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The Coming of the Bridegroom.

I

"Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you"—St. Matt. 15:29

"Lest there be not enough for us and you"—
 So spake the Wise; but One, methought, there stood
 Silent, and sad, and half in doubting mood,
 As though the Truth itself were less than true.
 She wept, and from the stainless Four withdrew.
 Meekly, and laid her brimming cuse of oil
 In hands unused to prayer and saintly toil,
 Unlike her own, but hands of those she knew.
 In vain; they went to buy; she sat alone,
 Her lamp untrimmed, yet full in emptiness;
 And lo! at midnight hour the Bridegroom came,
 And found her weeping. Did he then disown
 That venturous rath? Ah no! for His dear name
 Her soul she perilled, and He needs must bless.

II

"If any man come to me and hate not... yea, and his own life
 also, he cannot be my disciple"—St. Luke xiv. 26.

Yea, and He blesseth! Mild we hear Him say;
 "Daughter, who hast not shunned to risk thy best,
 To leave the guarded fold, and roam in quest
 Of wildered lambs on mountain crags astray,
 I know thee; thou hast found the narrow way,
 O wise in thy unwisdom, and didst dare
 To quit the sheltered haunts of praise and prayer,
 And, seeming prayerless, teach the lost to pray.
 Therefore a bridal robe I give to thee,
 And with the oil of gladness thee anoint
 Above thy fellows, and for thee appoint
 A portion with my great ones. Rise and shine!
 The door is open; enter thou with me,
 And, in thy beauty, be forever mine."

H. MONTAGU BUTLER