

# **FROM FAMILY TO PHILOSOPHY**



# **FROM FAMILY TO PHILOSOPHY**

**LETTER-WRITERS FROM THE PASTONS TO  
ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING**

**Henry Summerfield**



**University  
of Victoria**  
Libraries

2019

© Henry Summerfield 2019

Published by  
ePublishing Services, University of Victoria Libraries  
Victoria, British Columbia V8P 5C2  
Canada  
press@uvic.ca

Book design by Yenny Lim, ePublishing Services, University of Victoria Libraries.

Cover image: Alfred Walter Bays. 1889. Image from page 638 of “Stories for the household”. Courtesy of Internet Archive on flickr, [flic.kr/p/ovpvxp](https://www.flickr.com/photos/ovpvxp/). No known copyright restrictions.

This publication, unless otherwise indicated, is released under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) License. This means that you may copy, distribute, display, and perform the work, and make derivative works and remixes based on it only for non-commercial purposes. Distribution of derivative works may only be made under an identical license that governs the original work. Properly attribute the book as follows:

Summerfield, Henry. *From Family to Philosophy: Letter-Writers from the Pastons to Elizabeth Barrett Browning*. University of Victoria Libraries, 2019.  
This work is licensed under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 International License, except where otherwise noted.

Download this book: <https://dspace.library.uvic.ca/handle/1828/3859>

References to Internet website URLs were accurate at the time of writing. Neither the authors nor the University of Victoria is responsible for URLs that may have expired or changed since the manuscript was prepared. The publisher and contributor make no representation, express or implied, with regard to the accuracy of the information contained in this book and cannot accept responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions that it may contain.

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Title: *From family to philosophy : letter-writers from the Pastons to Elizabeth Barrett Browning* / Henry Summerfield.

Names: Summerfield, Henry, author.

Description: Includes bibliographical references.

Identifiers: Canadiana (print) 20190190221 | Canadiana (ebook) 20190190264 | ISBN 9781550586473 (softcover) | ISBN 9781550586480 (PDF) | ISBN 9781550586497 (EPUB)

Subjects: LCSH: English letters—History and criticism.

Classification: LCC PR911 .S86 2019 | DDC 826/.009—dc23

“... the Three Regions immense  
Of Childhood, Manhood & Old Age”

William Blake, *Jerusalem* 98:32-33

“And catch the Manners living as they rise”

Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Man*, I, 14



# CONTENTS

Preface	ix
<b>PROLOGUE</b>	
1 A Philosopher in Interesting Times and an Emperor's Benevolent Servant - <i>Cicero and Pliny the Younger</i>	3
<b>PRELUDE</b>	
2 Naked Ambition - <i>The Pastons</i>	9
3 Victims of Power - <i>The Lises</i>	13
4 Blinkered Nobleness - <i>Sir Thomas More</i>	17
5 A Scholar Abroad - <i>Roger Ascham</i>	19
6 Jacobean Gossip - <i>John Chamberlain</i>	23
7 Spymaster, Poet, Provost of Eton - <i>Sir Henry Wotton</i>	27
8 A Troubled Life - <i>John Donne</i>	31
9 In Time of Civil War - <i>James Howell</i>	35
10 On the Cusp of Modernity - <i>Sir Thomas Browne</i>	41
<b>FORETASTE</b>	
11 An Early Charmer - <i>Dorothy Osborne</i>	47
<b>INTERLUDE</b>	
12 The Self and the Modern World	55
<b>FRUITION</b>	
13 He Loves His Friends - <i>Jonathan Swift</i>	59
14 Putting a Spin on It - <i>Alexander Pope</i>	73
15 No One's Obedient Servant - <i>Lady Mary Wortley Montagu</i>	81
16 Wandering Down Byways - <i>John Byrom</i>	99
17 All-accomplished Gentleman - <i>Lord Chesterfield</i>	103
18 He Fears Madness - <i>Samuel Johnson</i>	117
19 Lockean Sentimentalist - <i>Laurence Sterne</i>	127
20 Not Quite a Recluse - <i>Thomas Gray</i>	137
21 He Gathers It All In - <i>Horace Walpole</i>	149
22 He Has Escaped from Slavery - <i>Ignatius Sancho</i>	197
23 Heaven Is Not for Him - <i>William Cowper</i>	205
24 A Marriage Fails in India - <i>Eliza Fay</i>	227

25	Farmer, Poet, Lover, Exciseman - <i>Robert Burns</i>	235
26	He Loves Liberty – But Not Too Much of It - <i>Sydney Smith</i>	249
27	Often Down, but Never Out - <i>Samuel Taylor Coleridge</i>	263
28	She Obeys the Fourth Commandment - <i>Mary Russell Mitford</i>	289
29	What Is His Vocation? - <i>Lord Byron</i>	313
30	Seeker of Beauty, Victim of Passion - <i>John Keats</i>	349
31	A Sharp Tongue and a Hungry Heart - <i>Jane Welsh Carlyle</i>	365
32	Not an Elopement – Just a Private Marriage - <i>Elizabeth Barrett Browning</i>	399

#### EPILOGUE

33	What a Literature is Here!	437
	Notes	439
	Further Reading	511