CHOOSING NOT CHOOSING

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 Heights I never saw—
"Wouldst 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, Wouldst 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—

MISSING
P 1725 I took one Draught of Life—
P 1761 A train went through a burial gate,
P 364 The Morning after Wo—
P 524 Departed—to the Judgment—
P 525 I think the Hemlock likes to stand
P 365 Dare you see a soul at the "White Heat"?
P 526 To hear an Oriole sing
P 301 I reason, Earth is short—
P 527 To put this World down, like a Bundle—
P 366 Although I put away his life—
P 367 Over and over, like a Tune—
P 670 One need not be a Chamber—to be Haunted—
P 302 Like Some Old fashioned Miracle—
P 303 The Soul selects her own Society—
P 368 How sick—to wait—in any place—but thine—
P 528 Mine—by the Right of the White Election!
P 369 She lay as if at play
P 370 Heaven is so far of the Mind
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 Fiim with Film,
Then handed me my Being's worth—
A single Dram of Heaven!

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.

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 ceclaim their Tunes—
Pronouncing every word
Like Hammers—Did they know they fell
Like Litanies of Lead—
To satin Races—he is nought—
But Children on the Don,
Beneath his Tabernacles, play,
And Dnieper Wrestlers, run.

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

365

Date 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

526

To hear an Oriole sing
May be a common thing—
Or only a divine.
To put this World down, like a Buncle—
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—

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 whatsoever delighted it,
I never would let go—
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—

Ourself—behind Ourself—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
8] That Whiter Host.
17. The Prudent] The Body
17. s] the

19-20] A Spectre—infinite—
accompanying—
He fails to fear—
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] Oustrude
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 part—suffices—for a Brig—like mine—_

Ours be the rousing—wild though the sea—
Rather than a Mooring—unshared by thee.
Ours be the Cargo—_nuladen—here—_
Rather than the "spicy isles—"
And thou—not there—

368

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—

528

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

369
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.