVI

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

Earls Colne, Halstead

Feb. 21, 1875.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

I have run down to Colne for a glimpse of my dear Bee, whom I had not seen for five months, and of my Mother; & now I am alone with the latter, Beatrice taking my place at home with her brother & sister for a week or two. A wonderful evergreen my Mother continues; still able to face the keen winds & the frost daily in her Bath chair--well swathed, of course in eiderdown & flannels. Beatrice takes beautiful care of her & is happy & content with her life here, loving the country as dearly as I do & having time enough for study & reading, as well as for domestic activities, to keep her mind as busy as her body. How I do long for you to see my children, dearest Friend. I wonder if you are surrounded with any in your brother's home--young, growing, blossoming plants that gladden you. And I wonder if the winter, which I hear is so severe in America this year, tries you--whether you can yet move briskly enough to keep up the circulation--and whether you have as many dear friends round you as you had at Washington. In my walks I keep thinking of these things. Write me a little letter once more, it would do me such good. No one of all your friends so easy as I to write to because none to whom any & every little

detail is so welcome, so precious--lifting a tiny corner of the great vast of space between us, giving me for a moment to feel the friendly grasp of your hand--I that long for it so. Two years are over since your illness began, or seemed to begin, dearest friend--so slow & stealthy in its approaches, so slow & stealthy in its retreat--may the spring that is coming (the birds have already caught sight of it, cold & brown & bare as the landscape still is)--may it but come laden with healing, strengthening, refreshing influences--so that you begin to feel again the joyous freedom of health, warbling once more a song of joy for lilac time. True, I know indeed, my dearest, that anyhow you are content, not grudging the price paid for your life work, but even some way or other the richer for paying it--gathering precious equivalents for pain & privation of health in your inmost soul. I cannot choose but believe this earnestly--the resplendent faith that there is not "one cause nor result lamentable, at last, in the Universe" which glows throughout the Poems is for me an exhaustless source of strength & comfort.--I see every now & then & like the more each time the Conways. I am half afraid Mr. Conway works too incessantly--that is, does not like well enough the indispensable supplement of close mental work--plenty of air & exercise, &c.,--hates walking, & indeed it is not to be wondered at in great, smoky London (I shall be fond enough & proud enough of it too when I am over the Atlantic). Unless one has a real passion for open air & the sense of sky overhead, like me. I hear Mr. Conway is coming to America for six months in October.

Feb. 25--I kept my letter till to-day that I might have the happiness of speaking to you on my birthday. See me this evening in the bright,

cheerful parlour of our cottage, which stands just in the middle of the old village (it has been a village & jogged on through all change at its own sober, sleepy pace this 800 years)--my mother in her arm chair by the fire; I chatting with her & working or playing to her when she is awake; & with the Poems I love beside me, reading, musing, wondering while she dozes. Ah, shall I ever attain to the Ideal that burst upon me with such splendour of light & joy in those Poems in 1869--so filling, so possessing me, I seemed as if I had by one bound attained to that ideal--as if I were already a very twin of the soul from whom they emanated. But now I know that divine foretaste indicated what was possible for me, not what was accomplished--I know the slow growth--the standstill winters that follow the growing joyous springs & ripening summers. I believe it will take more lives than this one to reach that mountain on which I was transfigured again, never to descend more, but to start thence for new heights, fresh glories. Ah, dear friend, will you be able to have patience with me, for me?

Good-bye, my dearest.

ANNE GILCHRIST.

LETTER XXVII

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

50 Marquis Rd., Camden Sq.

London,

May 18, 1875.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

Since last I wrote to you at the beginning of April (enclosing a little photograph of that avenue just by our cottage at Colne) I have been into Wales for a fortnight to see Percy, & have looked for the first time in my life on the Atlantic--the ocean my mental eyes travel over & beyond so often and that your eyes and ears & heart have been fed by, have communed with and interpreted, as in a new tongue, to the soul of man. Looking upon that, watching the tides ebb & flow on your shores, sharing, through my beloved book, in those greatest movements you have spent alone with it--that was a new joyful experience, a fresh kind of communing with you.--I went to Wales because I felt anxious about Percy, who is not happy just now. I must not tell friends here about it (except his brother & sisters) but I am sure I may tell you, for you will listen with sympathy. He has attached himself very deeply, I think it will prove, to a girl, & she to him, whose parents welcomed him cordially to their house for a year or two & allowed plenty of intercourse till they became aware through Percy himself (who thought it right to tell the father as soon as he was

fully aware of his own feelings & more than suspected Norah's response to them) that there was a strong affection growing up between the two. Then they peremptorily forbade all intercourse--not because they have any objection to Percy--quite the contrary, they say; but solely and simply because he is not yet earning money enough to marry on, & they hold that a man has no right to engage a girl's affections till he can do so. As if these things could be timed to the moment the money comes in! Percy was in hopes, & so was I, that if I went down, I might get sense enough into their heads, if not kindness & sympathy into their hearts, to see that the sole effect of such arbitrary & narrow-sighted conduct would be to alienate & embitter the young people's feelings toward them, while it would make them more restless & anxious to marry without adequate means. Whereas if a reasonable amount of intercourse were allowed, it would be a happy time with them, & Norah being still so young (18), & Percy working away with all his might, doing very well for his age & sure, conscientious, thorough, capable, & well trained worker that he is (for the L. School of Mais gives a first rate scientific preparation for his profession) to be making a modest sufficiency in a year or two. Well, they were very courteous & indeed friendly to me, & I think I have won over the mother; but the father remains obdurate, & Percy feels bitterly the separation--all the more trying as they live almost within sight of each other. So Beatrice & Grace are going to spend their holidays with him this summer to cheer him up. Meanwhile, dear friend, I am on the whole happier than not about him. I liked what I saw of Norah & believe he has found a very sweet, affectionate girl of quiet, domestic nature, practical, industrious, sensible--thoroughly well to suit him, & that there is true & deep love between them--also, she took to me very much, & I feel will be

quite another child to me. It is besides no little joy to me to find how Percy has confided in me in this & chooses me as the friend to whom he tells all--far from being any separation, as sometimes happens, this love of his seems to draw us closer together. Only I am very, very anxious for his sake to see him in a better berth--they would let her marry him on £300 a year; now he has only £175. He is quite competent to manage iron or copper or tin works, only he looks so young, not having yet any beard or moustache to speak of. That is the end of my long story.

This will reach you on your birthday perhaps, my dearest Friend; at any rate it must bear you a greeting of love and fond remembrance for that dear day such as my heart will send you when it actually comes: patiently waiting heart, with the fibres of love and boundless trust & joy & hope which bind me to you bedded deep, grown to be, during these long years, a very part of its immortal substance, untouchable by age or varying moods or sickness, or death itself, as I surely believe. I long more than words can tell to know how it fares with you now in health and spirit. My children are all well & growing & unfolding to my heart's content. Beatrice & Herbert deeply influenced by your Poems. Good-bye, my dearest Friend.

A. GILCHRIST.

LETTER XXVIII

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

Address

1 Torriano Gardens

Camden Road, N. W.

London

Earls Colne

Aug. 28, 1875.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

Your letter came to me just when I most needed the comfort of it--when I was watching and tending my dear Mother as she gently, slowly, with but little suffering, sank to rest. There was no sick bed to sit by--we got her up and out into the air and sunshine for an hour or two even the day before she died--No disease, only the stomach could not do its work any longer & for the last three weeks she lived wholly on stimulants, suffering somewhat from sickness. She drew her last breath very gently before daybreak on the 15th inst., in her 90th year, which she had entered in Jan. She looked very beautiful in death, notwithstanding her great age--as well she might--tranquil sunset that it was of a beautiful day--a fulfilled life--joy & delight of her father in youth (who used to call her the apple of his eye), good wife, devoted, self-sacrificing, wise

mother--patient, courageous sufferer through thirty years of chronic rheumatism, which, however, neutralized & ceased its pains the last few years--unsurpassed, & indeed I think unsurpassable, in conscientiousness--in the strong sense of duty & perfect obedience to that highest sense--she is one of those who amply justify your large faith in women.

I do not need to tell you anything, my dearest friend--you know all--I feel your strong comforting hand--I press it very close.

I had all my children with me at the funeral.

O the comfort your dear letter was & is to me. Thinking over & over the few words you say of yourself--& what is said in the paper (so eagerly read--every word so welcome) I cannot help fancying that the return of the distressing sensations in the head must be caused by your having worked at the book--the "Two Rivulets" (I dearly like the title & the idea of bringing the Poems & Prose together so)--that you must be more patient with yourself and submit still to perfect rest--& that perhaps in regard to the stomach--you have not enough adapted your diet to the privation of exercise--that you must be more indulgent to the stomach too in the sense of giving it only the very easiest & simplest work to do. My children join their love with mine.

Your own loving

ANNE.

LETTER XXIX

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

1 Torriano Gardens

Camden Rd., Nov. 16, 1875.

London

I have been wanting the comfort of a talk with you, dearest Friend, for weeks & weeks, without being able to get leisure & tranquillity enough to do it to my heart's content--indeed, heart's content is not for me at present--but restless, eager, longing to come--& the struggle to do patiently & completely & wisely what remains for me here before I am free to obey the deep faith and love which govern me--so let me sit close beside you, my Darling--& feel your presence & take comfort & strength & serenity from it as I do, as I can when with all my heart & soul I draw close to you, realizing your living presence with all my might.--First, about Percy--things are beginning to look a little brighter for him. He is just entering upon a new engagement with some very large & successful works--the Blenavon Iron Co.--where, though his salary will not be higher at first, his opportunities of improvement will be better & he is also to be allowed to take private practice (in assaying & analyzing). The manager there believes in Science & is friendly to Percy & will give him every facility for showing what he can do, so that he hopes to prove to the Directors before long that he is worth a good salary. The parents of Norah (whom he loves) have released from their unfriendly attitude since my

Beatrice has been staying with them; the two girls have attached themselves to one another & Per. has had delightful opportunities of being with Norah, & best of all, she is to return here with Beatrice (they are coming to-morrow), & Per. is to have a week's holiday & come up, so that he & Norah will be wholly together & have, I suspect, the happiest week they have yet had in their lives. Then I have stored away for them the furniture of the dear old home at Colne, & I really think that by the time '76 is out they will be able to marry. I see, and indeed I have known ever since he formed this attachment, that I must not look for him to come to America with me. But what I build upon, Dearest Friend, is that when I have been a little while in America & have made friends & had time to look about me I might hear of a good certainty for him--his excellent training at the School of Mines, large experience at Blenavon, energy, ability, & sturdy uprightness will make him a first-rate manager of works by & bye. But the leaving him so happy with his young wife will make it easier for us to part. Nov. 26--Beatrice has begun to work at anatomy at the School of Medicine for Women lately founded, & seems to delight in her work. She will not enter on the full course all at once--I am for taking things gently. Women have plenty of strength but it is of a different kind from men's & must work by gentler & slower means--Above all I do not like what pushes violently aside domestic duties & pleasures. The special work must combine itself with these; I am sure it can. Herby is getting on very nicely--never did student love his work better. He is eager, & by making the best use of present opportunities & advantages yet looking towards America full of cheerful hopes & sympathy. Grace is less developed in intellect but not less in character than the others. I can't describe her but send you her photograph. There is a freshness & independence of

character about her--yet withal a certain waywardness & reserve. She is a good, instinctive judge of character--more influenced by it than by books--yet with a growing taste for them too. She comes to America with a gay and buoyant curiosity, declining to make up her mind about anything till she gets there. We want, as far as possible, to transplant our home bodily--to bring as much as we can of our own furniture because we have beautiful old things precious in Herby's eyes & that we are all fond of. And [by] coming straight to Philadelphia & taking a house somewhere on the outskirts of it or Camden immediately we fancy this might be practicable, but have not yet launched into the matter. I have just heard from Mr. Rossetti, and also from Mrs. Conway of her husband having seen you, & if his report be not too sanguine it is a cheering one & would comfort me much, dearest Friend. But what he says is so favourable I am afraid to believe it altogether, knowing that you would make the very best of yourself & indeed be probably at your best with the pleasure of seeing an old friend fresh from England. Nov. 30. And now, dear Friend, I have had a very great pleasure indeed, thanks to you--a visit from Mr. Marvin--& I hope to have another when he returns from Paris. And the account he gives of you is so cheerful--so vivid--it seems to part asunder a gloomy cloud that was brooding in my mind. And though I know that for the short hours that you feel bright & well are many long hours when you are far otherwise, still I feel sure those short hours are the earnest of perfect recovery--with a fine patience--boundless patience. And now I can picture you sitting in your favourite window, having a friendly word with passers-by--& feel quite sure that you are happy & comfortable in your surroundings. And a great deal else full of interest Mr. Marvin told me. I was loth for him to go, but one hour is so small, we have noticed, for a

friend, I am sorry to say.

William Rossetti has a little girl which is a great delight to him. Miss Hillard of Brooklyn has also paid me a visit & spoken to me of you. She charmed me much--only I felt a little cross with her for giving Herby such a dismal account of his chances as an artist in America. However, we both refused to be discouraged, for after all he can send his pictures to England to be established &c., having plenty of friends who would see to it; & we are both firm in the faith that if you can only paint the really good pictures the rest will take care of itself, somehow or other--& that can be done as well in America as in England, but of course he must finish his training here.

With best love from us all, good-bye, my dearest Friend.

ANNE GILCHRIST.

LETTER XXX

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

1 Torriano Gardens

Camden Rd., London

Dec. 4, 1875.

Though it is but a few days since I posted a letter, my dearest friend, I must write you again--because I cannot help it, my heart is so full--so full of love & sorrow & struggle. The day before yesterday I saw Mr. Conway's printed account of you, & instead of the cheerful report I had been told of, he speaks of your having given up hope of recovery. Those words were like a sharp knife plunged into me--they choked me with bitter tears. Don't give up that hope for the sake of those that so tenderly, passionately, love you--would give their lives with joy for you. Why, who knows better than you how much hope & the will have to do with it, & I know quite well that the belief does not depress you--that you are ready to accept either lot with calmness, cheerfulness, perfect faith, perhaps with equal joy. But for all that, it does you harm. Ideas always have a tendency to accomplish themselves. And what right have the Doctors to utter gloomy prophecies? The wisest of them know the best how profoundly in the dark they are as to much that goes on within us, especially in maladies like yours. O cling to life with a resolute hold, my beloved, to bless us with your presence unspeakably dear, beneficent presence--me to taste of it before so very long now--thirsting, pining, loving me. Take

through these poor words of mine some breath of the tender, tender,
ineffable love that fills my heart and soul and body--take of it to
strengthen the very springs of your life: it is capable of that; O its
cherishing warmth and joy, if it could only get to you, only fold you
round close enough, would help, I know. Soon, soon as ever my boy has one
to love & care for him all his own, I will come; I may not before, not if
it should break my heart to stop away from you, for his welfare is my
sacred charge & nearer & dearer than all to me. Verily, my God, strengthen
me, comfort me, stay for me--let that have a little beginning on this dear
earth which is for all eternity, which will live & grow immortally into a
diviner reality than the heart of man has conceived.

