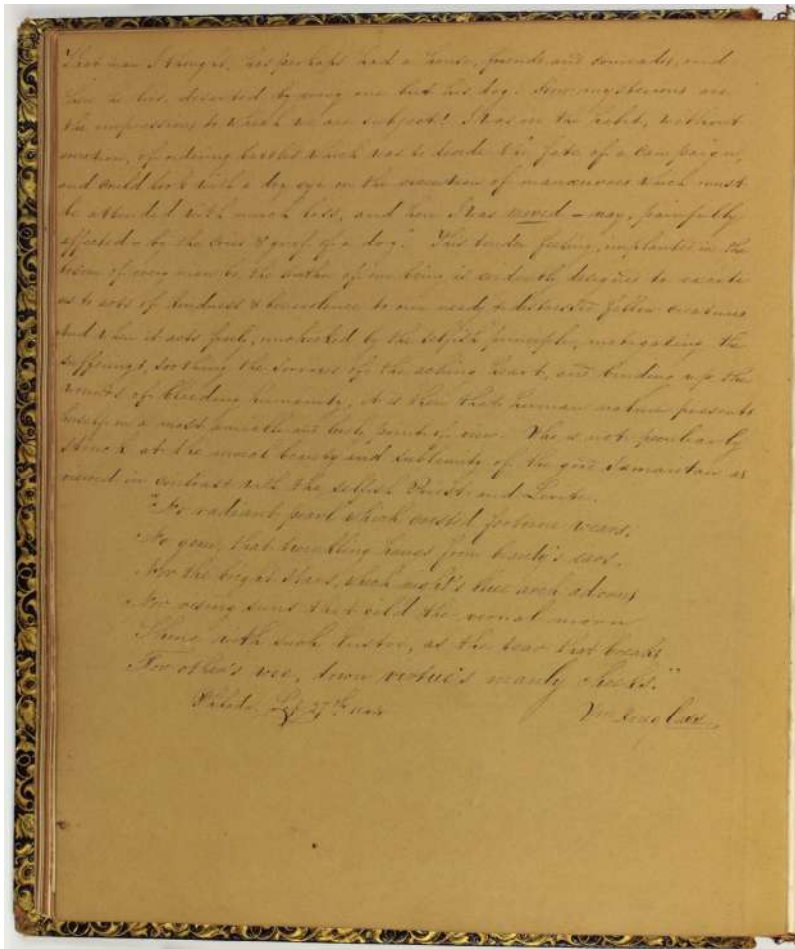


Martina Dickerson Album

Pages 22, 22v

S. Lympsett's

Sympathy, as depicted in case of distress, is that tender affection which is common to man. Though not equally strong in all, the presence of it is not to be entirely without in any. Often and too many hearts, far from this tender and warm benevolent connection, are rendered under the influence, though such some of the nature, cold and distant. Kind and unfeeling as the same nature is, yet desire the absence evidence of being fully alive to the genuine principle that enters into the feelings of another's vice, ambition and the fondness of power, but just forward the way in a course of blood and carnage, leaving others in stress and distress, the ground with height of stain, holes, an eye for an eye, hand for hand, the natural affection of humanity, but could not withstand it. A noble and generous spirit, whose common & expressive phrase was, that the heart of a politician should be in his hat, showed on a certain occasion, that though his military habits and his unconquerable thirst for supreme power, enabled him to behold unmoved the slaughter of human beings by thousands and tens of thousands, that he was nevertheless susceptible of sympathetic feelings. As he sat there, gazing on a field of battle in that, he saw a husband lay dying on the body of his slain master. The creature came towards him, then sitting to the dead body, mourned over it, pitied, and cannot be with him again. He then it was the feeling of the moment, and must have been the same, the same, or the circumstances itself. How much is depicted of any thing of more which I have seen on a field of battle!



Headnote:

Written on September 27, 1844 by the Reverend William Douglass of the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas in Philadelphia, this entry in Martina Dickerson's friendship album evokes the empathy of men despite the harsh and often brutal realities they often have to confront. Douglass effectively does this by using the experience of Napoleon Bonaparte during his first Italian Campaign (1792-1797) and a grieving dog mourning the death of its owner on the battlefield. Douglass concludes his entry with a portion of the poem, "The Botanic Garden", written by Erasmus Darwin (grandfather of Charles Darwin) in 1791.

