

O good painter, tell me true,
 How is your hand the cunning to draw
 Shapes of things that you never saw?
 Ay! Well here is an order for you.

Woods & cornfields a little brown,
 The picture must not be over-bright,
 Not all in the golden & gracious light
 Of a cloud, when the summer sun is down.

Always and always, night & morn,
 Woods upon woods with fields of green
 Lying between them, not quite seen,
 And not in the full thick leafy bloom,
 When the wind can hardly find breathing room
 Under their tassels, — call the reed,
 Biting shorter the short green grass,
 With a hedge of sumach & bass grass,
 With blue birds twittering all around,
 O, good painter you can't paint sound.

These and the house where I was born,
Low & little and black and old,
With children as many as it can hold,
All at the windows open wide,

Heads and shoulders clear outside,
And fair young faces all ablush;
Perhaps you may have seen some day
Roses crowding the edge of some arched
Out of a wilding wayside bush.

Sister closer, when you have done
With words & corn fields & grazing herds,
A lady, the loveliest ever the sun
Looked down upon, you must paint for me,
If I could only make you see
The clear blue eyes, the tender smile
The sovereign sweetness the gentle grace,
The woman's soul the angel face
That are beaming on me all the while.
I need not speak these foolish words;
Yet one word tells you all I would see,
She was my mother; you will agree
That all the rest may be thrown away.

Two little urchins at his knee
You must paint, sir; one like me,—
The other with a clearer brow,
And the light of his adventurous eyes
Flashing with boldest enterprise;
By twenty years old he went to sea,—
God knoweth if he be living now,—
He sailed in the good ship Commodore,
Nobody ever crossed her track
To bring us news, and she never came back,
Ah! 'tis twenty long years ago or more
Since that old ship went out of the bay
With my great hearted brother on her deck,
I watched him till he shrank to a speck,
And his face was towards me all the way.
Bright his hair was, a golden brown,
The time we stood at our mother's knee;
That beauteous head if it did go down,
Carried sunshine into the sea!

Out in the fields one summer night
We were together, half afraid
Of the corn leaves rustling & of the shade

Of the high hills, stretching so still & far,
Loitering till after the low little light
Of the candle shone through the open door.
And over the haystack's pointed top,
All of a tremble, and ready to drop,
The first half-hour, the great yellow star,
That we, with staring, ignorant eyes,
Had often and often watched to see
Propped and held in its place in the skies
By the fork of a tall red mulberry tree,
Which close in the edge of our flap-field grew,
Dead at the top, - just one branch full
Of leaves, notched round, and lined with wool,
From which it tenderly shook the dew
Over our heads, when we came to play
In its handbreadth of shadow, day after day: -
A friend to go home in; for one of us bore
A nest full of speckled & thin-shelled eggs,
The other a bird held fast by the legs,
Not so big as a straw of wheat:
The berries we gave her she would not eat,
But cried and cried till we held her
To sleep & shining to keep her still.

cat. no. 9241 *

(9759)

At last we stood at our mother's knee.
 Do you think sir, if you try,
 You can paint the look of a lie?
 If you can, pray have the grace,
 To put it solely in the face
 Of the wretch that is likest me;
 I think 'twas solely mine, indeed;
 But that's no matter, — paint it as,
 The eyes of our mother — take good heed
 Sinking, sob on the nest full of eggs,
 As the fluttering bird, held so fast by the
 But straight thro' those eyes down to our eyes,
 And O! with such injured, wretched
 I felt my heart bleed where that glance went
 as though

A sharp blade had struck thro' it
 You sir, know,
 That you on the canvas are to repeat
 Things that are faint — things most sweet,
 Woods & corn fields & milberry tree,

The mother, — the lords, with their bid, at her
knee;

But O that look of reproachful woe!
High as the heavens your name I'll shout
If you paint me the picture and
I leave that rest.

the

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book

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 You can paint the look of a lie?
 If you can, pray have the grace,
 To put it solely in the face
 Of the wretch that is likest me;
 I think 'twas solely mine, indeed;
 But that's no matter, — paint it as,
 The eyes of our mother — take good heed
 Looking up on the nest full of eggs,
 See the fluttering bird, held so fast by the
 But straight thro' our faces down to our feet,
 And O! with such injured, unwatchful eyes,
 My heart bleed where that glance went
 as though

A sharp blade had struck thro' it
 You sir, know
 That you on the canvas are to repeat
 Things that are finest — things most sweet,
 Woods & corn fields & mill chimes & trees,

The mother, - the lads, with their bird, at her
knee;

But O that look of reproachful woe!
High as the heavens your name I'll shout
If you paint me the picture and
I leave that out.

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