

CHOICE

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I

Youth saw two visions in the night.
O Lord of Light,
You bid me choose? Then guide me right.

He saw a cottage. Roses fair
Encircled it and kissed the air
To ecstasy. The sun
His riding done
Had bade young Vesper run
To hang her even lamps, and beckon Darkness on.—
Love stood there waiting at the door,
Desire smiling from her lips
For one who hastened more and more
To seize her eager finger-tips.
She runs to meet him at the garden-gate; anon
What peals of laughter!
Bob and Bess
Scramble after
Dad's caress. . . .

Youth saw the angels bless their home
And consecrate their good-night kiss.
He even saw the God-man come
Because their love resembled His.

II

Youth saw two visions in the night.
O God of Might,
You bade me choose; now give me light!

He saw the cave where Christ was born.
He watched while to the Child forlorn
His loved one crept. Their eyes
Were loud with lies
And hellish cruelties.
They nailed His hands and feet and spat against His face.
Youth winced and screamed while Christ was lashed
With thongs, and writhed in agony;
Youth felt the knife of one who gashed
Christ's flesh and shouted gleefully.
He saw men's faces leer, he felt his Love's disgrace.

*God, what pain
To love and know!
'Twere almost gain
To be Thy foe! . . .*

No angel came with strength for Youth
To watch men crucify the Child.
No ending to the brutish truth
Of Hell enthroned and God defiled!

III

Youth saw two visions in the light.
O Love so bright,
Accept my choice:—I choose Thy Night.