

Aleister Crowley

Collected Works, Volume I, Part 1



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THE WORKS OF ALEISTER CROWLEY Vol. I, part 1 of 3 ASCII
VERSION

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Copy”

edition of 1905 e.v. by Bill Heidrick T.G. of O.T.O. Descriptions of portraits
retained, even though they are not in this edition.

(The winner of the competition was J.F.C.Fuller’s “The Star in the West”)
File 1 of 3.

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Pages in the original are marked thus at the bottom: {page number} or {page number A} and {page number B}.

Comments and descriptions are also set off by curly brackets {}

Comments and notes not in the original are identified with the initials of the source: *e.g.* WEH note = Bill Heidrick note, *etc.* Descriptions of illustrations are not so identified, but are simply in curly brackets.

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THE WORKS OF
ALEISTER CROWLEY

VOLUME I

ESSAY COMPETITION COPY

THE WORKS

OF

ALEISTER CROWLEY

“{variation: WITH PORTRAITS}”

VOLUME I

FOYERS

SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF RELIGIOUS TRUTH

1905

[“All rights reserved”]

Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.

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{ILLUSTRATION ON PAGE FACING AND JUST BEFORE TITLE in the delux edition: This is a photo of Crowley in his 20s, frontal with tailed bow tie and signed “Aleister Crowley” in block below.}

P R E F A C E

IT is not without some misgiving that I have undertaken to edit the collected writings of Aleister Crowley. The task has been no easy one. His numerous reference to the obscurer bypaths of classical mythology, and his not less frequent allusions to the works of Qabalistic writers, have demanded much elucidation. In making the explanatory notes, I have endeavoured to strike a golden mean between the attitude of Browning, when he published “Sordello,” and that of Huxley, who took it for granted that his readers were entirely ignorant: and only such passages or phrases

have been annotated as were thought likely to present any difficulty to the student of ordinary intelligence.

It is no part of the duty of an editor to assume the role of critic. But I must explain that I am conscious of Crowley's weaknesses. They are in the main the outcome of his astonishing perversity; nowhere more strikingly demonstrated than in "The Poem," throughout which there is a struggle for the supremacy between his sense of the ridiculous and his sense of the sublime.

I am also aware that his views on religious matters will be found unpalatable in some quarters. But it should be remembered that these writings represent the ideas of a man of an unconventional mind brought up in conventional surroundings. When he came to man's estate he not unnaturally revolted: and the result has been, as in many such cases, that his search for the truth has led him to investigate the religious beliefs of many nations; nor have those investigations tended to lessen the gulf which separates him from the orthodox point of view.

The edition is authorized, and, as such, complete: therein are contained all the important works of Aleister Crowley.<<WEH NOTE: To some years before date of publication, limited to poetry and only a part of the prose.>>

I.B.

LONDON, "March" 1905.

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TABLE OR CORRESPONDENCES “End of volume”<<WEH NOTE:
This table is not included in the editions used to enter this text.>>

{ix}

ACELDAMA

A PLACE TO BURY STRANGERS IN.

A PHILOSOPHICAL POEM.

1898.

[The poems collected in Volume I. comprise the whole of the first period of Crowley's life; namely, that of spiritual and mystic enthusiasm. The poet himself would be inclined to class them as Juvenilia. A few other early poems appear in "Oracles," Vol. II., chosen as illustrative of the progress of his art. The great bulk of the early MSS. from 1887 to 1897 have been sedulously sought out and destroyed. They were very voluminous.] {col. start below}

ACELDAMA

“I contemplate myself in that dim sphere

Whose hollow centre I am standing at

With burning eyes intent to penetrate

The black circumference, and find out God.”

“Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.” — ST. JOHN xii, 24, 25.

It was a windy night, that memorable seventh night of December, when this philosophy was born in me. How the grave old Professor<<C.G.Lamb, Demonstrator of Engineering at Cambridge.>> wondered at my ravings! I had called at his house, for he was a valued friend of mine, and I felt strange thoughts and emotions shake within me. Ah! how I raved! I called to him to trample me, he would not. We passed together into the stormy night. I was on horseback, how I galloped round him in my phrenzy, till he became the prey of a real physical fear! How I shrieked out I know not what strange words! And the poor good old man tried all he could to calm me; he thought I was mad! The fool! I was in the death struggle with self: God and Satan fought for my soul those three long hours. God conquered - now I have only one doubt left — which of the twain was God? Howbeit, I aspire!

“And falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. ... Insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say — the field of blood.” — ACTS i. 18,19. {1A}

DEDICATION

DIVINE PHILOSOPHER!<<1>> Dear Friend!<<2>>

Lover and Lord!<<3>> accept the verse

That marches like a sombre hearse,

Bearing truth's coffin, to the end.

Let man's distorted worships blend

In this, the worthier and the worse,

And penetrate the primal curse.

Alas! They will not comprehend.

Accept this gospel of disease

In wanton words proclaimed, receive

The blood-wrought chaplet that I weave.

Take me, and with thine infamies

Mingle my shame, and on my breast

Let thy desire achieve the rest.

<<1. Von Eckartshausen>>

<<2. An adept who was in correspondence with the author.>>

<<3. Christ.>>

ALCELDAMA.

“Six months and I sit still and hold
In two cold palms her cold two feet;
Her hair, half grey half ruined gold,
Thrills me and burns me in kissing it.

Love bites and stings me through to see
Her keen face made of sunken bones.
Her worn-out eyelids madden me,
That were shot through with purple once.”

SWINBURNE, “The Leper,”

“Poems and Ballads,” 1866. {1B}

ALCELDAMA.

DARK night, red night. This lupanar<<1>>

Has rosy flames that dip, that shake,

Faint phantoms that disturb the lake

Of magic mirror-land. A star

Like to a beryl, with a flake

Of olive light

Struck through its dull profound, is steadfast in the night.

<<1. Brothel.>>

I.

I AM quite sane, quite quiet. Sober though

Is as a woof to my mad dreams. My brain

Beats to the double stroke; the double strain

Warps its gray fibres; all the dream is wrought

A spider-tapestry; the old blood-stain

Spreads through the air

Some hot contagious growth to slay men unaware.

II.

I have discovered God! His ghastly way
Of burning ploughshares for my naked feet
Lies open to me — shall I find it sweet
To give up sunlight for that mystic day
That beams its torture, whose red banners beat
Their radiant fire
Into my shrivelled head, to wither Love's desire?

III.

I was a child long years ago, it seems,
Or months it may be — I am still a child!
They pictured me the stars as wheeling wild
In a huge bowl of water; but my dreams
Built it of Titan oak, its sides were piled
Of fearful wood
Hewn from God's forests, paid with sweat and tears and blood. {2A}

IV.

I crept, a stealthy, hungry soul, to grasp

Its vast edge, to look out to the beyond;

To know. My eyes strained out, there was no bond, No continuity, no
bridge to clasp.

No pillars for the universe. Immond,<<1>>

Shapeless, unstayed,

Nothing, Nothing, Nothing, Nothing! I was afraid.

<<1. Unclean — from the French “immonde.”>>

V.

That was my sanity. Brought face to face

Suddenly with the infinite, I feared.

My brain snapped, broke; white oarage-wings<<1>> appeared On
stronger shoulders set, a carapace,

A chariot. I did essay that wierd

Unmeasured dome;

Found in its balance, peace; found in its silence, home.

<<1. “Cf.” Virgil, “Aeneid,” vi. 20.>>

VI.

That was my madness. On bright plumage poised

I soared, I hovered in the infinite;

Nothing was everything; the day was night,

Dark and deep light together, that rejoiced

In their strange wedlock. Marvellously white

All rainbows kissed

Into one sphere that stood, a circumambient mist.

VII.

I climbed still inwards. At the moveless point

Where all power, light, life, motion concentrate, I found God dwelling.
Strong, immaculate,

He knew me and he loved! His lips anoint

My lips with love; with thirst insatiate

He drank my breath,

Absorbed my life in His, dispersed me, gave me death. {2B}

VIII.

This is release, is freedom, is desire;

This is the one hole that a man may gain;

This is the lasting ecstasy of pain

That fools reject, the dread, the searching fire

That quivers in the marrow, that in vain

Burns secretly

The unconsumed bush where God lurks privily.

IX.

This was a dream — and how may I attain?

How make myself a worthy acolyte?

How from my body shall my soul take flight,

Being constrained in this devouring chain

Of selfishness? How purge the spirit quite

Of gross desires

That eat into the heart with their corrupting fires?

X.

Old Buddha gave command; Jehovah spake;

Strange distant gods that are not dead to-day

Added their voices; Heaven's desert way

Man wins not by sorrow — let him break

The golden image with the feet of clay!<<1>>

Let him despise

That earthen vessel which the potter marred<<2>> — and rise!

<<1. "Vide" Daniel ii.>>

<<2. Oriental symbol for the body.>>

XI.

As life burns strong, the spirit's flame grows dull; The ruddy-cheeked
sea-breezes shame its spark;

Wan rainy winds of autumn on the dark

Leafless and purple moors, that rage and lull
With a damned soul's despair, these leave their mark, Their brand of fire
That burns the dross, that wings the heart to its desire. {3A}

XII.

No prostitution may be shunned by him
Who would achieve this Heaven. No Satyr-song.
No maniac dance shall ply so fast the thong
Of lust's imagining perversely dim
That no man's spirit may keep pace, so strong
Its pang must pierce;
Nor all the pains of hell may be one tithe as fierce.

XIII.

All degradation, all sheer infamy,
Thou shalt endure. Thy head beneath the mire
And dung of worthless women shall desire
As in some hateful dream, at last to lie;

Woman must trample thee till thou respire

That deadliest fume;<<1>>

The vilest worms must crawl, the loathliest vampires gloom.

<<1. The concrete expression of the horror of the individual.>>

<<2. Morbid imaginations, which ever torment the traveller upon the path of asceticism.>>

XIV.

Thou must breathe in all poisons; for thy meat,

Poison; for drink, still poison; for thy kiss,

A serpent's lips! An agony is this

That sweats out venom; thy clenched hands, thy feet Ooze blood, thine eyes weep blood; thine anguish is More keen than death.

At last — there is no deeper vault of hell beneath!

XV.

Then thine abasement bringeth back the sheaves

Of golden corn of exaltation.

Ripened and sweetened by the very sun {3B}
Whose far-off fragrance steals between the leaves
Of the cool forest, filling every one
That reaps yon gold
With strange intoxications mad and manifold.

XVI.

Only beware gross pleasure — the delight
Of fools: the ecstasy, the trance of love —
Life's atom-bonds must strain — aye, and must move, And all the body
be forgotten quite,
And the pure soul flame forth, a deathless dove, Where all worlds end!
If thou art worthy God shall greet thee for a friend.

XVII.

I am unworthy. In the House of Pain
There are ten thousand shrines. Each one enfolds A lesser, inner, more
divine, that holds
A sin less palpable and less profane.

The inmost is the home of God. He moulds
Infinity,
The great within the small, one stainless unity!

XVIII.

I dare not to the greater sins aspire;
I might — so gross am I — take pleasure in
These filthy holocausts, that burn to sin
A damned incense in the hellish fire
Of human lust — earth's joys no heaven may win; Pain holds the prize
In blood-stained hands; Love laughs, with anguish in His eyes.

XIX.

These little common sins may lead my lust
To more deceitful vices, to the deeds
At whose sweet name the side of Jesus bleeds {4A}
In sympathy new-nurtured by the trust
Of man's forgiveness that his passion breeds —

These petty crimes!

God grant they grow intense in newer, worthier times!

XX.

Yet — shall I make me subject to a pang

So horrible? O God, abase me still!

Break with Thy rod my unrepentant will,

Lest Hell entrap me with an iron fang!

Grind me, most high Jehovah, in the mill

That grinds so small!

Grind down to dust and powder Pride of Life — and all!

XXI.

In every ecstasy exalt my heart;

Let every trance make loose and light the wings

My soul must shake, ere her pure fabric springs

Clothed in the secret dream-delights of Art

Transcendant into air, the tomb of Things;

Let every kiss

Melt on my lips to flame, fling back the gates of Dis!<<1>>

<<1. A name contracted from Dives, sometimes given to Pluto and hence also the the lower world. But “vide” Dante, “Inferno,” Canto xxxiv.>>

XXII.

Give me a master! not some learned priest

Who by long toil and anguish has devised

A train of mysteries, but some despised

Young king of men, whose spirit is released

From all the weariness, whose lips are prized

By men not much —

Ah! let them only once grow warm, my lips to touch.

XXIII.

Ah! under his protection, in his love,

With my abasements emulating his,

We surely should attain to That which Is, {4B}
And lose ourselves, together, far above
The highest heaven, in one sweet lover's kiss,
So sweet, so strong,
That with it all my soul should unto him belong.

XXIV.

An ecstasy to which no life responds,
Is the enormous secret I have learned;
When self-denial's furnace-flame has burned.
Through love, and all the agonizing bonds
That hold the soul within its shell are turned
To water weak;
Then may desires obtain the cypress crown they seek.

XXV.

Browning attained, I think, when Evelyn Hope
Gave no response to his requickening kiss;

In the brief moment when exceeding bliss

Joined to her sweet passed soul his soul, its scope Grew infinite for ever.
So in this

Profane desire

I too may join my song unto his quenchless quire.

XXVI.

When Hallam died, did Tennyson attain

When his warm kisses drew no answering sigh

From that poor corpse corrupted utterly.

When four diverse sweet dewes exude to stain

With chaste foul fervour the cold canopy?

Proud Reason's sheath

He cast away; the sword of Madness flames beneath!

XXVII.

Read his mad rhymes; their sickening savour taste; Bathe in their carnal
and depraving stream:

Rise, glittering with the dewdrops of his dream, {5A}

And glow with exaltation; to thy waist
Gird his gold belt; the diamond settings gleam
With fire drawn far
Through the blue suddering vault from some amazing star.

XXVIII.

Aubrey<<1>> attained in sleep when he dreamt this
Wonderful dream of women, tender child
And harlot, naked all, in thousands piled
On one hot writhing heap, his shameful kiss
To shudder through them, with lithe limbs defiled To wade, to dip
Down through the mass, caressed by every purple lip.

<<1. Aubrey Beardsley. The dream is authentic.>>

XXIX.

Choked with their reek and fume and bitter sweat
His body perishes; this life is drained;

The last sweet drop of nectar has not stained
Another life; his lips and limbs are wet
With death-dews! Ha! The painter has attained
As high a meed
As his who first begot sweet music on a reed.

XXX.

And O! my music is so poor and thin!
I am poor Marsyas<<1>>; where shall I find
A wise Olympas and a lover kind
To teach my mouth to sing some secret sin,
Faint, fierce, and horrible; to tune my mind,
And on a reed
Better beloved to bid me discourse at his need? {5B}

<<1. Marsyas, a Satyr, inventor of the pastoral flute; Olympas, his favourite pupil. It will be seen that the names are carelessly transposed.>>

XXXI.

Master!<<1>> I think that I have found thee now:

Deceive me not, I trust thee, I am sure

Thy love will stand while ocean winds endure.

Our quest shall be our quest till either brow

Radiate light, till death himself allure

Our love to him

When life's desires are filled beyond the silver brim.

<<1. Christ.>>

XXXII.

Here I abandon all myself to thee,

Slip into thy caresses as of right,

Live in thy kisses as in living light,

Clothed in thy love, enthroned lazily

In thine embrace, as naked as the night,

As love and lover

More pure, more keen, more strong than all my dreams discover. {6A}

EPILOGUE.

My heavy hair upon my olive skin

("Baise la lourde criniere!")

Frames with its ebony a face like sin.

My heavy hair!

You touched my lips and told me I was fair;

It was your wickedness my love to win.

("Baise la lourde criniere!")

Your passion has destroyed my soul — what care

If you desire me, and I hold you in

My arms a little, and you love for lair

My heavy hair!

It is fatal web your fingers spin.

("Baise la lourde criniere!")

Let our love end as other loves begin,

Or, slay me in a moment, unaware!

Nay? Kiss in double death-pang, if you dare!

Or one day I will strangle you within

My heavy hair! {6B}

THE TALE OF ARCHAIS.

A ROMANCE IN VERSE.

1898.

TO

THE WHITE MAIDENS OF ENGLAND

THIS TALE OF GREECE IS DEDICATED.

THE AUTHOR'S BALLADE OF
HIS TALE.

Go to the woodlands, English maid,
Or where the downs to seaward bend,
When autumn is in gold arrayed,
Or spring is green, or winters send
A frosty sun, or summers blend
Their flowers in every dainty dye,
And take, as you would take a friend,
This pleasant tale of Thessaly.

Lie on the greensward, while the shade
Shortens as morning doth ascend

The gates of Heaven, and bud and blade
Laugh at the dawn, while breezes lend
Their music, till you comprehend
The meaning of the world, and sigh —
Yet love makes happy in the end
This pleasant tale of Thessaly.

Turn from my book, the poet prayed,
And look to Heaven, an hour to spend
Before His throne who spake and bade
The fountains of the deep descend
And bade the earth uproot and rend
To pitch like tents the mountains high,
And gave him language who hath penned
This pleasant tale of Thessaly.

ENVOI.

Fair maiden, who hast rightly weighed
The message of the morning sky,

Think kindly of the man who made

This pleasant tale of Thessaly. {7A}

THE TALE OF ARCHAIS.

PART I.

SHE lay within the water, and the sun

Made golden with his pleasure every one

Of small cool ripples that surrounded her throat,

Mix with her curls, and catch the hands that float Like water-lilies on the
wave; she lay

And watched the silver fishes leap and play,

And almost slept upon the soughing breast

That murmured gentle melodies of rest,

And touched her tiny ear, and made her dream

Of sunny woods above the sacred stream

Where she abode (her home was cool and dark

That no small glow-worm with his tender spark

Might lighten till the moon was down, a nook

Far from the cool enticements of the brook,

And hidden in the boskage close and green.)

So dreamed she, smiling like a faery queen;

So the bright feet and forehead of the breeze

Lured her to sleep, and shook the morning trees

Clear of the dewfall, and disturbed the grass,

So that no rustle, should a serpent pass,

Might rouse her reverie. So then, behold,

Chance leant from Heaven with feet and face of gold, And hid the iron of
her body bare

With such warm cloudlets as the morning air {7B}

Makes to conceal the fading of the stars:

Chance bowed herself across the sunny bars,

And watched where through the silence of the lawn

Came Charicles, the darling of the dawn,

Slowly, and to his steps took little heed;

He came towards the pool, his god-wrought reed

Shrilling dim visions of things glorious,

And saw the maiden, that disported thus,

And worshipped. Then in doubt he stood, grown white And wonderful,
with passion's perfect might

Firing his veins and tinging in his brain,

He stood and whitened, and waxed red again.

His oat<<1>> unheeded glanced beneath the wave,

His eyes grew bright and burning, his lips clave —

A sudden cry broke from him: from the height

His swift young body, like a ray of light,

Divides the air, a moment, and the pool

Flings up the spray like dew, divinely cool:

A moment, and he flashed towards her side

And caught her trembling, as a tender bride

At the first kiss; he caught her, and compelled

Her answer, in his arms securely held.

And she no word might say; her red lips quailed,

Her perfect eyelids drooped, her warm cheek paled, A tear stole over it.
His lips repent

With vain weak words — O iron firmament!

How vain, how cold are words! — his lips repeat

Their faint sweet savour, but her rosy feet

Held in his hands and touched with reverent lips

Revived her soul more perfectly. Soon slips

Her gentle answer; now her timid eyes

So tender with the lifted lashes rise

To meet his gaze.

He spoke: "Have pity on me

Who wronged thee for my perfect love of thee, {8A}

My perfect love, O love! for strange and dread

Delights consume me; I am as one dead

Beating at Heaven's gate with nerveless wing,

Wailing because the song the immortals sing

Is so fast barred behind the iron sky.

Speak but thine anger quickly; let me die!"

"But I forgive thee, thou art good and kind."

"O love! O love! O mistress of my mind,

You love me!" "Nay, I was a while afraid,

Being so white and tender; for a maid

I lived alone with flower and brook, nor guessed

Another dwelt within the quiet nest

That these woods build me; hold my trembling hand, Teach me to love; I
do not understand."

