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Collect: Two: Philadelphia, The Conservator

GIVE ALL TO LOVE

HORACE TRAUBEL

1902

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The Conservator keeps a high
place in my
JULIA regard among
MARLOWE American publi-
cations. I wish
all the great American public
might feel its influence now as it
is bound to be felt later.

Collects: Two

GIVE ALL TO LOVE

GIVE all to love. Burn your ships behind you. Dismiss if and but from your vocabulary. Offer no compromises. Admit no doubts. Take love by the hand. Introduce it to your heart. Let it run as blood in your veins. They will tell you it is not worth while. But if love is not worth while nothing is worth while. You have often thought you have loved. But if you once love you will see that you never loved. You once thought you would surrender all rather than lose love. But you will see that you cannot lose what you did not possess. You have yet to learn the real build and bravery of love. These little pettifogging loves of lovers would not go very far to heal a wound. These oaths and pledges of love are made but to be broken. Love never takes an oath or gives a pledge. You put on your best clothes and call yourself a lover. You exhibit your balance in bank and swear you are loyal to love. You become great and are flattered and you swear by greatness and flattery that the possibilities of your love are beyond count. But love has the habit of finding its way home unobserved. Love has no bills to settle with tailors. Love sponges its slate clean every night. Love repudiates debts. Love owes nothing. Love endows the heart with the last confidence of its riches and the

last appeal of its poverty. No fraud can get back of love. There is no plot in love. Love itself must be love : for if love fail all will fail. There is nothing to go to if love is forfeited. But love must be love. Love's two hands must have no secrets from each other. Love will not traffic with its tasks or its opportunities. Love is not benefit and loss, good and evil, white and black : love is only benefit, good, white, and love again. Love is not your family. It is all families. Love is not your country. It is all countries. Love is not today's duty to today. It is as much today's duty to yesterday and tomorrow. Love seen short or long, seen in or out, seen heaven or hell, is no passing humor, no cloud coming or going, no pendulum right or left. Love takes no chances with alien currents. It makes no settlements except when the heart can pay in full. Love is stern as the scaffold. It will go to execution with you. But it will not permit you to escape your guarantees.

Give all to love. I will. I will get married. I will bear children. But if I give all to love who knows but I may not marry? Who knows but I must forbear children? Love is not a strain of passion. It is not desire. It is not the madman caper of amorous impulse. It is not a little affair that goes well with dinner. It is not a ribbon or a tie or some casual pleasure. It is not a look of the eye, the electric kisses of lips, the lapse of man in woman or woman in man. It is not that mysterious overflow of feeling which floods a moment in some de-



lirium of demiurgic forgetfulness. It is not an inundation or an intoxication. It is not the florid surrender to fevers and dreams.

Give all to love. Not the love that is satisfied to remain within the house. Not the love that is afraid to cross seas. Not the love that stumbles on lame feet. Not the love which is loyal and faithful. Not the love which answers to one humor or one virtue. Not the love which cannot survive treachery and wrong. Not the love to which custom or statute gives sanction. Not that puny and sickly accident which goes about pale in the shadow. Not the vague and vain trifle which is rung into being by a churchbell. Not the short weight and small measure of a parochial instinct. Not the flush of an amour, the moonlight of an escapade, the dead darkness of an assassination. Love is rigor. Love is not a compact between one and another. It is a signal to which all the race must respond. It is not a meal set for two but a feast providing a universal providence. It is not your lifted hat. It is not mock courtesy or a certain cut of coat or some fiction of etiquette imported from London or Paris. It is a touch of home, the direct emanation of the personal heart, the immediate influx and efflux of persuading influences. It is inured to snow and tropic. It is without artifice. It delivers all its messages at first hand. It abhors the vicarious and the vacillating. If love has a crow to pick with you it will never send in an exaggerated bill. It is first to come

and last to leave. It is the course of a dream, a star-spent celestia, yet as practical as your next meal and as palpable as your roof.

Give all to love. Not the love that at home is called patriotism and abroad is called treason. Not the love which legislates favors into individual treasuries. Not the love which betrays communities. Not the love which sends armies to subdue. But such love as recognizes the human principle. Love which breaks down walls and makes light of obstacles. Love which frees. Love now makes love a bond. Love will yet make love enfranchisement. Love never gives for returns. Love will give love for love's sake. What can love receive except love? And love can never come in fetters. It can never come because demanded. It can never come because it is lawful. It can only come when it chooses, in what dress it selects, and without law observe its lawful rites. What law like the law of its own impeccable instinct? Love goes alone. It refuses attendance, it hates a retinue. Love flies before the rod. It hurries away from the state. It shrinks from the traditions. Love can play hermit. It likes to get lost in the crowd. It maintains its identity whatever the pressure of majorities. It declines to rule and declines to be ruled. The state must not rule love. It must be love. The church must not have a doctrine about love. It must have love. The state with dreams of imperial renown, the church with dreams of universal dominion, with the jail and the