Transcription:

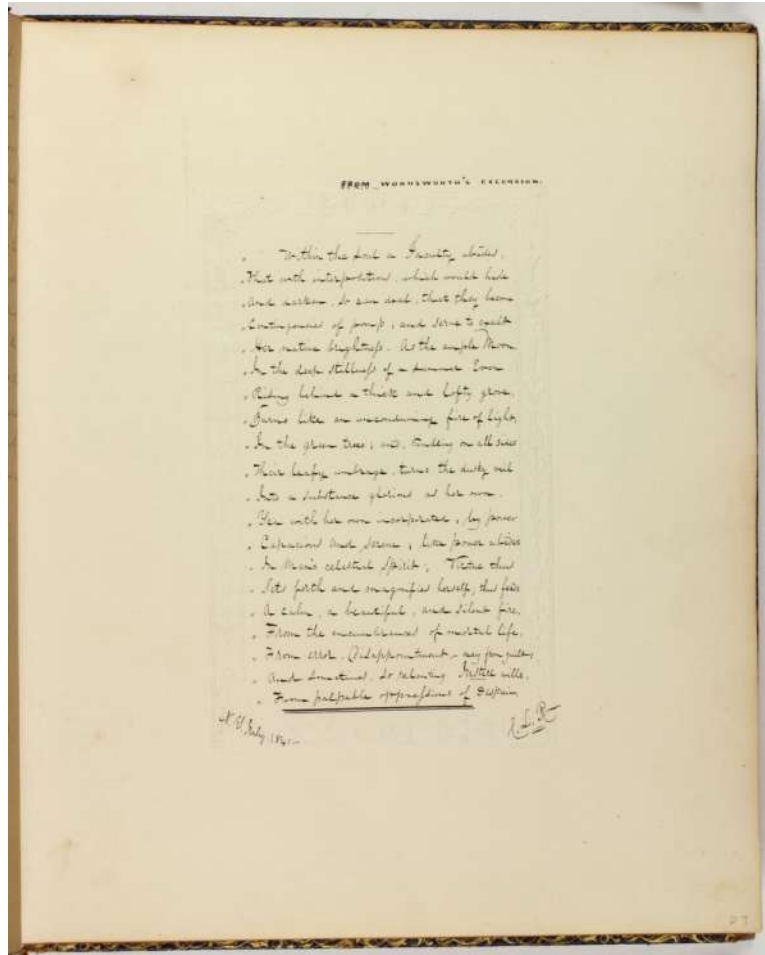
Sympathy

Sympathy, as it operates in view of distress, is that tender affection which is common to man. Though not equally strong in all, we presume it is not wholly extinct in any. Often has the weary traveller, far from his kindred and home been refreshed & nourished under the hospitable, though rude dome of the native child of the forest. Wild and untutored as he unquestionably is, yet does he give the clearest evidence of being fully alive to the generous principle that enters into the feelings of another's woe. Ambition and the pride of power that push forward the hero in a career of blood & carnage, laying cities in ashes and strewing the ground with heaps of slain bodies; may for awhile, blunt this natural affection of humanity, but cannot wholly eradicate it. Napoleon Buonaparte, whose common & expressive phrase was, that "the heart of a politician should be in his head," showed on a certain occasion, that though his military habits and his unconquerable thirst for supreme power enabled him to behold unmoved the slaughter of human beings by thousands and tens of thousands, that he was nevertheless susceptible of sympathetic feelings. "As he with others passed over a field of battle in Italy, he saw a houseless dog lying on the body of his slain master. The creature came towards them, then returned to the dead body, moaned over it pitifully, and seemed to ask their assistance. Whether it were the feeling of the moment continued Napoleon, the scene, the hour, or the circumstance itself, I was never so deeply affected by anything which I have seen on a field of battle. (22v) That man I thought, has perhaps had a house, friends and comrades, and here he lies, deserted by every one but his dog. How mysterious are the impressions to which we are subject! I was in the habit, without emotion, of ordering battles which was to decide the fate of a campaign, and could look with a dry eye on the execution of maneuvers which must be attended with much loss, and here I was moved — nay, painfully affected — by the cries & grief of a stray dog." This tender feeling, implanted in the bosom of every man by the author of our being is evidently designed to excite us to acts of kindness & benevolence to our needy & distressed fellow creatures. And when it acts freely, unchecked by the selfish principle, mitigating the sufferings, soothing the sorrows of the aching heart, and binding up the wounds of bleeding humanity, it is then that human nature presents herself in a most amiable and lovely point of view. Who is not peculiarly struck at the moral beauty and sublimity of the good Samaritan as viewed in contrast with the selfish Priest and Levite.

