

STELLA MALIGNA

A Woman speaks :



Y little slave !

Wouldst thou escape me ? Only in the grave.

I will be poison to thee, honey-sweet,

And, my poison having tasted,

Thou shalt be delicately wasted,

Yet shalt thou live by that delicious death

Thou hast drunken from my breath,

Thou didst with my kisses eat.

I will be thy desire, and thou shalt flee me,

Thy enemy, and thou shalt seek :

My strength is to be weak,

And if through tears, not through thy tears, thou see me,

Beware, for of my kisses if thou tire,

Not of my tears,

Not of my tears shalt thou put off desire

Before the end of years.

What wouldst thou of me, little slave ? my heart ?

Nay, be content, here are mine arms around thee,

Be thou content that I have found thee,

And that I shall not suffer thee depart.

Ask nothing more of me.

Have I not given thee more than thou canst measure ?

Take thou thy fill of pleasure.

Exult that thou art mine : think what it is

To be without my kiss ;

Not to have known me is to know not love.

Think, to have known me not !

Heart may indeed from heart remove,

Body by body may not be forgot.

Thou hast been mine : ask nothing more of me.
My heart is not for thee.

Child, leave me then my heart ;
I hold it in a folded peace apart,
I hold it for mine own.
There, in the quietness of dreams, it broods
Above untroubled moods,
No man hath been so near me as to have known.
The rest is thine : ah, take
The gift I have to give, my body, lent
For thy unsatisfied content,
For thy insatiable desire's compelling,
And let me for my pleasure make
For my own heart a lonely dwelling.
Thou wilt not ? Thou wilt summon sorrow
From morrow unto endless morrow ?
Thou wilt endure unto the uttermost ?
Ah ! little slave, my slave,
Thou shalt endure until desire be lost
In the achievement of the grave.
Thou shalt endure, and I, in dreams, behold,
Within my paradise of gold,
Thy heart's blood flowering for my peace ;
And thy passion shall release
The secret light that in the lily glows,
The miracle of the secret rose.

ARTHUR SYMONS.