

CHOOSING
NOT
CHOOSING

OXFORD

Dickinson's Fascicles

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Of Life? 'Twere odd I fear [a] thing
That comprehendeth me
In one or two existences—
Just as the case may be—

Of Resurrection? Is the East
Afraid to trust the Morn
With her fastidious forehead?
As soon impeach my Crown!

7. two] more—

8] As Deity decree—

446

He showed me Hights I never saw—
"Would'st Climb"—He said?
I said, "Not so."
"With me"—He said—"With me?"

He showed me secrets—Morning's nest—
The Rope the Nights were put across—
"And now, Would'st have me for a Guest?"
I could not find my "Yes"—

And then—He brake His Life—and lo,
A light for me, did solemn glow—
The steadier, as my face withdrew
And could I further "No"?

11. steadier] larger—

218 X59

FASCICLE 20

- MISSING P 1725 I took one Draught of Life—
P 1761 A train went through a burial gate,
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1725

I took one Draught of Life—
 I'll tell you what I paid—
 Precisely an existence—
 The market price, they said.

They weighed me, Dust by Dust—
 They balanced Film with Film,
 Then handed me my Being's worth—
 A single Dram of Heaven!

1761

A train went through a burial gate,
 A bird broke forth and sang,
 And trilled, and quivered, and shook his throat
 Till all the churchyard rang;

And then adjusted his little notes,
 And bowed and sang again.
 Doubtless, he thought it meet of him
 To say good-by to men.

364

The Morning after Wo—
 'Tis frequently the Way—
 Surpasses all that rose before—
 For utter Jubilee—

As Nature did not care—
 And piled her Blossoms on—
 And further to parade a Joy
 Her Victim stared upon—

The Birds declaim their Tunes—
 Pronouncing every word
 Like Hammers—Did they know they fell
 Like Litanies of Lead—

On here and there—a creature—
 They'd modify the Glee
 To fit some Crucifixal Clef—
 Some Key of Calvary—

524

Departed—to the Judgment—
 A Mighty Afternoon—
 Great Clouds—like Ushers—leaning—
 Creation—looking on—

The Flesh—Surrendered—Cancelled—
 The Bodiless—begun—
 Two Worlds—like Audiences—disperse—
 And leave the Soul—alone—

3. leaning] placing
 5. Cancelled] Shifted
 7. Two] the—

7. disperse] dissolve—
 / withdraw—/ retire—

525

I think the Hemlock likes to stand
 Upon a Marge of Snow—
 It suits his own Austerity—
 And satisfies an awe

That men, must slake in Wilderness—
 And in the Desert—cloy—
 An instinct for the Hoar, the Bald—
 Lapland's—necessity—

The Hemlock's nature thrives—on cold—
 The Gnash of Northern winds
 Is sweetest nutriment—to him—
 His best Norwegian Wines—

To satin Races—he is nought—
 But Children on the Don,
 Beneath his Tabernacles, play,
 And Dnieper Wrestlers, run.

6. And] Or
 7. instinct] hunger
 7. Hoar] drear—
 12. best] good

365

Dare you see a soul at the "White Heat"?
 Then crouch within the door—
 Red—is the Fire's common tint—
 But when the quickened Ore

Has sated Flame's conditions—
 She quivers from the Forge
 Without a color, but the Light
 Of unannointed Blaze—

Least Village, boasts it's Blacksmith—
 Whose Anvil's even ring
 Stands symbol for the finer Forge
 That soundless tugs—within—

Refining these impatient Ores
 With Hammer, and with Blaze
 Until the designated Light
 Repudiate the Forge—

4. quickened] vivid
 5. sated] vanquished
 6. She] It

526

To hear an Oriole sing
 May be a common thing—
 Or only a divine.

It is not of the Bird
 Who sings the same, unheard,
 As unto Crowd—

The Fashion of the Ear
 Attireth that it hear
 In Dun, or fair—

So whether it be Rune,
 Or whether it be none
 Is of within.

The "Tune is in the Tree—"
 The Skeptic—showeth me—
 "No Sir! In Thee!"

11. none] din—

301

I reason, Earth is short—
 And Anguish—absolute—
 And many hurt,
 But, what of that?

I reason, we could die—
 The best Vitality
 Cannot excel Decay,
 But, what of that?

I reason, that in Heaven—
 Somehow, it will be even—
 Some new Equation, given—
 But, what of that?

