

Whom God hath loved, whom Devils
dare not scorn,
Despise not thou, — the meanest hu-
man creature.
Climb, if thou canst, the heights of
thine own nature,
And look toward Paradise where each
was born.

So I spread sackcloth on my former pride:
And sat down, clothed and covered up
with shame:
And cried to God to take away my
blame
Among my brethren: and to these I cried

To come between my crime and my
despair,
That they might help my heart up,
when God sent
Upon my soul its proper punishment,
Lest that should be too great for me to
bear.

And so I made my choice: and learned
to live
Again, and worship, as my spirit
yearned:
So much had been admired — so much
been learned —
So much been given me — O, how much
to give!

Here is the choice, and now the time, O
chooser!
Endless the consequence though brief
the choice.
Echoes are waked down ages by thy
voice:
Speak: and be thou the gainer or the
loser.

And I bethought me long . . . "Though
garners split,
If none but thou be fed art thou more
full?"
For surely Knowledge and the Beauti-
ful
Are human; must have love, or die for it!

To Give is better than to Know or See:
And both are means: and neither is
the end:
Knowing and seeing, if none call thee
friend,
Beauty and knowledge have done naught
for thee.

Though I at Aphrodite all day long
Gaze until sunset with a thirsty eye,
I shall not drain her boundless beauty
dry
By that wild gaze: nor do her fair face
wrong.

For who gives, giving, doth win back his
gift:
And knowledge by division grows to
more:
Who hides the Master's talent shall
die poor,
And starve at last of his own thankless
thrift.

I did this for another: and, behold!
My work hath blood in it: but thine
hath none:
Done for thyself, it dies in being done:
To what thou buyest thou thyself art sold.

Give thyself utterly away. Be lost.
Choose some one, something: not thy-
self, thine own:
Thou canst not perish: but, thrice
greater grown, —
Thy gain the greatest where thy loss was
most, —

Thou in another shalt thyself new-find.
The single globule, lost in the wide sea,
Becomes an ocean. Each identity
Is greatest in the greatness of its kind.

Who serves for gain, a slave, by thank-
less pelf
Is paid: who gives himself is priceless,
free.
I give myself, a man, to God: lo, He
Renders me back a saint unto myself!

NIGHT.

COME to me, not as once thou camest,
Night!
With light and splendor up the gor-
geous West;
Easing the heart's rich sense of thee
with sighs
Sobbed out of all emotion on Love's
breast;
While the dark world waned wavering
into rest,
Half seen athwart the dim delicious light
Of languid eyes:

But softly, soberly; and dark — more
dark!
Till my life's shadow lose itself in
thine.
Athwart the light of slowly-gather-
ing tears,
That come between me and the star-
light, shine
From distant melancholy deeps divine,
While day slips downward through a
rosy arc
To other spheres.

SONG.

Flow, freshly flow,
Dark stream, below!
While stars grow light above:
By willowy banks, through lonely downs,
Past terraced walls in silent towns,
And bear me to my love!

Still, as we go,
Blow, gently blow,
Warm wind, and blithely move
These dreamy sails, that slowly glide, —
A shadow on the shining tide
That bears me to my love.

Fade, sweetly fade
In dewy shade
On lonely grange and grove,
O lingering day! and bring the night
Through all her milk-white mazes bright
That tremble o'er my love.

The sunset wanes
From twinkling panes.
Dim, misty myriads move
Down glimmering streets. One light I
see —
One happy light, that shines for me,
And lights me to my love!

FORBEARANCE.

CALL me not, Love, unthankful or un-
kind,
That I have left my heart with thee,
and fled.
I were not worth that wealth which I
resigned,
Had I not chosen poverty instead.

Grant me but solitude! I dare not swerve
From my soul's law, — a slave, though
serving thee.
I but forbear more grandly to deserve:
The free gift only cometh of the free.

HELIOS HYPERIONIDES.

