

Elizabeth Barrett Browning's Plagiarism of Mathew Franklin Whittier

By Stephen Sakellarios, M.S. © 2021 (revised May 2022)

"Come little infant, love me now,
While thy unsuspected years
Clear thy aged father's brow
From cold jealousy and fears."

Come...little *child*, sit with me now, ...while thy unsuspected years...while your *youthful* years clear your aged *mother's* brow...from cold jealousy and fears...from *hot worries* and fears.—"Larkrise to Candleford," character of Pearl Pratt, Series 4, Episode 2.

Committing the unthinkable—suspecting Elizabeth Barrett Browning of plagiarism

As of this writing, Mathew Franklin Whittier, younger brother of 19th-century Quaker poet John Greenleaf Whittier, has been this author's subject of intensive study for well over a decade. M.F. Whittier has emerged from that study as a literary child prodigy with a 54-year career. He wrote in many different genres, but he published almost all of his work anonymously. Many authors adopted pseudonyms in the Victorian era, but typically they used them as familiar nick-names.. Mathew, however, employed a vast number of different pseudonyms in order to remain hidden. In part, this was a personal preference; partly it became a necessity, when he began involving himself in clandestine work for the abolitionist movement. In any case, not only did he hide his authorship, but he refused to publicly defend his work when it was stolen, or mistakenly attributed by rumor to other authors. This created the perfect conditions for plagiarism; but because he was inspired, exceptionally talented and extremely prolific, his work made several of his plagiarists famous—some of them, world-famous. That is our underlying premise, and it has been substantiated elsewhere. The purpose of this paper is to expose one of these plagiarists—a beloved author whom, so far as this writer is aware, no-one has hitherto suspected. Neither would he have suspected her, had he not run directly into irrefutable evidence. We are speaking of the celebrated British poet, Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

Disclaimer

The writer must add a disclaimer, here, that his research into the historical Mathew Franklin Whittier began as a study of reincarnation—specifically, to see whether a felt recognition for Whittier's portrait, which had been accidentally encountered online in mid-2005, indicated an authentic past-life match. The subsequent discovery of his literary legacy was a natural outgrowth of delving more and more deeply into the historical record. This paper will not draw heavily on the reincarnation-related elements of that study, but will reference them occasionally in due course.

Plagiarism, a persistent problem for Mathew

Mathew's first wife and soul-mate, Abby Poyen Whittier, died of consumption on March 27, 1841, two weeks after she and Mathew lost their second child, eight-month-old Sarah Greenleaf Whittier. They had been forced by circumstances to live in a Portland, Maine hotel during the

winter, where past-life memory suggests it was drafty, but Abby was taken by her sisters back to her father's house in East Haverhill, Mass. a few days before she died. It was one of Mathew's personal traits to clamp down hard on his emotions, appearing to everyone else to be coping; but the loss nearly drove him insane. During the first few months, he immersed himself in a study of Abby's metaphysical and spiritual texts, and he wrote a series of tributes to her. Some of these he began sharing with various prominent literary figures, most probably in the first half of 1842. He did not limit himself to his native America—he also sent packets overseas. One appears to have ended up with a writer signing as “Piers Shafton,” who modified Mathew's stories to a greater or lesser extent, and published them under his own pseudonym. A piece which I have concluded was definitely Mathew's work, appears in “The Illuminated Magazine” which was published in London by Douglas Jerrold, entitled “A Night Wi' The Industrious Fleas.” This humorous sketch, my estimation, is substantially as Mathew had originally written it. In concept, one may compare this fanciful social satire to “Some Words with a Mummy,” which, in this writer's estimation, Edgar Allan Poe plagiarized from Mathew.



The question of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's plagiarism of Mathew's work came up via a circuitous route—a fluke, really-speaking. It so happens that when “The Raven” was published in 1845, readers noticed a strange correlation with a poem published the previous year by Elizabeth Barrett (who was not yet married to Robert Browning), entitled “Lady Geraldine's Courtship.” It became apparent that each contained a nearly-identical line about “purple curtains.” In “Lady Geraldine's Courtship” we read:

With a murmurous stir, uncertain, in the air, the purple curtain

while in “The Raven” is found the line:

And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain

In order to explain what appeared to be blatant plagiarism not only concerning this particular line, as well as imitation of the literary style of the entire poem, when Poe released his own compilation, “The Raven and Other Poems” in mid-1845, he lavishly dedicated it to Barrett:

TO THE NOBLEST OF HER SEX—

TO THE AUTHOR OF

“THE DRAMA OF EXILE”—

TO MISS ELIZABETH BARRETT
BARRETT,

OF ENGLAND,

I DEDICATE THIS VOLUME,

WITH THE MOST ENTHUSIASTIC ADMIRATION

AND WITH THE MOST SINCERE ESTEEM.

This, in the world of corporate public relations, is called “damage control.” Poe would rather have been viewed as a gushing admirer of Barrett (which was bad enough), than a plagiarist—and he would *much* rather be thought so, than for it to be suspected that *both* of them had plagiarized the same man! The only thing in this dedication which would have been “most sincere admiration and esteem,” was Poe’s admiration for Barrett as a fellow-thief. Certainly his earlier *review* of her compilation had not been filled with unqualified praise. For example, in his assessment of the 1845 American reprinting of her compilation (which featured five of the poems she plagiarized from Mathew), “The Drama of Exile, and Other Poems,”¹ he writes:

Of the twenty-eight “Sonnets,” which immediately succeed the “Drama of Exile,” and which receive the especial commendation of Blackwood, we have no very enthusiastic opinion. The *best* sonnet is objectionable from its extreme artificiality; and, to be effective, this species of composition requires a minute management—a well-controlled dexterity of touch—compatible neither with Miss Barrett’s deficient constructiveness, nor with the fervid rush and whirl of her genius. Of the particular instances here given, we prefer “the Prisoner,” of which the conclusion is particularly beautiful. In general, the themes are obtrusively metaphysical, or didactic.

Agreeing with the British critics, the one poem he favorably singles out is “Lady Geraldine’s Courtship”:

“The Lady Geraldine” is, we think, the only poem of its author which is not deficient, considered as an artistical whole.

It is worth noting, in this context, that Elizabeth Barrett modified the line concerning “purple curtains” for her 1845 reprinting in America, “A Drama of Exile and Other Poems.” There, it reads as follows, with the original given for comparison underneath:

With a rushing stir, uncertain, in the air, the purple curtain
Swellleth in and swelleth out around her motionless pale brows;

With a murmurous stir, uncertain, in the air, the purple curtain
Swellleth in and swelleth out around her motionless pale brows;

What we have is the type of unthinking revision which might be expected from a plagiarist. Unlike “murmurous” air, “rushing” air does not “stir” curtains or “swell” them—it flaps them or billows them. Nor is rushing air, i.e., a strong breeze, “uncertain.” Nor does “rushing” air reflect the mood of Lady Geraldine, in this context, as “murmurous” air does. In short, the replacement may sound slightly better to the ear, but it entirely contradicts the meaning being conveyed, and hence the intent of the original poet. It is, therefore, clearly not an *improvement* by Barrett on her own poetry, but rather an ignorant substitution inserted into a better poet’s work, based on superficial considerations.

Examining “Lady Geraldine’s Courtship”

This discovery of the matching “curtains” lines suggested taking a closer look at this poem. It *immediately* engendered a profound sense of intuitive recognition, as a deeply personal account of Mathew’s courtship with Abby. When Mathew wrote of their relationship, in tribute—which he did many times—he would typically alter, or even reverse, a few selected attributes. Thus, he would give the character representing Abby, in these anecdotes drawn from real life, blond hair instead of auburn; or, he might make her tall instead of petite. Otherwise, the story would be essentially as it occurred. One might say that Mathew was keeping Abby’s memory alive; one might just as accurately say that he was writing a coded memoir of their courtship and marriage.

Over the course of the research, it became apparent that when Abby was a teenager, she may have experimented with first names that she liked better than her given name, “Abigail.” In the many veiled references Mathew made to her in his writings, the character representing her was very often named “Juliana” or “Julia”; but sometimes “Adeline” or “Adela.” One may extrapolate that *these* were two of the names that young Abby experimented with. It so happens that “Geraldine” can be construed as an amalgamation of “Juliana” and “Adeline.”

Abby’s father was a marquis, and she herself was raised in an upper-class family. Although her mother was Scottish, there is evidence that French was spoken in the family, and hence we can assume that it was run along French and European lines. Abby’s first cousin was Charles Poyen, one of the first to introduce Mesmerism to America. In his book, “The Progress of Animal Magnetism in New England,” he tells us that when he arrived in America from Guadeloupe, he

stayed for five months with his uncle—who would have been Abby’s father—in Haverhill, Mass. However, he says that he moved to nearby Lowell *to improve his English*, which infers that English was not the primary language spoken in that household.²

“Lady Geraldine” is an English lady, the daughter of an earl—but an earl is actually one step lower on the scale of nobility than a marquis. Abby was only 15 or 16 when the events recounted in “Lady Geraldine’s Courtship” would have taken place, while it is inferred that “Lady Geraldine” is somewhat older. And, of course, the story takes place in England, while Mathew courted Abby in America. Otherwise, the poem stands as a more-or-less verbatim account of their relationship, and especially of their outdoor tutoring sessions. Young Mathew was denied a college education, which he desperately desired as he wished to pursue a literary career. Abby appears to have stepped in to pass along her own upper-class private education to him, as his tutor. These sessions would have begun when she was quite young, but judging by her 14-year-old poetry, she, too, was a child prodigy.

Mathew frequently employed the literary device of embedding works within a letter to a friend or relative. This device is used in “Lady Geraldine’s Courtship.” There is a strong sub-plot concerning jealousy for an upper-class rival; this appears to have been autobiographical, as well. Thus, when we see the poet, Bertram, reading classics out-of-doors with Lady Geraldine, and freely (perhaps somewhat too freely) giving his own cynical opinions of the world, with the Lady generously suffering him to do so—and when we see Lady Geraldine spontaneously bursting into song—all of this is an accurate depiction of their own courtship. Only the scene in which the rival tries to forcibly take Lady Geraldine’s hand has been toned down somewhat, as past-life memory suggested that the real rival this character is based on attempted to forcibly kiss Abby, or worse. Note that these matching historical facts arose *before* examining “Lady Geraldine’s Courtship,” from past-life memory as well as from a number of clues in Mathew and Abby’s written works.

