

but she has never tasted luxury, and nothing is too good for her. But to disobey Christ for the love of a girl is no better than to do it for the love of gold,' he added bitterly. 'He that loveth father or mother (or any other) more than me is not worthy of me.'

He paused, expecting my rebuke or consolation. I gave neither, but looked on with awe at this battle between the new St. George and his dragon.

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'My dear Ruth, I have something important to tell you.'

'What is it?' she said with trembling, for his pallid face made her fear the worst, and the worst was a break in their affection.

'It is not that,' he said, reading her thought, and the blood which had left her face so suddenly at his first sentence rushed back in a rosy tide at this assuring word. 'It is not that, but I had hoped to enthrone you as my queen in a palace worthy of you, especially if the Sherman silver purchase law should pass and make my silver shares a bonanza. This morning's papers brought the report that it passed yesterday, and my stock went up to half a million in value. I had been battling all night in my mind about what I am going to tell you, and the right had won when this news re-enforced the other side, and it has taken me all day to regain the victory.'

'Do you mean,' she said, 'that you have been tempted to gamble with your stock?'

'I mean,' he said, with swiftness, as if he feared something would cut him off in his story, 'that I have given my silver shares to God for the poor, and appointed myself manager and administrator without salary. My salary as a teller is as much as a Christian ought to spend on himself and his family.'

Ruth glanced toward the door. Had her lover gone crazy? She turned an inquiring, searching look upon him. His face seemed unnatural because preternaturally calm, that calmness that is intensified by appearing on the background of a retreating storm. She could not understand that face, and so her thoughts returned upon herself. An average Christian, she had liked preaching next best to a party; had said her prayers regularly, but had never given more than a passing thought to the great sorrows and wrongs that raged like billows outside the secure ark of her own home. In dreams of night and day she had anticipated luxury with her lover, with a casual thought, now and then, as she met a beggar, that charity is one of the duties, perhaps privileges, of wealth. Stunned at first by her lover's announcement, she now realized that the palaces of her dreams, which she expected him to turn to brick and stone, had instead been broken like a bubble by the breath of his words. Her heart overflowing with disappointment and resentment, she pulled her engagement ring from her finger and handed it to him, saying, with mingled pity and scorn, 'Crank or crazy, whichever you are, here is my contribution to your new scheme for mending the universe.'

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Our St. George had given his silver stock to God in word only after two victories, each at the end of twelve hours' struggle with selfish ambition. But in dealings with God a man's word is not always as good as his bond. Partly from fear or the scornful laughter of business associates, who could not appreciate his motive, and partly from a secret hope, hardly whispered to himself, that he might recover his lost love, he used a part of his silver profits to build a fine mansion, surrounded by a stately private park, ostensibly for his mother and himself. He tried to compromise with conscience by ordering generous supplies of food to be

given to all beggars who applied at his door. In leisure hours, partly to escape thinking, he investigated in tenements and public institutions the causes of sins and sorrows, and found them to be appetite and lust and covetousness.

Thus it was when he came to attend a temperance meeting of the W. C. T. U. He had never been identified with temperance work, thinking its advocates rather fanatical, and so took a seat in a half-hidden nook near the door. A woman was speaking whose face he could not see, but her voice set his heart a-quiver.

'Pshaw!' he said, 'it can't be Ruth. She never cared for such meetings.'

He listened eagerly, not daring to look out lest she might see him, if indeed it was she. It was. She told the meeting how she came to give up what she called her aimless life and enter into temperance work. She had been sent by her mother to carry relief to her aunt, who had made a pitiful appeal for help. She found that once beautiful, that cultured aunt in what was hardly better than a hovel, to which her once wealthy husband had dragged her down through drink. And so she had become a member of a W. C. T. U., and was now their president.

When the meeting was over she lingered to write a note, some message of mercy, and so all others had left the hall when she reached the door.

They met. 'I am so ashamed of my selfishness,' she said.

'And I,' said he, 'of the cowardice that took the place of my consecration.'

The palatial residence is now not only their home but also by irreversible deed, the home of the friendless, the aged, the or-

phaned—a great headquarters of charity and reform; and the park is the park of all—'Union Signal.'