HELIOS all day long his allotted labor
pursues;
No rest to his passionate heart and his
panting horses given,
From the moment when roseate-fingered
Eos kindles the dews
And spurns the salt sea-floors, ascend-
ing silvery the heaven,
Until from the hand of Eos Hesperos,
trembling, receives
His fragrant lamp, and faint in the
twilight hangs it up.
Then the over-wearied son of Hyperion
lightly leaves
His dusty chariot, and softly slips into
his golden cup:
And to holy Æthiopia, under the ocean-
stream,
Back from the sunken retreats of the
sweet Hesperides,
Leaving his unloved labor, leaving his
unyoked team,
He sails to his much-loved wife; and
stretches his limbs at ease
In a laurelled lawn divine, on a bed of
beaten gold,
Where he pleasantly sleeps, forgetting
his travel by lands and seas,
Till again the clear-eyed Eos comes with
a finger cold,
And again, from his white wife severed,
Hyperionides
Leaps into his flaming chariot, angrily
gathers the reins,
Headlong flings his course through
Uranos, much in wrath,
And over the seas and mountains, over
the rivers and plains,
Chafed at heart, tumultuous, pushes
his burning path.

ELISABETTA SIRANI.

1665.

JUST to begin, — and end! so much, —
no more!
To touch upon the very point at last

Where life should cling: to feel the
solid shore
Safe; where, the seething sea's strong
toil o'erpast,
Peace seemed appointed; then, with all
the store
Half-undivulged of the gleaned ocean
cast,
Like a discouraged wave's on the bleak
strand,
Where what appeared some temple
(whose glad Priest
To gather ocean's sparkling gift should
stand,
Bidding the wearied wave, from toil
releast,
Sleep in the marble harbors bathed with
bland
And quiet sunshine, flowing from full
east
Among the laurels) proves the dull blind
rock's
Fantastic front, — to die, a disallowed,
Dasht purpose: which the scornful shore-
cliff mocks,
Even as it sinks; and all its wealth
bestowed
In vain, — mere food to feed, perchance,
stray flocks
Of the coarse sea-gull! weaving its
own shroud
Of idle foam, swift ceasing to be seen!
— Sad, sad, my father! . . . yet it
comes to this.
For I am dying. All that might have
been —
That must have been! . . . the days,
so hard to miss,
So sure to come! . . . eyes, lips, that
seemed to lean
In on me at my work, and almost
kiss
The curls bowed o'er it, . . . lost! O,
never doubt
I should have lived to know them all
again,
And from the crowd of praisers single
out
For special love those forms beheld so
plain
Beforehand. When my pictures, borne
about
Bologna, to the church doors, led their
train
Of kindling faces, turned, as by they go,
Up to these windows, — standing at
your side
Unseen, to see them, I (be sure!) should
know
And welcome back those eyes and lips,
descried
Long since in fancy: for I loved them so,
And so believed them! Think! . . .
Bologna's pride
My paintings! . . . Guido Reni's mantle
mine . . .
And I, the maiden artist, prized among
The masters, . . . ah, that dream was too
divine
For earth to realize! I die so young,
All this escapes me! God, the gift be
Thine,
Not man's then . . . better so! That
throbbing throng
Of human faces fades out fast. Even
yours,
Belovéd ones, the inexorable Fate
(For all our vowed affections!) scarce
endures
About me. Must I go, then, desolate
Out from among you? Nay, my work
insures
Fit guerdon somewhere, — though the
gift must wait!
Had I lived longer, life would sure have
set
Earth's gift of fame in safety. But I
die.
Death must make safe the heavenly guer-
don yet.
I trusted time for immortality, —
There was my error! Father, never let
Doubt of reward confuse my memory!
Besides, — I have done much: and what
is done
Is well done. All my heart conceived,
my hand
Made fast . . . mild martyr, saint, and
weeping nun,
And truncheoned prince, and warrior
with bold brand,
Yet keep my life upon them; — as the sun,
Though fallen below the limits of the
land,
Still sees on every form of purple cloud
His painted presence.
Flaring August's here,
September's coming! Summer's broid-
ered shroud
Is borne away in triumph by the year:
Red Autumn drops, from all his branches
bowed,
His careless wealth upon the costly bier.

