

# *Sonnets on Miss Savage*

*By*

*Samuel Butler*

**Free**editorial 

## *Sonnets On Miss Savage*

*I*

*She was too kind, wooed too persistently,  
Wrote moving letters to me day by day;  
The more she wrote, the more unmoved was I,  
The more she gave, the less could I repay.  
Therefore I grieve, not that I was not loved,  
But that, being loved, I could not love again.  
I liked, but like and love are far removed;  
Hard though I tried to love I tried in vain.  
For she was plain and lame and fat and short,  
Forty and over-kind. Hence it befell  
That though I loved her in a certain sort,  
Yet did I love too wisely but not well.  
Ah! had she been more beauteous or less kind  
She might have found me of another mind.*

*II*

*And now, though twenty years are come and gone,  
That little lame lady's face is with me still;  
Never a day but what, on every one,  
She dwells with me, as dwell she ever will.  
She said she wished I knew not wrong from right;  
It was not that; I knew, and would have chosen  
Wrong if I could, but, in my own despite,  
Power to choose wrong in my chilled veins was frozen.  
'Tis said that if a woman woo, no man  
Should leave her till she have prevailed; and, true,  
A man will yield for pity, if he can,  
But if the flesh rebels what can he do?  
I could not. Hence I grieve my whole life long  
The wrong I did, in that I did no wrong.*

### *III*

*Had I been some young sailor, continent  
Perforce three weeks and then well plied with wine,  
I might in time have tried to yield consent  
And almost (though I doubt it) made her mine.  
Or had it been but once and never again,  
Come what come might, she should have had her way;  
But yielding once were yielding twice, and then  
I had been hers for ever and a day.  
Or had she only been content to crave  
A marriage of true minds, her wish was granted;  
My mind was hers, I was her willing slave  
In all things else except the one she wanted:  
And here, alas! at any rate to me  
She was an all too, too impossible she.*

*Samuel Butler.*

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