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ALICE MEYNELL

THE MODERN MOTHER

Oh what a kiss
With filial passion overcharged is this!
To this misgiving breast
The child runs, as a child ne’er ran to rest
Upon the light heart and the unoppressed.
Unhoped, unsought!
A little tenderness, this mother thought
The utmost of her meed
She looked for gratitude; content indeed
With thus much that her nine years’ love had bought.
Nay, even with less.
This mother, giver of life, death, peace, distress,
Desired ah! not so much
Thanks as forgiveness; and the passing touch
Expected, and the slight, the brief caress.
Oh filial light
Strong in these childish eyes, these new, these bright
Intelligible stars! Their rays
Are near the constant earth, guides in the maze,
Natural, true, keen in this dusk of days.