

CANTATA

DONA NOBIS PACEM

1

Angus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi
Dona nobis pacem.

11

Beat! beat! drums! - blow! bugles! blow!
Through the windows - through the doors - burst like a ruthless force,
Into the solemn church, and scatter the congregation,
Into the school where the scholar is studying;
Leave not the bridegroom quiet - no happiness must he have now with
his bride,
Nor the peaceful farmer any peace, ploughing his field, or gathering
in his grain,
So fierce you whirr and pound you drums - so shrill your bugles blow.

Beat! beat! drums! - blow! bugles! blow!
Over the traffic of cities - over the rumble of wheels in the streets;
Are beds prepared for the sleepers at night in the houses? No
sleepers must sleep in those beds,
No bargainers' bargains by day - would they continue?
Would the talkers be talking? would the singer attempt to sing?
Then rattle quicker, heavier drums - you bugles wilder blow.

Beat! beat! drums! - blow! bugles! blow!
Make no parley - stop for no expostulation,
Mind not the timid - mind not the weeper or prayer,
Mind not the old man beseeching the young man,
Let not the child's voice be heard, nor the mothers entreaties,
Make even the trestless to shake the dead where they lie awaiting the
hearses,
So strong you thump O terrible drums - so loud you bugles blow.

WALT WHITMAN.

111

RECONCILIATION

Word over all, beautiful as the sky,
Beautiful the war and all its deeds of carnage must in time be utterly
lost,
That the hands of the sisters Death and Night incessantly, softly,
wash again and ever again this soiled world;
For my enemy is dead, a man divine as myself is dead,
I look where he lies white-faced and still in the coffin - I draw
near,
Bend down and touch lightly with my lips the white face in the coffin.

WALT WHITMAN.

DIRGE FOR TWO VETERANS

The last sunbeam
Lightly falls from the finished Sabbath,
On the pavement here, and there beyond it is looking
Down a new-made double grave.

Lo, the moon ascending,
Up from the east the silvery round moon,
Beautiful over the house-tops, ghastly, phantom moon,
Immense the silent moon.

I see a sad procession,
And I hear the sound of coming full-keyed bugles,
All the channels of the city streets they're flooding
As with voices and with tears.

I hear the great drum pounding,
And the small drums steady whirring,
And every blow of the great convulsive drums
Stikes me through and through.

For the son is brought with the father,
In the foremost ranks of the fierce assault they fell,
Two veterans, son and father, dropped together,
And the double grave awaits them.

Now nearer blow the bugles,
And the drums stike more convulsive,
And the daylight o'er the pavement quite has faded,
And the strong dead-march enwraps me.

In the eastern sky up-buoying,
The sorrowful vast phantom moves illumined,
'Tis some mother's large transparent face,
In heaven brighter growing.

O strong dead-march you please me!
O moon immense with your silvery face you soothe me!
O my soldiers twain! O my veterans passing to burial!
What I have I also give you.

The moon gives you light,
And the bugles and the drums give you music,
And my heart, O my soldiers, my veterans,
My heart gives you love.

WALT WHITMAN.

The Angel of Death has been abroad throughtout the land; you may
almost hear the beating of his wings. There is no one as of old
.....to sprinkle with blood the lintel and the two side-post of our
doors, that he may spare and pass on.

JOHN BRIGHT.

Dona nobis pacem

We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of health, and behold trouble!

The snorting of his horses was heard from Dan; the whole land trembled at the sound of the neighing of his strong ones; for they are come, and have devoured the land....and those that dwell there in....

The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.....
Is there no balm in Gilead?; is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

JEREMIAH Vlll. 15-22.

VI

'O man greatly beloved, fear not, peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong.'

DANIEL X. 19.

'The glory of thos latter house shall be greater than of the former.....and in this place will I give peace.'

HAGGAI 11. 9.

'Nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

And none shall make them afraid, neither shall the sword go through their land.

Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

Open to me the gates of righteousness, I will go into them.

Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled; and let them hear, and say, it is the truth.

And it shall come, that I will gather all nations tongues.

And they shall come and see my glory. And I will set a sign among them, and they shall declare my glory among the nations.

For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, so shall your seed and you name remain for ever.'

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men.

(Adapted from Micah iv. 3, Leviticus xxvi. 6, Psalms lxxxv. 10, and cxviii. 19, Isaiah xliii. 9, and lxvi. 18-22, and Luke ii. 14.)

Dona nobis pacem.

A N O X F O R D E L E G Y

Go, for they call you, Shepherd, from the hill;
Go, Shepherd, and untie the wattled cotes;
No longer leave thy wistful flock unfed,
Nor let thy bawling fellows rack their throats,
Nor the cropp'd grasses shoot another head.
But when the field are still,
And the tired men and dogs all gone to rest,
And only the white sheep are sometimes seen
Cross and recross the strips of moon-blanch'd green;
Come, Shepherd, and again begin the quest!

Here will I sit and wait,
While to my ear from uplands far away
The bleating of the folded flocks is borne,
With distant cries of reapers in the corn -
All the live murmur of a summer's day.
(Here will I sit and wait,
While to my ear from uplands far away
The bleating of the folded flocks is borne,
With distant cries of reapers in the corn,
All the live murmur of a summer's day.)