He clasped her to him, but no word might say,

And led her from the pool a little way,

And there he laid her on the flowery mead,
And watched her weeping. His forgotten reed
Floated away, a ship for fairy folk,
Along the limpid rivulet. Then broke
From smitten heart and ravished lips the tongue
Of fire that clad its essence with the robe of song.

<<1. Panpipe.>>

SONG OF CHARICLES.

MAN'S days are dim, his deeds are dust,
His span is but a little space,
He lusts to live, he lives to lust,
His soul is barren of love or trust,
His heart is hopeless, seeing he must
Perish, and leave no trace;
With impious rage he mocks the bounds
Of earth, albeit so wholly base;
His ears are dead to subtle sounds,

His eyes are blind, for Zeus confounds

His vain irreverence, and astounds

High Heaven with wrathful face. {8B}

But I am born of gods, and turn

My eyes to thee, thyself divine.

My vigorous heart and spirit yearn

With love, my cheeks with passion burn —

As thy clear eyes may well discern

By gazing into mine.

Thy heart is cool, thy cheeks are pale,

Nor blush with shame like winter wine

To understand my amorous tale,

For words and looks of Love must fail

To touch thee, since a snowy veil

Is 'twixt my mind and thine.

Dear goddess, at whose early breast

I drank in all desires and woes;

Most reverend god, who oft caressed

Her pale chaste wifehood, and who pressed

Upon my forehead kisses blest;

Bid blossom out this rose,

This fair white bud whose heart is pure,

Whose bosom fears not, neither knows

The long vague mysteries that endure

Of life uncertain, of love sure.

Teach her the mystic overture

To Love's transcendant throes.

He ceased: but out of Heaven no sound of might,

No tongue of flame gave answer. Still as night,

Silence and sunlight, stream and mead, possessed

The whole wide world. The maid's reluctant breast Heaved with soft
passion nowise understood,

And her pulse quickened. Through the quiet wood

Her answer rang: "My voice with thine shall break

The woodland stillness, for the fountain's sake.

I'll sing to thee — Lamia! mother, I obey!"

In vain the desperate boy pursued the way

With awful eyes; no bruised flower betrayed
The tender footsteps of a goddess maid;
No butterfly flew frightened; on the pool
No ripple spoke of her; the streamlet cool {9A}
Had no small wreath of amber mist to mark
Her flight; she was not there, the silver spark
Had flashed and faded; all the field was bare,
No wave of wing bestirred the sultry air,
Save only where the noontide lark rose high
To chant his liberty. The vaulted sky
Was one blue cupola of rare turquoise
That shimmered with the heat.
His pulses pause
For his despair ineffable. Her name
He called; she was not, and the piercing flame
Of love struck through him, till his tortured mind Drove his young limbs,
the wolf that hunts the hind, Far through the forest. Lastly sleep, like death,
With strong compulsion of his labouring breath
Came on him dreamless.
When he woke, the day
Stooped toward the splendour of the western bay,

And he remembered. Like a wild bird's cry
The song within him flamed, a melody
Dreadful and beautiful. The sad sea heard
And echoed over earth its bitter word.

SONG.

Ere the grape of joy is golden
With the summer and the sun,
Ere the maidens un beholden
Gather one by one,
To the vineyard comes the shower,
No sweet rain to fresh the flower.
But the thunder rain that cleaves,
Rends and ruins tender leaves.

Ere the wine of perfect pleasure
From a perfect chalice poured,
Swells the veins with such a measure
As the garden's lord

Makes his votaries dance to, death

Draws with soft delicious breath

To the maiden and the man.

Love and life are both a span. {9B}

Ere the crimson lips have planted

Paler roses, warmer grapes,

Ere the maiden breasts have panted,

And the sunny shapes

Flit around to bless the hour,

Comes men know not what false flower:

Ere the cup is drained, the wine

Grows unsweet, that was divine.

All the subtle airs are proven

False at dewfall, at the dawn

Sin and sorrow, interwoven,

Like a veil are drawn

Over love and all delight;

Grey desires invade the white.

Love and life are but a span;

Woe is me! and woe is man!

The sound stood trembling in the forest dim

Lingering a little, yet there taketh him

A strong man's one short moment of despair.

He fell, the last of Titans, his loose hair

Tangled in roses; while his heart and mind

Broken and yet imperishable, blind,

Hateful, desire they know not what, and turn

Lastly to pray for death; his wild eyes burn,

And bitter tears divide his doubtful breath.

So grew his anguish to accomplish death,

Had not the goddess with the rosy shoon<<1>>

Stoop'd o'er the silver surface of the moon

To touch his brow with slumber, like a kiss

Whose dreams perfused the name of Archais,

Till the sweet odour dulled his brain, and sleep

Loosened his limbs, most dreamless and most deep.

The mosses serve him for a bed; the trees

Wave in the moonlight, daughters of the breeze;
Hardly the pleasant waters seem to shake,
And only nightingales, for slumber's sake,
Lull the soft stars and seas, and matchless music make.

And now the sun is risen above the deep;
The mists pass slowly on the uplands steep;
Far snows are luminous with rosy flecks
Of lambent light, and shadow tints and decks {10A}
Their distant hollows with black radiance,
While the delivered fountains flash and glance
Adown the hills and through the woods of pine
And stately larch, with cadences divine
And trills and melodies instinct with light and wine.

The sun, arising, sees the sleeping youth
And lumes his locks with evanescent gold,
While birds and breezes, watching, hold them mute, And light an silence,
the twin-born of truth,
Reign o'er the meadow, and possess the wold.

The poet bows his head, and lays aside his lute.

<<1. WEH NOTE: shoe.>>

PART II.

WHEN God bethought Him, and the world began,
He made moist clay, and breathed on it, that man
Might be most frail and feeble, and like earth
Shrink at Death's finger from the hour of birth;
And like the sea by limits of pale sand
Be utterly confined; but so He planned
To vivify the body with the soul,
That fire and air were wedded to control
The heavy bulk beneath them, so His breath
Touched the warm clay and violated death,
Gave to the spirit wings and bade it rise
To seek its Maker with aspiring eyes,
Gave to the body strength to hold awhile
The spirit, till the passions that defile

Should waste and wither, and the free soul soar.

But evil lusted with the soul, and bore

A thousand children deadlier than death;

The sin that enters with the eager breath

Of perfect love; the sin that seeks it home

In lights and longings frailer than the foam;

The sin that loves the hollows of the night,

The sin that fears; the sin that hates the light;

The sin that looks with wistful eyes; the sin

That trembles on the olive of the skin; {10B}

The sin that slumbers; these divide the day

And all the darkness, and deceive, and slay.

And these regather in the womb of hell

To marry and increase, and by the spell

Of their own wickedness discover sin

Ungessed at, but slow treason creeping in,

To spread corruption, and destroy the earth.

But in the holy hour and happy birth

That swam through stars propitious, meadows white, And fresh with
newer flowers of the night

In the pale fields supernal, when his sire
Took from the nurse the child of his desire,
A man, the prayers of many maidens sent
So sweet a savour through the firmament
That no false spirit might draw nigh. And still
His angel ministers defend from ill
The head they nurtured. Evil dreams and spells,
Cast at the dimmest hour, the sword repels
And drives them down the steep of Hell. But dim
Sweet faces of dead maidens drew to him;
Quiet woods and streams and all the mountains tall, Cool valleys, silver-
streaked with waterfall,
Came in his slumbers, chaste and musical,
While through their maze his mind beheld afar
Dim and divine, Archais, like a star.

It was no dream, or else the growing dawn
Deepened the glory of the misted lawn,
For to his eyes, half open now, there seems
A figure, fairer than his dearest dreams.

He sprang, he caught her to his breast, the maid
Smiled and lay back to look at him. He laid
Her tender body on the sloping field,
And felt her sighs in his embraces yield
A sweeter music than all birds. But she,
Lost in the love she might not know, may see
No further than his face, and yet, aware
Of her own fate, resisted like a snare {11A}
Her own soft wishes. As she looked and saw
His eager face, the iron rod of law
Grew like a misty pillar in the sky.
In all her veins the blood's desires die,
And then — O sudden ardour! — all her mind
And memory faded, and looked outward, blind,
Beyond their bitterness. Her arms she flung
Around him, and with amorous lips and tongue
Tortured his palate with extreme desire,
And like a Maenad maddened; equal fire
Leapt in his veins; locked close for love they lie, The heart's dumb word
expressed without a sigh

In the strong magic of a lover's kiss,
And the twin light of love; but Archais
Felt through her blood a sudden chill; her face
Blanched and besought a moment's breathing space;
Her heart's desire welled up, and then again
Whitened her cheeks with the exceeding pain
Of uttermost despair. At last her strength
Failed, and she flung her weary body at length
Amid the bruised flowers; while from her eyes
Surged the salt tears; low moans she multiplies
Because her love is blasphemous; the wind
Signs for all answer, sobs and wails behind
Among the trees; the streams grows deadly pale
Hearing her weep, and like a silver sail
The fading moon drifts sorrowful above.
Then Charicles must ask his weeping love
To lead him to the fountain of her tears.
But she, possessed by vague and violent fears,
Spake not a little while, and then began:
"O thou, a child of Heaven, and a man,

Even so my lover, shall my woeful song
So move thy spirit for my bitter wrong
(Got-nurtured through thou be) against the rods
Laid on me by my mother, whom the gods {11B}
Righteous in anger, doomed, for fiery sin
Kindled by hell-flames, cherished within
Her lustful heart, for sin most damnable,
To suffer torment in remotest hell,

Where the grim fiend grinds down with fiery stones The unrepentant
marrow of men's bones,

Or chills their blood with poisonous vials of death, Or dooms them to the
tooth and venomous breath

Of foul black worms; and on the earth to dwell
For long space, and there (most terrible!)
To change her shape at times, and on her take
The fierce presentment of a loathly snake to the<<1>>
To wander curst and lonely through the dire black brake.
And this thing is my mother, whose foul tomb
Is a black serpent, spotted with the gloom
Of venomous red flecks, and poisonous sweat,
While on her flat lewd head the mark is set

Of utter loathsomeness; and I, her child
Born of incestuous lust, and sore defiled
With evil parentage, am now (Most just
Unpitied Zeus!) condemned with her, I must
The hated semblance of a serpent wear
When noon rides forth upon the crystal air.”
While yet she spake, the dwindling shadow ran
Beneath the feet of Charicles, the wan
Waste water glinted free, and to the deep
Cool pebbles did the kiss of sunshine creep;
The busy lark forgot for joy to sing,
And all the woods with fairy voices ring;
The hills in dreamy langour seem to swoon
Through the blue haze! behold, the hour of noon!

<<1. WEH NOTE: This inconvenience is not unlike that reported of Melusine, wife of the Angevin Raymond de Lusignan. Melusine had a little problem of turning to a blue and white serpent from the waist down every Saturday. After her death following discovery of this complaint, she was said “to haunt the Lusignan castle, causing much fear by the sound of her swishing tail”. Thus the ancestors of the English kings!>>

And lo! there came to pass the dreadful fate

Her lips had shuddered out her pulses bate

Their quick sweet movement; on the ground she lies Struggling, and
rending Heaven with her cries. {12A}

Like light, in one convulsive pang the snake

Leapt in the sunlight, and its body brake

With glistening scales that golden skin of hers,

And writing with pure shame, the long grass whirrs With her sharp flight
of fury and despair.

Then Charicles at last became aware

Of the fell death that had him by the throat

To mar his music; like one blind he smote

The quivering air with cries of sorrow; then,

Disdaining fear and sorrow, cried to men

And gods to help him; then, resolved to dare

All wrath and justice, he rose up to swear

(Lifting his right hand to the sky, that glowed

Deadly vermilion, like the poisonous toad

That darts an angry red from out its eye,)

By sword and spear, by maze and mystery,

By Zeus' high house, and by his godhead great,

By his own soul, no ardour to abate
Until he freed Archais. Like a star
Rebellious, thrust beyond the morning's bar,
Erect, sublime, he swore so fierce an oath
That the sea flashed with blasphemy, and loath
Black thunder broke from out the shuddering deep.
He swore again, and from its century's sleep
Earthquake arose, and rocked and raved and roared.
He swore the third time. But that Heaven's Lord
Curbed their black wrath, the stars of Heaven's vault Had rushed to
whelm the sun with vehement assault.

The heavens stood still, but o'er the quaking earth, That groaned and
shrank with the untimely birth

Of fury and freedom, Charicles strode on

With fervid foot, to Aphrodite's throne

In seagirt Paphos, to exact her aid —

The sun stood still, creation grew afraid

At his firm step and mien erect and undismayed. {12B}

Strident the godlike hero called aloud

Blaspheming, while that sombre bank of cloud

Witnessed the wrath of Zeus; the thunder broke
From purple flashes vanished into smoke
That rolled unceasingly through heaven; the youth
Cried out against high Zeus, "The cause of Truth,
Freedom, and Justice!" and withal strode on
To the vast margin of the waters wan
That barred him from his goal; his cloak he stripped, Then in the waves
his sudden body dipped
And with his strenuous hands the emerald water gripped.

Long had he struggled (for Poseidon's hand
Heaped foam against him) toward the seemly strand, But that Love's
Mother,<<1>> journeying from Rome, Passed in her car the swimmer,
while her home

Scarce yet was glimmering o'er the waste wide sea
Against whose wrath he strove so silently;
Whom now beholding, checked her eager team,
Dipped to the foam from which she sprang whose gleam Bore the sweet
mirage of her eyes, and bent
Over the weary Charicles. Content
With him she spake, and he, still buffeting

The waves, looked never up, but with the swing
Of strong fierce limbs, clove through the water gray.
Hearing her voice, he answered, "Ere the day
Has fallen from his pinnacle must I
Reach seagirt Paphos, with a bitter cry
To clasp the knees of Cytherea, and pray
That she will aid me." Then the billows lay {13A}
Fondly quiescent while she answered him:
"Yea, are thine eyes with weeping grown so dim
Thou canst not see who hovers over thee?
For I am she thou seekest. Come with me
And tell me all thy grief; thy prayer is heard
Before thy spirit clothes in wintry word
The fire it throbs with." So her eager doves
Waited. From seas grown calm the wanton loves
Lifted the hero to the pearly car,
Whose floor was azure and whose front a star
Set in seven jewels girt with ivory.

<<1. Aphrodite.>>

Then the light rein the goddess left to lie

Unheeded, and the birds flew on apace,

Until the glint and glory of the place

Grew o'er the blue dim line of ocean.

It was a temple never built of man,

Being of marble white, and all unhewn,

Above a cliff, about whose base were strewn

Boulders of amethyst or malachite.

Save these the cliffs rose sheer, a dazzling white, Six hundred feet from
ocean; so divine

Was the tall precipice, that from the shrine

A child might fling a stone and splash it in the brine.

Within whose silver courts and lily bowers

The Queen of Love led Charicles; white flowers

Blushed everywhere to scarlet, as her feet,

Themselves more white, did touch them. On a seat

White with strewn rose, and leaves of silver birch, Remote from courts
profane, and vulgar search,

They rested, till the hero's tale was told.

Then Aphrodite loosed a snake of gold

From her arm's whiteness, and upon his wrist
Clasped it. Its glittering eyes of amethyst
Fascinate him. "Even so," the goddess cried,
"I will bind on thy arm the serpent bride {13B}
Free from her fate, and promise by this kiss
The warmer kisses of thy Archais."
She spake, and on his brow, betwixt her hands
Pressed softly, as a maid in bridal bands,
Kissed him a mother's kiss. Then Charicles
Gave her due thanks, and bent his ear to seize
Here further words. And she: "Not many days
Shall flame and flicker into darkened ways
Before the wings of night, ere Hermes fly
Hither, the messenger of Zeus. But I
Bid thee remain beneath the temple gate
While I consider our war on Fate.
Till then, and I will tell thee everything
That thou must do; but now let song take wing
Till the pale air swoon with the deep delight
That makes cool noontide from the sultry night.

What are your dreams, my maidens? Your young dreams?
Are they of passion, or of rocks and streams,
Of purple mountains, clad about with green,
Or do their lamps grow dim in the unseen?
Sing to his hero; sing, lure slumber to your queen.”

SONG OF APHRODITE’S HANDMAIDENS.

My dreams are sweet, because my heart is free,
Because our locks still mingle and lips meet,
Because thine arms still hold me tenderly,
My dreams are sweet.

Visions of waters rippling by my feet,
Trees that re-weave their branches lovingly,
Birds that pass passionate on pinions fleet:

Such quiet joys my eyes in slumber see —
Let death’s keen sickle wander through the wheat!
I love not life o’ermuch; since loving thee

My dreams are sweet. {14A}

Sing, little bird, it is dawn;

Cry! with the day the woods ring;

Now in the blush of the morn

Sing!

Love doth enchain me and cling,

Love, of the breeze that is born,

Love, with the breeze that takes wing.

Love that is lighter than scorn,

Love, that is strong as a king,

Love, through the gate that is horn,<<1>>

Sing!

<<1. The gate through which true dreams are perceived.>>

Then Charicles rejoicing quickly ran

And chose a lyre, and thus his song began

Rippling through melodies unheard of man.

SONG OF CHARICLES.

Wake, fairy maid, for the day

Blushes our curtain to shake;

Summer and blossoms of May

Wake!

Lilies drink light on the lake,

Laughter drives dreamland away,

Kisses shall woo thee, and slake

Passion with amorous play,

Clip thee and love, for Love's sake.

Wake and caress me, I pray,

Wake!

Snow-hills and streams, dew-diamonded,

Call us from silvery dreams

To where the morning kindles red

Snow-hills and streams.

See, breezes whisper, sunlight gleams

With gentle kissings; flowers shed

Pale scents, the whole sweet meadow steams.

Forth, glittering shoulders, golden head,

And tune our lutes to tender themes

Among the lost loves of the dead,

Snow-hills and streams. {14B}

The queen clapped dainty hands, caressed of dew,

And bade the love-lorn wanderer sing anew.

His muse came trembling, soon through starry air it flew.

SONG OF CHARICLES.

Within the forest gloom

There lies a lover's bower,

A lotus-flower

In bloom.

O lotus-flower too white,

Starred purple, round and sweet,

Rich golden wheat

Of night!

I'll kiss thee, lotus-flower,

I'll pluck thee, yellow grain,

Once and again

This hour.

There coos a dove to me

Across the waves of space;

O passionate face

To see!

I'll woo thee, silver dove,

Caress thee, lotus-flower;

It is the hour

Of Love.

Cypris blushed deep; albeit for love did swoon

At the song's sweetness, while the cold dead moon

Was still and pale; her nymphs are fain to sigh

With sudden longing filled, and like to die

For vain delight, for still across the sea

Stole sensuous breaths of Sapphic melody

From the far strand of Lesbos; then there came

Into their eyes a new and awful flame

Suddenly burning; now upon the beach

The waves kept tune in unexpressive speech

As sad voice drew night; the hero shrank

Like one in awe; the flame shot up and sank {15A}

From the crimson-vestured altar; then the song

Found in the wavering breeze from over sea a tongue.

Here, on the crimson stand of blood-red waters,

We, Cypris, not thy daughters,

Clad in bright flame, filled with unholy wine,

O Cypris, none of thine! —

Here, kissing in the dim red dusk, we linger,

Striking with amorous finger

Our lyres, whose fierce delights are all divine —

O Cypris, none of thine!

Quenchless, insatiable, the unholy fire

Floods our red lips' desire;

Our kisses sting, as barren as the brine —

O Cypris, none of thine!

Our songs are awful, that the heavens shrink back

Into their void of black.

We worship at a sad insatiate shrine —

O Cypris, none of thine!