I am well satisfied with Norah, dear Friend. She is very affectionate,
loveable, prudent, & clear in all practical matters, well suited to Percy
in tastes, &c.

Your own

ANNIE.

LETTER XXXI

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

Blaenavon

Routzpool

Mon. England

Jan. 18, '76.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

Do not think me too wilful or headstrong, but I have taken our tickets & we shall sail Aug. 30 for Philadelphia. I found if I did not come to a decision now, we could not well arrange it before next summer. And since we have come to a decision my mind has been quite at rest. Do not feel any anxiety or misgivings about us. I have a clear and strong conviction I am doing what is right & best for us all. After a busy anxious time I am having a week or two of rest with Percy, who I find fairly well in health & prospering in his business--indeed, he bids fair to have a large private practice as an analyst here, & is already making income enough to marry on, only there is to build the nest--& I think he will have actually to build it, for there seem no eligible houses--& to furnish--so that the wedding will not be till next spring or early summer. Nevertheless, with a definite goal & a definite time & the way between not so very rugged, though rather dull and lonely, I think he will be pretty cheery. This little town (of 11,000 inhabitants, all miners, smelters &c.) lies up

among the hills 1100 ft. above the sea--glorious hills here, spreading, then converging, with wooded flanks, & swift brooklets leaping over stones in the hollows--the air, too, of course deliciously light & pure. I have heard through a friend of ours of Bee's fellow student who lives in Camden (Mr. Suerkrop, I think his name is) that we shall be able to get a very comfortable home with pleasant garden there for about £55 per an. I think I can manage that very well--so all I need is to hear of a comfortable lodging or boarding house (the former preferred) where we can be, avoiding hotels even while we hunt for the house. I have arranged for my goods to sail a week later than we do, so as to give us time.

Good-bye for a short while, my dearest Friend.

ANNE GILCHRIST.

Bee has obtained a very satisfactory account of the Women's Medical College in Philadelphia & introductions to the Head, &c.

LETTER XXXII

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

1 Torriano Gardens

Camden Rd.

London

Feb. 25, '76.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

I received the paper & enclosed slip Saturday week, filling me so full of emotion I could not write, for I am too bitterly impatient of mere words. Soon, very soon, I come, my darling. I am not lingering, but held yet a little while by the firm grip of conscience--this is the last spring we shall be asunder--O I passionately believe there are years in store for us, years of tranquil, tender happiness--me making your outward life serene & sweet--you making my inward life so rich--me learning, growing, loving--we shedding benign influences round us out of our happiness and fulfilled life--Hold on but a little longer for me, my Walt--I am straining every nerve to hasten the day--I have enough for us all (with the simple, unpretending ways we both love best).

Percy is battling slowly--doing as well as we could expect in the time. I think he will soon build the nest for his mate. I think he never in his heart believed I really should go to America, and so it comes as a great

blow to him now. You must be very indulgent towards him for my sake, dear friend.

I am glad we know about those rascally book agents--for many of us are wanting a goodish number of copies of the new edition & it is important to understand we may have them straight from you. Rossetti is making a list of the friends & the number, so that they may all come together.

Perhaps, dearest friend, you may be having a great difficulty in getting the books out for want of funds--if so, let me help a little--show your trust in me and my love thus generously.

Your own loving

ANNIE.

LETTER XXXIII

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

1 Torriano Gardens

March 11, '76.

I have had such joy this morning, my Darling--Poems of yours given in the Daily News--sublime Poems one of them reaching dizzy heights, filling my soul with strong delight. These prefaced by a few words, timid enough yet kindly in tone, & better than nothing. The days, the weeks, are slipping by, my beloved, bearing me swiftly, surely to you--before the beauty of the year begins to fade we shall come. The young folk too are full of bright anticipation & eagerness now, I am thankful to say; and Percy getting on with, I trust, such near & definite prospect of his happiness that he will be able to pull along cheerily towards it after we are gone, in spite of loneliness.

I expect, Darling, we must go to some little town or village ten or twenty miles short of Philadelphia till the tremendous influx of visitors to the Centennial has ceased, else we shall not be able to find a corner there.--By the bye, I feel a little sulky at your always taking a fling at the poor piano. I see I have got to try & show you it too is capable of waking deep chords in the human soul when it is the vehicle of a great master's thought & emotions--if only my poor fingers prove equal to the task! (All my heart shall go into them.) Take from my picture a long, long

look of tender love and joy and faith, deathless, ever young, ever
growing, ever learning, aspiring love, tender, cherishing, domestic love.

Oh, may I be full of sweet comfort for my Beloved's Soul and Body through
life, through and after death.

ANNE GILCHRIST.

LETTER XXXIV

WALT WHITMAN TO ANNE GILCHRIST

Camden, New Jersey

March, 1876.

DEAREST FRIEND:

To your good & comforting letter of Feb. 25th I at once answer, at least with a few lines. I have already written this morning a pretty full letter to Mr. Rossetti (to answer one just rec'd from him) & requested him to loan it you for perusal. In that I have described my situation fully & candidly.

My new edition is printed & ready. Upon receipt of your letter I sent you a set, two Vols. (by Mail, March 15) which you must have rec'd by this time. I wish you to send me word soon as they arrive.

My health, I am encouraged to think, is perhaps a shade better--certainly as well as any time of late.

I even already vaguely contemplate plans (they may never be fulfilled, but yet again they may) of changes, journeys--even of coming to London & seeing you, visiting my friends, &c. My dearest friend, I do not approve your American trans-settlement. I see so many things here you have no idea

of--the social, and almost every other kind of crudeness, meagreness, here (at least in appearance).

Don't do anything towards it nor resolve in it nor make any move at all in it without further advice from me. If I should get well enough to voyage, we will talk about it yet in London.

You must not be uneasy about me--dearest friend, I get along much better than you think for. As to the literary situation here, my rejection by the coteries and the poverty (which is the least of my troubles), am not sure but I enjoy them all--besides, as to the latter, I am not in want.

LETTER XXXV

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

1 Torriano Gardens

Camden Rd., London

March 30, '76.

Yesterday was a day for me, dearest Friend. In the morning your letter, strong, cheerful, reassuring--dear letter. In the afternoon the books. I don't know how to settle down my thoughts calmly enough to write, nor how to lay down the books (with delicate yet serviceable exterior, with inscription making me so proud, so joyous). But there are a few things I want to say to you at once in regard to our coming to America. I will not act without "further advice from you"; but as to not resolving on it, dear friend, I can't exactly obey that, for it has been my settled, steady purpose (resting on a deep, strong faith) ever since 1869. Nor do I feel discouraged or surprised at what you say of American "crudeness," &c. (of which, in truth, one hears not a little in England). I have not shut my eyes to the difficulties and trials & responsibilities (for the children's sake) of the enterprise. I am not urged on by any discontent with old England or by any adverse circumstances here which I might hope to better there: my reasons, emotions, the sources of my strength and courage for the uprooting & transplanting--all are inclosed in those two volumes that lie before me on the table. That America has brought them forth makes me want to plant some, at least, of my children on her soil. I understand &

believe in & love her in & through them. They teach me to look beneath the surface & to get hints of the great future that is shaping itself out of the crude present, & I believe we shall prove to be of the right sort to plant down there.--O to talk it all over with you, dearest Friend, here in London first; I feel as if that would really be--the joy, the comfort, of that. I cannot finish this to-day but send what I have written without delay that you may know of the safe arrival of the books. With reverent, grateful love from us all.

ANNE GILCHRIST.

LETTER XXXVI

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

1 Torriano Gardens

Camden Rd. London

April 21, 1876.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

I must write again, out of a full heart. For the reading of this book, "The Two Rivulets," has filled it very full. Ever the deep inward assent, rising up strong, exultant my immortal self recognizing, responding to your immortal self. Ever the sense of dearness, the sweet, subtle perfume, pervading every page, every line, to my sense--O I cannot put into any words what I perceive nor what answering emotion pervades me, flows out towards you--sweetest, deepest, greatest experience of my life--what I was made for--surely I was made as the soil in which the precious seed of your thoughts & emotions should be planted--try to fulfil themselves in me, that I might by & bye blossom into beauty & bring forth rich fruits--immortal fruits. So no doubt other women feel, and future women will.

Do not dissuade me from coming this autumn, my dearest Friend. I have waited patiently--7 years--patiently, yet often, especially since your illness, with such painful yearning your heart would yearn towards me if

you realized it--I cannot wait any longer. Nor ought I to--that would indeed be sacrificing the prudence that concerns itself with immortal things to the prudence that concerns itself only with temporary ones. But, indeed, even so far as this latter is concerned, there is no sacrifice for any. It is by far the best step, for instance, I could take on Beatrice's account. She is heartily in earnest in her medical studies. I am persuaded, too, it is a splendid training for her whether or no she ever makes a money-earning profession of it. And in England women have at present no means of obtaining a complete medical education. They cannot get admission to any Hospital for the clinical part of the course. So that she is exceedingly anxious to come where it is possible for her to follow out her aims effectually. Then, I am confident she will find America congenial to her--that she is in her essential nature democratic--& that she has the intelligence, the sympathies, earnestness, affectionateness, unconventionality needed to pierce through appearances surface "crudeness" & see & love the great reality unfolding below. So I believe has Herby. Then an artist is as free as an author to work where he pleases & reaps as much from fresh and widened experiences. He does not contemplate cutting himself off from England--will exhibit here--very likely take a studio in London for a season, a couple of years hence to work among old friends & associations & so have double chance & opportunities. Then above all, dearest friend, they too see America in & through you--they too would fain be near you. Have no anxiety or misgivings for us. Let us come & be near you--& see if we are made of the right sort of stuff for transplanting to American soil. Only advise us where. If it be Philadelphia (which as far as offering facilities for Beatrice would, as far as I can learn, suit us very well). We must not come, I think, till the end of October, because of

its being so full. Perhaps indeed, dearest Friend (but dare not build on it) we shall talk this over in England. If you are able to take the journey, it might, and would, be sure to do you good as well as to rejoice the hearts of English friends. But if not, if we are not able to talk over our coming, do not feel the least anxious about us. We shall light on our feet & do very well. Percy seems getting on fairly well, considering what a bad time it is in his line of business. I think he will be able to marry this autumn or following winter. I shall go and spend a month with him in July. Perhaps, indeed, if, as many are prophesying, the iron trade does not recover its old pre-eminence here, he may be glad by & bye that I have gone over to America & opened a way for him. But if he does not follow me then, if I live, I hope to spend a few months with him every three or four years, instead of as now a few weeks once a year. Anyhow we have to live widely apart. Thanks for the papers just received. Specially welcome the account of some stranger's interview with you--for me too before very long now the joy of hearing the "strong musical voice" read the "Wound Dresser" or speak.

I have happy thoughts for my companions all day long, helping me over every difficulty--strengthening me. Good-bye, dearest Friend. Love from us all.

A. GILCHRIST.

LETTER XXXVII

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

1 Torriano Gardens

Camden Rd., London

May 18, 1876.

Just a line of birthday greeting, my dearest Friend. May it find you enjoying the beautiful spring-time & the grand sights of people & products & the music at Philadelphia, notwithstanding drawbacks (but lessening drawbacks, I earnestly hope) of health, lameness. Rejoiced, too, perhaps with the sight of many dear old friends occasion has brought to your city. May all that will do you good come, my dearest Friend. And not least the sense of relief & joy in having fulfilled the great task, in the teeth of such difficulties relaunched safely, more fully, richly equipt, the ship to sail down the great ocean of Time, bearing precious, precious freight of seed to be planted in countless successions of human souls, helping forward more than even the best lovers of your poems dream, the great future of humanity. That is what I believe as surely as I believe in my own existence.

The "low star," the great star drooping low in the west, has been unusually resplendent of a night here lately & by day lilacs & the labernums wonderfully brightening dear old smoky London, constant reminders all, if I needed any, of the Poet & the Poems, so dear to me.

If I do not hear from you to the contrary I am to take our passage by one of the "States" Line of Steamers that come straight to Philadelphia sailing about the 1st Sept.--& I am told one ought to secure one's cabin a couple of months or so beforehand. But if there be indeed an increasing hope of your coming here in the course of the summer, or if you think it would be best for us to go to New York (only I want to go at once where we are likely to stop, because of my furniture), let me hear as soon as may be, dear Friend. Looking at it purely as concerns the young ones, for some reasons it is very desirable to come this year & for others to wait till next. With Bee, for instance, we are both losing time & wasting money by going over another winter here when there is no complete & satisfactory medical course to be had. Then as regards dear Percy, he writes me now that though he is doing fairly well, he does not think he will be able to take a house & marry till next summer--& that I am very sorry for. But then I think that as I could not be with him nor help him forward, the balance goes down on Beatrice's side, if I am able to accomplish it.

Good-bye, my dearest Friend. Loving, tender thoughts shall I send you on the 30th. Solemn thoughts outleaping life, immortal aspirations of my soul toward your soul. The children's love too, please, dearest Friend.

ANNE GILCHRIST.

LETTER XXXVIII

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

Round Hill, Northampton, Mass.

Monday, Sept., '77.

DEAREST FRIEND:

I have had joyful news to-day! Percy's wife has a fine little boy--it was born on the 10th, and Norah got through well & is doing nicely; so I feel very happy.

Since then Per. has gone to Paris where he is to read a paper before the "Iron and Steel Institute" on the Elimination of phosphorus from Iron--which is also a little triumph of another kind for him--for the Council which accepted his paper is composed of eminent English scientists, & eminent foreign ones will hear it.--I need not tell you it is indescribably lovely here now--no doubt Kirkwood is the same--the light so brilliant, and yet soft--the rich autumn tints just beginning to appear--the temperature delicious--crisp & bracing, yet genial.

The throng of people is gone--but a few of the pleasantest of the old set remain--& a few interesting new ones have come!--among them Mrs. Dexter from Boston, who was a Miss Ticnor, daughter of the author of the book on Spanish literature--she and her husband full of interesting talk. Also Mr.

Martin B---- and his wife--a fine specimen of a leading Bostonian. Besides these also a physician from Florida whom I much admire--with a beautiful firm tenor voice--very handsome & graceful too, a true southerner, I should say--(but of Scotch extraction).

Next week we go to Boston.

I went over the Lunatic Asylum here the other day & saw some strange, sad sights--some figures crouched down in attitudes of such profound dejection I shall never forget them--some very bright and talkative. It is said to be the best managed in America. Dr. Earle, who is at the head, is a man of splendid capacity for the post--a noble-looking old man (uncle of those Miss Chases you met at our house).

I can't settle to anything or think of any thing since I received Percy's letter but the baby & Norah. Love to you & to Mrs. Whitman[25] & Hattie[26] & Jessie.[27]

Good-bye, dear Friend.