inquisition as adjuncts to propitiate the adverse inclinations of the popular instinct, can never get the symbols of love where they belong. A republic is not republican because it is republic but because it is love. If love fail the republic all fails it. You send your armies forth as emissaries of an idea. What idea? An idea of love? What can love do on a battlefield but weep? What can love do in a conquest but apologize for the wounds it inflicts? Yet we are proud of our disgrace. We advertise our defaults on our national flags. Our creeds and constitutions are the first offenders against the love they proclaim. We love Jesus. And we outlaw or kill the first man who attempts to live Jesus. We sing love hymns in battle. How much we will do for power. How little we will do for love. Yet love alone is power. Conquest is not power. Love is power. Would you not rather have love than loyalty? Would you not rather extend the boundaries of your love than of your dominion? Give all to love. All—without exception. The state as well as the heart. The race as well as the individual. Trade as well as benefaction. If trade was given to love philanthropy would be impossible. Love is despised as a sentiment. It is looked upon as a thing without backbone. Love may be anything but love. It may be all the evil you see in it. It may be at the root of misfortune. But that is always because love is not given unqualified service. That is because you think or feel love as simply tribal

or personal cause and effect. That is because you have got love localized but not at the root. That is because you call in love to perform special duties rather than for its universal operation. With love back of the state there would be no state. With love back of the church there would be no church. With love back of the home there would be no home. Yet would men in love's behoof be more lawful, more reverent, more chaste, than under any prior exercise of a partial authority. For love is the hardest traveller on the road. But love does nothing it is compelled to do. It performs its deeds but does not live them. And unless love lives love its power lapses and is betrayed.

Give all to love. Give the children to love. Give the slums to love. Give the tramps to love. Give all murder and all prostitution to love. You shake with terror. I ask too much. What would become of human society if love loved its evil? But if love exercised its final prerogatives how much of what you call evil would survive? Love is not for fair weather. Love is, most of it, for foul weather. Love is, most of it, for the bad in the world. Love is for those who suffer. Love would open prisons. Now you are again alarmed. But if you will open your hearts prisons will open of themselves. I would not break down one prison wall or turn the key in one lock. But I would let love meet crime face to face. For crime never looks into the face of love. Crime looks always into the face of enemies. You think

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Give all to love

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crime should be meted justice. But how can crime get justice if it does not get love? Give all to love. You think you know what love is. And yet you complacently see that children round your corner starve. You think you know love. And yet your codes are those of force and fraud. You think you love. And yet you go out into the midday and shoot pigeons for sport. You think you love. And yet you find excuse for war. You think you love. And yet you justify commercial codes for which pirates used to be executed on the high seas. You think you love. And yet you think that your children are entitled to all the preference of joy. You think you know what love is. And yet you know that in the huddle and horror of social devastation your hand has done as much as any other to produce the wreck. But if you have a love which will not pour out through all your borders the plenty of its illimitable possessions, what can your church-spire do for you, or your magna chartas, or your loyalty to a family accident? Love, you see, is a hard master until obeyed. Yet in the hour of your obedience you can draw upon it for all exigencies of freedom and light. For love is not the gush of some irresponsible sentiment. It is the thing we call civilization. It is of all loyalists loyal and of all rebels rebel. But its martyrdoms would shame the displays of a medieval inquisition. It must be stoned, hung, burned, and by these evidences grow fibrous and intense. In courts it dismisses the judge. In temples it sets aside the

priest. In politics it vetoes the legislator. It encourages none of those trespasses which counterfeit the heart. It takes man's deeds back to man again. It sees that all the paraphernalia of history must refer finally to love. Nothing else explains it. Nothing else has an equal place for experience and prophecy.

Give all to love. But you must not domesticate your love. You must not house it until it is of no use in the rigorous atmospheres of an adverse environment. Love is not to be tied fast to an interpretation. Love cannot be reserved for a person or be sworn to or go on some one's finger with a ring. Love is not a whim. It cannot bestow or withhold. It cannot be used as a collateral for debts. It cannot be given in return for love. Love translates every tongue. Often it goes wrong ways. It is rather misunderstood than understood. It may appear with awkward manners and may not fold its napkin at table and may not scrape and fawn in proper seasons and may even now and then swear out loud. For love takes giant ways to its giant ends. It oversteps customary bounds. It takes your formulas and stretches them till they break. It refuses alliances that are paid for in surrenders and compromises. It tears up your marriage records. It puts on your bond. Then runs wild in vice. It rejects your bond. Then is a stickler for the law. Love refuses to swear that it will love. It knows neither man nor woman. It knows only love. It knows not one woman or man or twenty women and men. It

knows only love. It never appears at an altar. It always remains in the heart. It never takes refuge in prayer. Love will always love. But how it will love love itself could not prophecy. But love never obeys. Love neither asks nor accords obedience. Obedience could not love. Obedience can only obey.

Give all to love. Love does not ask you to get on your knees. Love does not fear your pride. Love sees you transfigured into expressions of a universal providence. Miserly is that love which pays a few scores to a little colony and refuses benefit of joy to the rest of the earth. As if you could really love one without loving all. As if you could ascend to ideal planes by trick of thumb. As if your domestic paragons did not default in the most serious incident of their alliance. As if you were not an idiot to send your armies abroad to convince your enemies that you love them. As if you are ever really big without love. As if the strongest man without love was not weaker than the weakest man with love. As if the brutalest and bloodiest battlefield of history ever gave you such victory as comes with the simplest love you win from the plainest jackanapes of your town. As if the greatest man without love is not found in the dust supplicating the patronage of his inferiors. As if comrades could not love where lovers could not love. As if sex alone could settle all questions of love. As if there was not something big enough to enclose even sex. As if love would not rather be

love than be respectable. Love that would rather be justice than welcome. Love that would rather figure on a cross than on a fashion plate. You think the sun up there is a big thing. But love is a bigger thing than your solar bonfire. You count your universe in stars and nebula. But love counts its greater universe in love alone. Give all to love.

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