



Emma Darwin: A Victorian Life

James D. Loy, Kent M. Loy

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In 1808, Josiah Wedgwood II, owner and general manager of the famous pottery and china manufactory that bore his name, welcomed an eighth child into his large, vibrant family. This daughter, Emma, had a relatively happy childhood and grew up intelligent, educated, and religious. A talented sportswoman and an accomplished pianist, she married her cousin Charles Darwin at the age of thirty, bore ten children in their forty-three years together, and patiently nursed her famous husband through mysterious and chronic illnesses.

Informed by her strong Christian faith as well as her quick, inquiring mind, Emma learned to coexist with her husband's radical scientific theories, though she worried about the fate of Charles's soul. Although the high spirits of her youth were somewhat dampened by the cares of life, she managed family and household affairs--including the difficult circumstances surrounding the death of three children--with courage, gravity, and a sense of humor.

In this charming volume, the wife, companion, and confidante of the father of evolution comes into full focus. Drawing upon Emma's personal correspondence as well as the abundant literature about her husband, authors James Loy and Kent Loy reveal the fascinating story of an exceptional woman who remained true to herself despite hardship and who, in the process, humanized her work-obsessed husband and held her family together.

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