There are several indications that Mathew would fondly characterize Abby as a river sprite. Perhaps she was fond of swimming in the Merrimack River near her family home. Keeping in mind that the actual events inspiring the poem probably harken back to when she was 16 or even younger, note the following lines from “Lady Geraldine’s Courtship”:

After, when we were grown tired of books, the silence round us flinging
A slow arm of sweet compression, felt with beatings at the breast,
She would break out on a sudden, in a gush of woodland singing,
Like a child’s emotion in a god,—a naiad tired of rest.

Abby was not only a literary prodigy, but a musical prodigy, with a fine singing voice. She was also a mystic from a young age, having been taught by her Scottish mother, Sally Elliot Poyen; and she particularly loved the stars, which she believed were conscious beings in heaven. (All of this is taken directly from Mathew’s and Abby’s prose and poetry.)

Perhaps a year after first reading this poem, it suddenly struck me that the phrase “a child’s emotion in a god” is nonsensical. As written, the figure conveyed would be tantamount to a *childish god*, which description would hardly fit the Lady Geraldine. However, if the phrase is

reversed, revealing that the line originally read, “Like a god’s emotion in a child,—a naiad tired of rest,” we now have a precise description of the deeply spiritual Abby Poyen, a musical prodigy, singing for Mathew alone in Nature as a young teen. Barrett would have chosen to modify the line because it clashed with the assumed age of Lady Geraldine; whereas the simile would not have troubled Mathew, since this particular stanza was a secret tribute to his young beloved.

To give some idea of how this depiction would fit the historical Abby Poyen, there is a humorous story written—as this writer has determined—by Mathew, which features Abby at, perhaps, ten years of age, singing a complicated solo in church:

All who attended the rehearsals were perfectly delighted with the solo as sung by “little Mary.” It was very difficult. It was marked from beginning to end, “Andantino,” “Dolce,” “Affetuoso,” “Crescendo,” “Pianissimo,” with changing keys and flats and sharps springing out from unexpected places; but she had conquered it all.³

The poem “Lady Geraldine’s Courtship” continues:

Oh, to see or hear her singing! scarce I know which is divinest,—
For her looks sing too,—she modulates her gestures on the tune;
And her mouth stirs with the song, like song; and when the notes are finest,
‘Tis the eyes that shoot out vocal light, and seem to swell them on.

Then we talked,—oh, how we talked! her voice, so cadenced in the talking,
Made another singing—of the soul! a music without bars,—
While the leafy sounds of woodlands, humming round where we were walking,
Brought interposition worthy sweet,—as skies about the stars.

Finally, we note that Barrett saw fit to subtitle “Lady Geraldine’s Courtship” as “A Romance of the Age.” Once we become more familiar with her style of lying—which is to refute things that people haven’t yet suspected, as a guilty precaution—it will become apparent that she was quite aware this poem was a *personal* tribute. Therefore she had to somehow style it as a *universal* one, even though her characterization is mere fluff.

Additional poems plagiarized by Elizabeth Barrett

A number of indications and cross-correspondences were discovered in the text of “Lady Geraldine’s Courtship”; but while thumbing through Elizabeth Barrett’s “Poems,” this writer discovered two more written in the same style—which happens to be Mathew’s preferred style—which *also* appear to be his. Subsequently, yet another was found, indicating that Mathew must have sent Barrett at least four poems which she incorporated into her two-volume set: “Lady Geraldine’s Courtship,” “The Lost Bower,” “Wine of Cyprus,” and “A Child Asleep.” Barrett claimed all as her own, having modified them where necessary for location and gender. However, she made the tactical error—not for her own century, but for posterity—of lying rather transparently about her plagiarism to her personal friend and mentor, Hugh Stuart Boyd. She had sworn him to secrecy; but Boyd, not realizing what was at stake, preserved her letters and these have been duly published.

Her great frustration was that she, herself, was an overly-intellectual, tedious, pretentious poet; whereas Mathew, who was certainly no intellectual slouch, and who had obtained a fine education thanks to Abby and to his own efforts, was truly inspired. He was *particularly* inspired when he wrote, in deep grief, about Abby; or, in the case of “A Child Asleep,” about their first-born son, Joseph. No amount of Barrett’s pretending that she had simply generated these stories out of her fertile imagination is convincing, once one knows the true story behind them. And whenever she solicited feedback from her literary acquaintances in Europe, they were at best polite about her own work, while praising Mathew’s!

Before we visit these additional poems, let us look briefly at Barrett’s lies to her mentor, Mr. Boyd, and her frustration at the feedback she was receiving. Of course, she had to express her feelings of disappointment in a way which made it appear she was the author of all the poems—but unwisely for her, and fortunately for us, she *did* contrive a convoluted means of venting those feelings.

On Aug. 1, 1844, Barrett writes:

Last Saturday, on its being discovered that my first volume consisted of only 208 pages, and my second of 280 pages, Mr. Moxon uttered a cry of reprehension...and wanted to tear away several poems from the end of the second volume, and tie them on to the end of the first! I could not and would not hear of this because I had set my heart on having “Dead Pan” to conclude with. So there was nothing for it but to finish a ballad poem called “Lady Geraldine’s Courtship,” which was lying by me, and I did so by writing—i.e., composing,—*one hundred and forty lines last Saturday!* I seemed to be in a dream all day long. Long lines, too—fifteen syllables each! I see you shake your head all this way off. Moreover it is a ‘romance of the age,’ treating of railroads, routes, and all manner of ‘temporalities,’...⁴

This explanation is somewhat akin to the child who says, “The dog ate my homework,” in that it is logistically implausible, if not actually impossible. Dogs do not typically eat paper, and poets do not compose a world-class poem of this size in a single day. In a test I conducted myself, I found that it took nine minutes to copy the first three stanzas from a printed (online) source, attempting to write legibly as Barrett would have to do for her publisher. Since she was copying from an unfamiliar handwriting, we will say that it took her at least an extra minute, rounding it up to ten minutes for three stanzas. There are 103 stanzas in the poem; multiplied by 10 minutes, this yields 1,030 minutes or roughly 17 hours. Dividing by three stanzas yields roughly 5.7 hours. But Barrett had to constantly be on the lookout for personal references that revealed Mathew’s authorship, and modify those lines accordingly. So this is roughly a six-hour *copying* job, plus the time taken for editing. Had she actually *composed* the poem in one day, she would have had to create it at nearly the speed required to copy it! However, she did not claim to compose the entire poem in one day—rather, roughly half of it. She first wrote Boyd that she had composed thirteen pages, then revised that in subsequent correspondence to nineteen pages. If by her own admission thirteen pages contained 140 lines (four lines to a stanza), and then she modified this to nineteen lines, this gives us roughly 51 stanzas. Whether or not she could have composed 51 stanzas of this poem in a single day is itself debatable—but in any case, she did no

such thing. In reality she had the entire poem in front of her, and she was forced to spend her Saturday—not in a dream state, but in fuming resentment at Mr. Moxon—copying it over.

As for this being a “romance of the age,” it was written by a young American man who, in contradistinction to Abby at age 15, was very interested in technological progress. Abby would suffer him to wax eloquent about such things, and so Mathew fondly includes this particular feature of their romance in the story. Elizabeth Barrett didn’t even understand why it was there, but she felt it was just a bit suspicious. In order to allay Boyd’s suspicions, she simply came up with an explanation off the top of her head.

By letter of Sept. 22, 1844, Barrett complains to Boyd that her feedback ranges from noncommittal to bored regarding her own lengthy poems; but that the readers are enthusiastic about Mathew’s “Lady Geraldine’s Courtship” and “Wine of Cyprus.” She writes:

Now it is curious, that people in general are pleased with the “Lady Geraldine”—and it is true that I always hear of their being pleased with it, with a feeling like a *sense of escape*,—seeing that some peculiar circumstances attended its composition. Do not tell anybody—people might and would immediately call me a careless, hasty writer,—but the last *thirteen* of those printed pages were written,—composed and written—in one day. It was dangerous and might have been fatal speed. When people praise the poem, I always think, “What stuff it *might* have been!”—and *that* is very natural.

Then by letter of Oct. 4, 1844, she writes again:

Oh, and I think I told you, when giving you the history of ‘Lady Geraldine’s Courtship,’ that I wrote the *thirteen* pages of it in one day. I ought to have said *nineteen* pages instead. But don’t tell anybody, only keep the circumstance in your mind when you need it and see the faults. Nobody knows of it except you and Mr. Kenyon and my own family for the reason I told you.

We will have to deconstruct this pack of lies one statement at a time. First of all, what she euphemistically calls a “sense of escape” is a dissociative fugue state, born of a combination of guilt, envy and rage. And for the second time, she is swearing Boyd to secrecy. Where she says “thirteen,” in a subsequent letter she corrects it to “nineteen”—perhaps because she has realized that her lie is faulty somehow. “Composed” and “written” should normally be synonymous—that she feels the need to clarify, is due to the pricking of a guilty conscience. She wants to be sure that “written” isn’t interpreted as meaning *copying*. And as for what it “might have been,” she could have revised it, sending it to Mr. Moxon a day or two later, if she had the talent to improve it. But it is this poem which everyone is praising. Not only is Barrett incapable of improving it, but she could not have written it no matter how much time she had. And finally, the whole business, as I have demonstrated, is *not* “very natural,” at all.

The same guilty smirk may be detected in Barrett’s Oct. 1, 1844 letter to Cornelius Mathews:

Both Carlyle and Miss Martineau select as favorite “Lady Geraldine’s Courtship,” which amuses and surprises me somewhat. In that poem I had endeavoured to throw

conventionalities (turned asbestos for the nonce) into the fire of poetry, to make them glow and glitter as if they were not dull things.

What Barrett means, is that she was amused and surprised to find that these literary figures selected Mathew's poem as their favorite. But now she feels compelled to briefly explain *why* she felt "amused," with this elaborate, phony construction. In reality, she is saying, "I know this is not my usual style, nor what one might normally expect from a woman, but the explanation is that I was experimenting, not that I had plagiarized it from a man." Note that she has given two different rationales. To Boyd, she says she wrote it hurriedly, in a dream-state; while to Mathews, she says she was experimenting. But she doesn't mix the two—she doesn't tell Boyd she was writing quickly *and* experimenting; nor does she tell Mathews she was experimenting *and* writing quickly.