ANNE GILCHRIST.

LETTER XXXIX

BEATRICE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

New England Hospital

Codman Avenue

Boston Highlands

DEAR WALT:

Hospital life is beginning to seem a long-accustomed life. I enjoy all the duties involved & all the human relations. Even getting up in the night is compensated for by yielding a sense of importance & independence. I sleep in a large room with three windows, & three beds in a row. Breakfast at 7, & we are supposed to have seen all our patients before breakfast, but do not keep to that rule.

After breakfast, round to count pulses & respirations, note condition, dress any wound, in charge, etc. At 1/2 past 8 o'clock go the rounds with the resident physician (Dr. Berlin), all the students, & superintendent of nurses. Then put up medicine, each for her own patients (about 8 in no.), give electricity, etc. If one's patient has an ache or pain, the nurse whistles for the student (my whistle is 2). She sees the patient orders what is necessary, or if serious reports to Dr. Berlin. Then there is some microscopic work, & copying out the history & daily record of the case & making out the temperature charts more than fills in the day. At 8 o'clock

we all in conclave report about our patients & talk over any interesting case. One of my patients has empyema following pleurisy. I inject into her chest about a doz. of different preparations. Several of my patients (I have all the very sick just now) require very careful watching.

In the evening we go round again & count pulses & respirations & note temperatures. If a very sick patient, in the middle of the day; also take pulse, etc. The number of visits depending on the need & the competency of the nurse. I like introducing lint into wounds (such simple ones as an incised abscess of the breast) with the probe, because if I take trouble enough I can do it without hurting the patient, much to the patient's surprise.

The other day Mr. & Mrs. Marvin called to see me with Mrs. & Miss Callender--I enjoyed their visit much. To-day Mr. Marvin drove over to fetch me to lunch, & I had a beautiful drive over to Dorchester; in the afternoon a game of lawn tennis, a stroll down to the creek, & drive home by Forest Hill Cemetery & Jamaica Pond. The air was fresh after a shower & golden-tinted, & the drive through beautiful lanes & country. All were friendly & it was refreshing to emerge from the little hospital world. Mr. Marvin's cordial face greeted me when I was speaking to some patients in hammocks, under the trees, the day he called, much to my surprise.

I was to-day feeling the need of a little change of air & scene, so that the visit was most opportune.

Mr. Morse[28] is working away desperately at the bust of you; he feels as

if he would get on famously if he could only catch a glimpse of you. Now might not you come to Boston on your way to Chesterfield, ride up in the open horsecars (a very pleasant ride) to see me also and give Mr. Morse the benefit of a sitting? How I wish we could get Mrs. Stafford in here; the patients get most excellent care. I have great confidence in Dr. Berlin & in the attending physician. I do not want her to come for a month, because Dr. Berlin has just gone away for a vacation.

I fear no mere visiting once a day of a doctor will do her any good--she needs hygienic treatment--massage (a woman works here every day on the patients who need rubbing & massage), feeding up (I have never yet seen a patient whom we could not make eat, appetite or not, by aid of beef-tea & milk), perfect rest, & judicious treatment.

Dr. Berlin is a learned, charming woman of 28--she takes advanced views, gives no medicine at all in some cases, & if any, few at a time, but efficient. She is perfectly unaffected, very intelligent, & has been thoroughly trained. She is a Russian.

Please give my love to Mrs. Whitman & remember me to Colonel Whitman. This afternoon, when driving with Mr. Marvin, I thought of the pleasant drives I have had with Colonel Whitman.

Yours affectionately,

BEATRICE C. GILCHRIST.

If it were not for records accumulating mountain high I should have time to write to my friends.

LETTER XL

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

Sept. 3, '78.

Chesterfield, Mass.

I am half afraid Herby has got a malarious place by his description.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

I had a lingering hope--till Herby went south again--that I should have a letter from you, in answer to mine, saying you were coming up to see us here. In truth, it was a great disappointment to me, his going back to Philadelphia instead of your joining us, or him, either here or somewhere near to New York. I wonder where that North Amboyna is that you once mentioned to me--and what kind of a place it is. I have had a long, quiet time here, and have enjoyed it very much--never did I breathe such sweet, light, pure air as is always blowing freely over these rocky hills. Rocky as they are--and their sides & ravines are strewn with huge boulders of every conceivable size & shape--they nourish an abundant growth of woods, and I fancy the farmers here do a great deal better with their winter crops of lumber and bark and maple sugar than with their summer one of grain & corn. I expect Herby has described our neighbours to you--specially Levi Bryant, the father of my hostess--a farmer who lives just opposite and has put such heart & soul and muscle & sinew into his

farming that he has continued to win quite a handsome competence from this barren soil (it isn't muscle & industry only that are wanted here--but pluck and endurance) hauling his timber up & down over the snow & through the drifts, along roads that are pretty nearly vertical. I am never tired of hearing his stories (nor he of telling them) of hairbreadth escapes for him & his cattle--when the harness or the shafts have broken under the tremendous strain--& nothing but coolness & daring have got him or them out of it alive. Generally, as he sits talking, his little boy of eleven who bids fair to be like him and can now manage a team or a yoke of oxen as well as any man in the parish--and work almost as hard--sits close by him leaning his head on his father's shoulder or breast--for the rugged old fellow has a vein of great gentleness and affectionateness in him & I notice the child nestles up to him always rather than to the mother--who is all the same a very kind, amiable, good mother. Then there are neighbours of another sort up at the "Centre"--Mr. Chadwick, &c., from New York, with whom I have pleasant chats daily when I trudge up to fetch my letters--now & then I get a delightful drive or go on a blackberrying party with the folks round--I expect Giddy over to-day & we shall remain here together for about a fortnight--then back to Round Hill--where I am to meet the Miss Chase whom you may remember taking tea with & liking--then on to Boston to see dear Bee--& then to New York, where we shall meet again at last, I hope ere long. Love to Mr. & Mrs. Whitman--I enjoy her letters. Also to Hattie & Jessie--who will hear from me by & bye. With love to you, dear Friend.

Good-bye.

A. GILCHRIST.

LETTER XLI

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

Concord, Mass.

Oct. 25th.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

The days are slipping away so pleasantly here that weeks are gone before I know it. The Concord folk are as friendly as they are intellectual, and there is really no end to the kindness received. We are rowed on the beautiful river every day that it is warm enough--a very winding river not much broader than your favourite creek--flowing sometimes through level meadows, sometimes round rocky promontories & steep wooded hills which, with their wonderful autumn tints, are like a gay flower border mirrored in the water. Never in my life have I enjoyed outdoor pleasures more--I hardly think, so much--enhanced as they are by the companionship of very lovable men and women. They lead an easy-going life here--seem to spend half their time floating about on the river--or meeting in the evening to talk & read aloud. Judge Hoar says it is a good place to live and die in, but a very bad place to make a living in. Beatrice spent one Sunday with us here. We walked to Hawthorne's old house in the morning, & in the afternoon to the "Old Manse" and to Sleepy Hollow, most beautiful of last resting places. Tuesday we go on to Boston for a week very loth to leave Concord--at least, I am!--but Giddy begins to long for city life again.

And then to New York about the 5th Nov. Herby told you, no doubt, that I spent an hour or two with Emerson--and that he looked very beautiful--and talked in a friendly, pleasant manner. A long letter from my sister in England tells me Per. looks well and happy & is so proud of his little boy--and that Norah is really a perfect wife to him--affectionate, devoted, and the best of housewives. How glad I am Herby is painting you. I wonder if you like the landscape he is working on as well as you did "Timber Creek." Miss Hillard has undertaken the charge of a young lady's education, and is very much pleased with her task. She is in a delightful family who make her quite one with them--live in the best part of New York, and pay her a handsome salary. She has the afternoons and Saturday & Sunday to herself.--Concord boasts of having been first to recognize your genius. Mr. Alcott & Mr. Sanborn say so. Good-bye, dear Friend.

A. G.

LETTER XLII

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

39 Somerset St.

Boston

Nov. 13, '78.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

I feel as if I didn't a bit deserve the glorious budget you sent me yesterday, for I have been a laggard, dull correspondent of late, because, leading such an unsettled kind of life, I don't seem to have got well hold of myself. Beautiful is the title prose poem--the glimpse of the autumn cornfield: one smells the sweet fragrance, basks in the sunshine with you--tastes all the varied, subtle outdoor pleasures, just as you want us to. A lady who has just been calling on me--Miss Hillard--no relation of the odious Dr. H.--said, "Have you seen a lovely little bit about a cornfield by Walt Whitman in a New York paper?" She did not know your poems, but was so taken with this. By the bye, I am not quite American enough yet to enjoy the sound of the locusts & big grasshoppers--ours are modest little things that only make a gentle sort of whirr--not that loud brassy sound--couldn't help wishing for more birds & less insects when I was at Chesterfield--but I like our English name "ladybird" better than "ladybug". Do your children always say when they see one, as ours do, "Ladybird, ladybird, fly away home: your house is on fire, your children

are flown"? But for the rest--I believe I am growing a very good American; indeed, certain am I there is no more lovable people to live amongst anywhere in the world--and in this respect it has been good to give up having a home of my own here for awhile--for I have been thrown amongst many more intimately than I could have been otherwise. What you say of Herby's picture delights me, dear Friend. I have been grieving he was not with us, sharing the pleasant times we have had and enlarging his circle of friends--but after all he could not have been doing better--he must come on here by & bye. I wonder if you are as satisfied with his portrait of you as with the landscape. I suppose he is gone on to New York to-day. I have sighed for dear little Concord many times since I came away--beautiful city as Boston is & many the interesting & kindly people I am seeing here: but the outdoor life & the entirely simple, unpretending, cordial, friendly ways of Concord & its inhabitants won my heart altogether--one of them came to see me to-day & to ask us to go and spend a couple of days with them there again before we leave & I could not say nay, though our time is short. There are some portraits in the Art Museum here, which interested me a good deal--of Adams, Hancock, Quincy, &c.,--& of some of the women of that time--they would form an excellent nucleus of a national portrait gallery, which (together with good biographies while yet materials & recollections are fresh & abundant) would be a very interesting & important contribution to the world's history.--Tennyson's letter is a pleasure to me to see--considering his age & the imperfection of his sight through life, matters are better rather than worse with him than one could have expected. Since that was written a friend (Walter White) tells me they--the Tennysons--have taken a house in Eaton Sq., London, for the winter. And last, not least, thanks for Mr. Burroughs's

beautiful letter--that young man is indeed, as he says, like a bit out of your poems.

There are two or three fine young men boarding here, & Giddy & I enjoy their society not a little. Love to your Brothers & Sister. I shall write soon as I am settled down in New York to her or Hattie. Love to Mrs. Stafford. And most of all to you.

Good-bye, dear friend.

A. GILCHRIST.

I will send T's letter in a day or two.

LETTER XLIII

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

112 Madison Ave.

New York

Jan. 5, '79.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

Herby has told you of our difficulties in getting comfortable quarters here--and also that we seem now to have succeeded--not indeed in the way I most wished & hoped we had--in 19th St., taking rooms & boarding ourselves--so that we could have a friend with us when & as we pleased. It seems as if that were not practicable unless we were to furnish for ourselves. Certainly our experiences there of using another's kitchen were discouraging--it was so dirty and uncomfortable that we were glad to take refuge in a regular boarding house again before one week was out. It seems to me more difficult to get anything of a medium kind in New York than elsewhere I have been--if it isn't the best, it is very uninviting indeed.

Herby is enjoying his work and companionship at the League very much. We stand the cold well--how does it suit you? Is your arm free from rheumatic pains? When you come to Mr. J. H. Johnstons, which will be very soon I hope, we shall be quite handy, and have a pretty, sunny room--a sitting room by day!--with a handsome piece of furniture which is metamorphosed into a bed at night--and a large dressing closet with hot & cold water

adjoining--all very comfortable. O how wistfully do I think of one evening in Philadelphia, last winter. I shan't begin really to like New York till you come and we have had some chats together. I have news from England which makes me rather anxious. The Blaenavon Co., to which Per. is chemist, has gone into liquidation--& I don't know whether it will continue to exist--or how soon in these dull times he may find a good opening elsewhere. Should things go badly for him, either Giddy and I will return to England to share [our] home with him there, or else I want him to take into serious consideration coming out here, instead of our going back. Of course it would be a risky thing for him to do with wife & child, in these times, unless some definite opening presented itself, but I cannot help thinking that, being an expert in his profession, with first rate training & experience, and iron work & metallurgy promising here to have such enormous developments, he would be sure to do well in the end; and meanwhile we could rub on together somehow. However, we shall see. I have laid the matter before him, he & his dear little wife wrote me a very brave, cheery letter when they told me the bad news--& I shall have an answer to mine, I suppose, by the end of the month. Kate Hillard read an amusing paper on Swinburne at a meeting of the Woman's Club in Brooklyn--& we had some fine music too. For the rest, I have not yet presented any introductions here.

Have had some beautiful glimpses of the North & East River effects of the shipping at sunset, &c.--Have subscribed to the Mercantile library,--& are beginning to feel at home. Herby & Giddy had been to hear Mr. Frothingham this morning, & were much interested. Bee missed us sorely at first--but writes--when she does write, which is but seldom--pretty cheerily.

Friendly remembrance to your brother & sister. I wonder where Hattie & Jessie are spending their holidays. Love from us all. Good-bye, dear friend.

A. GILCHRIST.

Had a letter from Mr. Marvin--all well--he is doing the Washington letter of a N. Eng. paper. Hopes & trusts you are really going to Washington.

LETTER XLIV

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

112 Madison Ave.

14 Jan., '79.

DEAREST FRIEND:

The pleasantest event since I last wrote has been a visit from Mr. Eldridge. We had a long, friendly chat that did me good. Saturday evening we went to one of Miss Booth's receptions--met Joaquin Miller there, who is just back from Europe--of course we talked of you. Mrs. Moulton too is hoping so you will come to New York during her stay here, which is to last a week or two longer. John Burroughs has just sent me a post card to say he has returned from a 3-weeks stay with his folks in Delaware Co.--that he hopes to come here soon--wants Mrs. Burroughs to come too & board for a month or so--wants also "Walt to come--& lecture"--but "Walt will not be hurried." Did I tell you that we found boarding here a young man, Mr. Arthur Holland, one of the family who were so very friendly to me & made my stay so pleasant both in Concord & Cambridge? He often comes to our room of an evening for an hour or two's chat, & by the bye, being connected with the iron trade he has been able to make some enquiries for me as to what Per's chances as a scientific metallurgist would be in this country--& I am sorry to say he thinks they would be very poor indeed. Prof. Lesley said the same thing; so it is clear I must not urge him to

try the experiment, seeing he has a wife & child. Herby & Giddy both well.

Love from us all. Good bye, Dear Friend.

A. GILCHRIST.

Friendly greeting to your brother & sister.