527

To put this World down, like a Bundle—
 And walk steady, away,
 Requires Energy—possibly Agony—
 'Tis the Scarlet way

Trodden with straight renunciation
 By the Son of God—
 Later, his faint Confederates
 Justify the Road—

Flavors of that old Crucifixion—
 Filaments of Bloom, Pontius Pilate sowed—
 Strong Clusters, from Barabbas' Tomb—

Sacrament, Saints partook before us—
 Patent, every drop,
 With the Brand of the Gentile Drinker
 Who indorsed the Cup—

12. partook] indorsed

15. indorsed] enforced

14. Brand] Stamp

366

Although I put away his life—
 An Ornament too grand
 For Forehead low as mine, to wear,
 This might have been the Hand

That sowed the flower, he preferred—
 Or smoothed a homely pain,
 Or pushed the pebble from his path—
 Or played his chosen tune—

On Lute the least—the latest—
 But just his Ear could know
 That whatso'er delighted it,
 I never would let go—

The foot to bear his errand—
 A little Boot I know—
 Would leap abroad like Antelope—
 With just the grant to do—

His weariest Commandment—
 A sweeter to obey,
 Than "Hide and Seek"—
 Or skip to Flutes—
 Or All Day, chase the Bee—

Your Servant, Sir, will weary—
 The Surgeon, will not come—
 The World, will have it's own—to do—
 The Dust, will vex your Fame—

The Cold will force your tightest door
 Some Febuary Day,
 But say my apron bring the sticks
 To make your Cottage gay—

That I may take that promise
 To Paradise, with me—
 To teach the Angels, avarice,
 You, Sir, taught first—to me.

367

Over and over, like a Tune—
 The Recollection plays—
 Drums off the Phantom Battlements
 Cornets of Paradise—

Snatches, from Baptized Generations—
 Cadences too grand
 But for the Justified Processions
 At the Lord's Right hand.

One need not be a Chamber—to be Haunted—
 One need not be a House—
 The Brain—has Corridors surpassing
 Material Place—

Far safer of a Midnight—meeting
 External Ghost—
 Than an Interior—Confronting—
 That cooler—Host.

Far safer, through an Abbey—gallop—
 The Stones a'chase—
 Than Moonless—One's A'self encounter—
 In lonesome place—

Ourselves—behind Ourselves—Concealed—
 Should startle—most—
 Assassin—hid in our Apartment—
 Be Horror's least—

The Prudent—carries a Revolver—
 He bolts the Door—
 O'erlooking a Superior Spectre—
 More near—

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 4. Material] Corporeal | 19-20] A Spectre—infinite— |
| 8] That Whiter Host. | accompanying— |
| 17. The Prudent] The Body | He fails to fear— |
| 17. a] the | 19-20] Maintaining a |
| | Superior Spectre— |
| | None saw— |

Like Some Old fashioned Miracle—
 When Summertime is done—
 Seems Summer's Recollection—
 And the Affairs of June—

As infinite Tradition—as
 Cinderella's Bays—
 Or little John—of Lincoln-Green—
 Or Blue Beard's Galleries—

Her Bees—have an illusive Hum—
 Her Blossoms—like a Dream
 Elate us—till we almost weep—
 So plausible—they seem—

Her Memory—like Strains—enchant—
 Tho' Orchestra—be dumb—
 The Violin—in Baize—replaced—
 And Ear, and Heaven—numb—

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 5. infinite] Bagatelles— | 13. enchant] Review— |
| 12. plausible] exquisite | 14. be] is |
| 13. Memory] Memories | |

The Soul selects her own Society—
 Then—shuts the Door—
 To her divine Majority—
 Present no more—

Unmoved—she notes the Chariots—pausing—
 At her low Gate—
 Unmoved—an Emperor be kneeling
 Upon her Mat—

I've known her—from an ample nation—
 Choose One—
 Then—close the Valves of her attention—
 Like Stone—

3. To] On
 4. Present] Obtrude

8] On [her] Rush mat
 11. Valves] lids—

How sick—to wait—in any place—but thine—
 I knew last night—when someone tried to twine—
 Thinking—perhaps—that I looked tired—or alone—
 Or breaking—almost—with unspoken pain—

And I turned—ducal—
That right—was thine—
One port—suffices—for a Brig—like *mine*—

Our's be the tossing—wild though the sea—
 Rather than a Mooring—unshared by thee.
 Our's be the Cargo—*unladen*—*bere*—
 Rather than the "*spicy isles*"—
 And thou—not there—

Mine—by the Right of the White Election!
 Mine—by the Royal Seal!
 Mine—by the Sign in the Scarlet prison—
 Bars—cannot conceal!

Mine—here—in Vision—and in Veto!
 Mine—by the Grave's Repeal—
 Titled—Confirmed—
 Delirious Charter!
 Mine—long as Ages steal!

4. Bars] Bolts
 8] Good affidavit—

9. long as] while

She lay as if at play
 Her life had leaped away—
 Intending to return—
 But not so soon—

Her merry Arms, half dropt—
 As if for lull of sport—
 An instant had forgot
 The Trick to start—

Her dancing Eyes—ajar—
 As if their Owner were
 Still sparkling through
 For fun—at you—

Her Morning at the door—
 Devising, I am sure—
 To force her sleep—
 So light—so deep—

Heaven is so far of the Mind
That were the Mind dissolved—
The Site—of it—by Architect
Could not again be proved—

'Tis vast—as our Capacity—
As fair—as our idea—
To Him of adequate desire
No further 'tis, than Here—

APPENDIX B



FACSIMILE OF FASCICLE 20

For a description, see Textual Note, pp. xiii–xiv above.