Ironically, in 1856, Cornelius Mathews would falsely claim authorship of a novella which Abby and Mathew had written in collaboration, and which Mathew had published for her anonymously in 1850, entitled "Chanticleer: A Thanksgiving Story of the Peabody Family."

Now let us proceed to examine the other three poems for clues to Mathew Franklin Whittier's authorship.

Barrett's official explanation for "Wine of Cyprus," which immediately follows the title, is that it (i.e., the wine) was "Given to me by H.S. Boyd, Author of 'Select Passages from the Greek Fathers,' etc., to Whom These Stanzas are Addressed." The editor of "Elizabeth Barrett Browning: Translations from the Greek Christian Poets," Harriett Waters Preston, tells us:

As a mere girl, Miss Barrett had read the Greek Fathers in the original, under the guidance of the blind scholar, Hugh Stewart Boyd, who was deeply versed in them and could repeat from memory pages of their works both in prose and verse.

But in "Elizabeth Barrett Browning: The Origins of a New Poetry" by Dorothy Mermin (1989), we are told:

The exclusion of women from classical studies was made clear even to Elizabeth Barrett, precocious and favored oldest child, by the fact that the only instruction in them that was provided for her came from Bro's [her older brother's] tutor, Daniel McSwiney, beginning in 1817 and ending when Bro left for Charterhouse in 1820 and Mr. McSwiney, the job he had been engaged to do completed, left too.

In 1817, Barrett, born on March 6, 1806, would have been eleven years old. Concerning Boyd, the author states:

Her relationship with Hugh Stuart Boyd...lasted much longer and was much more intense and complicated. Boyd was a classical scholar, blind, married, with a grown daughter, already in his mid-forties when their correspondence began in 1827.

Barrett would have been 21 years old as of March 1827—hardly a “mere girl.” Apparently, Boyd both corresponded with her, and tutored her in person. Thus, one could plausibly take the following stanza literally, for her pen:

Ah, my gossip! you were older,
And more learned, and a man!
Yet that shadow, the enfolder
Of your quiet eyelids, ran
Both our spirits to one level;
And I turned from hill and lea
And the summer sun’s green revel,
To your eyes that could not see.

Certainly, it would seem to refer specifically to his blindness. But Barrett has personalized the other poems presented here, as well, rewriting entire stanzas where necessary. If that is what she’s done here, the stanzas which follow would have originally depicted Mathew and Abby studying together, this time seated indoors by the window:

And I think of those long mornings
Which my Thought goes far to seek,
When, betwixt the folio’s turnings,
Solemn flowed the rhythmic Greek.
Past the pane, the mountain spreading,
Swept the sheep-bell’s tinkling noise,
While a girlish voice was reading,—
Somewhat low for αἶς and οἶς!

Then what golden hours were for us!—
While we sat together there,
How the white vests of the chorus
Seemed to wave up a live air!
How the cothurns trod majestic
Down the deep iambic lines!
And the rolling anapæstic
Curled, like vapour over shrines!

It's apparent that we are dealing with adulterated poetry, which can be very tricky to sort out. In these stanzas, the “mountain spreading” and the sheep-bells may be literal, or literary license, or revisions by Barrett. There were certainly hills in the East Haverhill, Mass. area, at least one (Job Hill) being relatively close by the Whittier homestead. Similarly, the Whittier family kept sheep, so on both counts, allowing for literary license, this account is plausible for Massachusetts.

In the 16th stanza there is a particularly interesting clue, which Ms. Preston describes as a “playful” reference for Boyd from this “mere girl”:

Do you mind that deed of Ate

Which you bound me to so fast,—
Reading 'De Virginitate,'
From the first line to the last?
How I said at ending, solemn,
As I turned and looked at you,
That St. Simeon on the column
Had had somewhat less to do?

"De Virginitate" is a lengthy treatise on the spiritual virtue of virginity. Mermin makes it clear that there was some sexual tension between Barrett and Boyd, at least on Barrett's side:

Her jealous attachment to him was evidently, as she feared, considerably in excess of his affection for her and aroused resistance and hostility at Hope End [her family residence]. Her relations with his wife and daughter (whom she naturally scorned as unworthy of him) were often difficult. For a long time her father would not let her visit him, although he lived very close by, in Malvern, and her whole family appears to have found her obsessive regard for him puzzling and annoying. They read Greek together—or rather, since he was blind, she read to him and served as his amanuensis, like those models of filial-scholarly devotion, Milton's daughters.

But in my opinion, in order for Boyd to insist that Barrett, at age 21, read a lengthy Christian treatise on the virtue of virginity, either he would be overstepping his bounds as a male teacher, or else she would have to have been openly propositioning him, such that he felt the necessity of setting her straight on the matter in no uncertain terms. On the other hand, if we posit that Abby, at age 15, had assigned this treatise to 19-year-old Mathew as a homework assignment, it makes far more sense. She had been in love with him for some time, and perhaps didn't entirely trust herself in the matter; while he was beginning to reciprocate as she physically matured. She, too, would have assigned the piece to him as a way of setting boundaries, but in this case for the both of them. And indeed, he would have been less than thrilled with it. Note that this stanza precisely reflects Mathew's own sense of humor, as one can find it throughout his works. And remember that he had begun his career in this field at age 12, with humorous verse. By 1842, when he would have presumably sent this to Barrett, he had been writing and publishing in a similar vein for some 17 years. So far as this writer is aware, Elizabeth Barrett is not especially known for humor in her poetic works.

There is a great deal of evidence that Abby focused largely on the history, legends and philosophy of ancient Greece in her tutoring with Mathew. These references are found throughout Mathew's works, appearing primarily after this tutoring would have taken place. But Abby, being French, was presumably raised Catholic, whereas Mathew had been raised Quaker. There is, as said, copious evidence in Mathew's works that he especially admired the ancient Stoic philosophers. So what we may be seeing in this poem is not Barrett and Boyd's respective preferences, as Mermin interprets, but Mathew resonating with the ancient teachers, while trying to find respectful common ground with Abby in her admiration of the early Christian fathers.

In the following stanza, it appears that Abby is teaching Mathew to read aloud in the original Greek:

Do not mock me! with my mortal,
Suits no wreath again, indeed;
I am sad-voiced as the turtle
Which Anacreon used to feed:
Yet as that same bird demurely
Wet her beak in cup of his,
So, without a garland, surely
I may touch the brim of this

Now, think for a moment—who would be more likely to *mock* their student’s reading—an older man teaching a teenage girl; or a 15-year-old girl teaching her 19-year-old student and future husband? If their relationship was very close, it’s possible that Boyd might tease his younger student as she struggled through the Greek language, though it seems cruel given the intensity of her admiration for him. However, if this is Abby teasing Mathew, it would simply be part of their budding romance.

But *here*, perhaps, is the real smoking gun of the whole business:

For we sometimes gently wrangled;
Very gently, be it said,—
For our thoughts were disentangled
By no breaking of the thread!
And, I charged you with extortions
On the nobler fames of old—
Ay, and sometimes thought your Porsons
Stained the purple they would fold.

“Porson” is a typeface in the Greek alphabet based on the handwriting of English classicist Richard Porson. Mathew is, perhaps, more likely to have been familiar with it because of his printing background, using it here in a playful manner—but Barrett might not have understood the reference. Here, the original lines might have read:

Ay, and sometimes thought your Porsons
Like your purple dress’s folds.

This begs the interpretation that the narrator, who has been teased about his Greek pronunciation, is teasing his tutor, in turn, about her calligraphy—suggesting that it reminds him of the folds in her dress (being, perhaps, made of the same material from which she made the curtains; or at the least, suggesting that she had a fondness for the color purple). Mathew was a skilled calligrapher, having taught the subject briefly in 1838, and he used it throughout his life as a bookkeeper and secretary for various organizations; whereas Abby admits, in a letter to Mathew’s sister, that she has poor handwriting which he often criticizes. *But Boyd was blind*. Therefore, if it is the poet who is teasing the tutor about the latter’s Greek calligraphy, *this cannot possibly be about Hugh Boyd*. And the stanza is very clear—it is the poet who is teasing the tutor about his or her “Porsons.” It cannot be interpreted the other way around.

There are many clues which indicate that not only was Abby a deep student of mysticism and the occult from an early age, but that she, herself, may have been psychic and in particular, subject to prescient dreams. There is no such indication that I know of for either Elizabeth Barrett or her mentor, Hugh Boyd. Yet, we see what I take to be a clear reference to it in the following stanza:

For the rest!—a mystic moaning,
Kept Cassandra at the gate!
With wild eyes the vision shone in—
And wide nostrils scenting fate!
And Prometheus, bound in passion
By brute force to the blind stone,
Showed us looks of invocation
Turned to ocean and the sun.

In the history of ancient Greece, Cassandra tried to warn Troy of its coming doom, but remained unheeded. Mathew didn't know what to make of Abby's abilities—he argued against the possibility, in an editorial for the New York "Constellation" at the time, yet, perhaps some of her dreams were veridical. Here, without disparaging her in hindsight, he depicts it as he would have experienced it then: "wild eyes" and "wide nostrils scenting fate." And then the reference to Prometheus tells us that they both knew they were ahead of their time, and that together, they "turned to the ocean and the sun," where the ocean symbolizes infinity, and the sun symbolizes God. Indeed, Mathew and Abby *were* manifestly far ahead of their time, something also stressed by both of the psychic mediums employed in the writer's reincarnation study.

Note that Hugh Boyd is said to have been an expert on the Greek Fathers, i.e., the Christian Church Fathers. But half of this poem, at least, contains references to ancient Greece, as though the tutor is splitting his or her time between both subjects.

Personal tutoring was not uncommon in the 19th century. Therefore, if this theory is correct, one must simply assume that Elizabeth Barrett saw in Mathew's poem a fairly close parallel to her own relationship with Boyd. She could not resist the temptation to modify it so as to perpetrate the deception that she had actually written the poem for him, personally—while all she had done was to *personalize* it.