LETTER XLV

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

112 Madison Ave.,

Jan. 27, '79.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

Are you never coming? I do long & long to see you. I am beginning to like New York better than I did and to have pleasant times. Had some friendly chats with Kate Hillard last week, & went with her to call on Mrs. Putman Jacobi, who has a little baby 3 weeks old & is still in her room, but has got through very nicely--She talks well, doesn't she? & has a face with plenty of individuality in it. Also we went together on Saturday again to one of Miss Booth's receptions, & there met Mrs. Croly, & had the best talk about you I have had this long while. I like her cordiality--we are going to her reception on Sunday & to one at Mrs. Bigelow's Wednesday. It is true there is not much that can be called social enjoyment at these crowded receptions, but they enable you to start many acquaintanceships, some of which turn out lasting good. We had some fine harp playing & a witty recital at Miss Booth's. Miss Selous is back in America. I should not wonder if she comes on here soon. Bee is living at the Dispensary now, instead of in the Hospital, & finds the comparatively outdoor life--& the freedom from being "whistled" for all hours of the day and night as she was there--a wonderful refreshment. That coloured lady, Mrs. Wiley, whom

you met once at our house, is her fellow labourer & room mate at the Dispensary. Bee likes her much. I am not sure whether you know the Gilders? We spent a couple of hours delightfully with them yesterday afternoon. She has a very attractive face, a musical voice, & such a sweet smile. They are going to Europe for a four months' holiday this spring. I admire the simple, unconventional way in which they live. Herby is working away in the best spirits. He is going to paint that bowling alley subject on a large scale. Giddy is sitting by me with her nose in the French Dictionary, working away at a novel of Balzac's. I have had scarcely any letters from England lately!--and the papers bring none but dismal tidings; nevertheless I don't believe our sun is going down yet awhile--we shall emerge from this dark crisis the better, not the worse, because compelled to grapple with the evils that have caused it, instead of passively enduring them. Please give friendly remembrance from me to your brothers & sister. Have you been at Kirkwood lately, I wonder? I suppose Timber Creek is frozen over. Good-bye, dear Friend. Write soon, or better still Come!

A. GILCHRIST.

LETTER XLVI

HERBERT H. GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

New York

112 Madison Avenue

February 2nd, 1879.

DEAR DARLING WALT:

I read your long piece in the Philadelphia Times with ever so much interest, & with especial delight the delicately told bit about the dear old Pond, artistic, because so true. I know that it will please you to hear that I have gained tenfold facility with my brush since the autumn. It has agreed uncommonly well with me having enlisted under such an experienced & able painter as Chase; as a manipulator of the brush he is agreed by the experts (Eaton) to have no rival. I may yet be able to paint a head of you in one sitting that will do justice to you. Three of my pictures are nicely hung at the Water Colour Exhibition Academy of Design, the first time that I have exhibited in New York. We had two & three engagements every night (with one exception) last week, & go to Mrs. Croley's to-night. Your friend John Burroughs called last Wednesday--came to try Turkish baths for his malarious trouble, but it seemed to bring on his attacks of neuralgia worse. I am sorry that I can report but poorly of his health, so painfully excruciating was his neuralgia about his arms at times that a Dr. was sent for & morphia injected in his wrist, but I am

glad to say he reported himself a little better. He hopes that you will come and give the lecture on Lincoln this winter; why not, confound it, it would be most interesting.

Quite often we go to Miss Booth's receptions. Saturday evening, they are gay & amusing. Met Mr. Bliss, the gentleman that talked like "a house afire" one Sunday at your house last winter, you remember.

Last Wednesday I, mother, Giddy, & Kate Hillard went to Mrs. Bigelow's reception. Miss H. was asked to recite & she recited the "Swineherd" (Anderson's) charmingly, & "The Faithful Lovers," which took every one. "Walk in" Miller was there (I can't spell his name) & lots more.

This morning being Sunday, I took my skates to the Park. The wind was high & whirled us about fantastically; ladies seated in wicker chairs were pushed rapidly along the Pond's smooth icy surface by their gentlemen escorts, tall men kissed the ice or sprawled full length on their backs, while others flew by like swallows; all this with a church spire peeping behind hills dappled with snow & sunshine: what more inspiring than this?

And now dear Walt.

Good-bye for the present.

HERBERT H. GILCHRIST.

LETTER XLVII

BEATRICE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

33 Warrenton St.

Feb. 16, 1879.

DEAR MR. WHITMAN:

Although not in word, I have thanked you for your letter & papers by enjoying them thoroughly.

Down at this Dispensary we work just as hard as at the Hospital, but our spare minutes are our own (no records to write out); our work is under our own control; we are out in fresh air half the day, sometimes half the night, making intimate acquaintance with all sorts of people & places & with far distant parts of Boston.

We have all the responsibility that it is good for young doctors to have, i. e., in all difficult or obscure & dangerous cases we are obliged to call in older heads & are obliged to report verbally to the visiting physician of the month all our cases & our treatment. Only two students live at the Dispensary--Dr. Wiley (the coloured Philadelphia student you saw) & myself. In tastes we have much in common & on the whole I prefer to live with her rather than with any of the other students. We share rooms. We have a bedroom, a drug-room, a treatment room, waiting room for

patients, & take our meals in the kitchen.

A widow woman with two children housekeeps.

I think Boston a very beautiful city. The public Gardens & Commons in the busiest part, sloping down from the gilt domed state house on Beacon hill, threaded by paths in all directions, traversed by the business men, the fine ladies, the beggars, etc., etc. One broad, sloping path is given up to the boys who want to coast, temporary wooden bridges being thrown over the cross paths. Then, crossing South Bay to South Boston is a beautiful walk I take from one to four times a day. South Boston looks rather dingy; it is inhabited mostly by artisans & mill hands & fishermen, but walking up 3rd St., as you cross the lettered streets A, B, C, D, etc., you look down upon the harbour--on bright days bright blue, & a few sails to be seen--at sunset the colours of course are reflected gorgeously.

Somehow or other the sea looks doubly beautiful set in dingy S. Boston.

Far over in the West End too we have patients. Last Tuesday I had twins all by myself; only one, however, was born alive; the other had been dead a week. How delightful that you are feeling so much better. Shall you not be coming to Boston sometime before I leave, 1st June?

The Boston I know is not the Boston I knew in books; I am as far off from that as if I lived in England--is not the "hub"--I was reminded of that last Sunday when I had time for once to go to church & went to hear Mr. E.

E. Hale preach and went home to dinner with him....

I like his daughter whom we knew in Philadelphia. She is a clever young artist. Dr. Wiley is very popular with her patients, far more so than I.

Please remember me to all the Staffords & give my especial love to Mrs. Stafford. Also to Mrs. Whitman.

Yours affectionately,

BEATRICE C. GILCHRIST.

LETTER XLVIII

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

112 Madison Ave.

March 18, 1879.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

I hope you are enjoying this splendid, sunshiny weather as much as we are--the atmosphere here is delicious. In the morning Giddy and I set at home busy with needle work, letter writing, and reading. After lunch we go out for a walk or to pay visits--and of an evening very often to receptions (but they are not half so jolly as our evenings at Philadelphia). Still we have a lively, pleasant time. I like Miss Booth very much, with her kindly, generous character and active practical mind. So I do Mrs. Croly--she is more impulsive and enthusiastic. Kate Hillard often goes with us, & she is always good company. I had a note from Edward Carpenter the other day brought by a lady who had been living near him at Sheffield--an American lady with two very fine little girls who has lately lost her husband in England and was on her way back to her parents' home in Pennsylvania--somewhere beyond Pittsburg. She is one who loves your poems, & has great hopes of seeing you in New York. She told me her little girls were so fond of Carpenter he of them--he is first rate with children. I hope you will not put off coming to New York till we are returning to Philadelphia, which will be some time in May. I find Beatrice

is so anxious to get further advantages for study in England or Paris before she begins to practise, and Herby is so strongly advised by Mr. Eaton, of whose judgment & experience he thinks very highly, to study in Duron's Studio in Paris for a year, that I have made up my mind to go back, for a time at any rate, this summer; but I shall leave my furniture here, and the question of where our future home is to be, open. Herby is making great progress. I wish you could see the head of an old woman he has just painted--and I wish he had had as much power when he had such splendid chances of painting you. I cannot tell you how vividly and pleasantly Chestnut St. on a sunny day rose before me in your jottings. Love from us all. Tell your sister I often think of her & shall enjoy a chat ever so.

A. G.

LETTER XLIX

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

112 Madison Ave.

March 26, '79.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

It seems quite a long while since I wrote, & a very long while since you wrote. I am beginning to turn my thoughts Philadelphia-wards that we may have some weeks near you before we set out on fresh wanderings across the sea; and though I feel quite cheery about them, I look eagerly forward to the time beyond that when we have a fixed, final nest of our own again, where we can welcome you just when and as you please. Whichever side the Atlantic it is, you will come surely? for you belong to the one country as much as to the other. And I shall always feel that I do too. I take back with me a deep and hearty love for America--I came indeed with a good deal of that, but what I take back is different--stronger, more real. I went over to see friends in Brooklyn yesterday, & it was more lovely than I can tell you on the Ferry--in fact, it was just your poem, "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry". Herby still painting away con amore, & making good progress. I met Joaquin Miller at the Bigelows last week, & he was very pleasant (which isn't always the case) and said some very good things to me.

Thursday we are going to lunch with Mrs. Albert Brown--perhaps you may have heard of her as Bessie Griffiths. She was a Southern lady who, when

she was about 18, freed all her slaves & left herself penniless. On Sunday we take tea at Prof. Rood's of Columbia College. Kate Hillard we often see & have lively chats with. We meet also & see a good deal of General Edward Lee--a fine soldierly looking man, & I believe he distinguished himself in the war & was afterwards sent to organize the new Territory of Wyoming, & was the first governor. I wish very much that if you or your brother knew him or know anything about him, you would tell me--for reasons that I will tell you by & bye. Bee is seeing a great deal of the educated coloured people at Boston--was at the meeting of a literary club--the only white among 20 or 30 coloured ladies--likes them much.

Write soon, dear Friend. Meanwhile, best love & good-bye.

ANNE GILCHRIST.

No letters from England this long while.

Please give friendly greetings from me to your brother & sister.

LETTER L

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

Glasgow

Friday, June 20, 1879.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

We set foot on dry land again Wednesday morning after a good passage--not a very smooth one--and not without four or five days of seasickness, but after that we really enjoyed the sea & the sky--it was mostly cloudy, but such lovely lights and shades & invigorating breezes! and as we got up into northern latitudes, daylight in the sky all night through. The last three days we had glorious scenery--sailed close in under the Giant's Causeway on the north coast of Ireland--great sort of natural ramparts & bastions or rock, wonderfully grand. Then we sailed on Lough Fozle to land a group of Irish folk at Moville--some of them old people who had not seen Ireland for forty years, and who were so happy they did not know what to do with themselves. And what with this human interest, and the first getting near land again and the rich green-and-golden gorse-covered hills & the setting sun streaming along the beautiful lough with golden light, it was a sight & a time I shall never forget. Then we entered the Firth of Clyde & sailed among the islands--mountainous Arran, level Bute--& on the other hand the green hills of Ayr, with pleasant towns nestled under them, sloping to the Clyde--this was during the night--we did not go to bed at

all it was so beautiful--& then came a gorgeous sunrise--& then the landing at Greenock & a short railway journey to Glasgow, the tide not serving to bring our big ship up so far. We had very pleasant (& learned withal) companions on the voyage--the Professor of Greek & of Philosophy from Harvard and a young student from Concord, all of whom we have seen since we landed and hope to see often again, especially the young student, Frank Bigelow, who is a very nice fellow. Herby enjoyed the voyage much & so did Giddy. Glasgow is a great, solidly built city, very pleasant [in] spite of smoky atmosphere--full of sturdy, rosy-cheeked people with broad Scotch accent. We have been rushing about shopping--have not yet seen Per.--shall meet him at Durham in a week's time & spend a month together there where he will be superintending your works. Meanwhile we are going to Edinburgh for a few days. I kept thinking of you on the voyage, dear friend, & wondering how you would like it--& whether you could stand being stowed away in the little box-like berth at night. I should recommend any American friend coming over to try this line--we had a fine ship--fine officers & crew--& the latter part, fine scenery. Love to your Brother & Sister & to Mr. Burroughs. Address to me for the present.

Care Percy C. Gilchrist

Blaenavon

Poutzpool

Mon.

Love from us all. I shall write soon again. Good-bye dear Friend.

A. GILCHRIST.

LETTER LI

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

Lower Shincliffe

Durham

August 2d, '79.

DEAREST FRIEND:

I am sitting in my room with my dear little grandson, the sweetest little fellow you ever saw, asleep beside me. Giddy and Norah (my 3d daughter) are gone into Durham to do some shopping. Bee is up in London on her way to Berne in Switzerland, where she has finally decided to complete her medical studies. Herby is, I think, staying with Eustace Conway at Hammersmith just now. He has been spending a week at Brighton with Edward Carpenter & his family--but I will leave him to tell his own news. We are lodging in this little village with its red-tiled roofs & gray stone walls, lying among wooded hills, corn fields, meadows, and collieries on the banks of the Weir, for the sake of being near Percy & his wife. He is superintending here the erection of some kilns for making the peculiar kind of basic firebricks needed in his dephosphorization process. Durham Cathedral, which was mainly built soon after the Norman conquest, is in sight, crowning a wooded hill that rises abruptly from the river-side. It looks as solid, majestic, venerable as the rocks & hills--the interior is of wonderful grandeur & beauty. When you enter one of these cathedrals you

are tempted to say architecture is a lost art with us moderns so far as sublimity is concerned--except in vast engineering works. You would not dignify the Weir with the name of a river in America--it is no bigger than Timber Creek--but it winds about so capriciously through the picturesque little city as to make almost an island of the hill on which the castle & cathedral stand & to need three great solid stone bridges within a quarter of a mile of each other, & with its steep wooded sides carrying nature right into the heart of the old town. But the rainy season (we have scarcely seen the sun since we have been in England & I believe it is the same in France & Italy) and the great depression in trade, especially the coal & iron, which chiefly concerns this district, seem to cast a gloom over everything. There are whole rows of colliers' cottages in this village empty. Where they go to no one knows, but as soon as the collieries reopen they will all reappear. We often meet Colliers returning from work--they look as if they had just emerged from Hades, poor fellows--their faces black as soot--their lean, bowed legs bare--I believe the mines are hot here; they work with little on--but they are really the cleanest of all workmen, as they take a bath every night on their return before supping. The speech here is almost like a foreign tongue to any one from the south or middle of England. I wonder if you have yet read Dr. Bucke's book.[29] It is about the only thing I have read since my return. It suggests deeply interesting trains of thought.