We must be cheerful. Set the casement
wide.
One last look o'er the places I have
loved,
One last long look! . . . Bologna, O my
pride
Among thy palaced streets! The days
have moved
Pleasantly o'er us. What has been de-
nied
To our endeavor? Life goes unre-
proved.
To make the best of all things, is the best
Of all means to be happy. This I
know,
But cannot phrase it finely. The night's
rest
The day's toil sweetens. Flowers are
warmed by snow.
All's well God wills. Work out this
grief. Joy's zest
Itself is salted with a touch of woe.
There's nothing comes to us may not be
borne,
Except a too great happiness. But
this
Comes rarely. Though I know that you
will mourn
The little maiden helpmate you must
miss,
Thanks be to God, I leave you not for-
lorn.
There should be comfort in this dying
kiss.
Let Barbara keep my colors for herself.
I'm sorry that Lucia went away
In some unkindness. 'T was a cheerful
elf!
Send her my scarlet ribands, mother;
say
I thought of her. My palette's on the
shelf,
Surprised, no doubt, at such long holi-
day.
In the south window, on the easel, stands
My picture for the Empress Eleánore,
Still wanting some few touches, these
weak hands
Must leave to others. Yet there's
time before
The year ends. And the Empress' own
commands
You'll find in writing. Barbara's
brush is more
Like mine than Anna's; let her finish it.
O, . . . and there's 'Maso, our poor
fisherman!
You'll find my work done for him:
something fit
To hang among his nets: you liked
the plan
My fancy took to please our friend's dull
wit,
Scarce brighter than his old tin fish-
ing-can. . . .
St. Margaret, stately as a ship full sail,
Leading a dragon by an azure band;
The ribbon flutters gayly in the gale;
The monster follows the Saint's guid-
ing hand,
Wrinkled to one grim smile from head
to tail:
For in his horny hide his heart grows
bland.
— Where are you, dear ones? . . .
'T is the dull, faint chill,
Which soon will shrivel into burning
pain!
Dear brother, sisters, father, mother, —
still
Stand near me! While your faces
fixt remain
Within my sense, vague fears of unknown
ill
Are softly crowded out, . . . and yet,
't is vain!
Greet Giulio Banzi; greet Antonio; greet
Bartolomeo, kindly. When I'm gone,
And in the school-room, as of old, you
meet,
— Ah, yes! you'll miss a certain merry
tone,
A cheerful face, a smile that should com-
plete
The vague place in the household
picture grown
To an aspect so familiar, it seems strange
That aught should alter there. Mere
life, at least,
Could not have brought the shadow of a
change
Across it. Safely the warm years in-
crease
Among us. I have never sought to
range
From our small table at earth's general
feast,
To higher places: never loved but you,
Dear family of friends, except my
art:
Nor any form save those my pencil drew
E'er quivered in the quiet of my
heart.

I die a maiden to Madonna true,
And would have so continued. . .
There, the smart,
The pang, the faintness! . . .

Ever, as I lie
Here, with the Autumn sunset on my
face,
And heavy in my curls (whilst it, and I,
Together, slipping softly from the place
We played in, pensively prepare to die),
A low warm humming simmers in my
ears,
— Old Summer afternoons! faint frag-
ments rise
Out of my broken life . . . at times
appears
Madonna-like a moon in mellow skies:
The three Fates with the spindle and
the shears:
The Grand Duke Cosmo with the Desti-
nies:
St. Margaret with her dragon: fitful
cheers
Along the Via Urbana come and go:
Bologna with her towers! . . . Then
all grows dim,

And shapes itself anew, softly and slow,
To cloistered glooms through which
the silver hymn
Eludes the sensitive silence; whilst below
The southwest window, just one single,
slim,
And sleepy sunbeam, powders with waved
gold
A lane of gleamy mist along the gloom,
Whereby to find its way, through mani-
fold
Magnificence, to Guido Reni's tomb,
Which, set in steadfast splendor, I be-
hold.
And all the while, I scent the incense
fume;
Till dizzy grows the brain, and dark the
eye
Beneath the eyelid. When the end
is come,
There, by his tomb (our master's) let me
lie,
Somewhere, not too far off; beneath
the dome
Of our own Lady of the Rosary:
Safe, where old friends will pass; and
still near home!

