

1 be—  
! You married men—there's many in my view—  
Don't think your wife can all wrap up in you,  
Don't deem, though close her life to yours may grow,  
That you are all the folks she wants to know;  
Or think your stitches form the only part  
Of the crochet-work of a woman's heart.  
Though married souls each other's lives may burnish,  
Each needs some help the other cannot furnish.

Well, neighborhoods meant counties, in those days;  
The roads didn't have accommodating ways;  
And maybe weeks would pass before she'd see—  
And much less talk with—any one but me.  
The Indians sometimes showed their sun-baked faces,  
But they didn't teem with conversational graces;  
Some ideas from the birds and trees she stole,  
But twasn't like talking with a human soul;  
And finally I thought that I could trace  
A half heart-hunger peering from her face.  
Then she would drive it back, and shut the door;  
Of course that only made me see it more.  
'Twas hard to see her give her life to mine,  
Making a steady effort not to pine;  
'Twas hard to hear that laugh bloom out each minute,  
And recognize the seeds of sorrow in it.  
No misery makes a close observer mourn,  
Like hopeless grief with hopeful courage borne;  
There's nothing sets the sympathies to paining,  
Like a complaining woman, uncomplaining!  
It always draws my breath out into sighs,  
To see a brave look in a woman's eyes.

Well, she went on, as plucky as could be,  
Fighting the foe she thought I did not see,  
And using her heart-horticultural powers  
To turn that forest to a bed of flowers.  
You can not check an unadmitted sigh,  
And so I had to soothe her on the sly,