I wonder if you are at Camden, taking your daily trips across the ferry & strolls up Chestnut St. I hardly realized till I left it how dearly I love America--great sunny land of hope and progress--or how my whole life has been enriched with the human intercourse I had there. Give my love to

those of our friends whom you know & tell them not to forget us. I have had a long letter from Emma Lazarus. I suppose Hattie and Jessie are spending their holidays at Camden & that Hattie has pretty well done with school. We have been chiefly busy with needlework since we came--preparing dear Bee for Berne. I miss her sadly--had quite hoped we should have all been together at Paris this winter--but it seems the course is much longer & more arduous [there]. We spent a week in Edinburgh before we came on here. It is by far the most beautiful city I have ever seen. The journey between it and Berwick-on-Tweed lies through the richest & best cultivated farm land in Britain--the sea sparkling on one side of us & these fertile fields dotted with splendid flocks & herds--with large comfortable-looking farmhouses, & here & there an old castle; it was singularly enjoyable. How I have wished everywhere that you were with us to share the sight--and the best is that you would return home more than ever proud & rejoicing in America. It is a land where humanity is having, and is going to have, such chances as never before. Giddy sends her love. Mine also & to your brother & sister. Good-bye, dear Friend.

A. GILCHRIST.

Please write soon; I am longing for a letter.

LETTER LII[30]

WALT WHITMAN TO ANNE GILCHRIST

(Camden, New Jersey.)

(August, 1879.)

Thank you, dear friend, for your letter; how I should indeed like to see that Cathedral[31], I don't know which I should go for first, the Cathedral or that baby.[32] I write in haste, but I am determined you shall have a word, at least, promptly in response.

LETTER LIII

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

1 Elm Villas, Elm Row, Heath St.

Hampstead, Dec. 5, '79, London, England.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

You could not easily realize the strong emotion with which I read your last note and traced on the little map[33]--a most precious possession which I would not part with for the whole world--all your journeyings--both in youth & now. Mingled emotions! for I cannot but feel anxious about your health, & if I didn't know it was very naught to ask you questions, should beg you [to] tell me in what way your health has failed--whether it is the rheumatic & neuralgic affection that troubled you the last spring we were in Philadelphia, or whether the fatigues & excitements & the very enjoyments & full life, & burst of prophetic joy, as it were, had proved too great a strain. But you have accomplished another thing, that had to be done in your life & I exult with you--have seen the vast magnificent theatre, the free, unfettered conditions whereon humanity will enact a new drama, with the parts all so differently cast! the rest--the moving spirit of it all--hints of this, at least--flashes, glimpses, I find in your greatest poems. But, dear Friend, I think humanity moves forward [slowly] even under splendid conditions--you must give it a century or two instead of 50 years--before at least the crowning

glories of a corresponding literature & art will develop themselves--Nature has got plenty of time before her, & obstinately refuses to be hurried; witness her dealings with the mere rocks & stones.

Bee is at Berne, working away merrily, rejoicing in the really splendid advantage for medical study there open to her. She mastered German so as to be able to speak & understand it--lectures & all--with ease during the two months at Wiesbaden & she has found a thoroughly comfortable home with some excellent, intelligent ladies who are fond of her & see to her bodily welfare in every possible way. I have my dear little grandson with me here--as engaging a little toddler as the sun ever shone upon--so affectionate & sweet-tempered & bright. I wish I could see him sitting on your knee. You will certainly have to come to us as soon as ever we have a comfortable home, won't you? Giddy is well & as rosy as ever. She & Herby send their love. I have seen Rossetti--he was full of enquiries & affectionate interest in all that concerns you--& loth we were to break off our conversation & hurry back--but Hampstead, the pleasantest & prettiest of all our suburbs, is terribly inaccessible & cuts us off a good deal from the intercourse with old friends I had looked forward to. It is on the top of a high hill (as high as the top of St. Pauls), & looks down on one side over the great city with its canopy of smoke, & on the other over a wide, pleasant stretch of green & fertile Middlesex--has moreover pleasant lanes, solid old houses, shaded by big elms, & other picturesque features & such an abundance of keen, fresh air this cold weather too! We sigh for the warmth of an American house indoors often & for American sunshine out of doors. Rossetti has a beautiful little group of children growing up around him--I think the eldest girl will grow up a

real beauty & the boy too is a noble little fellow. I meet numbers so
delighted to hear about you. I believe Addington Symonds is preparing a
book which treats largely of your Poems.

Glad to hear that Brother & Sister & nieces are all well. I wish I could
write to some of them, but what with needlework, an avalanche of letters,
the care of my dear little man--the re-editing of my husband's life of
Blake, to which there will be a considerable addition of letters newly
come to light, I hardly know which way to turn. Per. & my nephew & the
"Process" have made a great stride forward. Won two important law suits at
Berlin, where the Bessemer ring & Krupp at their head were trying to oust
them of their patent rights. Also it is practically making good way in
England. So by & bye the money will begin to flow in, I suppose--but has
not done so yet.

I trust, dearest Friend, this will find you safe & fairly well again at
Camden, with plenty of great, happy thoughts to brood over for the winter.

Love from us all. Good-bye.

ANNE GILCHRIST.

LETTER LIV

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

5 Mount Vernon

Hampstead

Jan. 25, '80.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

Welcome was your postcard announcing recovered health & return to Camden! May this find you safe there, well & hearty, able to go freely to & fro on the ferries & streets. I wish one of those old red Market Ferry cars were going to land you at our door once more! What you would have to tell us of western scenes & life! What teas & what evenings we would have--you would certainly have to say "there is a point beyond which"--& would have pretty late trips back of moonlight. Strange episode in my life! so unlike what went before & what comes after--those evenings in Philadelphia--yet so natural, familiar, dear! If I were American-born, I certainly should not want to change it for any country in the world, and if as you have dreamed--as I too have dreamed--it is given us hereafter to have another spell of life on this old earth, may my lot be cast there when the great time dimly preparing is actually come. But meanwhile, dear Friend, my work lies here: innumerable are the ties that bind us. And I can only hope & dream that you will come & stay with us awhile when we have a home of our own. That dear little grandson stayed with me two months till I really

didn't know how to part with him, & grew more & more engaging & pretty in his ways every day--rapid indeed is the opening of the little bud at that age--between 1 & 3--& the way he had of looking up & giving you little kisses of his own accord would win anybody's heart. Bee's letters continue as cheery as ever--she is heartily enjoying work & life, and accomplishing the purpose she has set her heart upon, & the people she is with are so good and kindly, it is quite a home. She is working a good deal with the microscope. Her outdoor recreation is skating. Herby is getting on very nicely. He has had a commission to make some designs for a new kind of painted tapestry--and his figures "Audrey & Touchstone" are very much admired & have been bought by a rich American, & he has a commission for more. But the summer work he has set his heart upon is a portrait of you from all the material he brought with him--the many attempts he made there--handled with his present improved skill with the brush. I hope you will be able by & bye to send him the photograph he asked for--but no hurry. Edward Carpenter came up from Sheffield and spent an evening with us--which we all heartily enjoyed--he is a dear fellow. We talked much of you. He has been giving lectures this winter on the Lives of the Great Discoverers in Science. Carpenter knows intimately, goes freely among, a greater range & variety of men than any Englishman I know--he has a way of making himself thoroughly welcome by the firesides of mechanics & factory workers--his own kith & kin are aristocratic.

Giddy is taking singing lessons again, & hoping by the time you next see her to be able to contribute her share of the evening's pleasure. Percy is still working away indomitably at the "process," which is gaining ground rapidly on the continent, & I hope I may say slowly & surely in England. I

see the Gilders now & then--indeed they are coming up to lunch with us to-morrow--Mr. Gilder[34] is the better for rest--& they seem to enjoy England; but England has done her very worst in the way of climate ever since they have been here. O I do long for a little American sunshine. We met Henry James at the Conways last Sunday & found him one of the pleasantest of talkers. Rossetti & all your friends are well. Please give my love to your brothers & sister. Were Jessie & Hattie at home in St. Louis, I wonder, when you were there? Love from us all.

Good-bye, Dearest Friend.

A. GILCHRIST.

Please give my love to John Burroughs when you write or see him.

LETTER LV

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

Marley, Haslemere

England

Aug. 22, '80.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

I have had all the welcome papers with accounts of your doings, and to-day a nice long letter from Mrs. Whitman, which I much enjoyed, giving me better account of your health again, & of your great enjoyment of the water travel through Canada. So I hope, spite of drawbacks, you will return to Camden for the winter quite set up in body, as well as full of delightful memories. If only we were at 22nd St. to welcome you back & talk it all over at tea! Ah, those evenings! My friends told me I looked ten years younger when I came back from America than when I went. And I am not yet quite re-acclimatized; & what with missing the sunshine & working a little too hard, was feeling quite knocked up: so Bee insisted on my coming down, or rather up, here to stay with some very kind & dear friends. The house stands all alone on a great heath-covered hill, and below & around are endless coppices, so that you step from the lawn into [a] winding wood-path, along which I wander by the hour: and from my window I look over much such a view as we had at Round Hill Hotel, Northampton, this time two years, only that with the soft haze that is so

often spread over our landscape, the distant hill looks more ghostly in the moonlight. My friend is a noble, large-hearted, capable woman, who devotes all her life and energies to keeping alive an invalid husband; and he well deserves her care, for he has a beautiful nature, too, & their mutual affection is unbounded. He is just ordered by the doctors to leave the home they have made for themselves up here--which is as lovely as it can be--& to spend two years at least in Italy. So it is a sorrowful time with them--they have no children, but have adopted a little niece. Our new house is just ready & we are daily expecting our furniture from America. Herby has been working as usual, making good progress & has just done a beautiful little drawing for the new edition of his father's book. Bee, you will be glad to hear, has decided to continue her medical studies & is going to be assistant to a lady doctor at Edinburgh, who is to pay her sufficient salary to cover all remaining expenses. Meanwhile we have got her at home for a few weeks to help us through with the move in, and a sad pinch it will be to part with her again. Giddy has been paying a delightful visit to some friends of Carpenter's near Leeds--a Quaker family--the daughter very lovable & admirable. We do not forget the Staffords[35] nor they us. Mont. often sends Herby a magazine or a token. Love to them when you see them, & to Mr. & Mrs. Whitman & Hattie & Jessie & kindest remembrance to Dr. Bucke. Send me a line soon, dear Friend--I think of you continually & know that somewhere & somehow we are to meet again, & that there is a tie of love between us that time & change & death itself cannot touch.

With love,

A. GILCHRIST.

LETTER LVI

HERBERT H. GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

Keats Corner, England

12 Well Road, Hampstead, London

November 30th, 1880.

MY DEAR WALT:

Your postcard came to hand some little time ago. I was pleased to get it, to hear of your being well, & with your friends. I have been extremely busy seeing after the new edition of my father's book;[36] the work of seeing such a richly illustrated "edition de luxe" through the press was enormous, but it is done! The binders are now doing their work, & next Tuesday the reviewers will be doing theirs--I defy them to find any fault with the book. I dare say you think it "tall" talk, but I think that it is the most perfectly gotten up book that I ever have seen. My mother has written an admirable memoir of my father at the end of the second vol.

POND MUSINGS

(Pen sketch of a butterfly)

by

WALT WHITMAN

I thought that this was to be the title of your prose volume. I will

undertake the illustrations, choosing the paper (hand made), everything except the expense of reproducing, etc. I should say London is the place to have things executed in: if you wish to give photos they must be drawn by an artist and reproduced; no photo ever looked well in a book yet! they haven't decorative importance and don't blend with type. I should suggest that we should imitate the artistic size & style of your earliest edition of "Leaves of G.," a large, thin, flat volume, a fanciful, but as inexpensive as possible, cover written in gold on blue, a waterlily say: but I could think this over. I will design fanciful tailpieces to be woven in with the text; as a frontispiece the drawing that I gave you, retouched by me, and reproduced by the Typographic Etching Company, 23 Farringdon street, London, E. C. All these are only suggestions, which I am prepared to execute in right earnest thought. I read your letter to mother with interest. We like our new house so much, & I am sure that you would. You must come and stay with us & stroll on Hampstead Heath, & ride down into London upon an omnibus & sit to some good sculptor here in London (Boem say). And you yourself could make arrangements with the publishers. With remembrance to friends,

HERBERT H. GILCHRIST.

LETTER LVII

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

Keats Corner

Well Rd., Hampstead

Apr. 18, '81.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

I have just been sauntering in our little but sunny garden which slopes to the South--surveying with much satisfaction some fruit trees--plum, green gage, pear, cherry, apple--which we have just had planted to train up against the house and fence--in which fashion fruit ripens much better with our English modicum of sunshine, besides taking no room & casting no shade over your little bit of ground--Then we have filled our large window with flowers in pots which make the room smell as delicious as a garden. Giddy is assiduous in keeping them well watered & tended.--Welcome was your postcard--with the little rain-bird's coy note in it. But I had not before heard of your illness, dear friend--the letter before, you spoke of being unusually well, as I trust you are again now, & enjoying the spring. I am well again so far as digestion &c. goes; but bronchitis asthma of a chronic kind still trouble me. My breath is so short I cannot walk, which is a privation. I am going, at the beginning of June, to stay with Bee in Edinburgh, as she will not have any holiday or be able to come & see us this year, & much am I longing to be with her. Have you begun to have any

summer thoughts, dear Walt? And do they turn towards England, & our nest therein? Yes, I have received & have enjoyed all the papers & cuttings--dearly like what you said of Carlyle. Everyone here is speaking bitterly of the harsh judgments & sarcastic descriptions of people in the "reminiscences." But I know that at bottom his heart was genial and good & that he wrote those in a miserable mood--& never looked at them again afterwards. I hope you received the little memoir of my husband all right. Herby is very busy with a drawing of you--hopes that with the many sketches he made, & the vivid impress on his memory & the help of photographs, it will be good. I wish he had possessed as much power with the brush when he was in America as he has now--he is making very great progress in mastery of the technique. I observe, too, that he reads & dwells upon your poems--especially the "Walt Whitman"--with growing frequency & delight. We often say, "Won't Walt like sitting in that sunny window?" or "by that cheery open fire" or "sauntering on the heath"--& picture you here in a thousand different ways. I believe Maggie Lesley is coming from Paris, where she is studying art in good earnest, at the beginning of May, & then will come and spend a few days with us. Welcome are American friends! The Buxton Forman's took tea with us last week & we had pleasant talk of you & of Dr. Bucke. Mrs. Forman is a sincere, sympathetic, motherly woman whom you would like. The Rossetti's too have been to see us--we didn't think William in the best health or spirits--& his wife was not looking well either, but then another baby is just coming.

This Easter time the poorest of London working folk flock in enormous numbers to Hampstead Heath; it is a sight that would interest you--they

are rougher & noisier & poorer than such folks in America--& the men more prone to get the worse for drink--but there is a good deal of fun & merriment too--the girls & boys racing about on donkeys (who have a pretty hard time of it)--plenty of merry-go-rounds--& enjoyment of the pure air & sunshine, & such sights, more than they know. The light is failing, dearest friend; so with love from us all, good-bye.

