

put the devil under the feet of his Mother.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat—men and devils.

And hath exalted the humble. He has lifted up a Handmaid, his Immaculate Mother, and here now in heaven enthroned she reigns. He could not let that most pure body see corruption, from which body he had himself taken flesh.

He hath filled the hungry with good things—Mary always hungered for grace and yet was ever full of grace.

And the rich he hath sent empty away. They never hungered, nor thirsted for righteousness, therefore, though rich, they are utterly destitute.

He hath received Israel his servant. He has received into glory the fairest daughter of Israel.

Being mindful of his mercy. God who never forgets to be merciful has now granted us sure faith in the doctrine of the Assumption that we may believe on the firm foundation of infallible dogma.

As he spoke unto our fathers, to Abraham and his seed for ever. Mercy, Truth, Holiness—his word is accomplished in Mary, and Jesus the fruit of her womb.

Bearing these things in mind we may say once the *Our Father*, ten times the *Hail Mary*, and once the *Glory be to the Father*.



A DEVOUTE MEDITACYON

UPON THE ANTEME 'SALVE REGINA MISERICORDIÆ'

[From MS. Bodl. 480, Hilton's version of the *Stimulus Amoris*, the meditations added at the end, abridged and spelling modernised.

—C.K.]



IF thou wilt devoutly hail this glorious virgin, first consider her worthy muchness: what she is; she is God's Mother, worthier might she not be, and therefore with mirth and with wondering raise up worthyness to God's Mother and say to her here with reverence thus: *Salve*—Hail; and with that word stint¹ into beholding and say: Lady! though I vilest and unworthiest of all creatures

presume for to come to thy presence and to greet thee, thou art queen of heaven, lady of angels, mother of God, nevertheless I trust on thine unmeasurable meekness that thou wilt suffer me. And therefore thou, thou that be God's ark, without comparison worthier and holier than the ark of the Old Testament that Moses made, and I am much worse and uncleaner than Oza was, nevertheless Lady I trow that if I touch thee with devotion of heart, and greet thee with

¹ cease! and behold.

my mouth, I shall not be smitten to death as Oza was, that touched Moses's ark, but I hope to be quickened and more inflamed with thy love, for to say to thee heartily oft, *Salve Regina*—Hail Queen! Well is me that I have such a queen, and such a lady, under whose rule and ladyship I may lead my life. Lady! I will not rule myself, for I cannot, but I offer me to thy rule, as one of thy least servants that thou hast on earth, and say to thee on my simple manner, *Salve Regina*. But thou worthiest creature I might not trow that thou wouldest have ruth of such a wretch as I am, but for thou art *Regina Misericordiae*, queen of mercy, and I am servant of wretchedness and misease, most needy and therefore (I beseech thee²) thou use thy power to shew the sweetness of thy mercy.

For why? Thou art called queen and lady and mother of mercy, for thou art God's mother, and thou hast Jesus Christ thine own son that is mercy himself, in thy power, as the mother hath the child that she loveth. And thou art all belapped with mercy on each side, for tenderness of thy woman's heart. And thou art ordained of God for to show thy mercy and help to them that are able to receive mercy—and that are all they that know themselves here in wretchedness of sin and meekly run to thee for succour and for help. Unto all these thou art ready for to help them. Why dread we then? whereof be we so feared? Who asketh of her anything that needeth and hath it not? I hope none.

And she is *Vita*—life. She is mother of life and she is life, for she stayeth death of all manner of sin. She stayeth pride through meekness and lust with maidenhood, covetise with poverty, and envy with love and charity. And also she is life, for she getteth us of her son, the life of grace and the life of joy. She is a good life for she driveth away death and quickeneth dead men; she is life not eldand,³ she is a life of the Holy Ghost that bringeth to nought all fleshly life, she is a heavenly life for she feedeth her children with milk of heaven. Therefore who so will be her child and be fed of her hand, it is good that he forsake the lust and the delices of his flesh and torment his flesh skilfully and break his fleshly wills. For why? The more that he be mortified from sin and fleshly loves and likings, the nearer shall he be to be fed of her, for she is life and she is also *Dulcedo*—sweetness.