Scarcely the song did cease when out of heaven

A little cloud grew near, all thunder-riven,

Scarred by the lightning, torn of ravaging wind;
Upon it sate the herald, who should find
The home of Aphrodite, and should bring
A message from high Zeus. The mighty king
Had bidden him to speed. His wings drew nigh
And hushed the last faint echoed melody
With silver waving. As the messenger
Of mighty Zeus descending unto her
He stood before her, and called loud her name,
Wrapped in a cloud of amber-scented flame
Befitting his high office; but his word,
Too terrible for mortals, passed unheard {15B}
To Cypris' ear alone. She bowed her head
And bade her nymphs prepare a royal bed
Where he should rest awhile; and, being gone,
Cypris and Charicles were left alone.
An aureole of purple round her brow
Flames love no more; but fierce defiance now
Knotted the veins, suffused them with rich blood,
And wrath restrained from sight the torrid flood

Of tears; her eyes were terrible; she spake:
“Rise for thy life, and flee. Arise, awake,
And hide thee in the temple; Zeus hath spoken
To me — me, Queen of Love — O sceptre broken! —
O vainest of all realms! that thou must die.
This only chance is left thee yet, to fly
Within that sanctity even he not dares
To touch with impious hand; thus unawares
Creep in among the columns to a gate
My hand shall show thee; it will open straight
And thou must lie forgotten till his rage
Have lost its first excess — then may we wage
A more successful war against his power.”
But Charicles: “Shall I for one short hour
Fly from his tyranny? Am I such man
As should flee from him? Let the pale and wan
Women have fear — in strength of justice, I
His vain fierce fury do this hour defy!”
There shot through Heaven an awful tongue of fire,
Attended by its minister, the dire

Black thunder. In clear accents, cold and chill,
There sounded: “Boldest mortal, have thy will!
I do reverse the doom of Archais
And lay it on thyself; nor ever this
Shall lift its curse from off thee, this I swear.”
And Cypris looked upon him and was ware
His form did change, and, writing from her clasp,
Fled hissing outward, a more hateful asp {16A}
Than India breeds to-day, so terrible
Was his despair, so venomous as hell
The sudden hate that filled him. So away,
Knowing not whither, did he flee, till day
Dropped her blue pinions, and the night drew on,
And sable clouds banked out the weary sun.

PART III

LONG days and nights succeeded in despair.

Each noon beheld his doom — too proud for prayer,

And scorning Aphrodite's help — he strayed

Through swamps and weary bogs, nor yet betrayed

His anguished countenance to mortal men.

There was so keen an hour of sorrow, when

He had destroyed himself; but Heaven's hand,

Stretched out in vengeance, held him back. The land, Where rest is made eternal, slipped his clutch;

He wandered through the world and might not touch

The sceptre of King Death. In vain he sought

Those fierce embraces, nor availed him aught

To numb the aching of his breast. The maid

He loved, now freed from doom, no longer prayed

For anything but to discover him,

And her large eyes with weeping grew more dim

Than are the mists of Autumn on the hills.

She sought him far and near; the rocks and rills

Could tell he nought; the murmur of the trees
Told her their pity and no more; the breeze
That cooled its burning locks within the sea,
And dared not pass o'er the dank swamps where he
Was hid, knew nothing; nor the sloughing waves,
Through all the desolation of those caves {16B}
The sea-nymphs haunt, could say a word of him;
No stars, to whom she looked, had seen the grim
Abodes of Charicles, for deadly shade
Lowered o'er their top, nor any light betrayed
The horror of their core. Despairing then
Of nature's prophets, and of gods and men,
She cast her arms wide open to the sky,
Cried loud, and wept, and girt herself to die.

It was a pinnacle of ivory
Whereon she stood, the loftiest of three fangs
Thrust up by magic, in the direst pangs
Of Earth, when Earth was yet a whirling cloud
Of fire and adamant, a ceaseless crowd

Of rushing atoms roaring into space,

Driven by demons from before the Face.

And these gleamed white, while Helios lit the heaven, Like tusks; but at
the coming of the even

Were visions wonderful with indigo;

And in the glory of the afterglow

Were rosy with its kiss; and in the night

Were crowned with that unutterable light

That is a brilliance of solemn black,

Glistening wide across the ocean track

Of white-sailed ships and many mariners.

So, on the tallest spire, where wakes and whirrs

The eagle when dawn strikes his eyrie, came

The maiden, clad in the abundant flame

Of setting sun, with shapely shoulders bare,

And even the glory of her midday hair

Was bound above her head; so, naked pure,

Fixed in that purpose, which the gods endure

With calm despair, the purpose to be passed

Into the circle, that, serene and vast,

Girds all, and is itself the All — to die —
So stood she there, with eyes of victory
Fixed on the sun, about to sink his rays
Beneath the ocean, that the pallid bays
Fringed with white foam. But, as in pity, yet
The sun forgot his chariot, nor would set, {17A}
Since as he sank the maiden thought to leap
Within the bosom of the vaulted deep
From that high pedestal. And seeing this,
That yet an hour was left her, Archais
Lift up her voice and prayed with zeal divine
To Aphrodite, who from her far shrine
Heard and flew fast to aid over the night-clad brine.

PRAYER OF ARCHAIS.

O Mother of Love,
By whom the earth and all its fountains move
In harmony,
Hear thou the bitter overwhelming cry

Of me, who love, who am about to die
Because of love.

O Queenliest Shrine,
Keeper of keys of heaven, most divine
Yet Queen of Pain,
Since Hell's gates open, and close fast again
Behind some servants of thy barren and vain
Though queenliest shrine.

I am of those
Who hear their brazen clanging as they close
Fastward on life.

I wane to-night, wearied with endless strife,
A lover alway, never yet a wife,
Lost in love's woes.

Not unperceived of Cypris did her song
Die fitfully upon her tremulous tongue,
Nor fell the melody on cruel ears:

The bright-throat goddess sped through many spheres Of sight, beyond
the world, and flamed across

All space, on wings that not the albatross

Might match for splendour, stretch, or airy speed,

From cluster unto cluster at her need

Of stars, wide waving, and from star to star

Extended, in whose span the heavens are.

So came she to the maiden, and unseen

Gazed on her rapt. So sighed the amorous queen {17B}

“For her indeed might Charicles despair!”

Yet of her presence was the maiden ‘ware,

Although her mortal eyes might see her not;

So she knelt down upon that holy spot

And greeted her with tears; for now at last

The fountains of her sorrow, vague and vast,

Burst from the strong inexorable chain

Of too great passion, and a mortal pain

Beyond belief, and so in sudden waves

Tears welled impatient from their crystal caves.

(Men say those barren pinnacles are set

Since then with jewels; the white violet
Was born of those pure tears; the snowdrop grew
Where waking hope her agony shot through,
And where the Queen of Love had touched her tears,
The new-born lily evermore appears.)
So Cypris comforts here with tender words
That pierce her bosom, like dividing swords,
With hopes and loves requickened, and her breath
Grew calm as worship's, though as dark as death
Her soul had been for weary days no few;
Now, lightened by the spirit thrust anew
As into a dead body breath of life,
She gave sweet thanks with gentle lips that ope,
Like buds of roses on the sunny slope
Of lily gardens falling toward a stream
That flashes back the intolerable beam
Of sunlight with light heart.

They fled away
At Cypris' word, beyond the bounds of day

Into the awful caverns of the night,
Eerie with ghosts imagined, and the might
Of strange spells cast upon them by the dead.
So, ere the dying autumn-tide was fled,
There, in a lonely cleft of riven rock,
Whose iron fastnesses disdain and mock
Fury and fire with impassivity,
Archais rested, there alone must she
Wait the event of Aphrodite's wiles.
There, like a statue, 'mid the massy piles {18A}
Of thunder-smitten stone, as motionless
As Fate she sat, in manifold distress,
Awaiting and awaiting aye the same
One strong desire of life, that never came.

For Aphrodite sought in vain the woods,
The silent mountains, and impetuous floods
In all the world, nor had she knowledge of
Such dens as him concealed; (for what should Love
Know of such vile morasses?) in despair

Waved angry wings, and, floating through the air,
Came unto Aphaca, lewd citadel
Of strange new lusts and devilries of hell,
Where god Priapus dwelt; to him she came —
She, Love! — and, hiding her fair face for shame,
Nor showing aught the quivering scorn that glowed
Through all her body, her desire showed
In brief sharp words, and the lewd god gave ear
(For he shook terribly with bastard fear
Of being cast beneath the hoof of Time)
And answered her: “O mightiest, O sublime
White deity of heaven, a swamp is know
To me, so vile, so more than venomous grown
With filthy weeds; yea, all lewd creatures swarm
Its airless desolation through; and warm
Sick vapours of disease do putrefy
Its feverish exhalations; yet do I
With some fond band of loyal worshippers
Often draw thither; and black ministers
Of mine therein do office; I have seen

This being cursed of Zeus, a snake unclean

With its unholy neighbourhood; at morn

A fair bright youth, whose large eyes well might scorn The wanton eyes
of Ganymede, whose tongue

Reiterates ill curses idly strung

In circles meaningless high Zeus to move,

Yet has twain other cries; the one is 'Love!'

The other 'Archais!'" The Paphian lips

Smiled with a splendour potent to eclipse {18B}

The large-lipped drawn-out grinning of that court

That mouthed and gibbered in their swinish sport.

So with meet words of gratitude the dame

That rules our lives withdrew, triumphant flame

Kindling in her bright eyes and sunwarmed hair,

Burning in dawning cheeks as the fresh air

Kissed, cleansing them from that infested den

Of obscene deities and apish men,

Rivalling their gods in petty filthiness.

So Love's white-bosomed Queen gat full success

In the first season of her sojourning.

Then, on the verge of night, she went a-wing
To that most damned pestilence-rid marsh,
And, changing her bright shape, she donned the harsh Vile form of
woman past the middle age,
Who hath not virtue that may charm the sage
When the desire of folly is gone by,
And wrinkles yield to no false alchemy.
So, lewd of countenance, dressed all in rags,
She waited, fit mate of hell's filthiest hags,
Within a little hut upon the marge
Extreme of that bad swamp, whereby a barge,
Rotted with years and pestilence, lay moored.
The rusty chain men meant to have secured
Its most unwieldy hulk was eaten through
Of sharp-tongued serpents, and the poisonous dew
That the foul damp let fall at evening
Rotted it even to its core. A ring
Of silver girt it to the landing-stage,
Yet brimstone joined in wedlock with foul age

To burn into its vitals; thus the breath
Of Satyrs wantoning at noon with Death
Strained it, and all but cast it loose; the night
Drew on the outer world; no change of light
Was known within those depths, but vermin knew
By some strange instinct; forth the unholy crew {19A}
Of vampires and swamp-adders drew them out.
Alone amid the pestilential rout
Charicles' crest did glimmer red with wrath,
And, stealing from the barge, he drew him forth
And writhed into the hut, for latterly
So dark his soul had grown that never he
For shame and sorrow wore the form of man.
So to the hut on writing coils he ran
With angry head erect, and passed within
Its rotten doorway. Then the thing of Sin
That mocked the name of woman fondled him,
Stroked his flat head, his body curved and slim,
And from the fire brought milk. He drank it up
From the coarse pewter of the borrowed cup

And cried: "In eating, swear. I have vowed to make The gods infernal on
their couches quake

With fear before I die; I have vowed to live

With one aim only; never to forgive

The wrong the gods do me, and in my form

Love his high self, by whom the earth is warm

To-day, by whose defiance the universe

Would crash in one inextricable curse

To primal chaos. Hear me, I have sworn."

Then, suddenly, more glorious than the morn

Tipping the golden tops of autumn hills

With light, more countless than the myriad rills

Of bright dew running off the bracken leaves,

With gold more saturated than the sheaves

In the red glow that promises the day

Shall glory when the night is fled away

In bonds, a captive; so more glorious

Than the supreme ideal dreams of us

Mortals, he sprang forth suddenly a man.

Wherefore the hag, triumphant, then began

Likewise to change. The writhled visage grew
Fouler and fiercer, blacker in its hue;
The skewed deformities became more vile,
The rags more rotten, till a little while, {19B}
And all was changed to a putrescent heap
Of oily liquid on the floor asleep,
Like poisonous potency of mandragore
Ready to strike. And then a change came o'er
Its turbid mass, that shook, and grew divine,
A million-twinkling ocean of bright brine
That seemed to spread beyond the horizon,
Whence, stirred by strange emotions of the sun,
Waves rolled upon it, and a wind arose
And lashed it with insatiable blows
Into a surging labyrinth of foam,
Boiling up into heaven's unchanging dome
Of brightest aether; then, its womb uncloses
To bring to birth a garden of white roses,
Whence, on a mystic shell of pearl, is borne
A goddess, bosomed like the sea at morn,

Glittering in all the goodlihead and grace
Of maiden magic; her delicious face
Grew more and more upon the hero's sight,
Till all the hut was filled with rosy light,
And Charicles' grey eyes were luminous
With love-reflections multitudinous
As lilies in the spring. Again was seen
As in a mirror, like the ocean green,
The admirable birth of Love's eternal Queen.

So Charicles a moment was amazed.
A moment; then, contemptuous, he gazed
With curling lip on her, and sourly scorns
Her petty miracle: "The deed adorns
Too well a queen whose promises are foam."
And she, indignant, would have hied her home
And left him to despair, but pitying
His soul struck through with darts: "A bitter thing"
(She cried) "thou sayest, yet perchance my power
Is not as great as thine, for while I cower

Under the lash of Zeus, stand thou upright,
And laugh him to his beard for all his spite.”
“I, even now beneath his doom?” “Even thou!
For learn this law, writ large upon the brow
Of white Olympus, writ by him who made
Thee, yea and Zeus, of whom is Zeus afraid, {20A}
Graven by Him with an eternal pen,
The first law in the destiny of men:
“He whom Zeus wrongfully once injures may not be
Hurt by his power again in the most small degree.”
Thus, thy Archais” — “Mine! ah nevermore!”
“Peace, doubter! — is made free from all the sore
Oppressions of the past, nor may again
Zeus lay on her the shadow of a pain.”
“But I, but I” — “Yea, verily, fear not
But stratagem may lift thy bitter lot
From thy worn shoulders. Thus for half the day
Thou art as free as air, as woodland fay
Treading the circle of unearthly green,
By maiden eyes at summer midnight seen.

These hours of freedom thy may'st use to free
Love from his toils, and joy and goodly gree <<1>>
Shall be thy guerdon. Listen! I have power
To change thy semblance in thy happier hour;
Thou shall assume the countenance of Love's
Divinest maiden in the darkling groves
Of Ida. There shall thou meet happily
With Zeus himself. I leave the scheme to thee."

—

<<1. Gladness.>>

The flash of her desire within his brain
Came as a meteor through the wildered train
Of solemn spheres of night's majestic court.
He kissed the extended hand, and lastly sought
A blessing from the kindly Queen of Love.
Then, smiling, she was bountiful thereof,
And bade him haste away, when at the gate —
Twin witch-oaks that presided o'er the state
Of that detested realm — he felt a change,

Half pleasant, only beyond wonder strange,
A change as from a joy to a delight,
As from broad sunshine to the fall of night,
As from strong action to endurance strong,
As from desire to the power to long. {20B}
From man to woman with a strange swift motion,
Like tide and ebb upon a summer ocean.
Thus he went forth a girl; his steps he presses
Through sickly wastes and burning wildernesses
To the lascivious shade of Ida's deep recesses.

PART IV.

FAIRER than woman blushing at the kiss
Of young keen Phoibos, whose lips' nectar is
More fresh than lilies, whose divine embrace
Flushes the creamy pallor of her face,
And, even in those depths of azure sea
Where her eyes dwell, bids them glint amorously,
While the intense hushed music of his breath

Sighs, till her longing grows divine as death —

So, fairer far, drew dawn on Ida's grove.

The young sun rose, whose burning lips of love

Kissed the green steeps, whose royal locks of flame Brushed o'er the
dewy pastures, with acclaim

Of tuneful thrushes shrill with mountain song,

And noise of nightingales, and murmur long —

A sigh half-sad, as if remembering earth

And all the massy pillars of her girth;

Half-jubilant, as if foreseeing a world

Fresher with starlight and with waters pearled,

Sunnier days and rivers calm and clear,

And music for four seasons of the year

And pleasant people with glad throat and voice

To wise to grieve, too happy to rejoice.

So came the dawn on Ida to disclose

Within her confines a delicious rose

Lying asleep, a-dreaming, white of brow,

Stainless and splendid. Yea, and fair enow

To tempt the lips of Death to kiss her eyes

And bid her waken in the sad surprise
Of seeing round her the iron gates of hell
In gloomy strength: so sweet, so terrible,
So fair, her image in the brook might make
A passionless old god his hunger slake {21A}
By plunging in the waters, though he knew
His drowning body drowned her image too.
Yet she seemed gentle. Never thorn assailed
The tender finger that would touch, nor failed
The strong desire of Zeus, who wisely went,
As was his wont, with amorous intent
Among those pastures, and fresh fragrant lawns,
And dewy wonder of new woods, where dawns
A new flower every day, a perfect flower,
Each queenlier than her sister, though the shower
Of early dew begemmed them all with stars,
Diamond and pearl, between the pleasant bars
Of cool green trees that avenued the grove.
Zeus wandered through their bounds, and dreamt of love.
Weary of women's old lascivious breed,

The large luxurious lips of Ganymede,
He, weary of tainted kiss and feverish lust,
Esteeming love a desert of dry dust
Because he found no freshness, no restraint,
No virgin bosom, lips without a taint
Of lewd imagining, yet passed not by
With scorn of curled lip and contempt of eye
The chaste abandon of the sleeping maid,
But looked upon her lips, checked course, and stayed, And noted all the
virginal fresh air

Of Charicles, the maiden head half bare
To Phoibos' kiss, half veiled by dimpled arms
Within whose love it rested, all her charms
Half-shown, half-hidden, amorous but chaste.

And so, between the branches interlaced
And all the purple white-starred undergrowth,
Zeus crept beside the maid, little loath
To waken her caresses, and let noon
Fade into midnight in the amorous swoon
Of long delight, and so with gentle kiss

Touched the maid's cheek, and broke her dream of bliss.

And she, more startled than the yearling fawn

As the rude sun breaks golden out of dawn, {21B}

One swift sharp beam of glory, leapt aside

And made as if to flee, but vainly plied

Her tender feet amid the tangled flowers.

For Zeus, enraptured, put forth all his powers,

And caught her panting, timid, tremulous.

And he with open lips voluptuous

Closed her sweet mouth with kisses, and so pressed

Her sobbing bosom with a manlier breast

That she was silent; next, with sudden force,

Implacable, unshamed, without remorse,

Would urge his further suit; but so she strove

That even the power of Zeus, made weak for love,

Found its last limit, and, releasing her,

Prayed for her grace, a raptured worshipper,

Where but a moment earlier had he striven

A sacrilegious robber. And all heaven

Seemed open to his eyes as she looked down

Into their love, half smiling, with a frown
Coquetting with her forehead. Then a change,
Angry and wonderful, began to range
Over her cheeks; she bitterly began:
“I will not yield to thee — a mortal man
Alone shall know my love. No God shall come
From his high place and far immortal home
To bend my will by force. Freeborn, I live
In freedom, and the love that maidens give
To men I give to one, but thou, most high,
(For woman’s wits through your deceptions spy
And know ye for Olympians) shall know
A maiden’s heart no lover may win so.
Farewell, and find a fairer maid to love!
Farewell!” But he: “Through all the silent grove
I sought thee sighing — for thy love would I
Consent to be a man, consent to die,
Put off my godhead.” “If thou sayest sooth,
Any thy fair words bedew the flowers of truth
Nor wander in the mazy groves of lying,

I will be thine — speak not to me of dying
Or abdication, sith I deem so far
To tempt thee were unwise — we mortals are {22A}
Chary to ask too much — didst thou refuse
Either my honour or thy love to lose
Were a hard portion, for in sooth I Love.”
“Ah happy hour, sweet moment! Fairest grove
Of all fair Ida, thou hast sealed my bliss!”
Then with one long intense unpitying kiss
Pressed on her bosom, he arose and swore
By heaven and earth and all the seas that roar
And stars that sing, by rivers and fresh flood,
By his own essence, by his body and blood,
To lay his godhead down, till night drew nigh,
To be a mortal till the vesper cry
Of dying breezes. So the morning past
And found them linked inexorably fast
Each in the other’s arms. Their lips are wed
To drink the breezes from the fountainhead
Of lovers’ breath. Now Zeus half rises up,

Sips once again from that moon-curved cup.
And, in his passion gazing on the flower,
Darker and riper for Love's perfect hour,
His clear voice through the silent atmosphere
Burst rich and musical upon her ear.