ANNE GILCHRIST.

Friendliest greeting to your brother & sister & to Hattie & Jessie when you write & to the Staffords.

LETTER LVIII

HERBERT H. GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

Keats Corner, Well Road

North London

Hampstead, England

June 5th, 1881, Sunday afternoon

5 P. M.

MY DEAR WALT:

You don't write me a letter nor take any notice of my magnificent offers concerning "Pond Musings", etc. however, I will forgive you this oft-repeated offence. I often think of you, very often of America and things generally there, and nearly always with pleasure.

My mother is away staying with Beatrice in Edinburgh city, recruiting her health, which has most sadly needed it of late. So I and Grace & a new Scotch lassie, one Margaret, who officiates as servant most efficaciously too, I can tell you (such scrubbing & cleaning as you never saw the like) we three, I say, are alone at Keats Corner; cool sitting here in our long drawing-room (hung with innumerable pictures as of yore), although it has been scorchingly hot this past month. The morning I spend sketching on Hampstead Heath, which is lovely just now, all the May-trees are in full bloom the gorse & broom are a blaze of yellow, the rooks fly constantly by

a quarter of a mile (seemingly) overhead, the sly fellows giving some side like dart when you look up at them even at that height. I am painting one of them; so I have to look up pretty often. In the early morning the nightingale sings, oh, so sweetly, long trills & roulades in the most accomplished manner.

Last Wednesday Miss Ellen Terry, whose name you are doubtless familiar with as being the leading actress in London, well, she called upon me to ask my advice or opinion of a drawing connected with my father's book. Ellen Terry expressed herself highly interested in our house, pictures, decorations and so forth. Her manner was a little stagey, but graceful to the extreme, and you could see peeping out of this theatric manner a kind, good heart, oh, so kind, I feel as if I would do anything for her, her manners were so winning. "Will you come to the stage entrance of the Lyceum some day soon and you shall have stalls for two; now will you come? Do." Were her last words to Grace. I called on her at Kensington last week, returning the drawing, and I was so charmed with two beautiful children of hers, a tall, fair girl, a pretty mixture of shyness and self-possession that quite won me. She too I should fancy will be a great actress some day, she has such a bright face. The boy, Master Ted, was nice too.

Well, I gave Ellen Terry a proof of a drawing that I have just completed for Dr. Bucke's book--a job I got through Buxton Forman, a great friend of Bucke's, done con amore on my part. This drawing has been beautifully reproduced by the new photo intaglio-process. I hope Dr. Bucke will like it, but I should not expect great things from him in that line, judging

from the twopenny hapenny little pen & ink sketch by Waters which he sent over in the first instance; however, Forman rescued him from that & so far he has been guided by his friend. Whether he will when he sees my drawing, we neither of us know; but both feel to have done our best in the matter. I said that Ellen Terry must ask for you when she goes to America, which she contemplates some day. I have sold the last drawing I made in New York of you for £10. 10s to Buxton Forman (\$50. odd). Church bells have just commenced chiming in the distance, a sound I like better than the parsons. I hear that the young American artists are doing capitally filling their pockets. My cousin Sidney Thomas is, or was, in America, a good deal lionized, I understand. If at any time you favour me with a letter let it be a letter and not a postcard please. I have been reading Carlyle's reminiscences--good stuff in them, brilliant touches, but dreadfully morbid, don't you think? & one shuts the book up with a feeling that in some respect one Carlyle is enough in the world: & yet in some respects a million wouldn't be too many. I often think of your remark to us one day that tolerance is the rarest quality in the world.

Interested in those Boston scraps you send my mother. You have always been pretty well received in Boston, have you not--I mean in the Emerson days? Pity that when Emerson is no more there will be no fine portrait of him in existence; there was a nobility stamped upon his face that I never saw the like of, and which should have been caught and stamped forever on canvas.

We all see something of the Formans & all like them; they have so much character, rather unusual in literary folk of the lighter sort, I fancy; but there is something very fresh and original about Forman. Nice children

they have, too. Miss Blind is bringing out a volume of poems; why will people all imagine they can write poetry? William Rossetti is writing a hundred sonnets--writes one a day; one about John Brown is not bad: and many are instructive, but are in no sense poems. I am going down to tea & must not keep Grace waiting any longer. Love to you.

HERBERT H. GILCHRIST.

LETTER LIX

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

12 Well Road, Hampstead

London, Dec. 14, '81.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

Your welcome letter to hand. I have longed for a word from you--could not write myself[37]--was stricken dumb--nay, there is nothing but silence for me still. Herby wrote to Mrs. Stafford first, thinking that so the shock would come less abruptly to you.

I heard of you at Concord in a kind long letter from Frederick Holland, with whose wife you had some conversation. Indeed all that sympathy and warm & true words of love & sorrow & highest admiration & esteem for my darling could do to comfort me I have had--and most & best from America. And many of her poor patients at Edinburgh went sobbing from the door when they heard they should see her no more.

The report of your health is comforting dear friend. Mine too is better--I am able to take walks again--though still liable to sudden attacks of difficult breathing.

Herby is working hard--has just been disappointed over a competition

design which he sent in to the Royal Academy--a very poor & specious work obtaining the premium--but is no whit discouraged & has no need to be, for he is making great progress--works hard, loves his work & is of the stuff where of great painters are made, I am persuaded--so he can afford to wait. Giddy is not quite so well & strong as I could wish, but there seems nothing serious. She is working diligently at the development of her voice--& is learning German. Dr. Bucke's friend, Mr. Buxton Forman, & his wife are very warm, staunch friends of Herby's.

Please give my love to your sister, and tell her that her good letter spoke the right words to me & that I shall write before very long. Thanks for the paper, dear friend--& for those that came when I was too overwhelmed but which I have since read with deep interest--those about your visit to your birthplace. With love from us all--good-bye, dearest Friend.

A. GILCHRIST.

LETTER LX

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

12 Well Road

Jan 29, '82.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

Your letter to Herby was a real talk with you. I don't know why I punish myself by writing to you so seldom now, for indeed to be near you, even in that way would do me good--often & often do I wish we were back in America near you. As I write this I am sitting to Herby for my portrait again--he has never satisfied himself yet: but this one seems coming on nicely--and so is the Consuelo picture. Another one he has in his mind is to be called "The tea-party," and it is to be the old group round our table in Philadelphia--you & me and dear Bee & Giddy & himself. He thinks that what with memory & photograph & the studies he made when with you, he will be able to put you & my darling on the canvas.

Giddy's voice is developing into a really fine contralto & she has the work in her to become an artist, I think & will turn out one of the tortoises who outstrip the hares. Percy and Norah are spending the winter in London (at Kensington)--and we can get round by train in half an hour; so I often see them and the dear little man. Do you remember the Miss Chases--two pleasant maiden ladies who took tea with us once in

Philadelphia & talked about Sojourner Truth? One of the sisters is in London this winter & has been several times to see us. The birds are beginning to sing very sweetly here--& our room is full of the perfume of spring flowers--indoor ones. Did dear Bee tell you, in the long letter she once wrote you, how much she loved the Swiss ladies with whom she made her home while in Berne? A more tender & beautiful love and sorrow than that with which they cherish the memory of her never grew in any heart. I think you will like to see some of their letters--please return them, for they are very precious to me (the little matters they thank me for are some of dear Bee's things which I sent them for tokens). Love to your sister & brother. How are Mr. Marvin & Mr. Burroughs? Best love from us all. Good-bye, dear Friend.

ANNE GILCHRIST.

LETTER LXI

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

12 Well Road

Hampstead

May 8th, '82.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

Herby went to David Bognes^[38] about a week ago: he himself was out, but H. saw the head man, who reported that the sale of "Leaves of Grass" was progressing satisfactorily. I hope you have received, or will receive, tangible proof of the same. Bognes is a young publisher, but, I believe from what I hear, a man to be relied on. His father was the publisher of my husband's first literary venture & behaved honourably. Herby brought away for me a copy of the new edition. I like the type like that of '73, & the pale green leaf it is folded in so to speak. I find a few new friends to love--perhaps I have not yet found them all out. But you must not expect me to take kindly to any changes in the titles or arrangement of the old beloved friends. I love them too dearly--every word & look of them--for that. For instance, I want "Walt Whitman" instead of "Myself" at the top of the page. Also my own longing is always for a chronological arrangement, if change at all there is to be; for that at once makes biography of the best kind. What deaths, dear Friend! As for me, my heart is already gone over to the other side of the river, so that sometimes I

feel a kind of rejoicing in the swelling of the ranks of the great company there. Darwin, with his splendid day's work here gently closed; Rossetti, whose brilliant genius had got entangled in a premature physical decay, so that his day's work was over too! In a letter to me, William, who was the best, most faithful & loving of brothers to him, says, "I doubt whether he would ever have regained that energy of body & concentration of mental resource which could have enabled him to resume work at his full & wonted power. Without these faculties at ready command my dear Gabriel would not have been himself." Edward Carpenter's father, too, is gone, but he at a ripe age without disease--sank gently.

The photographs I enclose are but poor suggestions--please give one to Mrs. Whitman with my love, or if you prefer to keep both, I will send her others. Does the idea ever come into your head, dear Friend, of spending a little time this summer or autumn in your English home at Hampstead?

Herby is well and working happily. So is Grace. Little grandson & his parents away in Worcestershire.

It is indescribably lovely spring weather here just now. A carpenter near us has a sky-lark in a cage which sings as jubilantly as if it were mounting into the sky, & is so tame that when he takes it out of the cage to wash its little claws, which are apt to get choked up with earth, in warm water, it breaks out singing in his hand! Love from us all, dearest Friend. Good-bye.

ANNE GILCHRIST.

Affectionate greetings to your brother & sister & Hattie & Jessie.

Do you ever see Mr. Marvin? If so, give our love, we hope to see him one day.

LETTER LXII

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

Keats Corner

Well Rd., Hampstead, London

Nov. 24, '82.

DEAREST FRIEND:

You have long ere this, I hope, received Herby's letter telling of the safe arrival of the precious copy of "Specimen Days," with the portraits: it makes me very proud. Your father had a fine face too--there is something in it that takes hold of me & that seems to be a kind of natural background or substratum to the radiant sweetness of that other sacred & beloved face completing your parentage. I like heartily too the new portraits of you: they are all wanted as different aspects: but the two that remain my favourites are the portrait taken about 30 without coat of any kind, and the one you sent me in '69 next to those I love these two latest--& in some respects better, because they are the Walt I saw & had such happy hours with. The second copy of book & my lending one, has come safe--too--and the card that told of your attack of illness, & the welcome news of your recovery in the Paper; & I have been fretting with impatience at my own dumbness--but tied to as many hours a day writing as I could possibly manage, at my little book now (last night)--finished, all but proofs, so that I can take my pleasure in "Specimen Days" at last; but

before doing that must have a few words with you, dearest Friend. First a gossip. Do you remember Maggie Lesley? She came to see us on her way to Paris, where she is working all alone & very earnestly to get through training as an artist--then going to start in a studio of her own in Philadelphia. She, like my mother's sister, are to me fine, lovable samples of American women--in whom, I mean, I detect, like the distinctive aroma of a flower, something special--that is American--a decisive new quality to old-world perceptions. Herby is working away still chiefly at the Consuelo picture--has got a very beautiful model to-day sitting to him. His summer work was down in Warwickshire, making sketches--& very charming ones they are, of George Eliot's native scenes--one of a garden-nook--up steep, old, worn stone steps bordered with flowers that is enticing--it will make a lovely background for a figure picture.--Giddy's voice is growing in richness & strength--& she works with all her heart, hoping one day to be a real artist vocally--in church & oratorio music. She will not have power or dramatic ability for opera--nor can I wish that she had; there are so many thorns with the roses in that path. I fear you will be a loser by Bogne's bankruptcy. Did I tell you that among our friends one of your warmest admirers is Henry Holmes, the great violinist (equal [to] Joachim some think--we among them). Per. & wife & little grandson all well. My love to brother & sister & to Hattie [&] Jessie. Good-bye, dear Walt. I hope to write more & better soon.

ANNE GILCHRIST.

Greetings to the Staffords.

LETTER LXIII

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

12 Well Rd.

Hampstead

Jan. 27, '83.

It is not for want of thinking of you, dear Walt, that I write but seldom: for indeed my thoughts are chiefly occupied with you & your other self--your Poems--& with struggles to say a few words that I think want saying about them; that might help some to their birthright who now stand off, either ignorant or misapprehending.

We all go on much as usual.

Feb. 13. I wonder if you will like a true story of Lady Dilke that I heard the other day--I do: It was before her marriage. She was a handsome young heiress, a daring horsewoman, fond of hunting. There was a man, weakly & of good position, who had behaved very basely & cruelly to a young girl in her neighbourhood, & when (as is the case in England) half the county was assembled on the hunting field, Lady D. faced him & said in a voice that could be heard afar, "Sir you are a black-guard, & if these gentlemen had the right spirit in them they would horsewhip you." He looked at her with effrontery & made a mocking bow. "But," she continued, "since they won't, I will"--and she cut him across the face with her

riding whip; upon which he turned and rode off the field, like a dog with his tail between his legs, & reappeared in that neighbourhood no more. She was a woman much beloved--died at the birth of her first child (from too much chloroform having been given her). Her husband was heart-broken. I see you, too, are having floods. With us it pours five days out of seven, & so in Germany & France. We have made the acquaintance of Arabella Buckley, who has just written an interesting article about Darwin, whom she knew well, for the Century. She says his was the most entirely beautiful & perfect nature she ever came in contact with. How I wish we could have a glimpse of each other, dear Friend--half an hour talk--nay, a good long look & a hand-shake. Herby is overhead painting in his studio--such a pleasant room. How is John Burroughs? We owe him a letter & thanks for a good art. on Carlyle. Love to you, dearest friend.

Hearty remembrances to your brother & sister & Hattie & Jessie.

A. G.

LETTER LXIV

HERBERT H. GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

Keats Corner

Well Road, Hampstead, London, England

April 29th, '83.

MY DEAR WALT:

Your card to hand last night, with its sad account of dear Mrs. Stafford's health; but what the doctor says is cheering. I wonder, though, what the doctor would call good weather--mild spring, I suppose.

