APPENDIX 3

Additional Candidates for the “Master” Constellation, 1858–1861

The textual boundaries of the “Master” experiment are not easy to draw. Although I ultimately chose to include only two additional documents in this edition—*Mute – thy Coronation* – (A 825) and *A wife – at Daybreak* (A 826)—two others were strong contenders: *Did the Harebell loose / her girdle* (A 167) and *Again – his voice is at / the door* – (A 89-8/9). Excluded here because they offer no direct address to the “Master” and, furthermore, because their transmission histories differ from those of the other “Master” documents included in the present constellation, they nonetheless share two important conditions with the others: neither was ever bound into a fascicle, and neither, so far as we know, circulated beyond Dickinson’s private archive.

*Did the Harebell loose / her girdle* (A 167) dates to the same period as *Mute – thy Coronation* – (A 825), that is, ca. second half of 1860. It is a fair copy in pencil on a leaf of cream, lightly ruled stationery embossed FINE | NOTE | PAPER in a medallion. It has been folded into thirds, perhaps, since it remains unaddressed, for added privacy.

*Again – his voice is at / the door* – (A 89-8/9) dates to ca. early 1862 and thus the far end of the first constellation of “Master” documents. It is a fair copy in ink, with numerous variants, on a sheet of wove, cream stationery embossed PARIS. It has not been folded.

Although I did not include A 89-8/9 here—to do so would have required a transgression of the editorial parameters I set for the present constellation—it is my conviction that the poem looks back on the “Master” documents 1858–1861 from a half a year’s distance and serves, perhaps, as a kind of hinge between the unbound “Master” documents of this period and the fascicled “Master” documents of late 1862 and 1863. The vocabulary alone—flowers, moon, Angels, drops, stain—is suggestive. The rash of underlinings—twenty-eight instances in forty-six physical lines—and high number of variants further endow the work with an intensity characteristic of that in A 829 and A 828. An outlier in this edition, *Again – his voice is at / the door* – beautifully troubles the boundaries I have imagined.
Figure A3.1. A 167, ca. second half of 1860, *Did the Harebell loose / her girdle*
Figure A3.2. A 89-8, ca. early 1862, *Again – his voice is at / the door –*, opening leaf
Figure A3.3. A 89-9, ca. early 1862, Again – his voice is at / the door –, final leaves