SONG OF ZEUS.

O rosy star
Within thy sky of ebony shot through
With hints of blue
More golden and more far
Than earthly stars and flowers
That beam lasciviously through night's empurpled hours!

O well of fire!
O fountain of delicious spurting flame
Grown sad with shame,
Whose imminent desire
Drinks in the dew of earth,

Gives its own limpid streams to quench man's deathly dearth. {22B}

O gardened rose!

The fern-fronds gird thy fragrant beauty round.

Thy ways are bound

With petals that uncloset

When the sun seeks his way

Through night and sleep and love to all the dreams of day.

Love, sleep, and death!

The three that melt together, mingle so

Man may not know

The little change of breath

(Caught sigh that love desires,)

When love grows sleep, and sleep at last in death expires.

O lamp of love!

The hissing spray shall jet thee with desire

And foaming fire,

And fire from thee shall move

Her spirit to devour,
And fuse and mingle us in one transcendent hour.

Godhead is less
Than mortal love, the garland of the spheres,
Than those sweet tears
That yield no bitterness
To the luxurious cries
That love shrills out in death, that murmur when love dies.

Love dies in vain.
For breezes hasten from the summer south
To touch his mouth
And bid him rise again,
Till, ere the dawn-star's breath,
Love kisses into sleep, Sleep swoons away to Death.

So Zeus in her sweet arms slept daintily
Till the sun crept into the midmost sky,
And his own curse came back to sleep with him.

Through the noon's haze the world was vast and dim, {23A}

The streams and trees and air were shimmering

With summer heat and earth's cool vapouring,

When, round his limbs entwined, a fiery snake

Hissed in his frightened ear the call "Awake."

And Zeus arisen strives vainly to release

His valiant body from the coils, nor cease

His angry struggles in their cruel hold.

But all implacable, unyielding, cold,

Their sinuous pressure on his breast and thighs,

The white teeth sharp and ready otherwise

In one fierce snap to slay. There hissed "Beware!"

Fear Charicles avenging, and despair!"

And Zeus beheld the springe his foot was in,

And, once more wise, being out of love, would win

His freedom on good terms. His liberty

For Charicles' he bartered. Willingly

The boy accepts, yet in his eye remains

A tender woman-feeling, and his pains,

And even Archais' woes he did forget
In the sweep Lethe, that his lip had set
To their ripe brim, that he had drained. But now,
Freedom regained, more manly grows the brow;
He is again the free, the bold, the lover!
Far o'er the green his new-starred eyes discover
A kirtle glancing in the breeze, a foot
That lightly dances, though the skies be mute
Of music. Forth she flies, the distant dove,
And calls the woodland birds to sing of love;
Forth leaps the stag and calls his mates; the stream
Flashes a silver sunbeam, a gold gleam
Of leaping laughter, that the fish may know
The goodly tidings; all the woodlands glow
With olive and pure silver and red gold,
And all sweet nature's marvels manifold
Combine together in the twilight dim
To harmonize in the thalamic hymn. {23B}

HYMN.

O Lord our God!

O woodland king! O thou most dreadful God!

Who chasest thieves and smitest with thy rod,

That fearful rod, too sharp, too strong

For thy weak worshippers to bear!

Hear thou their murmured song

Who cry for pardon; pity, and prepare

For pain's delight thy votaries who kiss thy rod,

O high Lord God!

O Lord our God!

God of green gardens! O imperious god!

Who as a father smitest with thy rod

Thine erring children who aspire

In vain the the high mysteries

Of thy most secret fire.

Beat us and burn with nameless infamies!

We suffer, and are proud and glad, and kiss thy rod, O high Lord God!

O Lord our God!

O despot of the fields! O silent god!

Who hidest visions underneath thy rod,

And hast all dreams and all desires and fears,

All secrets and all loves and joys

Of all the long vague years

For lightsome maidens and desire-pale boys

Within thy worship. We desire thy bitter rod,

O high Lord God!

Thus that most reverend sound through all the vale

Pealed in low cadences that rise and fail,

And all the augurs promise happy days,

And all the men for Archais have praise,

And all maids' eyes are fixed on Charicles.

Then, to the tune of musical slow seas,

The wind began to murmur on the mead,

And he, unconscious, drew his eager reed {24A}

From the loose tunic; not they seat themselves
On moss worn smooth by feet of many elves
Dancing at midnight through them, and their voice
Bids all the woodland echoes to rejoice
Because the lovers are made one at last.
Then Charicles began to play; they cast
Tunic and snood and sandal, and began
To foot a happy measure for a span,
While still Archais at his feet would sit,
Gaze in his eyes, by love and triumph lit,
And listen to the music. And the fire
Of his light reed so kindled her desire
That she with new glad confidence would quire
A new song exquisite, whose tender tune
Was nurtured at the bosom of the moon
And kissed on either cheek by sun and rain.
She trembled and began. The troop was fain
To keep pure silence while her notes resound
Over the forest and the marshy ground.

ARCHAIS.

Green and gold the meadows lie

In the sunset's eye.

Green and silver the woods glow

When the sun is low,

And the moon sails up like music on a sea of breathing snow.

Chain and curse are passed away;

Love proclaims the day.

Dawned his sunrise o'er the sea,

Changing olive waves to be

Founts of emerald and sapphire; he is risen, we are free.

Light and dark are wed together

Into golden weather;

Sun and moon have kissed, and built

Palaces star-gilt

Whence a crystal stream of joy, love's eternal wine, is spilt. {24B}

CHARICLES.

Join our chorus, tread the turf

To the beating of the surf.

Dance together, ere we part,

And Selene's dart

Give the signal for your slumber and the rapture of our heart.

“Semi-Chorus of Men.”

Exalted with immeasurable gladness;

Bonds touched with tears and melted like the snow: —

Wake the song loudly; loose the leash of madness,

Beat the loud drum, and bid the trumpet blow!

“Semi-Chorus of Women.”

Let the lute thrill divinely low,

Let the harp strike a tender note of sadness;

Louder and louder, till the full song flow,

One earth-dissolving stream of utter gladness!

CHORUS.

Free! ye are free! Delight, thou Moon, to hear us!

Smile, Artemis, thy virgin leaves thy fold!

Star of the morning, fling thy blossom near us!

Phoibos, rekindle us with molten gold!

Starbeams and woven tresses of the ocean,

Flowers of the rolling mountains and the lea,

Trees, and innumerable flocks and herds,

Wild cattle and bright birds,

Tremble above the sea

With song more noble, the divinest potion

Of poet's wonder and bard's melody.

ARCHAIS.

Cold is the kiss of the stars to the sea,

The kiss of the earth to the orient grey

That heralds the day;
Warmer the kiss of a love that is free
As the wind of the sea,
Quick and resurgent and splendid. {25A}

CHARICLES.

Night her bright bow-string has bended;
Fast flies her arrow unsparing
Through the beech-leaves,
Aether it cleaves
Rapid and daring.
Ah! how it strikes as with silver! how the sun's laughter is ended!

ARCHAIS.

How the moon's arms are extended!

“Semi-Chorus of Men.”

Rejoicing, inarticulate with pleasure,
Joy streams a comet in the strong control
Of the sun's love; weave, weave the eager measure,
Fill the sea's brim from pleasure's foaming bowl!

“Semi-Chorus of Women.”

Weave, weave the dance; the stars are not your goal.
Freed slaves of Fortune, love's your only treasure.
While the gold planets toward the sunlight roll,
Weave, weave the dance! Weave, weave the eager measure!

CHARICLES.

Of your revels I'll be king.

ARCHAIS.

I the queen of your array.

Foot it nimbly in the ring,

CHARICLES.

Strewn with violet and may.

ARCHAIS.

Apple-blossom pile on high,

Till the bridal bed is duly

Panoplied with blooms that sigh. {25B}

CHARICLES.

Not a flower of them shall die,

Every one shall blossom newly;

Stars shall lend them of their beauty,

Rain and sunshine know their duty.

ARCHAIS.

Not a flower of them shall die

That compose our canopy;

Beech and chestnut, poplar tall,

Birch and elm shall flourish all

Dewed with ever-living spring.

Song and dance shall close the day,

CHORUS

Close this happy, happy day.

CHARICLES.

Of your revels I'll be king,

ARCHAIS.

I the queen of your array.

“Both.”

Foot it nimbly in the ring!

CHORUS.

Stay, stars, and dance with us! Our songs compel

The very gods to tremble,

Banish the ill ghosts of hell,
Make fiends their shape dissemble.
Freedom forbids their tyrannous reign here,
Flee to their prison must they, nor deceive;
Love had a lightning that shall strip them clear,
Truth through the curtain of the dark shall reave.
Ye love, O happy ones and chaste,
Ye love, and light indwells your eyes;
Truth is the girdle of your waist,
Ye play before the gates of pearl of Paradise.
Happy lovers, dwell together
In the isles of golden weather,
Free of tyranny and tether,
Roam the world, linked hand in hand, {26A}
Moonlight for your sleep, and breezes
Fresh from where the Ocean freezes,
And the cold Aurora stands
With new lilies in her hands.
Happy lovers, twilight falls.
Let us leave you for a while,

Guarding all the golden walls

With the weapon of a smile.

Silver arrows from the maiden

With new labours laden

Shall be shot at bold intruders who would violate your peace; Lightning
shall keep watch and warden through the sea-born isles of Greece.

Sleep! Sleep!

Sleep, ye happy lovers, sleep,

Soft and dreamless, sweet and deep,

Sleep! Sleep!

We will steal away

Till the break of day.

ARCHAIS.

In the arms of love at last

Love is anchored fast,

Firm beyond the rage of Heaven, safe beyond the ocean blast.

CHARICLES.

In the arms of love close prest!

O thy tender breast

Pillows now my happy head; softly breezes from the west “Both.”

Stir the ring-dove’s nest.

In the arms of love we lie;

Music from the sky

Tunes the hymenael lyre that will echo till we die.

God we feel is very nigh;

Soft, breeze, sigh

While we kiss at last to slumber,

And the varied number

Of the forest songsters cry:

This is immortality; this is happiness for aye. {26B}

Hush! the music swells apace,

Rolls its silver billows up

Through the void demesne of space

To the heavens’ azure cup!

Hush, my love, and sleep shall sigh

This is immortality!

EPILOGUE

IN HOLLOW STONES, SCAWFELL.

BLIND the iron pinnacles edge the twilight;

Blind and black the ghylls of the mountain clefted, Crag and snow-clad
slope in a distant vision

Rise as before me.

Here (it seems) my feet by a tiny torrent

Press the moss with a glad delight of being:

Here my eyes look up to the riven mountain

Split by the thunder.

Rent and rifted, shattered of wind and lightning,

Smitten, Scarred, and stricken of sun and tempest,

Seamed with wounds, like adamant, shod with iron,

Torn by the earthquake.

Still through all the stresses of doubtful weather

Hold the firm old pinnacles, sky-defying;

Still the icy feet of the wind relentless

Walk in their meadows.

Fields that flower not, blossom in no new spring-tide; Fields where grass
nor herb nor abounding darnel

Flourish; fields more barren, devoid, than ocean's

Pasture ungarnered. {27A}

Deserts, stone as arid as sand, savannahs <<1>>

Black with wrecks, a wilderness evil, fruitless;

Still, to me, a land of the bluest heaven

Studded with silver.

<<1. Spanish term for wide, grassy plains.>>

Castles bleak and bare as the wrath of ocean,

Wasted wall and tower, as the blast had risen,

Taken keep and donjon, and hurled them earthward,

Rent and uprooted.

Such rock-ruins people me tribes and nations,
Kings and queens and princes as pure as dawning,
Brave as day and true; and a happy people
Lulled unto freedom;

Nations past the stormier times of tyrants,
Past the sudden spark of a great rebellion,
Past the iron gates that are thrust asunder
Not without bloodshed:

Past the rule of might and the rule of lying,
Free from gold's illusion, and free to cherish
Joys of life diviner than war and passion —
Falsest of phantoms.

Only now true love, like a sun of molten
Glory, surging up from a sea of liquid
Silver, golden, exquisite, overflowing,

Soars into starland.

Sphere on sphere unite in the chant of wonder;

Star to star must add to the glowing chorus;

Sun and moon must mingle and speed the echo

Flaming through heaven.

Night and day divide, and the music strengthens,

Gathers roar of seas and the dirge of moorlands;

Tempest, thunder, birds, and the breeze of summer

Join to augment it. {27B}

So the sound-world, filled of the fire of all things, Rolls majestic torrents
of mighty music

Through the stars where dwell the avenging spirits

Bound in the whirlwind ...

So the cliffs their Song ... For the mist regathers, Girds them bride-like,
fit for the sun to kiss them; Darkness falls like dewfall about the hillsides;

Night is upon me. {end col. A}

Now to me remain in the doubtful twilight

Stretches bare of flower, but touched with whispers, Grey with huddled
rocks, and a space of woodland,

Pine-tree and poplar.

Now a stream to ford and a stile to clamber;

Last the inn, a book, and a quiet corner ...

Fresh as Spring, there kisses me on the forehead

Sleep, like a sister. {end col. B}

NOTE: - With the exception of this epilogue, and one or two of the lyrics, Crowley wished to suppress the whole of "The Tale of Archaïs." But it was thought inadvisable to form a precedent of this kind, as the book was regularly published. On the other hand, by adhering to this rule any poem not appearing in this edition may be definitely discarded as spurious.

SONGS OF THE SPIRIT.<<1>>

1898.

<<1. In this volume and throughout Crowley's works the visions, ordeals, etc., are, as a rule, not efforts of imagination, but records of (subjective) fact.>>

{columns resume}

SONGS OF THE SPIRIT.

“A fool also is full of words.”

“Ecclesiastes.”

DEDICATION

To J. L. BAKER.

THE vault of purple that I strove
To pierce, and find unchanging love,
Or some vast countenance<<1>>
All glory of the soul of man.
Baffled my blind aspiring gaze
With sunlight's melancholy rays,
And closed with iron hand the ways
That sunder space, divide the days with fiery fan.

<<1. The supreme Deity is shadowed by Qabalists in this glyph. See Appendix, "Qabalistic dogma," for a synthesized explanation of this entire philosophy.>>

Thine was the forehead mild and grave
That shown throughout the azure nave
Where Monte Rosa's silence gave

The starry organ's measured sound.

Where for an altar stood the bare

Mass of Mont Cervin,<<1>> towering there;

And angels dwelt upon the stair,

And all the mountains were aware that stood around.

<<1. Commonly known as the Matterhorn.>>

Thine was the passionless divine

High hope, and the pure purpose thine,

Higher and purer than stars shine,

And thine the unexpressed delight

To hold high commune with the wind

That sings, in midnight black and blind,

Strange chants, the murmurs of the mind,

To grasp the hands of heaven and find the lords of light. {29A}

Mine was the holy fire that drew

Its perfect passion from the dew,

And all the flowers that blushed and blew

On sunny slopes by little brooks.
Mine the desire that brushed aside
The thorns, and would not be denied,
And sought, more eager than a bride,
The cold grey secrets wan and wide of sacred books.

Thine was the hand that guided me
By moor and mountain, vale and lea,
And led me to the sudden sea
That lies superb, remote, and deep,
Showed me things wonderful, unbound
The fetters that beset me round,
Opened my waking ear to sound
That may not by a man be found, except in sleep.

Thy presence was as subtle flame
Burning in dawning groves; thy name
Like dew upon the hills became,
And all thy mind a star most bright;
And, following with wakeful eyes

The strait meridian of the wise,
My feet tread under stars and skies;
My spirit soars and seeks and flies, a child of light.

Thus eager, may my purpose stand
Firm as the faith of honest hand,
Nor change like castles built of sand
Until the sweet unchanging end.
Happy not only that my eye
Single and strong may win the sky,
But that one day the birds that fly
Heard your fair friendship call me by the name of friend. {29B}

THE GOAD.

GR:alpha-nu upsilon-gamma-rho-omicron-nu alpha-mu-pi-tau-alpha-iota-
eta-nu alpha-iota-theta-epsilon-rho-alpha pi-omicron-rho-sigma-omicron
gamma-alpha-iota-alpha-sigma Epsilon-lambda-lambda-alpha-nu-iota-
alpha-sigma alpha-sigma-tau-epsilon-rho-alpha-sigma

epsilon-sigma-pi-epsilon-rho-omicron-upsilon-sigma

omicron-iota-omicron-nu, omicron-iota-omicron-nu

alpha-lambda-gamma-omicron-sigma epsilon-pi-alpha-theta-omicron-nu,
phi-iota-lambda-alpha-iota.

EURIPIDES.

AMSTERDAM, "December" 23"rd", 1897.

LET me pass out beyond the city gate.

All day I loitered in the little streets

Of black worn houses tottering, like the fate

That hangs above my head even now, and meets

Prayer and defiance as not hearing it.

They lean, these old black streets! a little sky Peeps through the gap, the
rough stone path is lit Just for a little by the sun, and I

Watch his red face pass over, fade away

To other streets, and other passengers,

See him take pleasure where the heathen pray,

See him relieve the hunter of his furs,

All the wide world awaiting him, all folk

Glad at his coming, only I must weep:

Rise he or sink, my weary eyes invoke

Only the respite of a little sleep;

Sleep, just a little space of sleep, to rest
The fevered head and cool the aching eyes;
Sleep for a space, to fall upon the breast
Of the dear God, that He may sympathise.
Long has the day drawn out; a bitter frost
Sparkles along the streets; the shipping heaves
With the slow murmur of the sea, half lost
In the last rustle of forgotten leaves.
Over the bridges pass the throngs; the sound,
Deep and insistent, penetrates the mist —
I hear it not, I contemplate the wound
Stabbed in the flanks of my dear silver Christ.
He hangs in anguish there; the crown of thorns
Pierces that palest brow; the nails drip blood; {30A}
There is the wound; no Mary by Him mourns,
There is no John beside the cruel wood;
I am alone to kiss the silver lips;
I rend my clothing for the temple veil;
My heart's black night must act the sun's eclipse; My groans must play
the earthquake, till I quail At my own dark imagining; and now

The wind is bitterer; the air breeds snow;
I put my Christ away; I turn my brow
Towards the south stedfastly; my feet must go
Some journey of despair. I dare not turn
To meet the sun; I will not follow him:
Better to pass where sand and sulphur burn,
And days are hazed with heat, and nights are dim With some malarial
poison. Better lie
Far and forgotten on some desert isle,
Where I may watch the silent ships go by,
And let them share my burden for a while.
Let me pass out beyond the city gate
Where I may wander by the water still,
And see the faint few stars immaculate
Watch their own beauty in its depth, and chill
Their own desire within its icy stream.
Let me move on with vacant eyes, as one
Lost in the labyrinth of some ill dream,
Move and move on, and never see the sun
Lap all the mist with orange and red gold,

Throw some lank windmill into iron shade,
And stir the chill canal with manifold
Rays of clear morning; never grow afraid
When he dips down beyond the far flat land,
Know never more the day and night apart,
Know not where frost has laid his iron hand
Save only that it fastens on my heart;
Save only that it grips with icy fire
These veins no fire of hell could satiate;
Save only that it quenches this desire.
Let me pass out beyond the city gate. {30B}

IN MEMORIAM A. J. B. <<1>>

<<1. A maternal aunt of the poet.>>

THE life (by angels' touch divinely lifted
From our dim space-bounds to a vaster sphere),
The spirit, through the vision of clouds rifted,

Soars quick and clear.

Even so, the mists that roll o'er earth are riven, The spirit flashes forth
from mortal sight,

And, flaming through the viewless space, is given

A robe of light.

As when the conqueror Christ burst forth of prison, And triumph woke
the thunder of the spheres,

So brake the soul, as newly re-arisen

Beyond the years.