"The Lost Bower" and "A Child Asleep"

We turn our attention, now, to "The Lost Bower" and "A Child Asleep." These were both intuitively recognized as being Mathew's work. They, like "Lady Geraldine's Courtship" and "Wine of Cyprus" are written in Mathew's life-long preferred style. And there are elements of the paranormal in each of these poems.

By letter of Sept. 10, 1844 to Mrs. James Martin, Barrett writes:

I am glad that you like "The Lost Bower." The scene of that poem is the wood above the garden at Hope End.

In actuality, however, “The Lost Bower” is a literal account, by Mathew Franklin Whittier, of a “dimensional shift” experience from his childhood. He had stumbled upon a magical realm within the woods, which he was never able to find, again. He writes of it after his wife’s death, *because it is one bit of proof of the astral realm*—where he believes Abby now resides—which he can hold onto in his wavering faith. Whereas in “The Raven” doubt prevails (as its symbol, the bird, chants “nevermore”), here conviction of the afterlife, from having had a personal glimpse of it, prevails. This poem, also, has been slightly modified to reflect a setting in England, and Barrett’s gender—but she has retained a passage in which the narrator tears through the underbrush like a boy:

Thus I thought of the old singers
And took courage from their song,
Till my little struggling fingers
Torn asunder gyve and thong
Of the brambles which entrapped me, and the barrier branches strong.

On a day, such pastime keeping,
With a fawn’s heart debonair,
Under-crawling, overleaping,
Thorns that prick and boughs that bear,
I stood suddenly astonished—I was gladdened unaware.

Now, here’s the question—a tomboy might do this once, or twice—but the writer is clearly inferring that this was his or her *typical behavior*. And in the early 19th-century, presumably even young girls would normally wear dresses. Would such a girl in, say, 1812, from a well-to-do family, be routinely struggling through brambles and thick undergrowth? But this is entirely expected for a young American boy who, like Mathew, is known to have been something of a “pistol” (or, in 19th-century slang, “some pumpkins”).

Note Mathew’s personal account of his childhood, recounted by his travelogue persona, “Quails” in the March 27, 1852 edition of the Boston “Weekly Museum”:⁵

The eyes of the passengers were now bent, first upon the conductor, who was evidently highly excited with the responsibility that rested upon his shoulders for the first time during his public service, and then upon the traveler in tattered pants, who presented full as comical an appearance as we did, when a youngster, on an occasion when we attempted to climb over a high picket fence to see our little sweetheart, and our foot slipped, and we came down on the top of a pink bed minus one trousers’ leg and a part of our little linen roundabout.

Incidentally, this depiction of the poet having been a rough-and-tumble child is hardly necessary to the storyline. Had a girl encountered a magical place in the wood, which she was never able to find again, there is absolutely no reason to have her tearing through the undergrowth in this way. Obviously, her dress would have been in shreds every single time she returned home from such an outing, which one can hardly believe her parents would have permitted on an ongoing basis!

And “On a day, such pastime keeping” tells us it was ongoing. This description, like so much of Mathew’s work, was simply autobiographical.

There is another kind of “smoking gun” in this poem, as it was published by Elizabeth Barrett. We read:

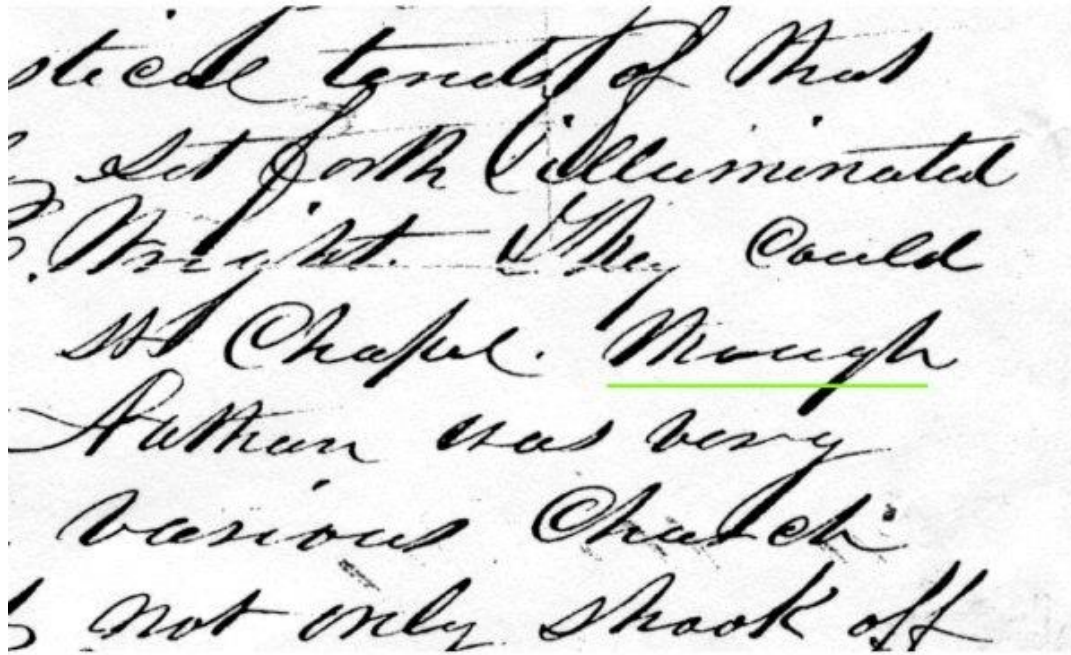
Small the wood is, green with hazels,
And, completing the ascent,
Where the wind blows and sun dazzles
Thrills in leafy tremblement,
Like a heart that after climbing, beateth quickly through content.

This is clearly an error—the last line should read:

Like a heart that after climbing, beateth quickly though content.

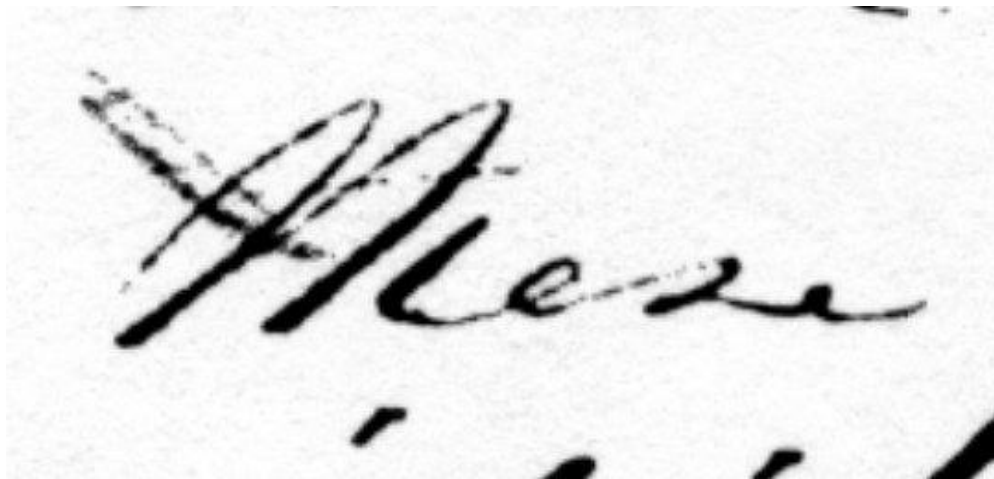
Apparently, Barrett never noticed her error, because she never corrected it in any subsequent reprintings nor, so far as this writer is aware, ever addressed the issue. At least one novelist made fun of it in 1866; while in later years, a biographer, as well as the editor of a “Dictionary of Similes,” simply repaired it on their own. Technically, the word “content” *can* be used as a noun. Merriam-Webster gives, as its sole example, the sentence, “He ate to his heart’s content.” One would have to believe that “contentment” was shortened to “content” so as to artificially retain the meter, which is a sign of a very poor poet. If we don’t make that assumption, the word is simply nonsensical in this context. On the other hand, “though content” makes perfect sense. It lacks only the judicious placement of a comma, which may have been withheld to subtly retain the poem’s rhythm—“beateth quickly, though content.” Or perhaps it *was* there, and Barrett removed it. Originally, the line conveyed that excitement was paradoxically accompanied by a deep peace of the spirit. On the other hand, “Beateth quickly through content,” if it has any meaning at all, would suggest that the excitement *resulted from the contentment*—i.e., “beateth quickly through contentment.” It would be generous even to say that this is a stretch. It indicates that Barrett was copying so quickly, she didn’t take the time to understand the poem’s meaning.

In a letter written to Mathew’s brother, John Greenleaf Whittier, dated June 17, 1842—about the time Mathew would have been sharing his work with various prominent literary figures—he is using a particular style of handwriting in which the small letter “h” is written, after a small letter “t,” with a tall stroke and a separate smaller stroke, which ideally is joined with the first one. However, sometimes he simply has a tall stroke sitting parallel on the page with a smaller vertical, which could be interpreted as “thr.” For example, below he is writing the sentence, “They could get no house but the Casco St. Chapel though they tried several others.”



side tends of that
set forth illuminated
bright. They could
at Chapel. through
Mathew was very
various Church:
not only shook off

Here we see another example of the same letter combination in the word “there,” magnified:



there

It would not be surprising if Barrett, copying these lines and not paying so much attention to their meaning, imagined that Mathew was being “poetic” by writing “through content.” After all, *she* wrote primarily for effect, and that is all she would be able to understand of Mathew’s poetry, as well.

Finally, we turn our attention to “A Child Asleep.” Unlike the first three poems I have examined, this one appears to have garnered little praise or acclaim. In fact, it seems to have been largely ignored, although in its original form it would have been an excellent poem. Note that it is written in precisely the same style as the others. Past-life emotional memory, and sheer familiarity with Mathew’s personal life and works, suggests that this was written in 1838, concerning his and Abby’s first child, Joseph. The original theme would have been that whereas some minister or priest has offered to bless their sleeping child, they have protested on the basis

that the child is in a holier state than the adults who are gazing upon him—if anything, *he* should be blessing *them*!

Softly, softly! make no noises!
Now he lieth dead and dumb;
Now he hears the angels' voices
Folding silence in the room:
Now he muses deep the meaning of the Heaven-words as they come.