LAST WORDS.

WILL, are you sitting and watching there yet? And I know, by a certain skill
That grows out of utter wakefulness, the night must be far spent, Will:
For, lying awake so many a night, I have learned at last to catch
From the crowing cock, and the clanging clock, and the sound of the beating watch,
A misty sense of the measureless march of Time, as he passes here,
Leaving my life behind him; and I know that the dawn is near.
But you have been watching three nights, Will, and you looked so wan to-night,
I thought, as I saw you sitting there, in the sad monotonous light
Of the moody night-lamp near you, that I could not choose but close
My lids as fast, and lie as still, as though I lay in a doze:
For, I thought, "He will deem I am dreaming, and then he may steal away,
And sleep a little: and this will be well." And truly, I dreamed, as I lay
Wide awake, but all as quiet, as though, the last office done,
They had streaked me out for the grave, Will, to which they will bear me anon.
Dreamed; for old things and places came dancing about my brain,
Like ghosts that dance in an empty house: and my thoughts went slipping again
By green back-ways forgotten to a stiller circle of time,
Where violets, faded forever, seemed blowing as once in their prime:
And I fancied that you and I, Will, were boys again as of old,
At dawn on the hill-top together, at eve in the field by the fold;
Till the thought of this was growing too wildly sweet to be borne,
And I oped my eyes, and turned me round, and there, in the light forlorn,
I find you sitting beside me. But the dawn is at hand, I know.
Sleep a little. I shall not die to-night. You may leave me. Go.

Eh! is it time for the drink? must you mix it? it does me no good.
But thanks, old friend, true friend! I would live for your sake, if I could.
Ay, there are some good things in life, that fall not away with the rest.
And, of all best things upon earth, I hold that a faithful friend is the best.
For woman, Will, is a thorny flower: it breaks, and we bleed and smart:
The blossom falls at the fairest, and the thorn runs into the heart.
And woman's love is a bitter fruit; and, however he bite it, or sip,
There's many a man has lived to curse the taste of that fruit on his lip.
But never was any man yet, as I ween, be he whosoever he may,
That has known what a true friend is, Will, and wished that knowledge away.
You were proud of my promise, faithful despite of my fall,
Sad when the world seemed over sweet, sweet when the world turned gall:
When I cloaked myself in the pride of praise from what God grieved to see,
You saw through the glittering lie of it all, and silently mourned for me:
When the world took back what the world had given, and scorn with praise
changed place,
I, from my sackcloth and ashes, looked up, and saw hope glow on your face:
Therefore, fair weather be yours, Will, whether it shines or pours,
And, if I can slip from out of my grave, my spirit will visit yours.

O woman eyes that have smiled and smiled, O woman lips that have kist
The life-blood out of my heart, why thus forever do you persist,
Pressing out of the dark all round, to bewilder my dying hours
With your ghostly sorceries brewed from the breath of your poison-flowers?
Still, though the idol be broken, I see at their ancient revels,
The riven altar around, come dancing the self-same devils.
Lente currite, lente currite, noctis equi!
Linger a little, O Time, and let me be saved ere I die.
How many a night 'neath her window have I walked in the wind and rain,
Only to look at her shadow fleet over the lighted pane.
Alas! 't was the shadow that rested, 't was herself that fled, you see,
And now I am dying, I know it: — dying, and where is she!
Dancing divinely, perchance, or, over her soft harp strings,
Using the past to give pathos to the little new song that she sings.
Bitter? I dare not be bitter in the few last hours left to live.
Needing so much forgiveness, God grant me at least to forgive.
There can be no space for the ghost of her face down in the narrow room,
And the mole is blind, and the worm is mute, and there must be rest in the tomb.
And just one failure more or less to a life that seems to be
(Whilst I lie looking upon it, as a bird on the broken tree
She hovers about, ere making wing for a land of lovelier growth,
Brighter blossom, and purer air, somewhere far off in the south,)
Failure, crowning failure, failure from end to end,
Just one more or less, what matter, to the many no grief can mend?
Not to know vice is virtue, not fate, however men rave:
And, next to this I hold that man to be but a coward and slave
Who bears the plague-spot about him, and, knowing it, shrinks or fears
To brand it out, though the burning knife should hiss in his heart's hot tears.
But I have caught the contagion of a world that I never loved,
Pleased myself with approval of those that I never approved,
Paltered with pleasures that pleased not, and fame where no fame could be,
And how shall I look, do you think, Will, when the angels are looking on me?
Yet oh! the confident spirit once mine, to dare and to do!
Take the world into my hand, and shape it, and make it anew:
Gather all men in my purpose, men in their darkness and dearth,
Men in their meanness and misery, made of the dust of the earth,
Mould them afresh, and make out of them Man, with his spirit sublime,

