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Poetry.

“HE ANSWERS NOT A WORD.”

MATT. xv. 21-29.

I.

OH ! what a cry of anguish wild—
“Thou Son of David, heal my child !”
Surely the Master must have heard,
And yet—*He answers not a word !*

II.

No word from Him. But from the crowd
Rises a murmur fierce and loud—
“What does she here ? Why wait we thus ?
Send her away—she wearis us !”

III.

Let them jeer on—she little heeds ;
With bitter cry again she pleads.
For her there is one only care—
The Master, has He heard her prayer ?

IV.

He has ! He speaks ! Her heart beats fast !
Oh joy ! The answer comes at last !
But why that look so stern, so grave ?
Can this be He who came to save ?

V.

“Woman,” He says, “thou hast no plea !
I am not sent to such as thee.
To feed My chosen sheep I came ;
Till they be filled thou hast no claim !”

VI.

“Send her away—what does she here ?”
Again resounds the cruel jeer—
“Daughter of an accursed race,
Thou hast no claim, no plea—give place !”

VII.

No claim, no plea ! Yet lo ! again
She pleads—she worships Him. In vain !
“Woman,” He says, “with children’s bread,
Dogs such as thou may not be fed !”¹

VIII.

Well may she now despair. But no !
Quick answers she, with cheek aglow—
“Truth, Lord—and by this very word
I know, I know, that I am heard !”

IX.

“For while their bread the children eat,
Some crumbs must fall beside their feet ;
And crumbs are food for dogs like me !
Truth, Lord—they word contains my plea !”¹

X.

She has prevailed ! He speaks once more,
But now that voice, so stern before,
On her parched heart, in words of love,
Falls like the dew from heaven above !

XI.

“O Woman, great thy faith indeed !
Be it according to thy need !
Thou hast been proved. Well hast thou fought !
I heard thee when I answered not !”

XII.

LORD, WHEN THOU SEEMEST TO DELAY,
YET WILL WE PRAY, AND PRAY, AND PRAY !
WHAT THOUGH THOU ANSWER NOT A WORD,
ENOUGH — WE KNOW THAT WE ARE HEARD.

PLUNKET-MEATH.

¹ An attempt is here made to give the force of the original, as rendered in the Revised Version—“Truth, Lord, *for* even the dogs eat,” etc.