Speak not! he is consecrated;
Breathe no breath across his eyes:
Lifted up and separated
On the hand of God he lies
In a sweetness beyond touching, held in cloistral sanctities.

It so happens that this same poem had previously appeared with Elizabeth Barrett's signature in the 1840 edition of "Finden's Tableaux," under the title, "The Dream." But the poem is not about "a dream," it makes the case that young children—and old souls like Joseph Poyen Whittier, in particular—return to heaven, from which they had recently come, while asleep. The author of this poem clearly believes that the child's experiences, as for example of angels, are real and actual, and that the child is pondering over what the angels are singing. On the other hand, characterizing this as a "dream" suggests that whoever fashioned the title took it as fantasy. Therefore, *the person who titled the poem cannot be the original poet*. We must presume that when Elizabeth Barrett submitted the poem to "Finden's Tableaux," they accommodated her by printing her title above the poem. Logically, then, Barrett was not the author, which means she plagiarized it.

To add insult to injury, the lavish illustration which accompanies the poem depicts a cherub dreaming of worldly scenes and people on earth—just as a skeptic might interpret the poem. If Barrett had any input into the drawing—and if she had been the original author—she would never have consented to such an off-target depiction.



Logistically, the explanation is simple. Mathew would have written this poem, perhaps with Abby offering suggestions, sometime in 1838, and he may have seen fit to send it to Barrett at that time (for reasons we will explore shortly). In a close comparison between the 1840 version and the 1844 version, it becomes apparent that Barrett worked from Mathew's original in both cases. Each version has stanzas which bears traces of authentic mysticism; as well as stanzas which appear to be clumsily added by Barrett, who had only a superficial understanding of mystical principles. For example, in 1840, we see:

Shapes of glory overlean thee;
 Shapes of beauty, love, and youth!
 Who would waken that had seen thee
 Sleeping, smiling—not, in sooth,
 Thine own smile—but the over-fair one dropped from some etherial mouth!

This is written by someone who definitely believes in celestial beings inhabiting the higher realms, who are interacting with their sleeping son in his exalted state of consciousness. The suggestion is that Joseph's smile *reflects* that being's brilliance. But then, in 1844, we read:

As the moths around a taper,
 As the bees around a rose,
 As in sunset, many a vapour,—
 So the spirits group and close
 Round about a holy childhood, as if drinking its repose.

Here, Barrett—who does not actually believe in the existence of celestial beings—compares the unseen spirits to a “vapour,” i.e., to ghosts. *She* imagines that these ghosts are drawn to the child, like “moths around a taper”—a rather frightening prospect, when you think about it! In other words, she has unthinkingly reversed Mathew's meaning. She can do this without realizing the

extent of her blunder, because to her it is all a mere fantasy. What does she care, so long as it sounds mystical?

Two more poems plagiarized by Barrett?

All of this brings up another distinct possibility. “The Cry of the Children,” another of the poems in Barrett’s 1844 compilation, was first published by her in the August, 1843 edition of “Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine.” It clearly contains references to the 1842 “Children’s Employment Commission” report, and hence could not (as this author first believed) have been written by Abby, who had died the previous year. However, it very likely could have been written by Mathew, reflecting Abby’s thoughts concerning child labor. Depending on the month of publication, and when the report became available in America, it would have been just as likely to influence Mathew as Barrett. There is evidence that Mathew read such reports, and wrote editorials about them.

Comparing the 1843 printing in “Blackwood’s” with the 1844 printing in “Poems,” one sees a number of modifications—none of which improve the poem. For example, in the concluding stanza as it appears in “Blackwood’s,” we have:

They look up with their pale and sunken faces,
And their look is dread to see;
For you think you see their angels in their places,
With eyes meant for Deity.
“How long,” they say,” how long, O cruel nation!
Will you stand, to move the world, on a child’s heart,
Trample down with a mail’d heel its palpitation,
And tread onward to your throne amid the mart?
Our blood splashes upward, O our tyrants!
And your purple shows your path—
But the child’s sob curseth deeper in the silence,
Than the strong man in his wrath!”

This stanza, in 1844, has been modified to:

They look up, with their pale and sunken faces,
And their look is dread to see,
For you think you see their angels in their places,
With eyes meant for Deity:—
“How long,” they say, “how long, O cruel nation,
Will you stand, to move the world, on a child’s heart,—
Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpitation,
And tread onward to your throne amid the mart?
Our blood splashes upward, O our tyrants,
And your purple shews your path;
But the child’s sob curseth deeper in the silence
Than the strong man in his wrath!”

“Stifle down” is hardly an improvement on “Trample down.” The change is thus far more likely to have been made by a plagiarist, who did not comprehend the poem’s power, than by the original author.

Note that the reference to “their angels” is based on the occult concept of the higher self, which beholds the more refined heavenly realm (just as we see portrayed in “A Child Asleep”). This writer, who has studied the subject for almost 50 years, has seen no evidence that Barrett was a deep student of authentic metaphysics; but this is known for both Mathew, and Abby (his teacher in these matters).

Meanwhile, the concluding line of the first stanza makes one wonder whether Mathew, having reading the British report, had not originally intended his poem to address similar abuses in America:

Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,
Ere the sorrow comes with years?
They are leaning their young heads against their mothers,—
And *that* cannot stop their tears.
The young lambs are bleating in the meadows;
The young birds are chirping in the nest;
The young fawns are playing with the shadows;
The young flowers are blowing toward the west—
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
They are weeping bitterly!
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
In the country of the free.

The “Star Spangled Banner” was well-known in America (though not by that name) as of 1814, and certainly by 1838. Francis Scott Key’s original manuscript does contain the line, “O’re the land of the free.” Might Barrett simply not have been familiar with it, so that her only modification, to taste, was to change “land of the free” to “country of the free”? If England, in 1842, was commonly identified as the “country of the free,” this writer is certainly not aware of it! Rather, the familiar 19th-century national characterization depicts Britain as “ruling the waves.” That Mathew, himself, would refer to America as the “land of free” is shown by his use of the phrase in his Dec. 12, 1846 story entitled “Everard and Fidelia. Or the Force of Circumstances,” which he signed “Dickens, Jr.”:

Again Everard dreamed—but not as before. Now, he was rejoicing by the side of his own sweet deliverer upon the heaving bosom of the Atlantic. The bright sun was casting his dazzling rays upon the foaming ocean and the ship proudly moved with puffed sails to the “land of the free.”⁶

Not conclusive, but certainly suggestive, is the fact that, in the second volume of Barrett’s publication, “The Cry of the Children” is immediately preceded by “The Lost Bower” and “A Child Asleep.” The three poems appear consecutively on pages 100, 123 and 127.

In the Aug. 18, 1837 edition of “The Liberator” appears a poem entitled “Stanzas. Written for the First of August, 1834,” celebrating England’s Slavery Abolition Act. The author is Joshua Coffin, a historian who had once been John Greenleaf Whittier’s classroom teacher. The second and third stanzas read:

Never more, O no, never, shall Britain, benighted,
Ever bind with her fetters, or scourge the poor slave;
But, grateful to God, for the wrongs He has righted,
Be ‘the land of the free and the home of the brave.’

Ah England, fair England,—with thrilling emotion,
Ashamed of my country, I glory in thee;
For through thy dominions, on land or on ocean,
No slave can exist in thy ‘home of the free.’

It would seem that Coffin is quoting from “The Star-Spangled Banner” in irony, to contrast the bondage of slaves in America with their freedom in England—from which country America won its independence! The only way he could do this, is if England was definitely *not* popularly associated with this phrase, the “land (or country) of the free.”

Similarly, in the March 15, 1861 edition of the same newspaper, is an “Extract of a Letter from a Lady” entitled “The Boasted ‘Land of the Free.’” She scathingly comments on the irony of a clergyman whose sermon she had recently heard, in Boston, who had “just returned from a tour in Europe.” He had boasted of the freedom in America, as compared with the oppressive, ubiquitous presence of government in Europe. But the letter-writer points out that no mention was made of the grievous oppression of slaves in America. If any country in Europe, including England, were commonly known as the “land of the free,” Garrison would not have given this title to her letter, as it would have been too confusing. Clearly, in the 19th century the phrase “the land of the free” referred *only* to America.

Yet another strange clue appears in Barrett’s letter to Boyd dated Sept. 8, 1843:

I, on the contrary, humbled as I was by your hard criticism of my soft rhymes about Flush, waited for Arabel to carry a message for me, begging to know whether you would care at all to see my “Cry of the Children” before I sent it to you. But Arabel went without telling me that she was going: twice she went to St. John’s Wood and made no sign; and now I find myself thrown on my own resources. Will you see the “Cry of the Human” or not? It will not please you, probably. It wants melody. the versification is eccentric to the ear, and the subject (the factory miseries) is scarcely an agreeable one to the fancy. Perhaps altogether you had better not see it, because I know you think me to be deteriorating, and I don’t want you to have farther hypothetical evidence of so false an opinion. Humbled as I am, I say “so false an opinion.” Frankly, if not humbly, I believe myself to have gained power since the time of the publication of the “Seraphim,” and lost nothing except happiness. Frankly, if not humbly!

My analysis of this paragraph is that Boyd is far less impressed with Barrett's own productions, compared with those she has plagiarized from much better writers. But because he does not suspect her of plagiarism, he honestly opines that her work is "deteriorating." Strangely, she mixes the titles of Mathew's poem, with one of her own (being, perhaps, an imitation), entitled "The Cry of the Human." It's not entirely clear *which* poem she wanted him to see (both were ultimately published in her 1844 compilation, "Poems.") However, since this letter was written the month after "The Cry of the Children" appeared in "Blackwood's," perhaps that's the one she meant. If so, she is using Mathew's poem to prove to Boyd that her work is *not* deteriorating. Clearly, her master plan is to *launch* her career on the strength of other people's work, but then to continue it with her own. Unfortunately, she simply is not talented enough, or genuinely inspired enough, to pull it off.