Very glad, my dear old Walt, to see your strong familiar handwriting again; it does one good, it's so individual that it is next to seeing you. Right glad to hear of your good health--had an idea that you were not so well again this winter. John Burroughs was very violent against my intaglio; on the other hand, Alma Tadema--our great painter here--liked it very much. I take violent criticism pretty philosophically, now that I see how unreliable it nearly always is. John Burroughs has got a fixed idea about your personality, and that is that the top of your head is a foot high and any portrait that doesn't develop the "dome" is no portrait.--Curious what eyes a man may have for everything except a picture. I finished lately a life-size portrait of James Simmons, J.P., a hunting (fox) squire of the old school--such a fine old fellow. My

portrait represents him standing firmly, in a scarlet hunting-coat well stained with many a wet chase, his great whip tucked under his arm whilst buttoning on his left glove, white buckskin trousers in shade relieving the scarlet coat, black velvet hunting cap, dark rich blue background to qualify and cool the scarlet. I wish you could see it. Then I have painted a subject "The Good Gray Poet's Gift." I have long meant to build up something of you from my studies, adding colour. You play a prominent part in this picture--seated at table bending over a nosegay of flowers, poetizing, before presenting them to mother. I am standing up bending over the tea-pot, with the kettle, filling it up; opposite you sits Giddy; out of the window a pretty view of Cannon place, Hampstead. Mater thinks it a pretty picture and a good likeness of you, just as you used to sit at tea with us at 1729 N. 22nd St. Now I am going out for a stroll on Hampstead Heath. Have just come in from a long ramble over the Heaths--a lovely soft spring day, innumerable birds in full song. I think J. B. is right when he says that your birds are more plaintive than ours--it's nature's way of compensating us for a loss of sunshine: what would England be without the merry lark, the very embodiment of cheeriness. Are not the Carlyle & Emerson letters interesting? It seems to me to be one of the most beautiful and pathetic things in literature, C's fondness for E. But all Englishmen, I must tell you, are not grumblers like Carlyle; he stands quite alone in that quality--look at Darwin!

I should be grateful for another postcard. With all love,

HERB. GILCHRIST.

LETTER LXV

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

Keats Corner

Hampstead

May 6, '83.

DEAREST FRIEND:

I feel as if this beautiful spring morning here in England must send you greetings through me. Our sunny little mound of garden, which runs down toward the south, is fragrant with hyacinths and wall-flowers (beautiful, tawny, reddish, yellow fellows laden with rich perfume)--and at the bottom is a big old cherry tree--one mass of snowy blossom; in a neighbour's gay garden & beyond is a distant glimpse of some tall elms just putting on their first tender green: our little breakfast room where I always sit of a morning opens with glass doors into this garden. Herby is gone with the "Sunday Tramps," of whom he is a member, for a ten or fifteen-mile walk. Said tramps are some half dozen friends & neighbours, some of them very learned professors but genial good fellows withal, who agree to spend every other Sunday morning in taking one of their long walks together--& a very good time they have. Giddy is gone to hear a lecture; our bonnie Scotch girl is roasting the beef for dinner, singing the while in the kitchen; and pussy & I are sitting very companionable & meditative in the little room before described.

You cannot think, dear friend, what a pleasure it was to have a whole big letter from you (not that I despise Postcards--they are good stop-gaps, but not the real thing). Yes, I have & prize the article on the Hebrew Scriptures. How I wish you could make up your mind to spend your summer holiday with us.

I am still struggling along, striving to say something which, if I can say it to my mind, will be useful--will clear away a little of the rubbish that hides you from men's eyes. I hear the "Eminent Women Series" is having quite a large sale in America. Good-bye. Love to Mrs. Whitman. Greetings to your brother. Love from us all to you.

A. GILCHRIST.

LETTER LXVI

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

Keats Corner

Hampstead, Jul. 30, 1883.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

Lazy me, that have been thinking letters to you instead of writing them! We have Dr. Bucke's book at last; could not succeed in buying one at Türbner's--I believe they all sold directly--but he has sent us one. There are some things in it I prize very highly--namely, Helen Price's "Memoranda" and Thomas A. Gere's. These I like far better than any personal reminiscences of you I have ever read & I feel much drawn to the writers of them. Also your letter to Mrs. Price from the Hospitals, dear Friend. That makes one hand-in-hand with you--then & there--& gives one a glimpse of a very beautiful friendship. But why & why did Dr. Bucke set himself to counteract that beneficent law of nature's by which the dust tends to lay itself? And carefully gathering together again all the rubbish stupid or malevolent that has been written of you, toss it up in the air again to choke and blind or disgust as many as it may? What a curious piece of perversity to mistake this for candour & a judicial spirit.[39] Then again, how do I hate all that unmeaning, irrelevant clatter about what Rabelais or Shakespeare or the ancients & their times tolerated in the way of coarseness or plainness of speech. As if you

wanted apologizing for or could be apologized for on that ground! If these poems are to be tolerated, I, for one, could not tolerate them. If they are not the highest lesson that has yet been taught in refinement & purity, if they do not banish all possibility of coarseness of thought & feeling, there would be nothing to be said for them. But they do: I am as sure of that as of my own existence. When will men begin to understand them?

We have had pleasant glimpses of several American friends this summer--of Kate Hillard for instance, who, by the bye narrowly escaped a bad accident just at our door--the harness broke & the cab came down on the horse & frightened him so that he bolted--struck the cab against a lamp-post (happily, else it would have been worse)--overturned them & it--but when they crawled out no worse harm was done than a few cuts from the glass--& Kate & her friend behaved very pluckily, & we had a pleasant evening together after all. Then there was Arthur Peterson, looking much as in the old Philadelphia days: and Emma & Annie Lazarus--who, owing to some letters of introduction from James the novelist, have had a very gay time indeed--been quite lionized--and last, not least, Mr. Dalton Dorr, the curator of the Pennsylvania Museum in Fairmount Park--whom we all liked much. He is enjoying his visit here with all his heart--is a great enthusiast for our old Gothic Cathedrals, and for everything beautiful--but says there is nothing such a source of unceasing wonder & delight as riding about London & over the bridges &c on the top of an omnibus watching the endless flow of people--it is indeed a kind of human Mississippi or Niagara.

The young folks are busy packing up to start for the seaside. Herby wants a background for a picture in which green turf & trees and all the richness of vegetation come down to the very edge of the sea and I seem to remember such a place near Lynn Regis, where I was thirty years ago, when my eldest child was born, so they are going to look it up. We hear the heat is very tremendous in America this year. I hope you are as well as ever able to stand it & enjoy it? I wonder where you are. Friendly greetings to Mr. & Mrs. Whitman & Hattie & Jessie & the Staffords. Love to you, dear Friend, from us all.

ANNE GILCHRIST.

My little book on Mary Lamb just out--will send you a copy in a day or two.

LETTER LXVII

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

Keats Corner

Hampstead

Oct. 13, '83.

DEAREST FRIEND:

Long & long does it seem since I have had any word or sign from you. I hope all goes well & that you have had a pleasant, refreshing summer trip somewhere. All goes on much as usual with us.

Hythe. Kent. Oct. 21. Not having felt very well the last month or two, and Giddy also seeming to need a little bracing up, we came down to this ancient town by the sea--one of the Cinque Ports--on Wednesday, and much we like it--a fine open sea--a delicious "briny odour"--and inland much that is curious and interesting--for this part of the Kentish Coast--so near to France--has innumerable old castles, forts, moats, traces everywhere of centuries of warfare and of means of defence against our great neighbour. It is a fine hilly, woody country, too, and very picturesque these gray massive ruins, many of them used now as farm houses, look. The men of Kent are very proud of their country and are reckoned a fine race--tall, muscular, ruddy-complexioned, and often too with thick, tawny-red beards--curious how in our little island the

differences of race-stock are still so discernible--keep along this same coast to the west only about a couple of hundred miles & you come to such a different type--dark--blackest and Cornish men.--I get a nice letter now & then from John Burroughs. I also saw this summer two women doctors who were very kind & good friends to my darling Bee--Drs. Pope--twin sisters from Boston, whom it did me good to see. They work hard--have a good practice--& say they don't know what a day's illness means so far as they themselves are concerned. They tell me also that the women doctors are doing capital work in America--and that one of them, who was with dear Beatrice at the Penn. Med. Col., Dr. Alice Bennett, is the efficient head of the woman's department of a large lunatic asylum. We are getting on in England too--but the field where English women doctors find the most work & the best position is India, where as the women are not allowed by their male relatives to be attended by men, the mortality was immense.--Herby has taken a better studio than our house afforded--both as to light & size--& finds the advantage great. I expect he is having a delightful walk this brilliant morning with the "Hampstead Tramps"--of whom I think I have told you. They often walk fifteen miles or so on Sunday morning.

Such a glorious afternoon it has been by the sea--sapphire colour--the air brisk & elastic, yet soft. To-morrow Gran goes home & I shall be all alone here.--I hear of "Specimen Days" in a letter from Australia--there will be a large audience for you there some day, dear Friend. I like what John Burroughs has been writing about Carlyle much. We have had nothing but stupidities of late about him here--but there will come a great reaction from all this abuse, I have no doubt--he did put so much gall in his ink sometimes, human nature can't be expected to take it altogether meekly. I

hope you received my little book safely. I should be a hypocrite if I pretended not to care whether you found patience to read it--for I grew to love Mary & Charles Lamb so much during my task that I want you to love them too--& to see what a beautiful friendship was theirs with Coleridge.

How are Mr. & Mrs. Whitman and Hattie & Jessie? Send me a few words soon.

Good-bye, dearest Friend.

ANN GILCHRIST.

LETTER LXVIII

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

Keats Corner

Hampstead

April 5, '84.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

Those few words of yours to Herby "tasted good" to us--few, but enough, seeing that we can fill out between the lines with what you have given us of yourself forever & always in your books--& that is how I comfort myself for having so few letters. But I turn many wistful thoughts toward America, and were not I & mine bound here by unseverable ties, did we not seem to grow & belong here as by a kind of natural destiny that has to be fulfilled very cheerfully, could I make America my home for the sake of being near you in body as I am in heart & soul--but Time has good things in store for us sooner or later, I doubt not. I could hardly express to you how welcome is the thought of death to me--not in the sense of any discontent with life--but as life with fresh energies & wider horizon & hand in hand again with those that are gone on first.

Herby found the little bit of gray cloth very useful--but one day save him an old suit. Your figure in the picture is, I think, a fair

suggestion of one aspect of you; but not, could not of course be, an adequate portrait. He will never rest till he has done his best to achieve that. As soon as he can afford it (for it is a very slow business indeed for a young artist to make money in England, though when he does begin he is better paid than in America) he means to run over to see you. He says he should like always to spend his winters in New York. I say how very highly I prize that last slip you sent me, "A backward glance on my own road"? It both corroborates & explains much that I feel very deeply.--If you are seeing Mrs. Whitman, please say her letter was a pleasure & that I shall write again before very long. I feel as if this letter would never find you--be sure & let us know your whereabouts.

Remembrance & love.

Good-bye, dear Walt.

ANNE GILCHRIST.

LETTER LXIX

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

Hampstead

May 2, '84.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

Your card (your very voice & touch, drawing me across the Atlantic close beside you) was put into my hand just as I was busy copying out "With husky, haughty lips O sea" to pin into my "Leaves of Grass." I hardly think there is anything grander there. I think surely they must see that that is the very Soul of Nature uttering itself sublimely.

Who do you think came to see us on Sunday? Professor Dowden.[40] And I know not when I have set eyes on a more beautiful personality. I think you would be as much attracted towards him as I was. It was he who told me (full of enthusiasm) of the Poems in Harper's which I had not seen or heard of. We had a very happy two or three hours together, talking of you & looking through Blake's drawings. He is a tall man, complexion tanned & healthy, nose finely modelled, dark eyes with plenty of life & meaning in them, hair grayish--I should think he was between forty & fifty--but says his father is still a fine hale old man.

Herby disappointed again this year of getting anything into the R.

Academy.

I think I like the idea of the shanty, if you have any one to take good care of you, to cook nicely, keep all neat & clean &c. I wonder if I have ever been in Mickle St. I, still busy, still hammering away to see if I can help those that "balk" at "Leaves of Grass". Perhaps you will smile at me--at any rate it bears good fruit to me--I seem to be in a manner living with you the while.

Everything full of beauty just now here, as no doubt it is with you.

Good-bye, dearest friend--don't forget the letter that is to come soon.

Love from us all, love & again love from

ANNE GILCHRIST.

LETTER LXX

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

Keats Corner

Aug. 5, '84.

DEAREST FRIEND:

The notion [that] one is going to write a nice long letter is fatal to writing at all. And so I mean to scribble something, somehow, a little oftener & make up in quantity for quality! For after all the great thing, the thing one wants, is to meet--if not in the flesh--then in the spirit. A word will do it. I am getting on--my heart is in my work--& though I have been long about it, it won't be long--but I think & hope it will be strong. Quite a sprinkling of American friends--some new ones this spring--among them Mr. & Mrs. Pennell[41] from Philadelphia--whom you know--we like them well--hope to see them again & again. Also Miss Keyse (her sister married Emerson's son) from Concord, and the Lesleys--Mary Lesley has married & gone to the West--St. Paul--has just got a little son.

How does the "little shanty" answer, I wonder? Herby has been painting some charming little bits in an old terraced garden here. I do wish you could hear Giddy sing now; I am sure her voice would "go to the right spot," as you used to say. Good-bye, dearest friend. Love from all & most

from

ANNE GILCHRIST.

LETTER LXXI

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

Wolverhampton

Oct. 26, '84.

DEAR WALT:

I don't suppose the enclosed will give you nearly so much pleasure as it gives me. But Villiers Stanford is, I think, the best composer England has produced since the days of Purcell & Blow, and your words will be sent home to hundreds & thousands who had not before seen them. How lovely the words read as themes for great music!

I have been staying with old friends who have a house you would enjoy--it stands all alone on the top of a heath-clad hill, with miles of coppice (young woods) below it, and spread out beyond is a rich valley with more wooded hills jutting out into it--and you see the storms a long way off travelling up from the sea, and you can wander for miles & miles through the woods or over the breezy hill--or, as you sit at your window, feel yourself in the very heart of a great, beautiful solitude. Very kind, warm friends, too, they are, who leave you as free as a bird to do what you like. I have had all the papers, dear friend, & have enjoyed them.

Now I am in the heart of the "Black Country," as we call it--black with

the smoke of thousands of foundries & works of all kinds--staying with Percy & his wife. Percy is having a very arduous time here starting some Steel Works--& what with his men being inexperienced & times bad & the machinery not yet perfectly adjusted, he seems harassed night & day--for these things have to be kept going all night too--but I hope he will get into smoother waters soon. The little son is rosy & bright & healthy--goes to school now, which, being an only child, he enjoys mightily for the sake of the companionship of other boys.

Love from us all, dear friend.

A. GILCHRIST.

Grace & Herby well & busy when I left.

LETTER LXXII

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

Keats Corner

Hampstead

Dec. 17, '84.

DEAREST FRIEND:

At last I have extracted a little bit of news about you from friend Carpenter, who never comes to see us and is [as] reluctant to write letters as--somebody else that I know. That you have a comfortable, elderly couple to keep house for you was a good hearing--for "the old shanty" had risen before my eyes as somewhat lonely, & perhaps the cooking, &c., not well attended to.--There seems a curious kind of ebb and flow about the recognition of you in England--just now there are signs of the flow--of a steadily gathering great wave, one indication of which is the little pamphlet just published in Edinburgh--one of the "Round Table" Series--no doubt a copy has been sent you. If not and you would care to see it, I will send you one. On the whole I like it (barring one or two stupidities)--at any rate, as compared with what has hitherto been written. My poor article has so far been rejected by editors--so I have laid it by for a little, to come with a fresh eye & see if I can make it in any way more likely to win a hearing--though I often say to myself, "If they have not ears to hear you, how is it likely one can unstop their

ears?" But on the other hand there is always the chance of leading some to read the Poems who had not else done so.--Percy & Norah and Archie, now grown a very sturdy active little fellow, are coming to spend Xmas with us, which is a great pleasure.

