

*Jesus, confirm my heart's desire
To work and think and speak for thee,
Still let me guard the holy fire,
And still stir up thy gift in me,
Ready for all thy perfect will,
Thy acts of faith and love repeat,
Till death thy endless mercies seal,
And make the sacrifice complete.*

When they had finished, the woman on the sofa said: "I must thank you for singing those two hymns, both of them favorites about which cling a thousand memories. Your tenor, Carl, is steadily improving; sweetness is the desired quality in the soprano and tenor, strength in the bass and contralto, their counters. But your voice, Frances, is unrivalled, for this morning by the exquisite neatness of your habit. Pardon me for speaking these truths which wear the appearance of flattery, and excuse my leaving, so abruptly, the scene of my enchantment. I wish to speak with Lucretia."

The woman, while speaking, had arisen. She now left the room. The singers, meanwhile, retired to the vacated sofa, the man conducting the woman by her hand. The damsel, knowing it thus to be retained, after they were seated, said: "Is it not unfair that grandmother should leave us no opportunity to repel these insidious attacks upon our modesty?"

The young man did not reply, and his companion continued: "You are depressed, Carl, and on a such auspicious day, a day when the smile of spring is first stealing over the face of winter."

Carl brant forward his other hand to the task of holding hers, and replied: "I am depressed, Frances; a burden is on my heart, that I would fain repeat in your ear."

"Speak on," returned his companion; "the poet has said: *The grief that will not speak, whispers the o'erfraught heart, and bids it break.* What was good for Macduff will doubtless benefit you."

"I would say, then, dear Frances," replied the man, "that I love you with my whole heart, that my life is in your hand, and that my very being is ensnared in the mesh of your magnetic personality; and this has been from the time, almost, when I first came into your father's service. What do you reply, sweet Frances? Can you return my love?"

Frances replied: "Talk not of love, good Carl. Why do you speak of the grand passion to me? I like you, Carl; I was ever pleased with your attentive kindness, but I do not, can not, love you."

The man evidenced the force of her reply by the tears which balanced on his eyelids. Frances surveyed him askantly, and resumed: "Why, Carl, do you waste a tear upon me, who can not weep a return? Eject me from the secret place. Remain my friend, my companion, but be some other woman's lover."

"I am aware how deeply I am bedded in poverty," replied the tenorist. "I know that we could not marry, tho we reciprocate in love. But I hoped that you might overlook this, that you would return some hopeful word to my simple offering."

The damsel answered by saying: "The poverty which you profess is not an obstacle. The humbleness of man's station in life can not diminish true love in woman."

"You love another, then," replied the suitor, "since your heart is barred to me. Do you love another, Frances?"