"No radiant pearl which crested fortune wears,
No gem, that twinkling hangs from beauty's ears,
Nor the bright stars, which night's blue arch adorns
Nor rising suns that gild the vernal morn
Shine with such lustre, as the tear that breaks
For other's woe, down virtue's manly cheeks."

Philada. Sep. 27th 1844

Wm Douglass



Headnote:

Charles L. Reason contributed "Despondency Corrected," a portion of William Wordsworth's nine-part poem "The Excursion," in July 1841.

Transcription:

From Wordsworth's Excursion.

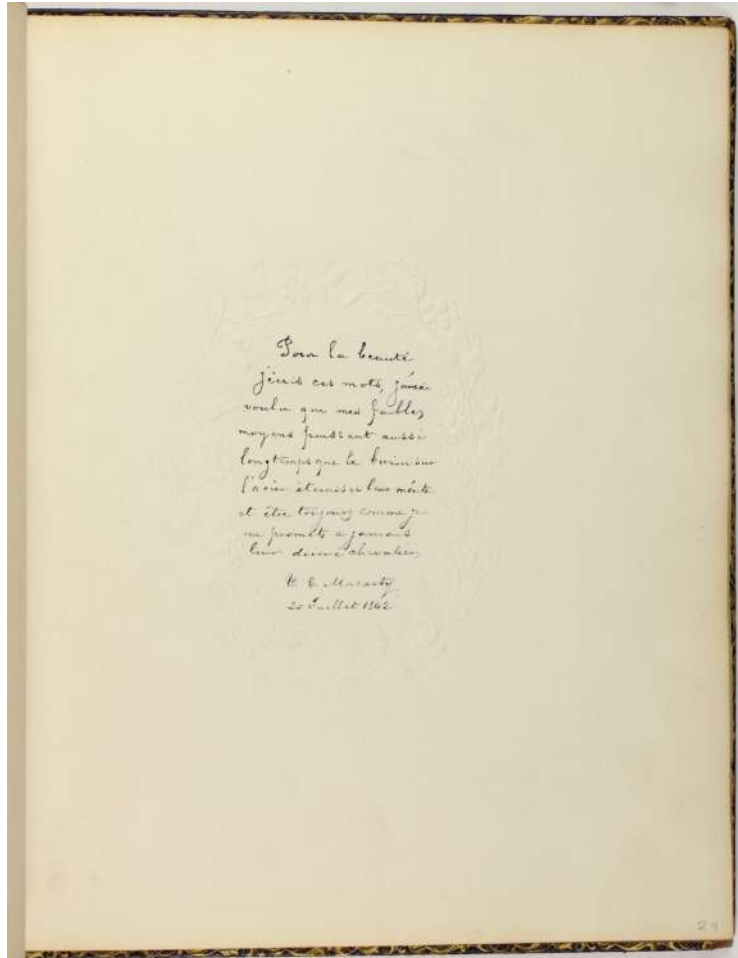
Within the soul a faculty abides,
That with interpositions, which would hide
And darken, so can deal, that they become
Contingencies of pomp; and serve to exalt
Her native brightness. As the ample moon,
In the deep stillness of a summer even
Rising behind a thick and lofty grove,
Burns like an unconsuming fire of light,
In the green trees; and, kindling on all sides
Their leafy umbrage, turns the dusky veil
Into a substance glorious as her own.
Yea with her own incorporated, by power
Capacious and serene; like power abides
In man's celestial spirit; virtue thus
Sets forth and magnifies herself; thus feeds
A calm, a beautiful, and silent fire,
From the encumbrances of mortal life,
From error, disappointment, — nay, from guilt;
And sometimes, so relenting justice wills,
From palpable oppressions of despair.

N.Y. July 1841

C.L.R.

