

A HYMN TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN OF SAINT
FRANCIS OF ASSISI.

Love setteth me a-burning.
When my new Spouse had won me;
My piteous state discerning,
Had set His ring upon me:
The conqueror's prize returning,
Love's knife had all undone me,
All my heart broke with yearning.
Love setteth me a-burning.

My heart was broke asunder:
Earthward my body sprawling,
The arrow of Love's wonder
From out the crossbow falling,
Like to a shaft of thunder
Made war of peace, enthralling
My life for passion's plunder.
Love setteth me a-burning.

I die of very sweetness.
Yet be thou not astounded.
That lance of Love's completeness
So sorrowfully wounded!
Oh, broad the iron's meetness!
Not one arm's length, a hundred
Has pierced me with its fleetness.
Love setteth me a-burning.

Then were the lances scattered
The ballister was flinging;
And aye the blows which battered
Upon my shield were ringing.
What could protect me, tattered,
Before that engine sinking?
So was I wholly shattered.
Love setteth me a-burning.

Assailed with such instruction
That all my bulwarks bevelled,*
Well nigh was I destruction
And shamefully dishevelled.
Still hear my sorrow's fiction:
Anew a crossbow levelled
Vouchsafed me new affliction.
Love setteth me a-burning.

* Dr. Swift.

Such perils did it vomit,
Great stones with metal weighted;
And every missile from it
With pounds a thousand freighted.
Plummet on awful plummet,
Hail unenumerated,
Urged with an aim consummate.
Love setteth me a-burning.

None missed; and nought defended
My breast from their unerring.
To earth I fell, distended,
No pulse within me stirring:
No longer I pretended
To meet the blows recurring;
I lay like one expended.
Love setteth me a-burning.

Not dead, but with a vernal
Surpassing joy made splendid;
Revived from my heart's kernel,
With strength and purpose blended,
I followed those eternal
Pathways which surely ended
Within the lists supernal.
Love setteth me a-burning.

Then my new forces verging,
In helm and harness sightly,
All His dominion scourging,
On Christ I warred right knightly.
Great skill against Him urging,
I grappled with Him tightly,
The dastard in me purging.
Love setteth me a-burning.

My wounds avenged, we plighted
Our troth of truce and leisure
For Love's sake sorely slighted;
Love lavished without measure.
To Christ at length united,
Made fit to bear its treasure
My heart is warmed and lighted.
Love setteth me a-burning.

JOHN GRAY.