Far above Space and Time, that earth environ

With bands and bars we strive against in vain,

Far o'er the world, and all its triple iron

And brazen chain,

Far from the change that men call life fled higher Into the world
immutable of sleep,

We see our loved one, and vain eyes desire

In vain to weep.

Woeful our gaze, if on lone Earth descendent,
To view the absence of yon flame afar —
Yet in the Heavens, anew, divine, resplendent,
Behold a star!

One light the less, that steady flamed and even
Amid the dusk of Earth's uncertain shore;
One light the less, but in Jehovah's Heaven
One star the more! {31A}

THE QUEST.

APART, immutable, unseen,
Being, before itself had been,
Became. Like dew a triple queen
Shone as the void uncovered:
The silence of deep height was drawn
A veil across the silver dawn

On holy wings that hovered.<<1>>

<<1. A qabalistic description of Macroprosopus. “Dew,” “Deep Height,” etc., are his titles.>>

The music of three thoughts became
The beauty, that is one white flame,
The justice that surpasses shame,
The victory, the splendour,
The sacred fountain that is whirled
From depths beyond that older world
A new world to engender.<<1>>

<<1. Microprosopus.>>

The kingdom is extended.<<1>> Night
Dwells, and I contemplate the sight
That is not seeing, but the light
That secretly is kindled,
Though oft time its most holy fire

Lacks oil, whene'er my own Desire

Before desire has dwindled.

<<1. Malkuth, the Bride. In its darkness the Light may yet be found.>>

I see the thin web binding me

With thirteen cords of unity<<1>>

Toward the calm centre of the sea.

(O thou supernal mother!)<<2>>

The triple light my path divides

To twain and fifty sudden sides<<3>>

Each perfect as each other. {31B}

<<1. The Hebrew characters composing the name Achd, Unity, add up to 13.>>

<<2. Binah, the Great Deep: the offended Mother who shall be reconciled to her daughter by Bn, the Son.>>

<<3. Bn adds to 52.>>

Now backwards, inwards still my mind

Must track the intangible and blind,

And seeking, shall securely find
Hidden in secret places
Fresh feasts for every soul that strives,
New life for many mystic lives,
And strange new forms and faces.

My mind still searches, and attains
By many days and many pains
To That which Is and Was and reigns
Shadowed in four and ten,<<1>>
And loses self in sacred lands,
And cries and quickens, and understands
Beyond the first Amen.<<2>>

<<1. Jehovah, the name of 4 letters. $1+2+3+4=10$.>>

<<2. The first Amen is = 91 or 7×13 . The second is the Inscrutable
Amoun.>>

THE ALCHEMIST

THIS POEM WAS INTENDED AS THE PROLOGUE TO A PLAY —
AT PRESENT

UNFINISHED. <<“The Poisoners,” finished later, by discarded as over-Tourneuresque.>>

“An old tower, very loft, on a small and rocky islet. In the highest chamber a man of some forty years, but silver-haired, looks out of the window. Clear starry night, no moon. Chamber furnished with books, alchemic instruments, *etc.* He gazes some minutes, sighs deeply, but at last speaks.”

THE world moves not. I gaze upon the abyss,

Look down into the black unfathomed vault

Of Starland and behold — myself

The sea

To give a sense of motion or of sound

Washes the wall of this grey tower in vain;

I contemplate myself in that dim sphere

Whose hollow centre I am standing at

With burning eyes intent to penetrate

The black circumference, and find out God — {32A}

And only see myself. The walls of Space

Mock me with silence. What is Life? The stars

Are silent. O ye matchless ministers

That daily pass in your appointed ways

To reach — we know not what! How meaningless

Your bright assemblage and your steady task

Of doubtful motion. And the soul of man

Grapples in death-pangs with your mystery,

And fails to wrestle down the hard embrace

That grips the thighs of thought. And so he dies

To pass beyond ye — whither? To find God?

All my life long I have gazed, and dreamed, and thought, Unless my
thought itself were but a dream,

A little, trouble dream, a dream of death

Whence I may wake — ah, where? In some new world Where
Consciousness doth touch the Infinite,

And all the strivings of the soul be found

Sufficient to beat back the waves of doubt,

To pierce the void, and grasp the glorious,

To find out Truth? Would God it might be so,

Since there is nothing for the soul to love
Or cling to beyond self. My chamberlain
Once showed me a pet slave, dwarf, savage, black,
A vile, lewd creature, who would cast a staff<<A boomerang.>>
Far wheeling through the air: — ‘twould suddenly
Break its swift course, and curving rapidly
Come hard upon himself who threw. Even so
These vile deformities — our souls — cast forth
Missiles of thought, and seek to reach some end
With swift imagining — and end in self.

What sage <<The image is Crowley’s own, drawn from the Spectre of the
Brocken.>> called God the image of man’s self

He sees cast dimly on a bank of cloud,
Thrice his own size? And I whose life has been

[“Cry without.” {32B}

One bitter fight with nature and myself

To find Him out, turn, terrible, to-night

[“Cry without.”

To see myself — myself — myself.

[“Cry without.”

Hush! Hark!

Methought I heard a cry. The seamew wails

Less humanly than that — I will go down

And seek the stranger.

[“Making as to leave room.”

E’en this rocky isle

Shall prove a friend —

“A Voice.” <<This voice is again heard, using the identical words, at the last great crisis of his life.>> Stand still.

“Philosopher.” Again! Is this

The warning of a mind o’er-strained?

[“Moving towards door.”

“Voice.” Stand still

And see salvation in Jehovah’s hands.

“Ph.” Is this the end of life?

“Voice.” Thy Life begins.

“Ph.” Strange Voice, I hear thee, and obey. Perchance I have not lived so far. Perchance to-day,

Like a spring-flower that slowly opens out

Its willing petals to the tender dawn,

My soul may open to the knowledge of

A dawn of new thought that may lead —

“Voice.” To God.

“Ph.” Hope hardly dared to name it!

“Enter” Messenger.

“Mess.” My lord, the king’s command!

“Ph.” I heed it not.

See thou disturb not my high meditation.

Away!

“Voice.” With meditations centred in thyself.

“Mess.” Who spoke?

“Ph.” Speak thou. I obey the king.

“Mess.” My lord,

He bids thee to his court, to hold the reins

Tight on the fretful horses of the state

Whose weary burden makes them slip — nay, fall

On the stern hill of war. Thou art appointed, {33A}

Being the wisest man in all the realm,

(So spake the king) the second to himself —

“Ph.” Thy vessel waits?

“Mess.” For dawn.

“Ph.” Then hasten thee

To tell them I am ready. The meanwhile

I will devote to prayer.

“Mess.” At dawn, my lord.

[“Exit” Messenger.

“Ph.” [“Turns to window.”] O maker and O Ruler of all Worlds,
Illimitable power, immortal God,

Vague, vast, unknown, dim-looking, scarcely spied

Through doubtful crannies of the Universe,

Unseen, intangible, eluding sense

And poor conception, halting for a phrase

Of weak mind-language, O Eternity,

Hear thou the feeble world, the lame desire,

The dubious crying of the pinioned dove,

The wordless eloquent emotion

That speaks with a man, despite his mind!

Hear, who can pray for naught, unknowing aught

Whereof, for what to pray. But hear me, thou!

Hear me, thou God, who fettered the bleak winds
Of North and East, and held in silken rein
The golden steeds of West and South, who bade
The tireless sea respect its narrow bounds,
And fixed the mountains, that eternal ice
Might be thy chiefest witness, and who wove
The myriad atoms of Infinitude
Into the solid tapestry of night,
And gave the sun his heat, and bade him kiss
The lips of death upon the moon's dark face,
So that her silver lustre might rejoice
The fiery lover, the sharp nightingale,
And those pale mortals whom the day beholds.
Asleep, because the many bid them slave {33B}
From dusk to dawn being poor; and braided up
The loose hair of all trees and flowers, and made
Their one white light divide to red and green
And violet <<Chosen in accordance with the theory of Young and
Helmholz.>>
and the hues innumerable

Lesser than these, and gave man hope at last
With the invariable law of death
Abundant in new life, and having filled
The world with music, dost demand of us
“Is my work meaningless?” O thou, supreme,
Thou, First and Last, most inconceivable
All-radiating Unity, thou sphere
All-comprehensive, all-mysterious,
Spirit of Life and Death, bow down and hear!
[“Bends deeper and prays silently. The flame grows duller, and finally
leaves the room in absolute darkness. Curtain.”]

SONNETS TO NIGHT.

I.

O NIGHT! the very mother of us all,
For from thy hollow womb we children came,
A little space to flicker as a flame,
And then within thy tender arms to fall

Tired, fain of nothing but to lie at last

Upon thy bosom, and gaze in thine eyes

Clear, calm, dispassionate, supremely wise,

And pass with thee the gates that must be passed.<<Compare this octet with that of the “Sonnet to Sleep” of P. B. Marston, which Crowley had not at this time read.>>

O Night, on thee is set our only hope,

Because our eyes, to tender for the day,

Are dazed with sunlight, and poor fingers grope

For those far truths that mock our vague endeavour, {34A}

Whilst we may find in thee the secrets grey

Of all things God would fain have hid for ever.

II.

All things grow still before thine awful face.

Now fails the lover’s sigh; Sleep’s angel clings

About the children with her dreamy wings,

And all the world is silent for a space.

The waving of thy dusky plumes in heaven

Alone breathes gentle music to mine ears,
So that despair is fain to flee, and fear
Cowers far away amid the shades of even.

“Hope,” is thy whisper, “hope, and trust in Night; My realm is the eternal,
and my power

The absolute. My child, gird on thy strength;
Clothe limbs with lustiness, and mind with might,
That, communing with me, though for an hour,
Thou mayest conquer when day comes at length.”

THE PHILOSOPHER’S PROGRESS.

“That which is above, is like that which is below; and that which is below
is like that which is above.”

HERMES TRISMEGISTUS.

THAT which is highest as the deep
Is fixed, the depth as that above:
Death’s face is as the face of Sleep;

And Lust is likest Love.

So stand the angels one by one.

Higher and higher with lamps of gold:

So stand the shining devils; none

Their brightness may behold. {34B}

I took my life, as one who takes

Young gold to ruin and to spend;

I sought their gulfs and fiery lakes,

And sought no happy end.

I said: the height is as the deep,

Twin breasts of one white dove;

Death's face is as the face of Sleep,

And Lust is likest Love.

And with my blood I forced the door

That guards the palaces of sin;

I reached the lake's cinereous <<Ash-covered.>> shore; I passed those groves within.

My blood was wasted in her veins,
To freshen them, who stood like death,
Our Lady of ten thousand Pains
With heavy kissing breath.

I said: Our Lady is as God,
Her hell of pain as heaven above;
Death's feet, like Sleep's, with fire are shod,
And Lust is likest Love.

Our Lady crushed me in her bed;
Between her breasts my life was wet;
My lips from that sweet death were fed;
I died, and would forget.

But so God would not have me die;
Her deadly lips relax and fade,

Her body slackens with a sigh

Reluctant, like a maid.

I said: O vampire <<1>> Lover, weep,

Who cannot follow me above,

Though Death may masquerade as Sleep,

And Lust laugh out like Love.

<<1. Any being who, under the guise of love, draws the strength from another.>>

But God's strong arms set under me

Lifted my spirit through the air

Beyond the wide supernal sea, <<Binah.>>

Beyond the veil of vair. {35A}

God said: My ways are sweet and deep;

The sceptres and the swords thereof

Change: for Death's face is fair as Sleep;

And Lust is clean as Love.

I slept upon His breast; and Death
Came like Sleep's angel, and I died,
And tasted the Lethean breath.
There was a voice that cried:

Behold, I stand above His head
With feet made white with whitest fire,
Above His forehead, that is red
As blood with His Desire.

I knew that Voice was more than God,
And echo trembled for its trust:
Sleep's feet, like Death's, with fire are shod,
And Love is likest Lust.

So I returned and sought her breast,
Our Lady of ten thousand Pains;
I drank her kisses, and possessed

Her pale maternal veins.

I said: Drain hard my sudden breath,

Be cruel for the vampire thrust!

Let Sleep's desire be sweet as Death,

And Love be clean as Lust!

I died amid her kisses: so

This last time I would not forget —

So I attained The Life;<<1>> and know

Her lips and God's have met.

<<1. "I.e.," that state of mind which perceives the hidden unity.>>

For in Those Hands<<1>> above His head

The Depth is one with That Above,

And Sleep and Death and Life are dead,

And Lust is One with Love. {35B}

<<1. A hand is here used as a symbol of the Infinite Point because Yod — the Greek Iota — means a hand.>>

SONNET.

THE woods are very quiet, and the stream
Hardly awakes the stilled ear with its word;
The voice of wind above like dawn is heard,
And all the air moves up, a sultry steam,
Here in the flower-land, where I lie and dream
And understand the silence of the bird;
My sorrow and my weakness are interred
In the deep water where the pebbles gleam.

I rouse the force persistent of my will
To compel matter to the soul's desire,
To make Heaven aid the mind that would aspire
To touch its borders, and to drink their fill
At those far fountains whence one drop of dew<<1>>

Descends upon my head from yonder blue.

<<1. The Amrita, or Elixir of Immortality.>>

AN ILL DREAM.

IN the grim woods when all the bare black branches Creak out their
curses like a gallows-tree,

When the miasmal pestilence-light dances,

A spectre-flame, through midnight's infamy.

My blood grows chill and stagnant with my shame.

O Love, to speak thy name!

O Life! O Heaven! O dreams long dead! Ye Spirits Rising unbidden from
Hope's cobwebbed<<1>> door, Ye quick desires that every soul inherits,

Leave me to weep, and torture me no more!

My face grows grey with sheer despair; I shrink

From dreams; I dare not think. {36A}

<<1. Because long shut, as in the story of Bruce and the spider.

WEH NOTE: This is the tale of Robert the Bruce, royal of Scotland, who was hid from his enemies by a spider spinning her web before the entrance of his cave. The same is told of the boy-Christ in the tale of the Slaughter of the Innocent. The former appears to be documented, while the latter is not.>>

I had a poet's dreams. My soul was yearning

To grasp the firmament and hold it fast,

To reach toward God, and, from His shrine returning, To sing in magic
melodies the vast

Desires of God towards man — O dreams! O years

Drowned in these bitter tears!

I felt the springs of youth within me leaping,

Let loose my pleasure, never guessed that pain

Was worth the holding — now, my life is weeping

Itself away, those agonies to gain

Which are my one last hope, that by some cross

Eld may avenge youth's loss!

Yet still youth burns! The hours its pleasure wasted Compel their bitter
memories to grow sweet;

Like some warm-perfumed poison if I tasted,

Felt its fierce savour pulse, and burn, and beat; Yet in my veins its sleepy
fire might bring

Strange dreams of some sweet thing.

Half a regret and half a shuddering terror,

The past lies desolate and yet is here,

Half guide, half tempter toward the stream of error, On whose fresh
bosom many a mariner

Puts out with silken sail — to find his grave

In its voluptuous wave.

Here are few rocks whereon a ship hath peril;

No storms may ruffle its insidious stream;

Only, no fish invade its waters sterile,

No white-winged birds above it glance and gleam, Only, it hath no shore,
no wave, but gloom

Wraps it within her womb. {36B}

No sun is mirrored in its treacherous water,

Only the false moon flickers and flits by

Like to the bloodless phantom shape of slaughter
Laughing a lipless laugh — a mockery,
A ghastly memory to wake and weep
— Should Sorrow let me sleep.

No current draws a man, to his fair seeming,
Yet all the while he whirls a stealthy sweep
Narrower, nearer, where the wave is steaming
With the slight spray tossed from that funnel deep Which dips, one wide
black shaft, most horrible,
Down to the nether Hell.

Yet there seems time. God's grief has not forgotten His mighty arm, and
with His pitying breath

A strong wind woke me ere my boat grew rotten
With venom of the stream, that quivereth
Now as He blew upon it — fish and bird
Live at that silent word!

And I arose to seek the oars of Lying
Wherewith I had embarked — the wind had torn

Their wood to splinters — “Jesus! I am dying!

Send me Thy cross to fashion some unborn

Oarage of Truth to quit this stream of Death!”

O vain, O wasted breath!

I have no strength. Upright I kneel, lamenting

The days when Love seemed fair, the bitter years When pain might have
found truth, ere unrelenting

I shipwrecked Life! O agony of tears!

Vain tears! In silence, with abated breath

I drift, drift on to Death! {37A}

THE PRIEST SPEAKS.

(“Boccacio. Day IV. Tale VIII.)”

LAY them together for the sake of Love

Within a little plot of piteous earth,

When life’s last flower is faded in the sun.

Lay them together in the tender ground

That summer showers may shed a trembling tear.
And summer breezes whisper melodies
Of pity. Lay them there, and when the sky
Opens a lingering eyelash of deep cloud,
And the sea sparkles out from under it
To kiss the earth into awakening
From the dream-slumbers that its fancies weave —
Fancies of starlight on the lucent sea
Gleaming from wide horizon to the feet
Of Cynthia's bow, all silver-shot with fire,
That virgin flame that lingers evermore
In the sweet phantasies of subtle sleep —
Fancies of lonely shadows darkly strewn
About the leaves of autumn in the woods,
Where the small floweret, hidden by the maze
Of the dying children of the copper-beech,
Lifts a blue forehead to the sun to kiss —
Fancies of old romance too pitiful
For any delicate quill to light upon —
Yes, when the sky from stainless ebony

Merges in azure, like as if the light
Of stars had melted into all the black
To gladden it, O then the solemn hush
Of morning shall behold the silent grave,
And wait a moment in rich worshipping
Of Love, creator of the world's delight,
Till the full chorus of the spirits of fire
(Whose mighty shoulders and wide-flashing wings
Bear the proud sun from his luxurious bed
Of rosy fleeces in the West low lying
Into the staircase of the jealous day)
Burst on the silence of the world beyond
And bid the listening poet catch the strain
Of their half-echoed hymn. But come, my friends, {37B}
Lay them together, breast to maiden breast,
Limb linked with limb, and lips to pallid lips,
So beautiful in death — the moth o' th' mind
Tells the grief-numbed senses "'Tis but sleep.
See! the pale glimmer of a ghostly arm
Flashes a spot of light!" Ah! weary day!

‘Tis but the flickering of the candle-light
And the unmannish sorrow of the heart
That lends the reins to fancy’s charioteer.
Lay them together, let us leave them there!
There comes a vision to my mortal eyes
Of things immortal. Hark! the growing swell
Of some wild clarion through the dazzling night,
Whose fairy aether suddenly illumines
With silver meteors innumerable
And golden showers of stars — lost worlds of thought And poets’ dreams,
and jewels of virgin sighs.
Hark! the broad rings of sound go wavering on
Eddying and rippling through the desert sky
That now is peopled with the diamond wings
That float through all the palaces of God.
O now to join them rise the armies vast
Of the lone spirits of the empty tomb,
And there I see the lovers piteous
Splendidly flash within the silver sphere
Of light, and there I lose them at the last

Most wonderfully passed within the veil
Of Time; caught up into the Infinite.
Lay them together. And the hollow hill
Shall echo me “together,” and the sky,
And the wide sea, and all the fragrant air,
Shall linger in the tumult of the dawn.
Lay them together. And the still small voice
Shall whisper “Peace,” and in the evening “Peace.”

THE VIOLET’S LOVE-STORY.

AMONG the lilies of the sacred stream
There grew a violet, like a maiden’s dream,
And when the wind passed over them, it stirred
Their white soft petals with its quiet word. {38A}

The sun looked on them and their leaves were glad; Only the purple
blossom there, that had

No kindred by the stream, let fall a tear,
Half wishing for the autumn of the year.

But when the summer came, the violet guessed

By some slow dream that thrilled her gentle breast, That some sweet
thing might come to her; she thought Through the long days of how her
dream was wrought: She guessed it woven of the spider's thread,

And coloured like the river's changing bed

Where polished pebbles shine; she guessed it frail And perfect, with pure
wings, like silver pale.

So there, behind the leaves and stems, her lids

Grew deep with veins of love, and Bassarids <<1>>

Racing the dim woods through, beheld her face,

Whispered together, and desired the place.