One more clue—whenever Mathew would introduce a piece with a quote, that quote would always be deeply relevant and meaningful in its broader context. Looking it up, one might find a hidden message in the preceding or following lines. But as Barrett published the poem in 1844 (not the 1844 printing), it opens with a line from the ancient Greek play "Medea" by Euripides, which translated, reads: "Alas, alas, why do you gaze at me with your eyes, my children." The context—a mother leaving her children after having avenged their father's betrayal by murdering his new wife—is totally irrelevant. I would even say it is repulsive. That in turn suggests to me that Barrett had arbitrarily and artlessly supplied the quote herself, without giving much thought to continuity of symbolism, as either Mathew or Abby would have done. It is the same kind of thoughtlessness we have seen when she unquestioningly assumed the phrase "through content."

Additionally, there is one poem in Barrett's 1844 compilation which I suspect of being Abby's work: "The Romance of the Swan's Nest," which appears immediately after "Wine of Cyprus." The evidence is found by comparing it to a poem in the May 25, 1850 edition of the Boston "Weekly Museum" entitled "Lilias," by "A.P." A brief summary of the relevant detective work behind this comparison is as follows.

Mathew had a very strong presence in the "Weekly Museum" from its inception in mid-1848, writing under a number of different pseudonyms. In the July 14, 1849 edition, he began publishing a series of Abby's works posthumously, beginning with a story of a precocious Irish orphan named "Mary Mahony" who seeks, and obtains, a public education. This story was signed "A.P.," for "Abby Poyen." Thereafter, the pieces Mathew submitted for her were signed only as "By the author of Mary Mahony." Most of these were short stories; however, two poems were also included. A great deal of Abby's poetry, written at age 14, had been dishonestly claimed by her then-classroom teacher, Albert Pike. However, for several reasons, this series in the "Museum" cannot possibly have been written by Pike. One of the poems is strongly reminiscent of "The Romance of the Swan's Nest." Entitled simply "Lilias," it depicts the poet as a child, wandering the local countryside in search of the fairies which her mother had told her about. Abby's mother, Sally Elliot Poyen, who was described as "brilliant," was of Scottish descent; "Lilias" is the Scottish form of the name, "Lily." Here, for the sake of comparison, the poem "Lilias" will be given in full; and then we will compare it with the first few stanzas of "The Romance of the Swan's Nest."

Lilias.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MARY MAHONY."

“Lilias, bright Lilias! silver-spoken Lilias—
Tell us where your ways have been?
Tell us of the sights you’ve seen?—
Wandering the day-long, thus
Far away from all of us—
Nimble-footed Lilias?”

“Oh, mother! I’ve been by the oaken tree,
Adown by the brookside, o’er the lea,
Far away, up in the mountains blue,
And thickets, and pastures, and meadows through.
I have been to look for the sylvan bands
That you say inhabit such beautiful lands;
And, mother, I sought again and again,
The plains and the woodlands o’er in vain.

“But as I looked in the brooks as I hurried by,
And there lay the sunlight, and the clear blue sky;
I glanced at the towers, and on every one
Was the light of a marvelous glory strown,
And the grass-blades—oh, and the very air
Bore token their footsteps had just been there.

“And was it so, mother?—and would they fly
From the mere approach of such as I!
Or were they concealed there?—the light that shone
Up from the earth—was it not their own?
I think it was even the living glow
Of their very presence, entranced me so,
I think they dwell always, wherever bloom
Or the gladness of springing life finds home,
And the beauty of verdure, and flowing wreath,
Is the raiment that God hath clothed them with.”

Little Ellie sits alone
Mid the beeches of a meadow,
By a stream-side, on the grass:
And the trees are showring down
Doubles of their leaves in shadow
On her shining hair and face.

She has thrown her bonnet by;
And her feet she has been dipping
In the shallow water’s flow—

Now she holds them nakedly
In her hands, all sleek and dripping,
While she rocketh to and fro.

Keep in mind, first of all, that Abby died on March 27, 1841; and so far as I'm aware, "The Romance of the Swan's Nest" was first published by Barrett in 1844. This poem, as Barrett published it, has some thematic inconsistencies. We have a child who is deeply appreciative of Nature, and concerned for the welfare of the swan and its eggs; yet, she imagines a future lover who owns serfs and slays his enemies! Migratory swans are not known to nest in New England; but it is clear from many references that Abby had a particular love of songbirds. Meanwhile, when Mathew wants to paint a young villain, he has that boy torture birds in the nest. Past-life emotional memory—which becomes increasingly reliable as it is infused with strong emotions—suggests to me that Mathew and Abby's abhorrence of this practice was one of the things that drew them together. In Mathew's 1863 novel for boys, "Harrie Lee: The Tempter and the Tempted," signed with his initials, "M.F.W.," he writes of the local bully and Harrie's tempter, Pete Emerson:

He spent whole days robbing birds' nests; delighting to witness the dying agonies of the poor little birds, and the greater agony of the parents.

With all of these clues in place, it becomes highly likely that this was originally Abby's poem about Ellie—or even another about "Lilias"—in which she had been monitoring a nest, only to find that one of the local ruffians had destroyed it. But she had found one "prince"—her future husband—who took her part in the matter, and whom she trusted with her secret. The poem was about a real-life incident which had been deeply meaningful to both. But this poem would have to have been radically altered by Barrett. In fact, much as the true narrative behind "A Child Asleep" has been lost, here also the original narrative has been removed, and we are left with the swan as a sort of incidental character, where, in its place, the girl's imaginings of a prince who owns serfs and slays enemies looms uppermost. As for the character's name, we may speculate that Abby had written an autobiographical series about young "Lilias," but that Barrett saw fit to rename the character "Ellie" so as to remove what she would have recognized as its association with Scotland, and instead make it reflect English culture.

As a comparison, at the end of Barrett's 1840 rendition of "The Dream," we can see that she has attempted to tack on a moral which was never part of the original:

Lovely ladies of our Britain,
Lovely ladies o'er the sea,
By the true loves near you sitting
Or, forsooth, who ought to be,—
Softly, by the light of smiling, turn the pages on your knee!

Softly, softly! Make no noises,
Critical of verse or prose!
They assert our inward voices,

Charming fast the graphic shows—
While a hope to give you pleasure roundeth all the dream's repose.

Nathless if the young boy's mother
(Which is woman's highest name)
Saw him sleeping—could another,
Though *aloud* she blessed him, blame?—
Nor, sweet ladies, should we blame you, though ye blessed us the same.

We will not attempt to interpret these lines, since if anyone would understand them, it would be Ms. Barrett (and she may not, herself). Perhaps she is simply trying to fend off anticipated criticism. But whatever it means, it is nowhere to be seen at the close of the 1844 version. This, once again, suggests that not only was Ms. Barrett a plagiarist, she was an *inept* plagiarist. She clumsily stepped all over these poems, like a young child ignorantly crushing a delicate piece of gold jewelry. She didn't understand what she had, and where she introduced her own modifications, they were sub-par and easily discernible—if only one knows to look for them.

The question arises as to why Mathew would have sent poetry to Elizabeth Barrett in the first place. I believe the answer is the poem she published in 1826 when she was 20 years old, entitled "Essay on Mind." Upon first obtaining a digital copy, this writer was amazed to discover that the work is deep, insightful and well-written; and most importantly, that it evinces a thorough and authentic grasp of mysticism. But it is neither an essay, nor is its subject the mind. This, rather, is the retrospective of an elderly man who is commenting on three related subjects: mankind, genius in general, and his own life as an unsung genius in particular. Both the heading—perhaps supplied by Barrett—and the running synopsis provided before the poem, strongly suggest that she cannot have been the true author.

The most logical scenario, if Barrett is as we have surmised her to be, is that she obtained the poem through an estate sale, and that she herself added the title and the introductory synopsis (which is highly intellectual and, in my opinion, is a sort of technically accurate blow-by-blow description which misses the artistic and mystical depth of the poem). Her neighbor, future mentor Hugh Stuart Boyd, recognizing its quality, introduced himself and offered his services as her tutor, believing it to have been hers.

It is probably safe to assume that by 1838, copies of this poem would have been available in America. Whoever the real author was, he was precisely the sort of person Mathew would have identified with, and enthusiastically admired. I have found numerous examples indicating that Mathew was preoccupied with this same theme—the history and nature of genius, as well as himself as a hidden genius—throughout his career. This would go a long way towards explaining why Mathew would have chosen Barrett, specifically, to share his work with.

Of course, a thief, having succeeded once, will always feel the "itch" to try it again, especially if the opportunity falls into her lap. Barrett, having gotten away with plagiarizing "Essay on Mind," plagiarized Mathew's poems, as well (and perhaps one or two of Abby's). Or rather, she initially plagiarized *four* of Mathew's poems, since she had concluded that the fifth, "Lady's Geraldine's Courtship," being the account of a man courting a woman, would be too implausible for her pen.

She only reluctantly decided to add *this one* under duress, when her publisher insisted that she make her first and second volumes of more equal length.

Mathew's reviews of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's works

On two separate occasions, separated by a span of twelve years, Mathew had occasion to write reviews of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's works. The first will require asserting yet another outrage, without having the space to substantiate it. Fortunately, it is the subject of a separate paper, entitled "Margaret Fuller's Dishonest Appropriation of Mathew Franklin Whittier's 'Star' Signature." Here, we will only assert that where one sees reviews and essays in the New York "Tribune," from their inception in the fall of 1844 until mid-1846, with a very few exceptions, these were all written by Mathew Franklin Whittier, being falsely claimed by that paper's literary editor, Margaret Fuller. Mathew would have been working for the paper as a freelancer under a pseudonym he used throughout his literary career, beginning as early as 1829 and extending until at least 1873. He occasionally signed with a "star" throughout his 54-year literary career, from 1829 until 1873.

It so happens that Mathew was called upon to review "A Drama of Exile" for the "Tribune," when that book was published in America in 1845. His review appears in the Jan. 4, 1845 edition, and in it he has inserted secret, coded messages to posterity. For want of space, we will simply touch on a couple of them. More examples of Mathew's method of embedding such coded messages may be found in this writer's books, "Mathew Franklin in his own words," and its sequel, "Mathew Franklin Whittier in his own world." Keep in mind, in the brief discussion which follows, that this is not an attempt to *prove* these points—that is done in the books.

First of all, this appears to have been a cautiously-worded critical review, which Margaret Fuller clumsily re-wrote so as to make it appear to be the very opposite, i.e., a glowing commendation. The opening paragraph, likely revised by Fuller, reads:

What happiness for the critic when, as in the present instance, his task is, mainly, how to express a cordial admiration; to indicate an intelligence of beauties, rather than regret for defects!