Martina Dickerson Album

Page 29



Headnote:

A French love poem inscribed by V.E. Macarty (possibly of the Macartys of New Orleans).

Transcription:

French:

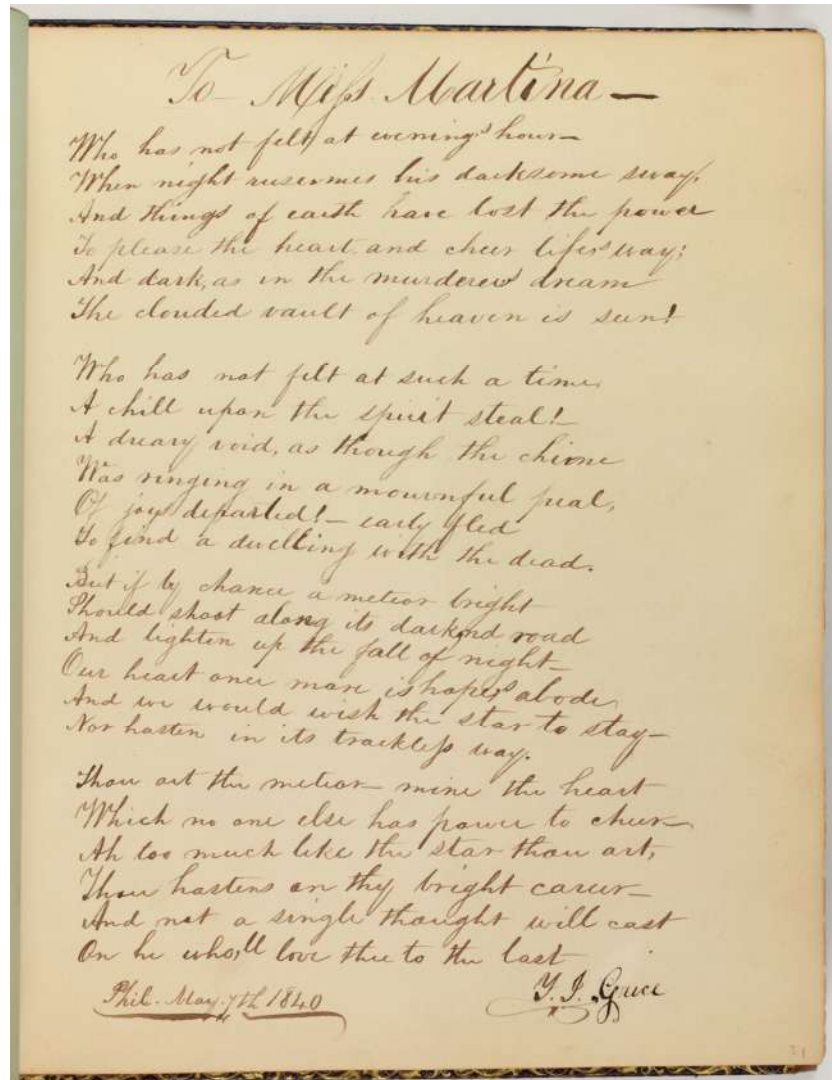
Pour la beauté
j'écris ces mots, j'aurais
voulu que mes faibles
moyens puissent aussi
longtemps que le burin sur
l'ancien éterniser leur mérite
et être toujours comme je
me promets à jamais
leur dévoué chevalier

V.E. Macarty
20 Juillet 1842

Our English translation:

For Beauty
I write these words
wishing my lowly means
can also be the long
ancient chisel of eternal merit
and will always be as I promised
forever your devoted knight

V.E. Macarty
July 20, 1842



Headnote:

Written to "Miss Martina" on May 7, 1840 and signed by Y. J. Grice of Philadelphia, per scholar Mary Maillard, the poem emphasizes how Martina has not felt despair given her young age. Y.J. Grice reminds Dickerson how much her "star" is needed to shine upon those who treasure her.

Transcription:

To Miss Martina –

Who has not felt at evening's hour –
When night resumes his darksome sway,
And things of earth have lost the power
To please the heart and cheer life's way;
And dark, as in the murderer's dream
The clouded vault of heaven is seen!