<<1. Votaries of Bacchus, so called from the Bassara, or long mantle, which
they wore.>>

The grey was blushing in the Eastern sky

When there drew near a child of poesy

With full lips very tender, and grave eyes

Where deep thoughts dwelt in some delicious wise.

He looked upon the lilies, and a tear
Dropped on their blossom; but a little fear
Came to the bosom of the violet
Lest he see not, or see her, and forget.

But he did see her, and drew close, and said:
“O perfect passion of my soul, O dead
Living desire, O sweet unspoken sin,
Leave thou the lilies; they are not thy kin. {38B}

“Within my heart one slow sweet whisper stole
Consuming and destroying all my soul
Lest, if the pure cold mind should conquer it,
I might not know, although it still were sweet.

“My pure desires arose and cast out love
That flew away, most like a wounded dove,
Only the drops were mine its bosom bled.

Now the last time it hovers by my head:

“Now the last time I turn and go to her.”

The violet smiled at him: his fingers fair

Plucked the sweet blossom to his breast; his eyes

Mused like delight, and like desire were wise.

There was a maiden like the sun, to whom

His footsteps turned amid the myriad bloom

Of flowers and leafy pathways of the wood,

Where, in a dell of roses white, she stood.

He came to her and looked so dear and deep

Into her eyes, the wells and woods of sleep,

And took the violet from his breast, and stood

A glad young god within the golden wood.

He kissed the blossom, and bent very low,

And put it to her lips — and even so

His lips were set on them; the flower sighed

For deep delight, and in the long kiss died.

Years fled and faded, yet a flower was seen

Gracious and comely in its nest of green,

And tender hands would water it and say:

“O happy sister, she that went away!

“For she brought back my lover to my heart,

And knew her work was perfect, and her part

Most perfect when she died between the breath,

And in the bridal kisses kissed to death.” {39A}

So grew the newer blossom and was glad:

Sweet little hopes her faint fair forehead had

That one day such a death might crown her days.

And so God too was glad, the story says.

THE FAREWELL OF PARACELSUS TO APRILE.<<1>>

<<1. “Paracelsus.” I am he that aspired to KNOW; and thou?

“Aprile.” I would LOVE infinitely, and be loved.

BROWNING, “Paracelsus.”

But Crowley here opposes Browning.>>

THOU Sun, whose swift desire to-day is dull,

And all ye hosts of heaven, whose lips are mute, And trees and flowers
and oceans beautiful

Among whose murmurs I have struck this lute

With joy supreme or agony acute,

And love transcending everything alway,

Pity me, pity, since the poisonous root

Of parting strikes the beauty of the day;

We meet for the last time beside the ocean gray.

Soul of my soul, we never can forget —

But, is our parting burnt across the skies?

Is the last word said? Must our lips be set

Not to new song, but to the bitter sighs

As of a child whose flower-garden dies,

Who knows no hope of some enduring spring?

Is the last song made, whose faint melodies
Brushed the pale air with an archangel's wing?
Is Hope divorced, our queen? Is Love discrowned, our King?

Far o'er the Ocean sets a fiery star
And meteors cross the angry horizon;
A comet blazes, reddening the bar
Of silver water where the moonlight shone,
And, as I stand upon the cliff like one {39B}
Amazed, a shape seems always at my back
To whisper wickedness, o'erheard of none,
And stealthily to follow on my track,
And cloke my lifted eyes with suffocating black.

Vainly I turn to seek him, for my eyes
Are dimmed with saltness never born of brine;
Vainly I fight the air; he sneers, and lies.
He laughs at all this agony of mine.
He chills my heart, and desecrates the shrine
Where Love his holy incense used to burn.

He mocks those thoughts, those songs, those looks divine While his lewd
visage no man may discern,

And baffling darkness hides his terror if I turn.

Fighting and falling ever, weariest

Even of beating off the tempter's blows,

Struggling in vain to what one hopes the best,

A distant river over many snows,

On whose green bank the purple iris glows,

And the anemone in some wild cleft,

With the white violet, and the briar rose,

And the blue gentian from the heavens reft —

Lo! 'Twas that golden bank but yester morn I left.

O river where we dwelt! Yon summer sward

Whereon we lay, two kings of earth and air;

For whom ten thousand angels had drawn sword

At our light bidding. Surely, surely, there

We might float ever to the sea, and spare

The dainty plumage of that perfect place.

O God! O Life! O Death, thou would'st not wear Such evil mask upon
thy golden face —

O Mary, pity me of thine abounding grace. {40A}

Those days are dead, and hope no newer birth.

I left thy shores, blue stream, at His command

Who reared the mountains from the shaken earth;

Who holds the lightning in His holy hand,

And binds the stars in adamantine band,

And yearns towards the children of His mind.

I left their summer and their dewy strand

To pass a life of work, alone, unkind,

To fight a way toward heaven, mute, desolate, and blind.

The dusty desert glimmers in the night;

A solitary palm-tree shades the well;

I am alone, a weary eremite

Striving the secrets of the stars to tell,

And every blade of grass that makes the dell

Is counted and divined by me, who stare

With eyes half blinded by the fires of Hell
That my wild brain imagines everywhere,
Roaring and raging round with red infernal glare.

The yellow sand toward the deep sky extends:
A dusky mirage would confuse my view;
Far, far away, where desolation ends,
There is a water of serenest blue;
And by it stands, as patient and as true
As in the past, his form to whom I turn,
And break my bondage and would touch anew
His holy lips; my body and spirit yearn;
He fades away, and fires of Hell within me burn.

Still, as I journey through the waste, I see
A silver figure more divine arise;
The Christ usurps the horizon for me.
And He requickens the forgotten skies;
His golden locks are burning on my eyes,
And He with rosy finger points the way,

The blood-wrought mystic path of Paradise
That leads at last through yonder icy spray
Of Death to the blue vaults of the undying day. {40B}

But oh! this desert is a weary land!
Poisons alone their prickly heads lift high;
The sun, a globe of fury, still doth stand
In the dark basin of the burning sky.
There is no water, no, nor herb, and I
Faint at his anger who compels the herd
To fall upon the waste, so fierce and dry
That none may pass it, not the very bird.
Throughout the vast expanse no single sound is heard.

Only the moaning of the dying ox,
And my parched cry for water from cracked lips;
In vain the stern impenetrable rocks
Mock my complaint: the empty pitcher dips
Into the empty well; the water drips,
Oozing in tiny drops caught up again

By the sun's heat, that brooks not his eclipse
And dissipates the welcome clouds of rain.
God! have Thou pity soon on this amazing pain.

If but a lion stirred with distant roar
The silence of the world, perchance at last
I might find honey in his mouth, and store
His tawny flanks until the sand were past.<<1>>
Nay, but these wastes intolerably vast,
Like glowing copper raging for the heat,
Stretch and stretch on and leave me all aghast
Straining my eyes in horror and defeat
Toward the long vista seen where rescue seems to greet.

<<1. See the story of Samson.>>

The vessel fills with brackish foam. I drink,
Drink to the end, and stagger on alone
Without a staff to hold me if I sink
In the hot quagmires of untrusty stone.

Foodless and beastless, so despairing grown,
I know not, care not, only trust that soon
The sun's dominion may be overthrown,
And o'er the wilderness appear the moon
With cold lips to bestow the inestimable boon. {41A}

Still I have never prayed for death, but rather
Would be found fighting toward the goal I seek,
Stretching both hands toward a loving father,
And struggling toward some barren voiceless peak With feet made
stedfast, if God made them weak;
So, on the journey, in the hottest fight
I would be found by Death, whose palace bleak
Should be a resting-place until the night
Broke, and I met my God, and stood within His sight.

Only my brain grows feebler with the toil,
And clearer runs the river I forsook;
Now in clear pools its myriad fountains boil,
Now there runs singing to its breast a brook;

Now it flows gently to a little nook
Where I once rested — Ah! I clench my hand
And turn away with yet undaunted look,
Setting my face toward the distant land
That must lie somewhere far beyond this world of sand.

About me are the bones of many men
Who turned to God their rapt adoring eyes,
And cast away the love within their ken
For this vague treasure-house beyond the skies —
Whither I turn, like a dumb beast that dies,
A wistful look, and breathe a dumb complaint.
Lo! they have cast away the mask of lies
And not found Truth. So he would be a saint
Whose skeleton lies here because his soul did faint! {41B}

I will not turn toward Sodom any more.

Lest its ripe glades of fruit waft up their scent, And draw me to them,
what time heavens pour

Brimstone and fire from out the firmament,

And all my substance in its fall be spent;
Lest I lie there beneath a barren sea
Forgotten of high God, until there went
The final trumpet of the dead, who flee
Vainly that fearful blast of judgment. Woe is Me!

My feet, in spite of me, in circles bend;
I meet my own tracks often, all in vain
I seek some tower or cliff to make an end,<<1>>
I find no object on the distant plain;
Misty distortions crowd upon my brain,
And spectre fountains gurgle on the ground;
I drop to drink, and hear the horrid strain
Of chuckling devils, that grimace around,
And think I catch the note of Hell's three-headed Hound.

<<1. "I.e.," to serve as a direction.>>

Up still and staggering to the doubtful goal,
Feet dragging horribly behind, I move

Deathlike for dearth and for despair of soul;
At last I drop. From Heaven there comes a Dove
Bearing the semblance of the Man I love,
And fountains and fresh grass by magic spell
Are suddenly around me. And above
I hear the voice my visions know so well:
“Well striven all this day against the power of Hell!”

I know these mercies still diviner grow
Each day I strive. But should I sit and rest
One hour of dawn, and cry, “I will not go
Another step without more sleep,” that blest
Dove flies away, the fountains are repressed, {42A}
The grass is withered, and the angry sky
Rages more fierce that day, and from the crest
Of black foul mountains comes a bitter cry:
“He that returneth now shall in destruction die.”

So I press on. Fresh strength from day to day
Girds up my loins and beckons me on high.

So I depart upon the desert way,
So I strive ever toward the copper sky,
With lips burnt black and blind in either eye.
I move for ever to my mystic goal
Where I may drain a fountain never dry,
And of Life's guerdon gather in the whole,
And on celestial manna satisfy my soul.

Each night new failure and each day fresh strength, A sense of something
nearer day by day;

Though the ill road's intolerable length,
League upon league, fling back the torrid ray
Of the fierce sunlight night can scarce allay
With the incessant beating of cool wings,
And men's bleached skeletons infest the way;
Yet Hope her passion like a flower brings,
And Courage ranks me with unconquerable kings.

So, in the power of these who guard my path,
I hope one day to earn a loftier crown

Than that pale garland fresh from summer scath
That I called Love, and lie delighted down
Beside the fountains, fled the roaring town,
Where we were happy all the summer through,
And merry when the autumn tinged with brown
The glades, and in the winter thought we knew
Behind the cloudy weather some far sky was blue. {42B}

That crown I hope for shall be garlanded
Of deathless flowers of equal bloom. And thou,
O thou true lover, thou beloved head
And marble pallor of a prince's brow,
At the cliff's edge we stand together now;
The parting of our ways has come at last.
Mine is the bitterest journey, as I trow,
A man may take, so solitary, so vast,
It binds the future now, and stultifies the past.

Only the hope that God may reunite
Our ways diverging, and make one again

The deathless love that burns a beacon bright
On the black deeps, the irremeable main,
That men must launch on, the exalted plain
Of life. We sever, and our tears are few,
Knowing perchance beyond the moment's pain
We shall regather where the skies are blue,
And live and love for aye, pure, passionate, and true.

Also before my eyes there gleams from Heaven
The likeness of a Man in glory set;
The sun is blotted, and the skies are riven —
A God flames forth my spirit to beget;
And where my body and his love are met
A new desire possesses altogether
My whole new self as in a golden net
Of transcendental love one fiery tether,
Dissolving all my woe into one sea of weather.

So I am ready to assume the Cross,
Start on my journey with the last word said;

Turn my back resolute on dung and dross,
And face the future with no twitch of dread,
But dare to converse with the holy dead,
And taste the earnest of the church's bliss.
Love, God be with you! He is overhead
And watches us, that nothing be amiss —
Love! our hearts bleed as one in the last lingering kiss. {43A}

Good-by, good-by, good-by! the echo rings
A harsh, jarred sound in my self-tortured ears,
And agony, a fount of blood, upsprings
And tears our bosoms with dividing fears.
The cruel sea its final billow rears
And I must pass to seek an unknown sky;
We dare not see each other's face for tears,
And the last kisses — Did we only die!
Love! Ah! One kiss! One kiss! One kiss!
Good-by, Good-by!

A SPRING SNOWSTORM IN WASTDALE,<<1>>

<<1. Crowley was one of the pioneers of rock-climbing among the Cumbrian fells.>>

ON rocky mountain bare

Of grass, and meadows fair,

Angels their trumpets blow upon the night.

While o'er the shrinking dale

The insatiable gale

Roars with unconquered and impassive might.

Their robes of snow they rend,

And their deep voices blend

With tempest, like that angry Amphitrite,<<1>>

Her hair blown wild and loose

On windy Syracuse,

Lashing the waves with words of wrath, a terror of bright light.

<<1. Goddess of the Mediterranean Sea.>>

Here the thick snowflakes fall,
Till mountain in their pall,
And stream beneath their curtain are embraced;
They drive and beat and hiss,
Till their cold maiden kiss
Touches the lake's intolerable waste,
And from the wave is born
A maiden like the morn,
In sudden foam, an Aphrodite chaste,
Clean as the cold wind blown
From each abyss of stone,
Where the north whirlpool rushes down with wreckage interlaced. {43B}

Here on the bank I stand
In this grey barren land
Of winter, and the doubtful glint of spring
If on the hills thee glow
Through the thick mist of snow
Sunshine from westward in the evening;
While in a dell appear

Violets and snowdrops clear,
Buds of the larch, and swallows on the wing,
Ere once again the storm
Lofty and multi-form
Close the bright glimpse of summer and the hope of everything.

Silence her throne assumes,
Stars mount the sky, and looms
The misty monarch of the dale on high:
About the silver feet
I worship, as is meet,
The warrior God that fixed the curved sky,
Rent the cavernous earth,
Moulded in awful birth
The terror of the cloudy canopy,
And tore from underground
The lake's immense profound,
And clad the mountains now with this faint snow embroidery.

Now the white flakes decrease.

Wastwater lies in peace,
Kissed by the breezes where the wind once bit;
Gable alone doth stand,
A Pyramid more grand
Than Pharaoh's pride exalted, or the wit
Of magian shepherds built
Who sought his land and spilt
Blood of ten million slaves to conquer it.<<1>>
Clad in sparse robes of white
The mountain beckons Night
Her tracery of azure with the cold moon-rays to knit. {44A}

<<1. The reference is to the "Shepherd Kings" of Abydos, who, says one theory, built Ghizeh.>>

Armoured with secret might
I stand on earth upright,
Strong in the power of Him who welded earth,
Barred in the sky with steel,
And breathed upon the wheel

Of this vast scheme of stars, and made Him mirth
In the poor dreams of us
Who strive mysterious
To pierce the bands of sense, and break the girth
Of our own minds' desire,
Till He relume the fire
Lost at our fall, not kindled fresh till that diviner birth.

IN NEVILLE'S COURT, TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.<<1>>

<<1. The "Voice" is that of Lord Tennyson, whose rooms were in this court.>>

I THINK the souls of many men are here
Among these cloisters, underneath the spire
That the moon silvers with magnetic fire;
But not a moon-ray is it, that so clear
Shines on the pavement, for a voice of fear
It hath, unless it be the breeze that mocks
My ear, and waves his old majestic locks

About his head. There fell upon my ear:

“O soul contemplative of distant things,

Who hast a poet’s heart, even if thy pen

Be dry and barren, who dost hold Love dear,

Speed forth this message on the fiery wings

Of stinging song to all the race of men:

That hey have hope; for we are happy here.” {44B}

SUCCUBUS.<<1>>

<<1. The Succubus, and its male counterpart the Incubus, bulk largely in mediaeval literature and philosophy. The poem explains itself.>>

WHO is Love, that he should find me as I strive,

Pale and weary, dumb and blind, where curses thrive, Fold my sleep
within his wings, and lead my dreams Through a land of pleasant things, of
woods and streams, Bind my slumber with a chain of pure delight,

Though the canker of it strain at death of night,

Fill with passion and distaste and wakened pleasure All the moments run
to waste that else were treasure?

Who is Love? a fury red with all men's blood

On his cruel altars shed, a deadly flood?

Or a veiled vision black with shame and fear,

Whose most loathliest attack at night is near,

When the gates of spirit tense with angel's tread

Close, and all the gates of sense swing wide instead, When the will of
men is sleeping, and when the mind Hears no sobs of spirits weeping above
the wind,

All the subtle paths are clear for wicked breath,

And no angel warns the ear that this is death?

Is this fiend the Love that came when youth rose up Purple with its holy
flame, and flower-fair cup,

Gave me of his burning wine to fire my heart,

Filled me with desires divine toward my art?

Is he then the Love who robs me of my aim,

Doubts me if my heart still throbs with that cold flame, {45A}

Calm and eager purpose yet to reach the goal

That high hopes have sternly set before my soul,

To know, will, dare for man's sake if man may,

Grasp the secret of the plans that rule the way

Of stars and suns, that shape the tiniest blade

Of Grass whose frailties 'scape the passing maid,
Whose light foot brushes fern and moss? But Love
Comes a thief to men who turn toward things above
To set snares, by night, and makes afraid
The spirit's holy might with one slight maid
Visioned and unsubstisting save in foreign thought
To its own strength a slave by witchcraft brought!
This is not Love but Lust, not Life but Death is found: —
All the halls of sense with strife cry and resound.

The Brain awakes in wrath; behold! the foemen flee, All the earth is clad
with gold, and all the sea;
Driven back the demons yield, falter and cease;
For a little while the shield of sleep is peace.
Clear and bright the lamp burns; clean and sharp the sword,<<1>>
While I watch their paths between before the Lord.

<<1. Common magical implements. The lamp signifies Illumination and the
sword Will.>>

A RONDEL.

REST, like a star at sea
Thrice loved, thrice blest,
Burns. Will there come to me
Rest? {45B}

By these suppressed
Desires my soul must flee,
By heaven's crest,

I pray that secretly
Toward God's breast
I draw, to find, maybe,
Rest!

NIGHTFALL.

THE seas that lap the sand
Where lilies fill the land
Are silent, while the moon ascends to span the curved leaves.
The lordly stars arise

With pity in their eyes

So large and clear and wise,

And angels yearn toward the world that wonders, wakes, and grieves.

Sleep holds the hand of life,

And, as a loving wife

Moves not for fear the sufferer should wake before his hour, So sleep is
deadly calm,

And fills with perfect balm

The night's unquiet psalm

That wanders all too trembling up, and quivers as a flower.

The wise man opens wide

His casement, as a bride

Flings her bright arms to meet her spouse homeward who hasteneth; He
trims his lamp, and brings

The books of many kings

To spread their holy wings

About his head, and sing to him the secret ways of death.

He knows, and doth not fear;

His will is keen and clear;

His lips are silent to protect the secret mysteries. {46A}

No tempter spreads his net

So that his thoughts forget

The glory they have set

Before their face, nor loose their hold upon the perfect prize.

My hands no longer write:

Communion with the night

Is built, a bride of fiery truth across the subtle mind.

God's angels, and His fire,

Consume the soul's desire,

And strike a lighter lyre.

I seek; the angels lead me on, all light and truth to find.

THE INITIATION.

THERE is a bare bleak headland which the sea

Incessantly devours,

A rock impregnable, where herb and tree

Are not. A vision of it came to me

In night's most ghastly hours.

I who desire, beyond all named desire,

To pass the envious bounds of air and fire,

And penetrate the bosom of the night,

Saw in a vision such a neophyte

Stand on the forehead of the rock; I saw

The armies of unalterable law

Shudder within their spheres, as to him came

His master's spirit, like a tongue of flame,

To touch his lips and ears and eyes and hands

With that pale amber that divides the lands

Of sense and spirit, and beheld him quail

As fell from all his shaken soul the veil.