Whereas one strongly suspect that the original paragraph, as Mathew had written it, read something like this:

What a challenge it is for the critic when, as in the present instance, his task is, mainly, how to express a cordial admiration; to indicate an intelligence of beauties, rather than regret for defects!

And when he says "task," he means, specifically, that task assigned to him by the literary editor. In other words, Barrett has plagiarized his and his late wife's poetry, while her own poetry is markedly substandard; and yet he is charged by his editor with writing a review in unqualified praise, based entirely on Fuller's advocacy of 19th-century feminism.

The second paragraph would have been inserted, in its entirety, into the piece by Fuller:

We have read these volumes with feelings of delight far warmer than the writer, in her sincerely modest preface, would seem to expect from any reader, and cannot hesitate to rank her, in vigor and nobleness of conception, depth of spiritual experience, and command of classic allusion, above any female writer the world has yet known.

The review continues as a sort of battle to the death between the original writer and the editor, who has no qualms about inserting her own copy into the review, and turning Mathew's original meaning on its head. In short, Fuller and Barrett are kindred spirits—and both happen to be Mathew's plagiarists.

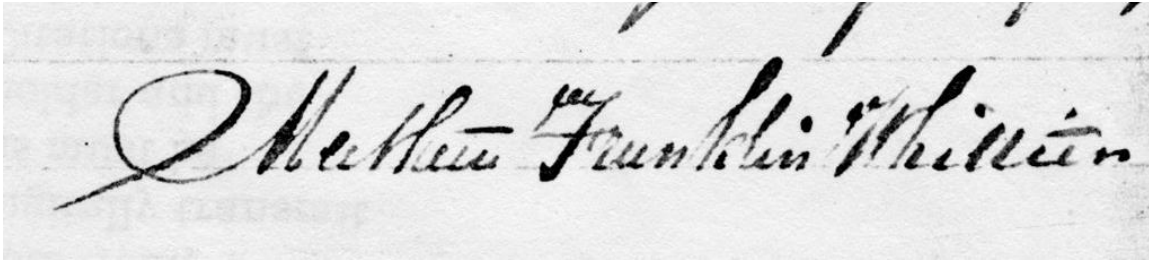
First of all, it appears that Mathew's primary concern—and, perhaps, his hidden revenge—is to showcase his and Abby's poetry. Thus, while he has only briefly excerpted Barrett's own work, he extensively showcases "The Romance of the Swan's Nest," "The Cry of the Children," and "Lady Geraldine's Courtship." The first two he has reproduced in their entirety; and as for "Lady Geraldine's Courtship," his excerpts are hardly random. These are, precisely, those stanzas describing his and Abby's tutoring sessions out in Nature, including the ones earlier quoted in this paper.

Now, one of Mathew's methods of conveying coded messages was to quote a snippet of a poem, where it was the *context of the quote* that bore the message. It might be the stanza preceding, or the one following. Here, we see:

We are accustomed now to much verse on moral subjects, such as follows the lead of Wordsworth and seeks to arrange moral convictions as melodies on the harp. But these tones are never deep, unless the experience of the poet, in the realms of intellect and emotion, be commensurate with his apprehension of truth. Wordsworth moves us when he writes an "Ode to Duty," or "Dion," because he could also write "Ruth," and the exquisitely tender poems on Mathew, in whom nature

“—— for a favorite child
Had tempered so the clay,
That every hour the heart ran wild,
Yet never went astray.”

Note that Mathew has misspelled the name "Matthew" so as to conform with his own personal spelling (as shown in a letter written by Mathew to Thomas Chandler dated June 20, 1837). Whether this was deliberate or simply habitual, we have no way of knowing. All we can say with certainty is that "Matthew" was, and continues to be, the more common spelling.



The lines are, indeed, from William Wordsworth's poem, "Matthew." Our Mathew has quoted the opening stanza imperfectly—whether intentionally or accidentally by memory, we know not—but in any case, here it is in context:

If Nature, for a favourite child,
In thee hath tempered so her clay,
That every hour thy heart runs wild,
Yet never once doth go astray,

Read o'er these lines; and then review
This tablet, that thus humbly rears
In such diversity of hue
Its history of two hundred years.

—When through this little wreck of fame,
Cipher and syllable! thine eye
Has travelled down to Matthew's name,
Pause with no common sympathy.

This is Mathew speaking to posterity, as the wronged original author forced to seemingly praise his plagiarist.

If we want to get a sense of what Mathew actually thought of Elizabeth Barrett's own work in "A Drama of Exile," we need only turn to a paragraph near the end of the review, which Fuller apparently left intact:

We have already said that, as a poet, Miss Barrett is deficient in plastic energy, and that she is diffuse. We must add many blemishes of over-strained and constrained thought and expression. The ways in which words are coined or forced from their habitual meanings does not carry its excuse with it. We find no gain that compensates the loss of elegance and simplicity.

I strongly suspect there was much more in this vein, before Fuller re-wrote it. Certainly, the above is antithetical to her substituted opening:

We have read these volumes with feelings of delight far warmer than the writer, in her sincerely modest preface, would seem to expect from any reader, and cannot hesitate to

rank her, in vigor and nobleness of conception, depth of spiritual experience, and command of classic allusion, above any female writer the world has yet known.

In the February 14, 1857 edition of the Portland (Maine) “Transcript,” appears a review entitled “Mrs. Browning’s New Poem,” signed “S.,” concerning “Aurora Leigh.” In the aforementioned books, this writer has gone in detail into the question of Mathew’s authorship of this review. Suffice it to say, here, that he was having a public debate in that paper concerning another review, of Julia Ward Howe’s “Words for the Hour,” which was tying up his “star” signature. In order to publish yet another critical review in this same paper, in the same edition, he was apparently forced to use another pseudonym. Here, he has simply chosen “S.” for “star.” By style, content and circumstances, it seems clear that this—and a second “S.”-signed piece commenting on the aforementioned debate, in the Feb. 28th edition—are Mathew’s own.

But unlike his 1845 review of Barrett, in 1857, Mathew is not constrained by his editor, Edward Elwell. He opens:

So Mrs. Browning has written another long poem, and the literary world is of course in raptures over it. The newspapers select their best formularies of laudation, the small reviews have a children’s delight about it, and even our friend Putnam, who has not yet added to his other virtues that of being a judge of new books, crows like a chanticleer with the rest. This result would doubtless have been the same, had Mrs. Browning’s book been even considerably poorer than it is; for no one, acquainted with the habits of criticism now in vogue, would expect anybody but some writer in Blackwood or the Westminster to get at all into the merits of so prolix and pretentious a poem. “Aurora Leigh” is about as long as the Iliad, and is also written in a dialect of English not much easier for common Englishmen to understand than would be the epic Greek. Indeed we would venture, though the Iliad be all Greek to us, rather to undertake to read it through, than to read some passages of “Aurora Leigh” till we understood them.

This is precisely the reaction we have alluded to regarding the final stanzas of the poem, “The Dream.” It means, simply, that Browning was faking it when writing on her own steam as an intellectual poet.

Note, in the above excerpt, Mathew’s use of the word “chanticleer” to represent a rooster. This is one of his trademarks, and the humor is typical for him, as well. But it is in the second paragraph that he drops one of his coded “bombs” for posterity:

Mrs. Browning is well known as the writer of a few very beautiful and many very ugly poems.

This *seems*, on its surface, to be merely gratuitous sarcasm. But it is actually Mathew’s way of informing us that Browning is a plagiarist. The same technique is reputed to have been used by Winston Churchill, when from amongst the crowd he was handed a particularly ugly baby. Thinking quickly, he exclaimed, “That’s *some baby!*” In other words, Mathew would craft a statement to be deliberately *neutral*, when it implied something else. Still don’t see it? Mrs. Browning *is known as* the writer—he deliberately refrains from asserting that she *is* the writer!

In other words, her reputation is as a writer of “a few very beautiful” poems, suspiciously found in a sea of “very ugly” ones. Hence—a plagiarist, who cannot, actually, write poems of high quality, herself. There are several instances in the historical record of Mathew using this technique, some of which are presented in this writer’s other papers concerning Charles Dickens and Edgar Allan Poe.

Mathew continues:

She is reputed a learned lady, and her choice of languages shows indubitable signs of an acquaintance with Greek roots. Her style, from its free use of upper-class words—words which are not common to the popular expression, or known to the popular heart, but which have the odor of learning, of science and the philosophies about them—seems always on the verge of being elegantly and studiously bombastic; and yet it sometimes contains an expression of quite unusual power or beauty. In her last poem the excellencies seem to us fewer and the defects altogether more abundant than in any of her preceding publications. In fact we have not seen a book for a long time which we think contains so much poor reading and which is so little worth the attention of sensible people, who value their time, as this “Aurora Leigh.”

In other words, her later work—which is her own—is far inferior to “her” early work, a portion of which was plagiarized. Furthermore, this may be a reference to Browning’s mentor, classical scholar Hugh Stuart Boyd, who had died in 1848. With Boyd backing her up, making suggestions, her earlier work was far superior to what she can produce on her own.

Mathew’s satirical pen is now fully unleashed. After exposing the hypocrisy of her preface, in which she asserts she has decided to write for herself, he turns to the question of theme:

It would be desirable to know what is the subject of the poem; yet this after much study we are not at all able to announce unless we copy from Mrs. Browning’s dedication.—The work itself seems to be without subjects, one or more. But on the eighth page we suspect it was intended to be revealed. An old man dies and thus addresses the heroine:

“His last word was, “love—
Love, my child, love, love!”—(then he had done
with grief)
“Love, my child!”

Here the word “love” repeated five times, and shrouded in impenetrable mystery as to whether it be noun nominative or verb imperative, seems to be the proposed subject of the poem.

Mathew particularly ridicules Browning’s appeal to the heavenly bodies, and especially the stars. His profoundly personal reason is that Abby had a deep appreciation of the stars, seeing them as living beings. They figure prominently in her work, including one which is undoubtedly assumed by scholars to have been written by her plagiarist, Albert Pike. “Part of an Address to the Stars,” signed “A.P.,” appears in the April 12, 1831 edition of the “Philadelphia Album and Ladies

Literary Port Folio.” During this early period in their relationship, Mathew, initially a skeptic, had ridiculed some of her more exotic beliefs. In particular, it appears he had convinced her that astrology was fraudulent—but she was not quite so ready to give up her love for the stars as living beings:

PART OF AN ADDRESS TO THE STARS.