Man, the great heir of Eternity, dragging the conquests of Time !
 Therefore I mingled among them, deeming the poet should hold
 All natures saved in his own, as the world in the ark was of old ;
 All natures saved in his own to be types of a nobler race,
 When the old world passeth away and the new world taketh his place.
 Triple fool in my folly ! purblind and impotent worm,
 Thinking to move the world, who could not myself stand firm !
 Cheat of a worn-out trick, as one that on shipboard roves
 Wherever the wind may blow, still deeming the continent moves !
 Blowing the frothy bubble of life's brittle purpose away ;
 Child, ever chasing the morrow, who now cannot ransom a day :
 Still I called Fame to lead onward, forgetting she follows behind
 Those who know whither they walk through the praise or dispraise of mankind.
 All my life (looking back on it) shows like the broken stair
 That winds round a ruined tower, and never will lead anywhere.
 Friend, lay your hand in my own, and swear to me, when you have seen
 My body borne out from the door, ere the grass on my grave shall be green,
 You will burn every book I have written. And so perish, one and all,
 Each trace of the struggle that failed with the life that I cannot recall.
 Dust and ashes, earth's dross, which the mattock may give to the mole !
 Something, though stained and defaced, survives, as I trust, with the soul.

Something ? . . . Ay, something comes back to me . . . Think ! that I might have
 been . . . what ?

Almost, I fancy at times, what I meant to have been, and am not.
 Where was the fault ? Was it strength fell short ? And yet (I can speak of it now !)
 How my spirit sung like the resonant nerve of a warrior's battle-bow
 When the shaft has leapt from the string, what time, her first bright banner un-
 furled,

Song aimed her arrowy purpose in me sharp at the heart of the world.
 Was it the hand that faltered, unskilled ? or was it the eye that deceived ?
 However I reason it out, there remains a failure time has not retrieved.
 I said I would live in all lives that beat, and love in all loves that be :
 I would crown me lord of all passions ; and the passions were lords of me.
 I would compass every circle, I would enter at every door,
 In the starry spiral of science, and the labyrinth of lore,
 Only to follow the flying foot of love to his last retreat.
 Fool ! that with man's all-imperfect would circumscribe God's all-complete !
 Arrogant error ! whereby I starved like the fool in the fable of old,
 Whom the gods destroyed by the gift he craved, turning all things to gold.
 Be wise : know what to leave unknown. The flowers bloom on the brink,
 But black death lurks at the bottom. Help men to enjoy, not to think,
 O poet to whom I give place ! cull the latest effect, leave the cause.
 Few that dive for the pearl of the deep but are crushed in the kraken's jaws.
 While the harp of Arion is heard at eve over the glimmering ocean :
 He floats in the foam, on the dolphin's back, gliding with gentle motion,
 Over the rolling water, under the light of the beaming star,
 And the nymphs, half asleep on the surface, sail moving his musical car.
 A little knowledge will turn youth gray. And I stood, chill in the sun,
 Naming you each of the roses ; blest by the beauty of none.
 My song had an after-savor of the salt of many tears,
 Or it burned with a bitter foretaste of the end as it now appears :
 And the world that had paused to listen awhile, because the first notes were gay,
 Passed on its way with a sneer and a smile : " Has he nothing fresher to say ?
 This poet's mind was a weedy flower that presently comes to naught !"
 For the world was not so sad but what my song was sadder, it thought.
 Comfort me not. For if aught be worse than failure from over-stress