Then on the night began the awful gale

That did assume a voice

Whereat the air was peopled with such forms

As ride abroad upon the path of storms,

And in the awe rejoice.

They gather, chanting, round that noble head.

The master of the prisons of the dead

Loosens the bonds and bids the furies spring

For their last struggle ere they own a king.

This paean of the sky they sing. {46B}

“We ride upon the fury of the blast,

Fast, fast.

We race upon the horses of the wind:

The tameless thunder follows hard behind,

Fast, and too fast.

The lightning heralds us; the iron blast

Lends us its splendour for a steed fire-shod,

The steed of God!”

From all the caverns of the hollow sea,

And all the fortresses that guard the air,

And all the fearful palaces of fire,

And all the earth’s dwarf-ridden secrecy,

They come, they gather, and they ride, to bear

Destruction and disorder and desire;
They cling to him who braves the gale of night,
And mock his might.
They rush upon him like a wave, and break
In fiery foam against him, and they shake
Life in its citadel.
They open Hell
To let the Furies and the Fates spring forth
On their wild chargers of the icy North
To quench the holy lamp.
His spirit and his life within him quail,
And all the armaments of sin assail
With deadly tramp
And swordless fury. Hell devours and tears
The heart of any a man, whom heavenly airs
Shield and lead on afar,
Where beyond storm and passion is the sky,
And where the sacred hand of the Most High
Holds out a star.
He stands amid the storm, a mighty rock;

His long hair blows about, the demons mock
His entry to their kingdom, and despair.
Groans in the blackness, infamous and bare,
And hateful shapes and eyes surround his head —
O for the magic of those mightier dead
To scatter them, and utterly destroy
Their likeness, and to penetrate the joy
Of yonder places past the realm of fear!
O that some mighty seer {47A}
Came to avenge, that might deliver him
From this grim fight, whose horrid ranks are dim
With mist of spumed blood, whose long chill hour
Beats out each second with the ghastly power,
Reluctant till the morning. Shall they cease,
These black battalions, and the dawn bring peace
To a head holier? Or shall he succumb,
Fight through long agonies and perish dumb,
Sword gripped hard to the last? or shall he fall
Recreant, coward, and no more at all
Reach the dim martyr-hall of heroes? Yet

The surging shapes gape hideous, to beget
Fresh armed foemen to destroy the king.
And first, on black imperishable wing,
That Nameless Thing.

Darkness, a dragon, now devours
The vision of those deadly powers,
The legions of the lords of sin.
It is an hour ere dawn begin.

ISAIAH.

A SONNET.

THE world is dusk, expectant of its doom.
Foulness is rampant; purity is dumb;
Despair stalks terrible. But I am come,
God-nurtured, in the void abyss of gloom;
The Spirit of my God is set on me;
He hath anointed me to preach glad news

Unto the meek; the broken heart to loose,
To utter to the captive liberty,
The prison's opening to all the bound,
And unto all men to proclaim aloud
The year acceptable before the Lord.
Therefore He fills my voice with silvery sound,
And by His spirit, a pillar of fire and cloud,
My eyes are lightning, and my tongue a sword. {47B}

THE STORM.

IN the storm that divides the wild night from the passionate kiss of the morning

Stands there a tower by the sea unshaken by wave and by wind;
Lightning assails, and the sea breaks vain on the battlements, scorning Even
to fling back the foam shattered before and behind; Save for one window its
height rears up unbroken and blind.

Here may a man gaze out to the night by the stars of it stricken, Out to the
blind black air that the lightning divides, and is dumb; Here, and look back
in the tower where pallid shades murmur and quicken: Low laughs leap in
the silence, sink to a sigh ere there come, Far from the feet of the storm, a
pulse like the beat of a drum.

Throbs the wild sound through the storm, and the wings of it waken and
quiver,

Only the watcher, unmoved, looks on the face of the night; Sees the strong hosts that unite, a fervent implacable river Foaming from heaven and hell, two armies of crimson and white; Flecked is the sky with their blood shed as by sabres of light.

Now they are clutching this arms, the phantoms that throng there behind him,

Foul and distorted, whose sight may not on men ever dawn; Now they entice and entreat, now strive with fresh fury to bind him, Cords that are cut by an angel whose sword is unceasingly drawn, Glitters, and bids them fall back as if struck by the eye of the morn.

Would he but turn he should see a woman laid naked before him, {48A}

Stretching her arms to his breast, reaching her lips to his face, Lips that should grant but one kiss ere the demons descended and tore him

Limb from wet limb, and devoured, and bore this stained soul into space Far from the regions of hope and the lands that are holy with grace.

Alway the battle proceeds and alway the tempest requickens, Pregnant with thunder, delivered when the swift knife is let flash; Alway the wind has its will and the slaughter-steam rises and thickens; Alway the sea is a lion, enraged by the wind and its lash; Alway the heavens resound with the thunder's reverberate crash.

Heaven has conquered, behold! and the hosts of the demons are fleeing; Dawn drives before her fair feet the feather-light wings of the gale; Silent the tower rears aloft its front into beauty and seeing.

Only the window is dark; only there hangs like a veil Sleep on the chamber and clings. Heard I a woman-fiend wail?

Heard I the sound of a kiss? Has man been destroyed in the daylight, Man whom the night could not quell? What angel fled weeping away?

There in the East there extends a white light devouring the grey light,
There the sun rises and brings hope with the dawn of the day.

Silence hides certainty — surely voices of angels that pray, Surely the
sound of delight, and of praise, and unspeakable glory Rings in the wind
like a bell, and wakes the white air of the lea; All the bright sea is aflame,
and the caps of it, golden or hoary, Leap in the light of the sun, in the light
of the eyes of the sea.

Triumph is born like a flower, and the soul of the adept is free. {48B}

WHEAT AND WINE.

CLEAR, deep, and blue, the sky

Is silvered by the morn,

And where the dewdrop's eye

Catches its brilliancy

Strange lights and hues are born:

I have seen twelve colours hover on a single spray of thorn.

There is a great grey tower<<1>>

Cut clear against the deep;

In the sun's awakening hour

I think it has the power

To touch the soul of sleep

With its tender thought, and bid me to awake for joy — and weep.

<<1. St. John's Chapel, Cambridge, which Crowley's rooms in 16 St. John's Street overlooked. It was his habit to work from midnight to dawn, when he could no longer be disturbed by visits from friends.>>

This night I am earlier.

No drowsy thought drew nigh

At eve to make demur

That I be minister

To Cynthia maidenly:

All night I have watched her sail through a black and silver sky.

Within my soul there fight

Two full and urgent streams,

Work's woe and dream's delight:

Like snow and sun they smite,

Days battle hard with dreams:

On a world of misty beauty the Aurora clearly beams.

So labour fought with pride,
And love with idleness,
My soul was torn and tried
With the impassioned tide
Of storm and deathly stress —
I had never dreamed a lily should arise amid the press. {49A}

Yet such a flower sprang here
Within this soul of mine,
When foemen bade good cheer
To foemen, grew one clear
Concept, ideal, divine,
Of a god of light and laughter, of a god of wheat and wine.

Work on, strong mind, devise
The outer life aright!
Dream, subtle soul, and arise
To noblest litanies
That pierce the mask of night —
In a man work lifts his eyelids, but his dreams lend eyes their light.

So dreams and days are wed,

And soul and body lie

Ambrosial in Love's bed.

See, heaven with stars is spread —

So glad of life am I

If an angel came to call me I am sure I would not die.

A RONDEL.

THE wail of the wind in the desolate land

Lifts voice where the heaven lies pallid and blind; Sweeps over the hills
from the sea and the sand

The wail of the wind.

The earth gives a bleak echo back, and behind

Lurk sorrows and sins in the grasp of a hand,

And love and despair are the lords of mankind.

The mountains are steadfast; immutably grand,

Bid me to their bosom the chain to unbind:

At peace and at pity I now understand

The wail of the wind. {49B}

THE VISIONS OF THE ORDEAL.

THE mind with visions clouded,

(Asleep? Awake?)

By bloodless shades enshrouded,

(By whom, and for whose sake?)

With visions dimly lighted,

By its own shade affrighted,

In its own light benighted,

The doors of hell may shake.

Unbidden spring the spectres

(Whence come, where bound?)

To baffle those protectors

Whose wings are broad around.

Uprise they and upbraid,

Till life shrinks back afraid,
And death itself dismayed
Sinks back to the profound.

Unholy phantom faces
(Of self? Of sin?)
Grin wild in all the places
Where blood is trodden in:
The ground of night enchanted
With deadly blooms is planted,
Where evil beasts have panted
And snakes have shed their skin.

With poison steams the air,
And evil scent
Is potent everywhere;
Creation waits the event:
In silence, without sighing,
The living and the dying,
Oppressed and putrefying,

Curse earth and firmament.

What dreams disturb my slumber,

Or what sights seen?

Foul orgies without number

In dens and caves obscene,

Accurst, detestable,

In which I laugh with hell,

And furies chant the knell

Of all things clean. {50A}

Ah God! the shapes that throng!

Ah God! what eyes!

The souls grown sharp and strong

That my lips made their prize,

The ruined souls, the wrecks

Of bodies fair of flecks

Long since, ere God did vex

My soul with sacrifice.

These press upon my lips
What lips of flame
To burn me, unless slips
Some cooler kiss, from shame
Washed clean by God's desire,
To save me from their fire —
Those kiss and respire
The perfume of the Name.<<1>>

<<1. Jehovah, here and throughout, unless expressly stated to the contrary.>>

Remorse and terror banished
By pitying lovers,
Who from my eyes have vanished,
(The Lidless Eye<<1>> discovers),
Repenting souls that turn,
Whose hearts with pity burn
For me, who now discern

Their lover around me hovers.

<<1. That of Macroprosopus, who “neither slumbers nor sleeps.”>>

Their love wards from my head

The furious hate

Of those loves doubly dead

That may not pass the gate:

By their entreating prayer

The angels fill the air

To guard my steps, to bare

The veil inviolate.

The visions leave me now;

I sink to sleep;

Calm and content my brow;

My eyes are large and deep.

The morning shall behold

On feet and plumes of gold

My spirit soon enfold

The flocks on heaven's steep. {50B}

Refreshed, encouraged, lightened,

Sent on the Way

Whose Sun and Star have brightened

From dawning into day,

I set my face, a flint,

Toward where the holy glint

Of lamps affords the hint

That leads me — where it may.

POWER.

THE mighty sound of forests murmuring

In answer to the dread command;

The stars that shudder when their king<<1>>

Extends his hand,

<<1. G. C. Jones, then of Basingstoke, a profound mystic.>>

His awful hand to bless, to curse; or moves
Toward the dimmest den
In the thick leaves, not known of loves
Or nymphs or men;

(Only the sylph's frail gossamer may wave
Their quiet frondage yet,
Only her dewy tears may lave
The violet;)

The mighty answer of the shaken sky
To his supreme behest; the call
Of ibex that behold on high
Night's funeral,

And see the pale moon quiver and depart
Far beyond space, the sun ascend
And draw earth's globe unto his heart
To make an end;

The shriek of startled birds; the sobs that tear
With sudden terror the sharp sea
That slept, and wove its golden hair
Most mournfully;

The rending of the earth at his command
Who wields the wrath of heaven, and is dumb;
Hell starts up — and before his hand
Is overcome. {51A}

It heard these voices, and beheld afar
These dread works wrought at his behest:
And on his forehead, lo! a star,
And on his breast.

And on his feet I knew the sandals were
More beautiful than flame, and white,
And on the glory of his hair
The crown of night.

And I beheld his robe, and on its hem
Were writ unlawful words to say,
Brodered like lilies, with a gem
More clear than day.

And round him shone so wonderful a light
As when on Galilee
Jesus once walked, and clove the night,
And calmed the sea.

I scarce could see his features for the fire
That dwelt about his brow,
Yet, for the whiteness of my own desire,
I see him now;

Because my footsteps follow his, and tread
The awful bounds of heaven, and make
The very graves yield up their dead,
And high thrones shake;

Because my eyes still steadily behold,
And dazzle not, nor shun the night,
The foam-born lamp of beaten gold
And secret might;

Because my forehead bears the sacred Name,
And my lips bear the brand
Of Him<<1>> whose heaven is one flame,
Whose holy hand

<<1. Jehovah.>>

Gathers this earth, who built the vaults of space, Moulded the stars, and
fixed the iron sea,

Because His<<1>> love lights through my face
And all of me. {51B}

<<1. Jehovah.>>

Because my hand may fasten on the sword

If my heart falter not, and smite
Those lampless limits most abhorred
Of iron night,

And pass beyond their horror to attack
Fresh foemen, light and truth to bring
Through their untrodden fields of black,
A victor king.

I know all must be well, all must be free;
I know God as I know a friend;
I conquer, and most silently
Await the end.

VESPERS.

THE incense steams before the Christ;
It wraps His feet with grey,
A perfumed melancholy mist,
Tears sacred from the day;

And awe, a holiness, I wist,
More sweet than man may say.

I bend my head to kiss the brow,
Scarred and serene and wide,
The bosom and the loin-cloth now
And where the blood has dried,
The blood whose purple tide doth flow
From out the smitten side.

The fragrance of his skin begets
Desire of holy things;
Through the dim air a spirit frets
His closely woven wings;
Like love, upon my brow he sets
The crown of many kings.

(The trembling demons of the sea
Before the poet bend;
He greets the angels quietly

As one who greets a friend;
He waiteth, passionless, to be
A witness of the end.) {52A}

I chant in low sweet verses still
A mystic song of dread,
As one imposing all his will
Upon the expectant dead;
And lights dip down, and shadows fill
The dreams that haunt my head.

I sing strange stories of that world
No man may ever see;
My lips with strong delight are curled
To kiss the sacred knee,
And all my soul is dewed and pearled
With tears of poetry.

The strong mysterious spell is cast
To bind and to release;

To give the devils hope at last,
To the unburied peace;
To gladden the reluctant past
With silent harmonies.

The song grows wilder now and strives
All heaven to enchain,
As who should grasp a thousand lives,
And draw their breath again
Into some cavern where he dives,
A hell of grisly pain.

And now behold! the barren Cross
Bursts out in vernal flowers;
The music weeps, as on the moss
The summer's kissing showers,
And there sweep, as sweeps an albatross,
The happy-hearted hours.

My rapt eyes grow more eager now,

God smites within the host,
White fires illuminate my brow
Lit of the Holy Ghost;
I see the angel figures bow
On heaven's silent coast.

Eternity, a wheel of light,
And Time, a fleece of snow,
I saw, and deep beyond the night,
The steady mystic glow
Of that lamp's flame unearthly bright
That watches Earth below. {52B}

Long avenues of sleepy trees
And bowers arched with love,
And kisses woven for a breeze,
And lips that scarcely move,
Save as long ripples on the seas,
That murmur like a dove.

I saw the burning lips of God
Set fast on Mary's face,
I saw the Christ, with fire shod,
Walk through the holy place,
And the lilies rosier where he trod
Blushed for a little space.

I saw myself, and still I sang
With lips in clearer tune,
Like to the nightingale's that rang
Through all those nights of June;
Such nights when stars in slumber hang
Beneath the quiet moon.

Still, in those avenues of light,
No maid, with golden zone,
And lily garment that from sight
Half hides the ivory throne,
Lay in my arms the livelong night
To call my soul her own.

The Christ's cold lips my lips did taste
On Time's disastrous tide;
His bruised arms my soul embraced,
My soul twice crucified;
And always then the thin blood raced
From out the stricken side.

The incense fumes, the chant is low,
Perfume around is shed;
I am as one of Them who know
The secrets of the dead:
The sorrows that walk to and fro,
The love that hides his head.

O living Head! whose thorns are keen
To bruise and pierce and slay;
O Christ! whose eyes have always been
Fixed fast upon the way,
Where dim Jerusalem was seen

A city cold and grey! {53A}

The flowers of fire that grow beneath
And blossom on the Tree
Are fed from his despair and death
Who sings of land and sea,
And all those mountains where thy breath,
Jehovah, still must be.

The censer swings to slower time;
The darkness falleth deep:
My eyes, so solemn and sublime,
Relent, and close, and weep;
And on the silence, like a chime,
I heard the wings of Sleep.

BY THE CAM.

TWILIGHT is over, and the noon of night
Draws to its zenith. Here beyond the stream

Dance the wild witches that dispel my dream
Of gardens naked in Diana's sight.
Foul censers, altars desecrated, blight
The corpse-lit river, whose dank vapours teem
Heavy and horrible, a deadly steam
Of murder's black intolerable might.

The stagnant pools rejoice; the human feast
Revels at height; the sacrament is come;
God wakes no lightning in the broken East;
His awful thunders listen and are dumb;
Earth gapes not for that sin; the skies renew
At break of day their vestiture of blue.

ASTROLOGY.

A LONELY spirit seeks the midnight hour,
When souls have power
To cast away one moment bonds of clay,
And touch the day

With pallid wistful lips beyond the earth,
And bring to birth
New thoughts with which life long has travailed;
As if one dead {53B}
Should rise and utter secrets of the tomb,
And from hell's womb
Or heaven's breast bring all the load of fears,
Toils of long years,
Sorrows of life an agonies of death,
Hard caught-up breath,
The labouring hands of love, the cheeks of shame,
The gloomy flame
Of lust, the cruel torment of desire
More than hell fire,
And bid them fade, as if the bryony
Let her flower die,
And banished them through space, as if a star
Dropped through the far
Vault of the sky, and, as a lamp extinct
With blood-red tinct,

Went out. So lonely in mysterious night
A wild, strange light
Flickers around the sacred head of man,
And bids him scan
The scroll of heaven, and see if there be not,
Black with no blot
Of cloud, but golden lettered on the blue
That mothers dew,
This message of good hope, good trust, good fate
And good estate:
“Work on, hope ever, let your faith be built
Of gold ungilt;
Your love exceed the starry vault for height,
The heaven for might;
Your faith wax firmer than a ship at sleep
On the grey deep,
Anchored in some most certain anchorage
From ocean’s rage;
Your patience stand when mountains shake and quail Before the gale
Of God’s great tribulation. Make thee sure

Thou canst endure!

And work, work ever, sleep not, gird thy head

With garlands red

Of blood from swollen veins forced in bitter toil

To win some spoil {54A}

Of knowledge from the caverns of the deep!

So shall the steep

Pathways of heaven gleam with loftier fires

Than earth's desires.

So shalt thou conquer Space, and lastly climb

The walls of Time,

And by the golden path the great have trod

Reach up to God!"

DAEDALUS.

THE scorpion kisses and the stings of sin

Cling hard within

The heart whose fibres, like a slender vine,

Earth's hopes entwine,

And all the furies of the air caress
The sorceress
Whose bosom beats in unison with shame,
A flower of flame
Whose root most secretly made fast in hell
Is watered by the seraphim that fell.

The heart wherein is lit the sacred fire
Of high desire,
Burnt clean from all untruth and sacrilege,
Her wings may fledge,
And fly a little in the broad sweet air,
Till unaware
The Spirit of Jehovah, like a dove
On wings of love,
Breathe the sweet kiss, a sacrament untold,
And clothe the heart's desire with flames of gold.

No rash Icarian wing this passion plies,
But sanctifies,

As if a censer (that a cherub swings)
Blossomed with wings
And floated up, an incense-breathing bird,
With songs half heard {54B}
Before the throne of God. Even so this life
Of sordid strife
Is made most holy, beautiful, and pure,
By this desire, if this desire endure.

So to the altar of the Highest aspire
Those souls whose fire
Has on it cast one grain of pure incense,
(Who guesses — whence?)
Those souls that cast their trammels off, and spring On eager wing,
Immaculate, new-born, toward the sky,
And shall not die
Until they cleave at last the lampless dome,
And lose their tent because they find their home.

EPILOGUE.

LIKE snows on the mountain, uplifted
By weather or wind as it blows,
In hollows the heaps of it drifted,
The splendour of fathomless snows;
So measure and meaning are shifted to fashion a rose.

The garland I made in my sorrow
Was woven of infinite peace;
The joy that was white on the morrow
Made music of viols at ease;
The thoughts of the Highest would borrow the roar of the seas.