Ye ever burning stars! I would that I
Might pierce the secrets of your deathless fire,
And so drink deep of some great mystery,
Not waiting for consuming funeral pyre,
But bathing deep, in silver rain, the high
And unknown spirit, which I feel, inspire
With mighty, but mysterious influence,
This clodded cerement, built and shaped of sense.

High stars! I would astrology were true,
So I might deeply pore upon your leaves,
And roam continually on with you,
Entranced in the path of sober eve;
Nor error-chained, be ever whirling through
The mazes that dark superstition strongly weaves,
About the spirit’s scope—for men have given,
For knowledge, (*so men say*,) their hopes of heaven.

Are ye not animate? eternal stars!
Who ever go, like gods, sublimely on!—
And he who duly on the eastern bars,
Drinks of a dewy incense—the high sun—
The sun-depending moon—the mystic cars
Of far-revolving comets—have ye none
Of the same soul that fills the earth bound clod?
Are ye not part of the universal God!

O deathless spirits! ye are beautiful
Beyond our comprehension—there is naught
Of this inspired matter, that bears rule
Upon this earth, so beautifully wrought,
So wonderful as ye!—Are ye not full
As this, of life, divinity, and thought?—
So eastern realms have judged, and bending down,
Joyed in your smile, or wept beneath your frown.

Ye are unswerving on your changeless way,
And time hath over you no influence;
Yet poor weak man, whose life is but a day—

The sport of heaven's winds—is an intense
Eternal spirit—an embodied ray
Of wisdom and eternity—but whence
Shall he assert, in overweening pride,
That ye are lifeless sods? Proud spheres once deified!

A.P.

In Mathew's opinion, by contrast, Browning's references to the stars, in her own poetry, is gratuitous and pretentious. So there is a deeper motive at work when he remarks:

We have the following description of the mode in which the heroine left Italy by ship. She was looking at her friend left behind on the shore, and says:

When the bitter sea
Inexorably pushes between us both,
And sweeping up the ship with my despair
Threw us out as a pasture to the stars."

Thus it appears that the sea swept the ship up, which would not be so strange had it done this by one of its waves: but it is a great marvel how Miss Aurora Leigh's despair should have been the instrument used. Again the last line of the above makes it look very much as if the passengers after drifting from shore were eating up by the stars—for we are at a loss what else "pasture to the stars" can signify. This, if the true meaning, surprises one the less, after observing what various other heretofore unknown offices the heavenly bodies have assigned to them by Mrs. Browning. For instance a few pages later the heroine had the following experience:

"O sorrowful great gift
Conferred on poets, of a two-fold life,
When one life has been found enough for pain!
We staggering 'neath our burden as mere men,
Being called to stand up straight as demi-gods,
Support the intolerable strain and stress
Of the universal, and send clearly up
With voices broken by the human sob,
Our poems to find rhymes among the stars."

It seems here that the stars are employed to keep or in some way to supply rhymes for poems. It would be an improvement if the stars could be persuaded not only to supply rhymes but also themselves to make the poems. Mrs. Browning would thus be relieved from the task herself. She would not be obliged to "support the intolerable strain and stress of the universal." There is hardly occasion here for the seriousness of saying that very few minds are called to bear any such strain, very few attain to universality—simpler duties than that hover about human life, and it is not meant by a kind Providence that the burden of life should be intolerable to any one, poet or not.

Shakspeare was probably unaware of that “sorrowful great gift” the possession of which is so much bewailed by Mrs. Browning.

But we are not yet through with the heavenly bodies. They seem, the moon especially, to haunt the volume. Thus the young Aurora sometimes gets part of a leaf of some old book to read, the difficulty attending which one would think might be made sufficiently obvious without a comparison. But Mrs. Browning prefers to bring in the moon as follows:

“She had to guess the bottom of a page
By just the top sometimes,—as difficulty
As, sitting on the moon, to guess the earth.”

This simile is quite too perfect in its way for comment. It is a masterpiece, containing in itself about all the defects which a simile can possibly have. For, first, there is no likeness between the things compared; secondly the thing to be said is made obscure rather than clear by the comparison; and thirdly, it was a thing in itself too plain to need help from any comparison whatsoever.

Mathew closes the review as follows:

“Aurora Leigh” is too long to be now more particularly examined. From the quotations given the reader may judge how many crimes against English and good sense the whole work contains. In fact, the whole work is one continuous crime; for the unexceptional poetry in it is a minimum—not more than half-a-dozen lines to a score of pages. Its story does not rise above the plot of average pamphlet love-stories—its characters have no significance, being unrepresentative of any known species of men and women, or of any species whom it would be desirable should be known—its discussions throw no light or beauty on anything in either realm of nature or art—and its style is one of the most vicious, one of the most ridiculously bombastic, that ever was found between the covers of an English book.

Mrs. Browning has many admirers, and some of her former poems deserve to be admired. Our regret is therefore the more that she should have given to the world a poem which must subside into so low a place in English literature, till it is, finally, and happily for everybody, forgotten.

Another piece of suggestive evidence

In the May 29, 1852 edition of the Boston “Weekly Museum”—the edition following the third and last of Mathew's letters from “Sally Sage,” lampooning the late Margaret Fuller (who had falsely claimed his “star”-signed work in the 1844-46 New York “Tribune”)—appears an unsigned editorial entitled “The Decline of Poetry.” It begins:

The last number of the *London Quarterly Review* contains what is commonly called a “rasping article” on a number of modern English poets, gentlemen of swelling diction

and vast pretensions, but who are wonderfully deficient in that divine fire the possession of which can alone warrant a man to attempt a poem of any kind, from an epigram to an epic. We are not, as our readers well know, a believer in the inferiority of the present age to any other age. We do not share in the alarm of those our friends who see nothing but decline in the present century, and who are preparing for sudden death to society. We hold that to-day is better than yesterday was, and that to-morrow will be better than today.

It so happens that this edition features “Lady Geraldine's Courtship” in its entirety. And before the page on which it is printed, is seen the following editorial comment:

“Lady Geraldine's Courtship”—The poem by Mrs. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, which we have transferred to our columns in the present number of the *Museum*, although considerably longer than poems usually printed in newspapers, is yet so beautiful that we could not resist the temptation to copy it. It is a perfect romance, an exquisite love-story, and the heart that is not quickened by a perusal of it must be insensible to the charms of poetry, woman, and love. Bachelor as we are, we like to read it once a month.

Now, there would be only one more edition of the “Weekly Museum” before it was turned over to Ossian Dodge—the entertainer who had falsely claimed Mathew's “Quails” travelogue in this paper. The editor up until this point was Charles A.V. Putnam, a worldly man who had earlier published what is almost certainly his own ostensibly humorous account of chasing a woman around his printing office, forcibly kissing her and, as a consequence, being slapped by her.⁷ Both Putnam and Mathew, at this time, were bachelors, inasmuch as Mathew had formally left his second, arranged marriage by mid-1849. Mathew appears to have frequently done office work, i.e., as an associate editor, for those papers that he was closely associated with and to which he contributed frequently, like the “Museum.” The question then becomes, was “Lady Geraldine's Courtship” inserted by Putnam, or by Mathew? If it was Mathew, knowing that he would not be able to work under Ossian Dodge, and wishing to dedicate his efforts with a final tribute to Abby, he may have urged the poem on Putnam, so that despite its length, it was printed in its entirety in this next-to-last edition. He may also have penned, speaking for the editorial staff, the brief commentary. If Putnam read any poem “once a month,” presumably it would have been about pursuing and conquering women, not about hopelessly wooing women above his social class. Meanwhile, it would not have been the only time that Mathew inserted tributes to Abby at the launch, or the close, of a newspaper he was closely associated with.

This, then, can be taken as another possible indication that Mathew was, in fact, the actual author of “Lady Geraldine's Courtship.”

Conclusion

These plagiarized poems, originally written by Mathew, are *deeply personal*, and they proceed from a deeply personal *context*. These are the poems which moved the British literati, precisely because they are the ones with “juice”—with authentic emotional and spiritual power, inasmuch as they derived from real life. With the possible exception of “Wine of Cyprus,” they cannot

have reflected Elizabeth Barrett's own experience, any more than the events related in "The Raven" could have been Edgar Allan Poe's experience. They were all Mathew's own experiences. Imagine you have written a sublime tribute to your wife, or your child—you share it with a prominent British poet—and what does she do? She ineptly modifies it to look as if she had written it largely in imagination, and she proceeds to feed her own fame on the strength of these very poems.

All are fooled, and thus it goes on, from generation to generation, from classroom to classroom and from textbook to textbook—until Mathew finally reincarnates, remembers who he was, gathers together his lost legacy, and begins publishing papers like this one.

Footnotes:

1) Poe, Edgar Allan (ed. J.A. Harrison), "The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe," Vol. XII, *Review of The Drama of Exile and Other Poems*, 1902, pp. 1-35.

2) Poyen, Charles, "Progress of Animal Magnetism in New England," 1837, pg. 41.

3) Boston "Weekly Museum," Nov. 10, 1849.

4) Kenyon, Frederic G., ed., "The Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning," Vol. I, 1898, pp. 176-177.

5) Scholars have mistakenly attributed the "Quails" travelogue series to an entertainer named Ossian Dodge, but I have definitely proven that it was written by Mathew Franklin Whittier. See "Mathew Franklin Whittier in his own words," by the author.

6) Mathew Franklin Whittier also used the phrase "land of the free" in direct reference to the "Star Spangled Banner," writing as the character "Ethan Spike" in the Nov. 29, 1862 edition of the Portland "Transcript."

7) I assume that the account, entitled "Love in a Printing Office," is autobiographical for Putnam, inasmuch as the young woman addresses the narrator as "Charley," the events take place in an editor's office, and the account is told in first person. The narrator places the anecdote in a small village he was visiting, and yet he appears to be the editor. He also fashions the dialogue so as to portray the woman as flirtatious and playful; but the picture that emerges suggests otherwise.