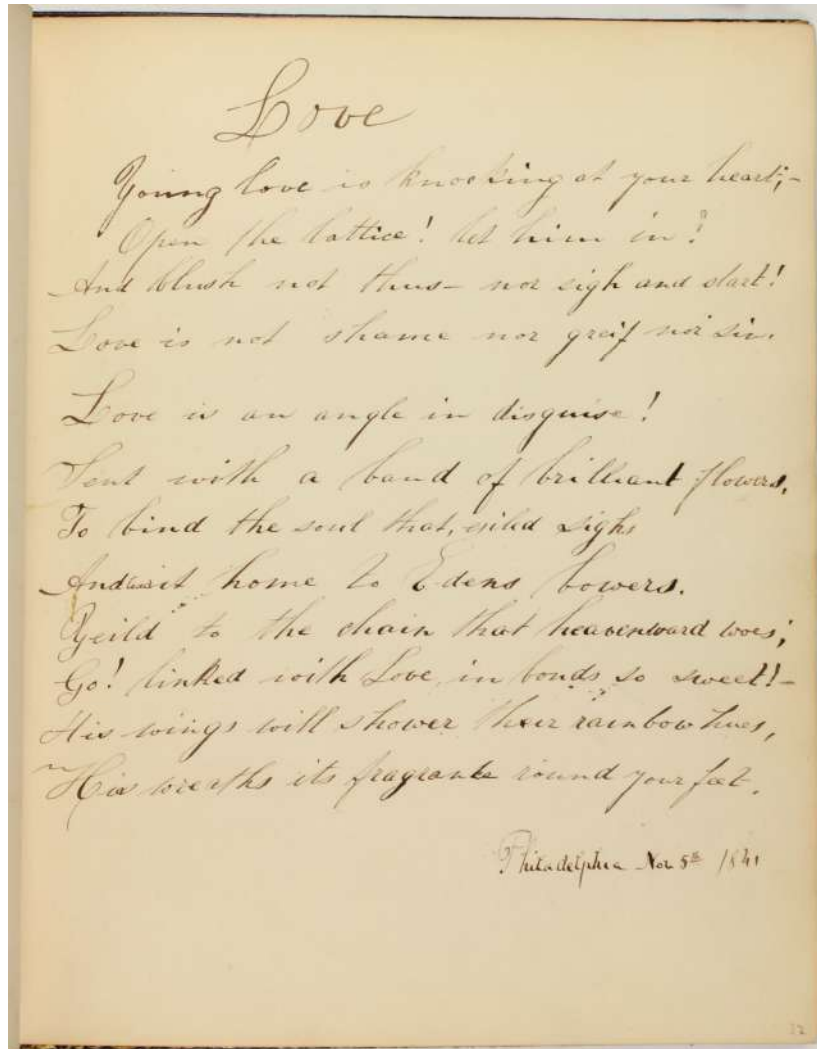
Who has not felt at such a time,
A chill upon the spirit steal!
A dreary void, as though the chime
Was ringing in a mournful peal,
Of joys departed! — early fled
To find a dwelling with the dead.

But if by chance a meteor bright
Should shoot along its darkened road
And lighten up the fall of night –
Our heart once more is hope's abode
And we would wish our star to stay –
Nor hasten in its trackless way.

Thou art the meteor — mine the heart
Which no one else has power to cheer –
Ah too much like the star thou art,
Thou hastens on thy bright career –
And not a single thought will cast
On he who'll love thee to the last

Phil. May 7th 1840

Y.J. Grice



Headnote:

This poem was a contribution by an unknown individual to Martina Dickerson's album. The poem in particular speaks to the bond of love shared between two African American friends/associates in the early 19th century.

More specifically the poem seems to represent the power of unyielding love from one person to another. Across distance and time for many African Americans in the early 19th century, love for one another had no boundaries.

Transcription:

Love

Young Love is knocking at your heart;—
Open the lattice! Let him in!
And blush not thus-nor sigh and start!
Love is not shame nor grief nor sin.
Love is an angle in disguise!
Sent with a band of brilliant flowers,
To find the soul that, exiled sighs
And lead it home to Edens bowers.
Yield to the chain that heavenward woes;
Go! linked with love in bonds so sweet!
His wings will shower their rainbow hues,
His wreaths its fragrance round your feet.
Philadelphia Nov. 5th 1841