Of a life's prime purpose, it is to sit down content with a little success.
 Talk not of genius baffled. Genius is master of man.
 Genius does what it must, and talent does what it can.
 Blot out my name, that the spirits of Shakespeare and Milton and Burns
 Look not down on the praises of fools with a pity my soul yet spurns.
 And yet, had I only the trick of an aptitude shrewd of its kind,
 I should have lived longer, I think, more merry of heart and of mind.
 Surely I knew (who better ?) the innermost secret of each
 Bird, and beast, and flower. Failed I to give to them speech ?
 All the pale spirits of storm, that sail down streams of the wind,
 Cleaving the thunder-cloud, with wild hair blowing behind ;
 All the soft seraphs that float in the light of the crimson eve,
 When Hesper begins to glitter, and the heavy woodland to heave :
 All the white nymphs of the water that dwell 'mid the lilies alone :
 And the buskined maids for the love of whom the hoary oak-trees groan ;
 They came to my call in the forest ; they crept to my feet from the river :
 They softly looked out of the sky when I sung, and their wings beat with breath-
 less endeavor

The blocks of the broken thunder piling their stormy lattices,
 Over the moaning mountain walls, and over the sobbing seas.
 So many more reproachful faces around my bed !
 Voices moaning about me : " Ah ! couldst thou not heed what we said ?"
 Peace to the past ! it skills not now : these thoughts that vex it in vain
 Are but the dust of a broken purpose blowing about the brain
 Which presently will be tenantless, when the wanton worms carouse,
 And the mole builds over my bones his little windowless house.
 It is growing darker and stranger, Will, and colder, — dark and cold,
 Dark and cold ! Is the lamp gone out ? Give me thy hand to hold.
 No : 't is life's brief candle burning down. Tears ? tears, Will ! Why,
 This which we call dying is only ceasing to die.
 It is but the giving over a game all lose. Fear life, not death.
 The hard thing was to live, Will. To whatever bourn this breath
 Is going, the way is easy now. With flowers and music, life,
 Like a pagan sacrifice, leads us along to this dark High Priest with the knife.
 I have been too peevish at mere mischance. For whether we build it, friend,
 Of brick or jasper, life's large base dwindles into this point at the end,
 A kind of nothing ! Who knows whether 't is fittest to weep or laugh
 At those thin curtains the spider spins o'er each dusty epitaph ?
 I talk wildly. But this I know, that not even the best and first,
 When all is done, can claim by desert what even to the last and worst
 Of us weak workmen, God from the depth of his infinite mercy giveth.
 These bones shall rest in peace, for I know that my Redeemer liveth.
 Doubtful images come and go ; and I seem to be passing them by.
 Bubbles these be of the mind, which show that the stream is hurrying nigh
 To the home of waters. Already I feel, in a sort of still sweet awe,
 The great main current of all that I am beginning to draw and draw
 Into perfect peace. I attain at last ! Life's a long, long reaching out
 Of the soul to something beyond her. Now comes the end of all doubt.
 The vanishing point in the picture ! I have uttered weak words to-night,
 And foolish. A thousand failures, what are these in the sight
 Of the One All-Perfect who, whether man fails in his work, or succeeds,
 Builds surely, solemnly up from our broken days and deeds
 The infinite purpose of time. We are but day-laborers all,
 Early or late, or first or last at the gate in the vineyard wall.
 Lord ! if, in love, though fainting off, I have tended thy gracious Vine,
 O, quench the thirst on these dying lips, Thou who pourest the wine !
 Hush ! I am in the way to study a long, long silence now.

I know at last what I cannot tell : I see what I may not show.
 Pray awhile for my soul. Then sleep. There is nothing in this to fear.
 I shall sleep into death. Night sleeps. The hoarse wolf howls not near,
 No dull owl beats the casement, and no rough-bearded star
 Stares on my mild departure from yon dark window bar.
 Nature takes no notice of those that are coming or going.
 To-morrow make ready my grave, Will. To-morrow new flowers will be blowing.

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