Meditation.

O Thou, in whose presence my soul takes delight,

On whom in affliction I call;

My comfort by day and my song in the night,
My hope, my salvation, my ail!

Where dost Thou, dear Shepherd, resort with Thy sheep,

To feed them in pastures of love;

Say, why in the valley of death should I weep,

Or alone in this wilderness rove?

Oh, why should I wander, an alien from Thee,

Or cry in the desert for bread?

Thy foes will rejoice when my sorrows they see,

And smile at the tears I have shed.

Ye daughters of Zion, declare, have you seen The star that on Israel shone?

Say, if in your tents my Beloved has been,
And where with His flocks He is gone?

He looks! and ten thousands of angels rejoice,

And myriads wait for his word;

He speaks! and eternity, filled with His voice,

Re-echoes the praise of the Lord.

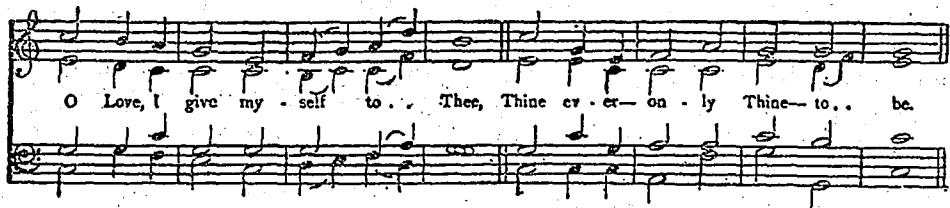
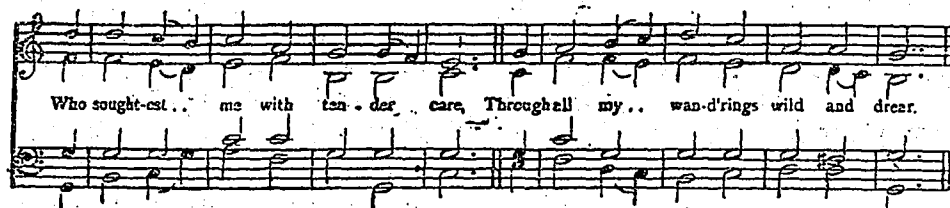
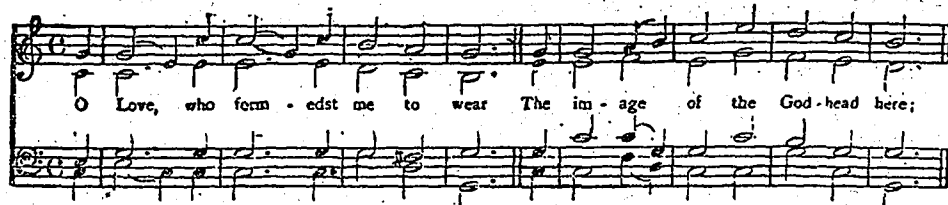
Dear Shepherd! I hear, and will follow Thy call;

I know the sweet sound of Thy voice;

Restore and defend me, for Thou art my all,
And in Thee I will ever rejoice.

Joseph Swain.

O Love, Who Formedst Me.



O Love, who ere life's earliest dawn
On me Thy choice hast gently laid;
O Love, who here as man wast born,
And wholly like to us wast made;
O Love, I give myself to Thee,
Thine ever, only Thine to be.

O Love, who once in time wast slain,
Pierced thro' and thro' with bitter woe;
O Love, who wrestling thus didst gain
That we eternal joy might know;
O Lord, I give myself to Thee,
Thine ever, only Thine to be.

O Love, who lovest me for aye,
Who for my soul dost ever plead;
O Love, who didst my ransom pay,
Whose power sufficeth in my stead;
O Love, I give myself to Thee,
Thine ever, only thine to be.

O Love, who once shalt bid me rise
From out this dying life of ours;
O Love, who once o'er yonder skies
Shalt set me in the fadeless bowers;
O Love, I give myself to Thee
Thine ever, only Thine to be.

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