Screen'd is this nook o'er the high, half reap'd field,
And here till sun-down, Shepherd, will I be.
Through the thick corn the scarlet poppies peep,
And round green roots and yellowing stalks I see
Pale pink convolvulus in tendrils creep;
And air-swept lindens yield
Their scent, and rustle down their perfumed showers
Of bloom on the bent grass where I am laid,
And bower me from the August sun with shade;
And the eye travels down to Oxford's towers.
(That sweet city with her dreaming spires;
She needs not summer for beauty's heightening,
Lovely all times she lies, lovely today.)

Come, let me read the oft-read tale again:
The story of that Oxford scholar poor,
Who one summer morn forsook
His friends
And came, as most men deem'd, to little good,
But came to Oxford and his friends no more.
but rumours hung about the country-side,
That the lost Scholar long was seen to stray,
Seen by rare glimpses, pensive and tongue-tied,
And I myself seem half to know thy looks,
And put the shepherds, Wanderer, on thy trace;
Or in my boat I lie
Moor'd to the cool bank in the summer heats,
'Mid wide grass meadows which the sunshine fills,

And watch the warm green-muffled Cumnor hills,
And wonder if thou haunt'st their shy retreats.
Leaning backwards in a pensive dream,
And fostering in thy lap a heap of flowers
Pluck'd in shy fields and distant Wychwood bowers,
And thine eye resting on the moonlit stream.
Still waiting for the spark from Heaven to fall.

And once, in winter, on the cause way chill
Where home through flooded fields foot-travellers go,
Have I not pass'd thee on the wooden bridge
Wrapt in thy cloak and battling with the snow,
Thy face tow'rd Hinksey and its wintry ridge?
And thou hast climb'd the hill
And gain'd the white brow of the Cumnor range;
Turn'd once to watch, while thick the snow-flakes fall,
The line of festal light in Christ Church hall -
Then sought thy straw in some sequester'd grange.

But what - I dream! Two hundred years are flown;
And thou from earth art gone
Long since, and in some quiet churchyard laid -
Some country-nook, where o'er thy unknown grave
Tall grasses and white flowering nettles wave,
Under a dark, red-fruited yew-tree's shade.

No, no, thou hast not felt the lapse of hours,
Thou waitest for the spark from Heaven! and we,
Ah, do no we, Wanderer, await it too?
See, 'tis no foot of unfamiliar men
Today from Oxford, up your pathway strays!
Here came I, often, in old days;
Thyrsis and I; we still had Thyrsis then.
Runs it not here the track by Childsworth Farm,
Up past the wood, to where the elm-tree crowns
The hill behind whose ridge the sunset flames?
The signal-elm, that looks on Ilsley Downs,
The Vale, the three lone weirs, the youthfull Thames? -
That single elm-tree bright
Against the west - I miss it! is it gone?
We prized it dearly; while it stood, we said,
Our friend, the Scholar Gipsy, was not dead;
While the tree lived, he in these fields lived on.
Needs must I, with heavy heart
Into the world and wave of men depart;
But Thyrsis of his own will went away.
So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,
From the wet field, through the vext garden-trees,
Come with the volleying rain and tossing breeze:
The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go I!

Too quick despairer, wherefore wilt thou go?
Soon will the high Midsummer pomps come on,
Soon will the musk carnations break and swell,
Soon shall we have the gold-dusted snapdragon,
Sweet-William with his homely cottage-smell,
And stocks in fragrant blow;
Tosses that down the alleys shine afar,
And open, jasmine-muffled lattices,
And groups under the dreaming garden-trees,
And the full moon, and the white evening-star,
He hearkens not! light comer, he is flown!
What matters it? next year he will return,
And we shall have him in the sweet spring-days,
With whitening hedges, and uncrumpling fern,
And blue-bells trembling by the forest-ways,
And scent of hay new-mown.
But Thyrsis never more we swains shall see.
Yet, Thyrsis, let me give my grief its hour
In the old haunt, and find our tree-topped hill.

I know these slopes, who knows them if not I?
But many a dingle on the loved hill-side,
With thorns once studded, old, white-blossom'd trees,
Where thick the cowslips grew, and, far described,
High tower'd the spikes of purple orchises,
Hath since our day put by
The coronals of that forgotten time
They all are gone, and thou art gone as well.

Yes, thou art gone! and round me too the night
In ever-nearing circle weaves her shade.
I see her veil draw soft across the day,
And long the way appears, which seem'd so short
And high the mountain-tops, in cloudy air,
The mountain-tops where is the throne of Truth.

There thou art gone, and me thou leavest here
Sole in these fields; yet will I not despair:
Despair I will not, while I yet descry
That lonely Tree against the western sky.
Fields where soft sheep from cages pull the hay,
Woods with anemones in flower till May
Know him a wanderer still.
Then let in thy voice a whisper often come.
To chase fatigue and fear.

Why faintest thou? I wander'd till I died.
Roam on! the light we sought is shining still.
Our tree yet crowns the hill,
Our Scholar travels yet the loved hillside.

(Words adapted from 'The Scholar Gipsy' and
'Thyrsis' by Matthew Arnold.)