Sooth, she is sweetness for through her prayer she putteth away bitterness of sin from us and getteth us sweetness of grace, and bringeth us in some time, for to feel a little of the sweetness of the heavenly country. The love of this lady is wonder sweet, not like lady love of this world that maketh a man unrestful, painful and

2 words illegible.

3 not growing old.

bitter. But certis, the naked mind⁴ of this lady in a loving heart driveth away unrest and cleareth the wit and softeth the affection and maketh a man's ghostly eye to behold her. In the which beholding men have sundry meditations. The meditation of her meekness raiseth up the heart to comfort, meditation of her fair head maketh the inner eye merry and glad, but the meditation of her maidenhood and of her motherhood both at once, and of her worthiness and of her muchhead, nearhand ravisheth the heart into wondering, into worshipping and into loving. . . . Good lady then take our little heart and vouchsafe for to lay it in thy bosom and feed it and drench it with sweetness of thy breast and anoint it with the blood of thy son Jesus Christ, and then I shall get what I will.

For why, thou art *Spes Nostra*, our hope! Art thou not she that desireth more our welfare, than any creature doth and without comparison more tenderly loveth us than father or mother may love their child? Yea certes! then if thou wilt help us and make us glorious in heaven, as I wot thou wilt, who may let thee? Certes no thing. For why? thy name is hope and they that hope in thee, as the prophet saith, shall change strength, they shall take wings as eagles and they shall fly and not fail, they shall run without travail. Lady, all the prayers of our old fathers were heard and all the behests that were made to them are fulfilled, for they hoped in thee. Much more ought our prayers to be heard that are bought and reconciled to the Father with the precious blood of thy dear son. Therefore he that faileth in himself let him run to thee and with all the might that he hath let him say *Spes Nostra Salve*.

Who may then let us Lady from thy greeting? What bemeaneth this oft greeting, but a yielding of reverence without stinting? Or what meaneth it to say one's 'hail' and oft 'hail' but asking of heal of thee for our soul—(and increase thou mine!) Or else we greet thee first and say 'hail' for asking of grace, and eft soon we say 'hail' for asking of bliss. For by thee grace is gotten and bliss is given and therefore *Ad Te Clamamus*, to thee Lady we cry, for thou art Lady of high kingdom and departer of heavenly warison⁵ for whatso thy son doth, thou doest; therefore we cry to thee our mother that washeth us and comforteth us weeping in the cradle of our frail flesh, and feedeth us with milk of devotion when we cry for hunger and thou bearest us up with thine arms of pity when we fail for false heart or for weariness in our travail, or we are wounded or hurt with temptations, thou softest us and healest us. For why? Thou be a lady of angels yet thou deignest for to be a leech for wretches. Thou art so courteous that thou forsakest not them that

⁴ the bare memory.

⁵ healing.

unkindly forsake thee, but by pleasance and by menacings thou drawest them again to thee. Certes he that goeth in this life among thus many perils as here are and crieth not to thee Lady, with dread and sorrow of heart some times, he hath either lost feeling or else is full blind, he is sore and feeleth it not. But blessed be that need that driveth us from sin and blessed is that falling that maketh us for to rise and to stand stiffer.⁶

Wonder not lady that we cry for we are far from thee. We are not in thy country but we are *Exules Filii Evae*—outlawed sons of Eve. We are outlawed for the sins of Eve, from the country of heaven and from the sight of God, but I hope we are not from God's grace outlawed, nor from thy sweet solace. Alas, why art thou so long banished from thine own country into this wilderness, when thou see thy Saviour Jesus in his joy and hail thy Lady sitting on her throne? Look thou be not checked with the love of this exile so that thou forget the welfare of thine own country. We are sons of Eve through kindly bringing forth for she is the mother of us all, but we are much more the sons of Eve through following of Eve's evil manners. . . . Us list not to be fed of the tree of life in beholding of Jesus Christ on the cross, but we stretch out our hands to the tree that was forbid us and feed us with lust of creatures as Eve did. We have no dainty of the mirth nor of the delices of Paradise. Us liketh more with swink and travail the getting of fleshly delices, than with jesting of heart the gracious tasting of Jesus Christ: and so, Lady, we are Eve's sons in all parts. Certes, but thou had holpen us through thy blessed day, both Eve and we, in the pit of hell should a' been.