I am deep in Froude's last volumes of "Carlyle's Life in London". Folks are grumbling that they have had enough & too much of Carlyle & his grumblings and sarcasms. But he is an inexhaustibly interesting figure to me, & will remain so in the long run to the world, I am persuaded. It grieves me that he should have been so cruelly unjust to himself as a husband--that remorse, those bitter self-reproaches, were undeserved, were altogether morbid: he was not only an infinitely better husband than she was wife: he was wonderfully affectionate & tender & just--& as to his temper & irritable nerves, she knew what she was about when she married him. Herby was walking through the British Museum the other day with a friend when a group, a ready-made picture, struck him--it was a young student-sculptress, a graceful girl high on a pile of boxes modelling in clay a copy of an antique statue, & standing below, looking up at her, was a young sculptor in his blouse, criticising her work with much animation & gesture; the background of the group, a part of the Elgin Marbles. So this is what Herby is painting & I think he will make a very jolly little picture out of it. I have been much a prisoner to the house with bad colds ever since I returned from Wolverhampton, but am beginning to get out again--which puts new life into me. I have never envied anything in this world but a man's strong legs & powers of tramping, tramping, over hill & dale as long as he pleases--legs would content me and a sound breathing apparatus! I am in no hurry for wings. Giddy's voice, too, is just now

eclipsed by cold.

I hope you have escaped this evil and are able to jaunt to & fro on the ferries as freely as ever. And I hope the pleasant Quaker friends are well--and Mr. & Mrs. Whitman and Hattie & Jessie--there is a fellow student of Giddy's at the Guild Hall music school who so reminds her of Hattie.

Love from us all, dear friend. Most from me.

ANNE GILCHRIST.

LETTER LXXIII

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

Keats Corner

Hampstead, England

Feb. 27, '85.

DEAREST FRIEND:

How has the winter passed with you I wonder? Me it has imprisoned very much with bronchial & asthmatic troubles--and the four walls of the house & the ceiling seem to close in upon one's spirit as well as one's body, all too much. I hope you have been able to wend to and fro daily on the great ferry boats & enjoy the beautiful broad river & the sky & the throngs of people as of old--you are in my thoughts as constantly as ever, though I have been so silent. Percy & his wife & the little son spent some weeks with us at Christmas & now they have taken a house quite near, into which they will be moving in a week or two. I can't tell you what a dear, affectionate, reasonable, companionable little fellow Archie is--now six years old. Perhaps you will have seen in the American papers that Sidney Thomas, the cousin with whom Percy was associated in the discovery of the Basic process, is dead--he spent his strength too freely--wore himself out at 35--he was much loved by all with whom he had to do. His mother & sister have been watching & hoping against hope & taking him to warm climates, he himself full of hope--the mind bright and active to the

last--& now he is gone--& his eldest brother died only two months before him.--I cannot help grieving over public affairs too--never in my lifetime has old England been in such a bad way--no honest & capable man seemingly to take the helm--& what Carlyle was fond of describing as the attempt to guide the ship by the shouts of the bystanders on shore--the newspapers &c. prospering very ill. A government that tries perpetually how to do it and how not to do it at the same moment! The best comfort is that I do not think there is any, the smallest sign, of deterioration in the English race; so we shall pull through somehow, after tremendous disasters. How many things should I like to sit and chat with you about, dear Walt--above all to see you again! I could not get my article into any of the magazines I most wished. I believe it is coming out in To-Day. Giddy was so pleased at your sending her a paper--a very capital article too it is of Miss Kellogg. I was interested also in a little paragraph I found about Pullman town, near Chicago, which confirmed my suspicion that it was not a thing with healthy roots--but only a benevolent despotism. I am seeing a good deal of your socialists just now--& I confess that though they mean well, I think they have less sense in their heads than any people I ever saw.

I am going to pay a little visit to those friends (friendliest of friends) who live on the lonely top of a heath-covered hill--with such an outlook, such wooded slopes and broad valleys--and the storms travelling up hours before they arrive--such sweeps of sunshine too!--& they mean to drive me about till I am quite strong again. So the next letter I write, dear Friend, shall be more cheery. I am afraid to look back lest this one should read too grumbly to send. I don't feel grumbly however--only shut

in. Herby has been working hard at getting up an exhibition here to help along our Public Library. It is so very hard to stir up anything like public spirit & unity of action in London or its suburbs--I suppose because of its vastness--& alas! also the social cliques & gentilities & snobbishnesses. Good-bye, dearest Walt, with love from all.

ANNE GILCHRIST.

LETTER LXXIV

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

Hampstead

May 4, '85.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

Delays of Editors--there is no end to them! I am promised now that the art. shall appear in the June No., & if it does I will send you at once the number of copies you name. And if it does not, I think I had best get it back & have done with the editors of To-day & try for some other & better opening again.

I have been reading & re-reading & pondering over Froude's 9 vols of Carlyle--"The Reminiscences," "Letters," &c. &c.--and am pretty well at boiling point with indignation against Froude--boiling point of anger & freezing point of contempt. His betrayal at every point of a sacred trust! lazy, slipshod editing! not even taking the pains to put letters and their answers together--but printing the one in 1882 & the others three or four years after--so that half the meaning and all the mutuality of the letters are lost! And then the sly malignity of the comments with which they are preceded! If I live I will do my utmost to expose all this & to show that Mrs. Carlyle was no injured heroine, nor he a selfish & neglected husband. Both had their faults, but the balance of affection &

tenderness was largely on his side, as well as of other great qualities: though I like her too--& think she would have scorned Froude's ignoble championship.

Herby has had rather better luck with his pictures this year. Has one--"The Sculptor's Lesson"--fairly well hung at the Royal Academy--where it shines out very cheerfully & holds its own modestly, I may say without maternal vanity. I think I described to you the little bit of actual life it depicts--a young girl he saw at the British Museum modelling a copy of an antique statue & young sculptor in his blouse standing below & giving her some animated criticism--a little bit of the Elgin marbles in the background. Herb. has also a little picture he calls "Midsummer"--a bit of a very old & buttressed wall hung with roses in full bloom, & Giddy's figure standing above--at the Grosvenor. Now if he has the luck to sell too! He has a commission also to paint a small portrait of me for our friends at Marley, on which he is busy just now. As soon as he has a little spare money in his pocket I think his first use of it will be a run across the Atlantic & a glimpse of you, dear Friend. Giddy is going to sing at a Soiree of socialists & revolutionary folk in general on Wednesday. Her songs are to be "The Wearing of the Green"--& "Poland Dirge" & the "Marseillaise". You will think we are getting pretty red hot! But alas! though our sympathy with the Cause--the cause of suffering millions--is warm, our faith in the wisdom & ability of those who are aspiring to be the leaders, so far as we know anything of them--is infinitesimal.

What a burst of beauty we have had during the last ten days! We look out

just now on a sea of apple & pear blossoms, from the deepest pink to dazzling white--& the tenderest green intermingled with all. I hope you are able to be out nearly all day & enjoy all--and that home affairs go smoothly & comfortably & that Mrs. Davis[42] is attentive & good & every way adequate as care-taker.

I am looking forward very much to the "After Songs" and "Letters of Parting". Does the sale of "Leaves of Grass" continue pretty steady? I look forward with a sort of dread to seeing my article in proof, lest I should feel very disappointed with it.

Your loving friend,

A. GILCHRIST.

Do you ever see or hear from Mr. Marvin? He is a favourite with all of us. Do you remember how we laughed at his dramatic presentation of a negro prayer meeting?

LETTER LXXV

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

Hampstead, London

Jan. 21, 85.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

I hope the To-days have come safe to hand. I am thinking a great deal about the new edition; and cannot help hoping you are going to revert to the plan of the Centennial Edition, which issued your writings in two independent volumes. May I, without being presumptuous, dear Walt, tell you how I should dearly like to see them arranged? I want "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," "Song at Sunset," "Song of the Open Road," "Starting from Paumanok," "Carol of Words," "Carol of Occupations" and either as "As I Sat by Blue Ontario's Shore" or the Preface to edit. 55 put into "Two Rivulets"--you could make room for them that the volumes might balance in size by making them exchange places with the "Centennial Songs" and the "Memoranda During the War"; not that these are not precious to me, but I want it dearest because I want in the Two Rivulet Volume what will best prepare the reader, lift him up to the true point of view, and make him all your own, before he comes to the inner sanctuary of "Calamus" & "Walt Whitman" & "Children of Adam."

Monday morn. Your letter just to hand. It gives me deep joy, dear Friend.

I have sent copies of To-Day to Dr. Bucke & John Burroughs but did not know of his change of address; so fear it has miscarried. I will send another, and also one to W. O'Connor.--You did not tell me about your fall--unless indeed a letter has been lost. It fills me with concern because of the difficulty it increases in getting that free out-door life that is so dear & essential to your soul & body, and because, too, I still cherished in my heart a hope that I should yet see you again--here in my own home--& now it seems next to an impossibility. Right thankful am I to hear about Mrs. Davis--that she takes good care of you--please give her a friendly greeting from me. I am going to have rather a bothersome summer--first of all, the house full of workmen to make all clean & tidy; & then my Scotch lassie, friend & factotum rather than servant, must have a holiday & go to her friends in Scotland for a month. I shall heartily welcome your friend, no need to say, & be sure to like her. Love from Grace & Herb. & most of all from me. I have plenty more to say but won't delay this.

Good-bye, dear Walt.

ANNE GILCHRIST.

LETTER LXXVI

ANNE GILCHRIST TO WALT WHITMAN

12 Well Rd., Hampstead, Eng.

July 20, '85.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

A kind of anxiety has for some time past weighed upon me and upon others, I find, who love & admire you, that you do not have all the comforts you ought to have; that you are perhaps sometimes straightened for means. We have had letters from several young men, almost or quite strangers to us, asking questions on this subject; and we hoped & thought that if this were so, you would permit those who have received such priceless gifts from you to put their gratitude into some tangible shape, some "free-will offering." Hence the paragraph was put into the Athenaeum which I send with this, and we were proceeding to organize our forces when your paper came to hand this morning (the Camden Post, July 3), which seems decisively to bid us desist. Or at all events wait till we had told you of our wishes and plan. One thing would, I feel sure, give you pleasure in any case; and that is to know that there is over here a little band--perhaps indeed it is now quite a considerable one, for we had not yet had time to ascertain how considerable--who would joyfully respond to that Poem of yours, "To Rich Givers."

A friend and near neighbour of ours, Frederick Wedmore, is coming over to America this autumn, and counts much on coming to see you. He is a well-known writer on Art here--a friendly, candid, open-minded man with whom, I think, you will enjoy a talk.

I am on the lookout for Miss Smith[43]--shall indeed enjoy a talk with a special friend of yours, dear Walt. I hope she will not fail to come. Giddy is away at Haslemere. Herby just going to write for himself to you.

That is a very graphic bit in the Post--the portrait of Hugo, the canary & the kitten--I like to know all that--as well as to hear the talk.

My love, dear Walt.

ANNE GILCHRIST.

So far as can be ascertained this is the last letter. Anne Gilchrist died
Nov. 29th, 1885.

THE END

Footnotes:

[1] Reprinted from the Radical for May, 1870.

[2] Reprinted from "Anne Gilchrist, Her Life and Writings," by her son Herbert H. Gilchrist--London, 1887.

[3] Reprinted from Horace Traubel's "With Walt Whitman in Camden," I, 219-220. Although addressed to Rossetti, this letter is evidently intended as much for Mrs. Gilchrist, whose name was not at this time known to Whitman.

[4] Alexander Gilchrist.

[5] Mrs. Gilchrist's emotion here apparently prevents her memory from doing complete justice to her own past. For a very different expression of her feelings toward Alexander Gilchrist, written at the time of her betrothal, see her letter announcing the engagement which she sent to her friend, Julia Newton, and which is to be found on pp. 30-31 of her son's biography.

[6] William Michael Rossetti.

[7] To W. M. Rossetti. See ante, p. x.

[8] First printed in Horace Traubel's "With Walt Whitman in Camden," III, 513.

[9] Evidently meaning the letter of September 3d.

[10] Missing.

[11] Percy Carlyle Gilchrist who became an inventive metallurgist.

[12] Herbert Harlakenden Gilchrist, who became an artist.

[13] Printed from copy retained by Whitman.

[14] To deliver his Dartmouth College ode.

[15] William Douglas O'Connor, an ardent Washington friend of Whitman.

[16] John Burroughs, the naturalist, then a young author and disciple of Whitman.

[17] Anne Gilchrist's son.

[18] Horace Greeley, nominated by the Democrats as their candidate for the Presidency.

[19] Burlington, Vermont, where Whitman's sister, Mrs. Heyde, lived.

[20] Henry M. Stanley, African Explorer.

[21] Undated. Made up from copy among Whitman's papers. This letter evidently belongs to the summer of 1873.

[22] The "Prayer of Columbus" was first published in Harper's Magazine in March, 1874.

[23] John Cowardine. See "Anne Gilchrist, Her Life and Writings," pp. 149 ff.

[24] Daughters of Thomas Jefferson Whitman.

[25] Mrs. George Whitman.

[26] Sister.

[27] Niece.

[28] Sidney Morse, the sculptor.

[29] "Man's Moral Nature," by Dr. Richard Maurice Bucke.

[30] This extract (?) is taken from H. H. Gilchrist's "Anne Gilchrist," p. 252. It is undated, but it is clearly a reply to the foregoing letter from Mrs. Gilchrist.

[31] Durham Cathedral.

[32] Anne Gilchrist's grandchild.

[33] Reproduced in "Anne Gilchrist, Her Life and Writings," facing p. 253.

[34] Richard Watson Gilder.

[35] Of Timber Creek, Camden County, New Jersey, whose hospitality helped Whitman to improve his health.

[36] The second edition of Alexander Gilchrist's "William Blake."

[37] Because of the death of her daughter Beatrice.

[38] Whitman's London publisher.

[39] Dr. Bucke, in his "Life of Whitman," had reprinted at the end of the volume many criticisms of the poet, adverse as well as favourable;

likewise W. D. O'Connor's "Good Gray Poet."

[40] Edward Dowden, of the University of Dublin.

[41] Artists, famous for their etchings. Mr. Pennell made several etchings for Dr. Bucke's biography of Whitman.

[42] Mrs. Mary Davis, who was Whitman's housekeeper until his death.

[43] Daughter of Pearsall Smith, of Philadelphia.