



Edinburgh, March 29, 1843

My dear friend

Whitewashing season has again returned with all its accompaniments of rubbing - scrubbing - scouring & polishing, so graphically described by Chambers, in one of his papers. - "I" all desolated & lonely" have smothered till the very points of my fingers are aching. Painters & paper-hangers have been my most frequent companions for the last week. We have got the Diningroom papered & have removed our sitting-room to the sunny side of the house; also the Nursery, alias my room, which is a decided improvement. - Well, after all, you lords of the creations are rather enviable as otherwise! you adopt a business or profession, & by giving due attention to it you become proficient. But woman! hurried from one occupation to another seldom gets above mediocrity even in the commonplace routine of ordinary duties. - I know that it is not intended we should ever enjoy that extent of capacity or strength of judgment

which you do, but still by better training we might surely be made more fit companions for you. If in anything we excel it is surely in the quickness of our perceptions, & in conversation; for this last we get little credit - it proves too frequently a source of annoyance. "I cannot help thinking that those who make" "a display of their own imperfections, are only angling for praise": says Gray - you must not think this my motive when I say, judging from my own mind & observation of others, I believe nearly half of woman's existence is spent in a sort of dreamy consciousness - ideas fleeting across her mind, without one being definitely arranged or followed out. But what was my starting point? - whitewashing! - & how has it led me into such a train of thought as to make a comparison between the mind of man & woman? I had better leave off, before dipping too deep in a subject too abstract for me to follow out.

Our Musical Meeting, which I mentioned, gave great satisfaction both to Mr. Muller & the audience. We have not finished our first course & we managed to sing several pieces in two & three parts. The principal object aimed at, is to enable us to sing by sight, independent of any instrument. Our progress showed the

efficacy of this mode of teaching. In the opposite system  
(Mainz) they trust to the memory of sounds given them  
by a piano forte. Their exhibition of pupils was a total  
failure, notwithstanding the contrary has been blazoned  
forth in the newspapers.

We received the paper you sent by last Packet & the slip  
inside. I suppose you will have got my letter sent by  
this month's Packet. This is the first time I have written  
to you without having one from you to answer. - had  
you told me I would have done so, when you were here,  
I would not have credited it; but letterwriting is  
not now so irksome a task to me as it used to be.  
The desk which you gave me has proven a very useful  
gift; many a line & letter I have written, which never  
would have been, had I not had it - formerly the  
time & trouble needed to collect the materials necessary  
for writing too often presented me, but now I have wrought  
but open my desk & everything requisite lies before  
me: if interrupted - close it, with the assurance, that  
when I return I shall find all things undisturbed &  
safe as when I left them.

Marion has been with us for a few days. M. Pinnerose  
having been travelling. She went home yesterday. I shall  
not say positively that you will receive a letter from  
her

with this but I got her to half promise to write;  
married ladies find so much to occupy their time  
& attention, yet gratitude - duty, ought to urge her.

You will perhaps be surprised at the light-hearted  
strain of this letter having lately received such a  
soleful one, had I written according to the general  
tone of my feelings it would have been a dull one  
indeed, but I feel my spirits particularly light tonight  
& I am glad of it. It vexes me when I think about hav-  
ing bothered you with allusions to my troubles: one  
can scarcely help writing in unison with the humor  
they are in at the time - however I have found the  
good old-fashioned duties of active domestic employ-  
ment an excellent remedy for diseases of the mind.

I hope you will find the seeds properly assorted. I took  
Mr. Lawson they were for a dealer & consequently got them  
at wholesale price - got a few of the newest annuals to run  
up the money. - Mother was at Bathgate lately, Mr. Dewar  
is suffering a good deal from the infirmities of age but  
is free from any palpable disease - she desires to be remem-  
bered to your Mother. Mother & Father join me in sending  
kind regards to your parents & self.

My relations are all  
well at present

Yours very sincerely

Margaret G. Mercer