And yet Lady! for we are not siker what shall worth⁷ of us, therefore *Suspiramus ad Te*—we sigh to thee. Yea Lady, we mourn for thee and we sigh to thee for longing of Love. Thou hast dropped a little of thy love into our hearts and that stirreth therein as it were a quick thing. What fool is he that seeketh not to thee that art brighter than the sun, fairer than life, sweeter than balm. Thou art well of wisdom, furnace of love, beam of the godhead, flood of pity, draught of mercy, mirror of honesty, sampler of all manner of holiness and the mother of Jesus Christ. Whoso will love a woman let him love thee. Lo Lady! thus seek we to thee for love, yea and for failing of sorrow we seek to thee. For why? our own sins and our frailties on the one side, temptations of the world and of the flesh and wicked spirits on that other side, all about beset us and would stop us the way.

⁶ Here follows a long conversational piece in which our Lady is adjured after the manner of chivalrous love with a good deal of humour—but too long to quote.
⁷ shall become.

Therefore we seek to thee *Gementes et flentes in hac lacrymarum valle*, men that are overcharged with sins, we weep for that we may not lightly cast it beside and go therefrom. We mourn as blind and made witless men, that could no chevisance for themselves⁸, we weep for the hard service and the vile thraldom that we are bound to the fiend. Certes much sorrow is in this dale, much matter of *Valle*—mourning and weeping in this dale of tears. We mourn as weeping and mourning runneth into it; for all manner of sin floweth into it and maketh it full of sorrow.

Eia ergo advocata nostra illos tuos misericordes oculos ad nos converte. Therefore Lady, our advocate, turn to us thy merciful eyes. A great mercy of our saviour it is that giveth us his own mother to be our advocate. We need not flee for dread. For why, our Justice is our father and our brother, and our advocate is our mother and our sister. What shall we suppose then but as much favour as brother and sister would do to us, so much shall we have. Good Lady, then turn thine eyes to usward and have ruth on us. For I trust faithfully that if thou wilt look on our wretchedness mercifully we shall be safe. For why? The beams of grace that shine out of thy lovely eyes purge our venemous eyes, with the which we wound each of us, other, as doth the basilisk. Certes our eyes are like to Eve's eyes for she looked on the fruit forbidden and her thought it good and sweet, and therefore she ate of it and slew herself, and perchance had she not seen it she had scaped harmless. So fare we with our venemous eyes that are full covetous and curious and of lustful love. Therefore if we would have clean eyes it is good that we offer them to the eyes of our blessed Lady, our advocate. For why? The light and the love that streameth out of her glorious eyes shall whole⁹ our eyes, for it kindleth cold hearts and putteth out mirkness, and driveth fiends to flight, it draweth up the soul to desire of heavenly things.

These eyes good Lady turn to us, *Et Jesum benedictum fructum ventris tui nobis post hoc exilium ostende.* Ah this is a wonderful womb that might receive our Creator, a praiseful womb that beareth our buyer, an heavenly womb that brought forth desire of all souis, flood of grace, plenty of bliss. In it was closed the price of lost men and the bliss of bought men, King of kings and Lord of lords. This blessed womb is a throne to God, a settle to the King of joy, a round womb and a soft for the spouse that is Jesus Christ, for to rest him in. This womb bear us the fruit that is our alder bliss.¹⁰ This fruit, good Lady, show to us after this exile, Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

⁸ were not able to make an agreement on their own behalf.

⁹ make whole. ¹⁰ the bliss of us all.