This pastime of hope and of labour
Fled singing through bountiful hours,
With sleep for a bride, for a neighbour
With Death in the blossoming bowers
That slays with his merciless sabre the passion of flowers.

This pastime had hope for its metre,

And trust in high God for the tune,
And passion of sorrow made sweeter
Than loves of the leafiest June,
When Artemis' arrows are fleeter than rays of the moon. {55A}

My hope in the ocean was founded,
Nor changed for the wind and the tide;
My love by the heaven was bounded,
And knew not a barrier beside;
My faith beyond heaven was grounded, as God to abide.

Though death be the stain on our roses,
The roses of heaven are white;
Though day on the world of us closes
The stars only dream of the night
As of music that roars and reposes and dies in delight.

Dead stars in the season of sighing,
Lost worlds of unspeakable pain,
White winds in the winter-tide dying,

Or pestilence risen from rain;
So thoughts are that perish for lying and rise not again.

Blue waves in the summer uncrested,
New homes for the fair and the free,
Bright breezes in forest-leaves nested,
Sweet birds in the flowering tree;
So thoughts that by truth have been tested sing down to the sea.

But weak as the flowers of summer
Are the flowers that float on my stream;
My song-birds to others are dumber
Than voices half heard in a dream;
My muse, louder gods overcome her, the eyes of them gleam.

The sorrow that woke me to singing
Is deeper than songs that I sing;
The birds that fresh music are bringing
No chords for my memory bring;
Those lips like a soul that are clinging most silently cling.

Take though for these verses, though time be

So sure and so swift for thy feet.

Though far from this England thy clime be<<1>>

In years that sway slow as the wheat,

Take thought, for an hour let my rhyme be not wholly unsweet. {55B}

<<1. Julian Baker expected at this time to be abroad for some years.>>

For truth and desire and devotion

May lend through the verses a voice,

They tremble with violent motion,

They yearn to be fair for thy choice

As billows and winds of the ocean that roar and rejoice.

For winds that are shaken and riven

I bound by my power unto me;

For these have I battled and striven

With winds that are rapid and free;

With weapons of words I have driven the pulse of the sea {56A}

There steals through my coldness a fire,

Between my slow words is a sword,

One lit by the heart of desire,

One sharp in the hand of the lord;

To these that sink, sleep, and expire, your welcome accord.

With wrath or repose for its raiment

Your power, like a pyramid, stands;

My love, with no claim, as a claimant

Came seeking out truth in the sands,

Found truth, and must place in poor payment this book in your hands.
{56B}

{full page below}

THE POEM.

A LITTLE DRAMA IN FOUR SCENES.

1898.

I dedicate this play<<1>> to the gentleman who, on the evening of June 24th, 1898, turned back in Shaftesbury Avenue to give a halfpenny to a little girl, and thereby suggested to me the idea here rendered. {col. start below}

<<1. Like all plays of this form, it may be read as a delicate idyll or a screaming parody, according to the nature and mood of the reader.>>

“SCENES.”

I. THE ANGEL OF PITY.

II. THE ANGEL OF LOVE.

III. THE ANGEL OF DEATH.

IV. THE FORM OF THE FOURTH WAS LIKE THE SON OF GOD.
<<See Daniel iii. 25.>>

“PERSONS.”

PERCY BRANDON (“a Poet”).

ESME VAUGHAN.

MR. VAUGHAN (“her Father”).

MR. BRANDON (“Father of Percy”).

A FRIEND TO VAUGHAN.

Butler, Footmen, etc., *etc.*

SCENE I.

“Shaftesbury Avenue, 8.30 p.m. A gentleman walking with a friend, both in evening dress. A little ragged girl. A young man. The gentleman stops and gives the little girl a halfpenny. The young man smiles.

“The gentleman notices the smile, and sees how great a sadness underlies it.”

VAUGHAN.

[“Turning to the young man.”]

AND you — what are you doing here?

Excuse my rudeness — you seem so sad. {57A}

PERCY.

I am sad to-night. I am very lonely in this place.

VAUGHAN.

There are plenty of people about.

PERCY.

People — mere shells, husks of the golden wheat that might grow even here.

VAUGHAN.

Why do you stay here?

PERCY.

I cannot think at home.

VAUGHAN.

Why think, if thinking makes you sad?

PERCY.

That I may write. I have not long to live, and I must write, write always.

FRIEND [“aside to Vaughan”].

Il me semble qu’il a faim.

PERCY.

I am hungry for a little love, a little pity. To-night you have shown me your soul, and I am not hungry any more. {57B}

VAUGHAN.

But, boy, you are starving physically. Come home with me and have some dinner. Only my daughter will be there.

PERCY.

You are very kind. Thank you.

FRIEND [“aside”]

He is a gentleman.

VAUGHAN.

But what are you doing to be alone in London?

PERCY.

Where should I go?

VAUGHAN.

Your father —

PERCY.

Has shown me the door.

VAUGHAN.

How have you quarrelled?

PERCY.

Because I must write.

VAUGHAN.

What do you write about that he dislikes?

PERCY.

He calls it waste of time.

VAUGHAN.

He may be right. What do you write about?

PERCY.

I write about all the horrible things I see, and try to find beauty in them, or to make beauty; and I write about all the beautiful things I only dream of. I love them all; yes, even that woman yonder. {58A}

VAUGHAN.

Do you find beauty in her?

PERCY.

No, but I see in her history a poem, to which I trust that God will write an end.

VAUGHAN.

What end can come but evi?

PERCY.

O! if I had not hope for her I should have none for myself.

VAUGHAN.

How? Have you then fallen?

PERCY.

Oh, yes, I have fallen. I am older every hour. I have wasted time, I have wasted love.

VAUGHAN.

Perhaps it is not all waste after all. There is a use for everything, nothing is destroyed — believe so, anyhow!

FRIEND.

What about this dinner of yours, Vaughan? Esme will think us a long while gone.

VAUGHAN.

Hansom! [“Exeunt.”

SCENE II.

“A year later. VAUGHAN’S house in Mayfair. PERCY’s bedroom. Moonlight streams through an open window in the corridor. PERCY asleep. He dreams uneasily, and after a little wakes up with a start and a cry.”

PERCY.

OH! I had such a bad dream. I dreamt I was straining out after a beautiful bird, and suddenly it stopped, and then I held it in {58B} my hands, and it was happy, and then I dropped down somehow into the darkness and the bird had gone — only it got so confused, and I woke up. I hear steps!

ESME. [“in corridor”].

Did you call, Percy? I heard a cry as if you were in pain.

PERCY.

Esme, I will come and talk to you in the moonlight. I want to say something that I couldn’t say before, because my heart choked me.

ESME.

Come out, Percy, the moon is so white, looking out of the black sky.

The sky is quite black near the moon; only far down where there are no more bright stars it is a deep, deep blue. It is bluer and deeper than the sea.

PERCY.

It is like your eyes. [“Comes out into corridor.”] Esme! I have looked into your eyes as your eyes look into Heaven, and there I have found my Heaven. O serene depths! O faultless face of my desire! O

white brow too clear! I sin against your holiness by my presence. Only the moon should see you, Esme.

ESME [“half in tears”].

You don’t mean like that, Percy, quite. Why do you say that?

“Enter” VAUGHAN “in shadow. He draws back and stands watching.”

PERCY.

Oh, you are crying, my heart! Do you cry because I have spoken and touched with fire the sweet child-love we have lived in all this year? Or is it

that you do not understand? Or are you sorry? Or are you glad?

{59A}

ESME.

I am very, very glad. [“They kiss. A little cloud passes across the moon without dimming its brightness.” Percy! Percy!

PERCY.

My wife, my own wife, will you kiss me?

ESME.

I am too happy to kiss you!

PERCY.

Esme, my Esme. And we will write our poem now together.

ESME.

I cannot write; we will live our poem now together.

PERCY.

Dear heart, dear heart! And she will give us light, our dear moon out yonder, always a pure cold light: and our life shall answer a purer, warmer flame. She is like a maiden covered with lilies; your lilies have kissed roses.

ESME.

And when the moon's light fails, the light of your song.

PERCY.

Let that light be drawn from Heaven too!

ESME.

Oh, Percy, I am so glad, so glad!

PERCY.

Esme!

ESME.

When will you begin your great poem — now? {59B}

PERCY [“as if in pain”].

Ah! my poem. I am in despair! It is so great, and I am so little; it is so pure, and I am so dull of understanding. When I write I feel as it were the breath of an angel covering me with holiness, and I know — then!

But now — I only write mechanically. I force myself. To-day I tore up all I wrote last night.

ESME.

Let us ask God to send you the angel, shall we?

[“They kneel, with arms intertwined, at the open window, and bow their heads silently.” VAUGHAN “also prays, with arms outspread in blessing. Curtain.”

SCENE III.

“Six months later.”

“The dining-room.” PERCY, VAUGHAN,

ESME “at diner.”

“Enter” BUTLER.

BUTLER.

If you please, sir, a gentleman has called; he says he must see you at once.

VAUGHAN.

Have you told him we are at dinner?

BUTLER.

Yes, sir; but he would not take that; begging your pardon, sir, he said it was only an excuse, and he wouldn't stand any nonsense.

VAUGHAN.

An excuse! Who is the fellow? {60A}

BUTLER.

I think he is a friend of Mr. Percy's, sir.

PERCY ["alarmed"].

It might be my father. ["Aside."] And I could have finished to-night -

the very last word. Something has been singing in me all day.

VAUGHAN.

I will come and speak to him.

[“Exit. The voices are heard outside.”]

BRANDON [“Stout, purple, “knobbed,” and ill-tempered”].

Yes, sir. Either I see my son now, or I fetch in a policeman.

Kidnapper! Yes, sir, that’s what I call you! Yes, sir! my name “is”

Brandon. And your damned name is Vaughan, sir! And I’ll drag your damned name through a police-court, sir, as soon as — as — Where’s my son?

[“Is heard to move towards dining-room.”]

VAUGHAN.

John! shut that door. Mr. Brandon, my daughter is at dinner in that room. I cannot allow you to enter

BRANDON.

That's where he is, you scoundrel. Out of the way, fool! ["Knocking"]

JOHN "over, bursts the door open and enters."] There you are, you snivelling little swine. My God! to think that damned puppy's my son!

Come out of it!

VAUGHAN ["who has entered and rung the bell for the servants"].

I shall have you locked up for assaulting my servant. {60B}

BRANDON.

And you for abducting my son. He's coming with me now or there'll be a fuss. Mark my words, you rascal!

["Enter two Footmen."]

VAUGHAN.

Seize that man. ["They seize and hold him after a struggle."] Esme go away to your room; this is no place for you. Now, sir, say all you have to

say!

[ESME “waits in the doorway.”

BRANDON.

Give me my son, and be damned to you! That’s all; and it’s plain enough, I hope.

PERCY.

Father, I am leaving Mr. Vaughan’s house, as I shall only get him into trouble if I stay. But I will not come home with you, you who broke my mother’s heart, and turned me from your doors penniless.

BRANDON.

Unnatural puppy!

PERCY.

My mother's spirit forgives you, and in my heart is no longer the desire for vengeance. So far have I risen, but not far enough to forget that you are the most abominable villain that plagues God's beautiful world with his infesting life.

BRANDON ["with sudden calmness"]..

This to his father! What does the Bible say, you wretch? {61A}

PERCY ["To" VAUGHAN].

I will go, my true new father. Kiss Esme for me a hundred times!

BRANDON ["breaking from Footmen"].

Damn you; that's your game, is it? No, you go with me, Sir Poet.

["Rushing at his son, strikes." PERCY, "warding of the unexpected blow, staggers." BRANDON, "maddened by the idea of fighting, snatches up a knife and drives it into his heart. He falls with a low cry."

VAUGHAN "dashes forward and strikes" BRANDON "heavily. He falls; footmen drag him off insensible"

VAUGHAN [“bending over” PERCY].

Are you hurt?

PERCY.

Oh, hardly hurt at all! Only my head a little, and I wanted so to finish the poem to-night.

ESME.

Let me come to him, father. Oh, Percy, Percy, look at me, look at me; you're not hurt, are you?

PERCY.

Am I ever hurt with your arms round me?

ESME.

Oh, but you grow whiter; you must be hurt.

VAUGHAN.

A knife! He must have stabbed him. Fetch a doctor, one of you, sharp!

["Exit a man." {61B}

ESME.

It is his heart; see, my hand is all covered with blood. Give me a handkerchief. Here, I will staunch the wound. ["She attempts to prevent the bleeding with her handkerchief."] Oh! Percy! ["A pause"] Oh! Percy!

PERCY.

I am going away, Esme. I shall see you often. When you think of me I shall always be with you. One day you will come to me, Esme! Kiss me!

Your kisses must finish my poem. One day your pen must finish it.

ESME.

You know I cannot write a line. Oh, how sorry I am for that!

PERCY [“to” VAUGHAN].

Good-by, my dear, dear friend. Take care of Esme for me. I shall watch over her myself, I and God together. She is so frail and white, and she understands. She sees my soul, and Heaven is always open to her eyes when she looks up, and she is so beautiful. Will it seem long, Esme, till we kiss again beyond the moon there — it is the moon, isn't it, come to see that Esme is not too sad about my dying? Be kind to her always, moon, when I am gone beyond you! You must finish my poem, Esme; there is only a little to do. Kiss me the last time! Good-bye, my dear friends. I wish I could take your hands, but I am so weak. Kiss me, Esme, quickly.

I feel the voice of God come like a shudder in my blood; I must go to Him.

Esme! Esme! Esme! I am so happy! [“Dies.”

[ESME flings herself passionately on to the body, weeping and kissing the dead face. Curtain. {62A}

SCENE IV.

“The next morning. ESME in bed asleep.”

“Enter” VAUGHAN.

VAUGHAN.

POOR child, poor child, how are you? You have not slept, I know. Why, she is still asleep! Hush! How calmly and regularly she breathes! How fresh she looks! How she smiles! It is wonderful! It is impossible!

Esme! Esme! it is a pity you cannot always sleep so, and never wake up to the cruel sorrow of yesterday. Ah me! When we all thought to be so happy. And in a month he would have married her: in a day he would have finished the poem. What a wonderful poem it was! One could hear, above the angels that sang, the voice of God in that awful music that made his lines quiver and shimmer like live coals. And the end was to have been so perfect: there was on the last passage of his work a hush, a silence almost as if the world — his world — awaited the voice of some great one. And now the silence is not broken. Perhaps men were not ready for those final chords. Perhaps to hear them would be to pass where he has passed! But oh! the pity! To leave his greatest task undone! To be stricken down in the last charge, a good soldier to the end! Would God he could come back only for an hour to put the keystone to his palace that he built of running brooks and trees and buds and the sound of the sea, and all the lights of heaven to widow it. [ESME’S “eyes open.”] Esme! you must wake up and kiss father!

ESME [“half awake”].

He sang to me all night, not his voice only, but a deeper voice that I understood so well as I never understood, a voice like his poem, only more beautiful even than that, and I can’t remember one word, only that he kissed

me all the night; and there was as it were a vapour, an incense-cloud, about me, and I could not see — and I am so happy. {62B}

VAUGHAN.

Esme, I am here, your father.

ESME.

Ah! it comes back. He is dead. Oh, God! Oh, God! And we were to have been married a month to-day.

VAUGHAN.

And he left the poem and could not finish it. {63A}

ESME [“pointing to scattered papers on a table”].

What have you been doing with those papers, father?

VAUGHAN [“astonished”].

They are not mine, child. I did not see them till you showed me.

[“Taking papers.”] Why, they are in your handwriting; what are they?

[“Reading, gradually becomes aware that something strange has happened.”]

It is finished - it is finished! [“Curtain.” {63B}

{full page below}

JEPHTHAH.

1899.

TO

GERALD KELLY,

POET AND PAINTER,

I DEDICATE THIS TRAGEDY.

{col. start below}

CAMBRIDGE, “November,” 1898.

JEPHTHAH.

“Let my lamp, at midnight hour,

Be seen in some high lonely Tower,

Where I may oft outwatch the Bear,

With thrice-great Hermes, or unspear

The spirit of Plato, to unfold

What Worlds, or what vast Regions hold

The immortal mind that hath forsook

Her mansion in the fleshy nook;

And of those Daemons that are found

In fire, air, flood, or under ground,

Whose power hath a true consent

With Planet, or with Element.

Some time let Gorgeous Tragedy

In Sceptr'd Pall come sweeping by.”

“Il Penseroso.”

GR: Tau-alpha-delta-epsilon nu-upsilon-nu epsilon-tau-alpha-iota-rho-alpha-iota-sigma Tau-alpha-iota-sigma epsilon-mu-alpha-iota-sigma-iota tau-epsilon-rho-pi-nu-alpha kappa-alpha-lambda-omega-sigma alpha-epsilon-iota-sigma-omega.

SAPPHO.

“It need not appear strange unto you that this Book is not at all like unto so many others which I have, and which are composed in a lofty and subtle style.” — “The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin the Mage.”

PRELIMINARY INVOCATION.

TO A. C. S.

IN the blind hour of madness, in its might,
When the red star of tyranny was highest;
When baleful watchfires scared the witless night,
And kings mocked Freedom, as she wept: "Thou diest!" {64A}
When priestcraft snarled at Thought: "I crush thee quite!"
Then rose the splendid song of thee, "Thou liest!"
Out of the darkness, in the death of hope,
Thy white star flamed in Europe's horoscope.

The coffin-nails were driven home: the curse
Of mockery's blessing flung the dust upon her:
The horses of Destruction dragged the hearse
Over besmirched roads of Truth and Honour:
The obscene God spat on the universe:
The sods of Destiny were spattered on her: —
Then rose thy spirit through the shaken skies:
"Child of the Dawn, I say to thee, arise!"

Through the ancestral shame and feudal gloom,

Through mediaeval blackness rung thy paeon:

Let there be light! — the desecrated tomb

Gaped as thy fury smote the Galilean.

Let there be light! and there was light: the womb

Of Earth resounded, and the empyrean

Roared: and the thunder of the seas averred

The presence of thy recreating word.

The stone rolls back: the charioted night,

Stricken, swings backwards on her broken pinions: Faith sickens,
drunken tyranny reels, the spite

Of monarchs, ruinous of their chained dominions: {64B}

The splendid forehead, crowned with Love and Light, Flames in the
starry air: the fallen minions

Drop like lost souls through horrid emptinesses

To their own black unfathomable abysses!

Now Freedom, flower and star and wind and wave

And spirit of the unimagined fire,

Begotten on the dishonourable grave

Of fallen tyranny, may seek her sire
In the pure soul of Man, her lips may have
In the pure waters of her soul's desire,
Truth: and deep eyes behold thine eyes as deep,
Fresh lips kiss thine that kissed her soul from sleep.

See Italy, the eagle of all time,
Triumphant, from her coffin's leaden prison,
Soar into freedom, seek the heights sublime
Of self-reliance, from those depths new-risen,
Stirred by the passion of thy mighty rhyme:
Eagle, and phoenix: shrill, sharp flames bedizen The burning citadle,
where crested Man
Leaps sword in hand upon the Vatican.

Those dire words spoken, that thine hammer beat,
Of fire and steel and music, wrath god-worded,
Consuming with immeasurable heat
The sties and kennels of priest and king, that girded The loins of many
peoples, till the seat
Of Hell was shaken to its deep, and herded

Hosts of the tyrant trembled, faltered, fled,

When none pursued but curses of men dead: —

See, from the Calvary of the Son of Man,<<1>>

Where all the hopes of France were trodden under; See, from the
crucifixion of Sedan

Thy thought the lightning, and thy word the thunder!

See her supreme, kingly, republican,

New France arisen, with her heart in sunder —

Yet throned in Heaven on ever-burning wheels,

Freedom resurgent, sealed with seven seals. {65A}

<<1. Napoleon III.>>

The seal of Reason, made impregnable:

The seal of Truth, immeasurably splendid:

The seal of Brotherhood, man's miracle:

The seal of Peace, and Wisdom heaven-descended:

The seal of Bitterness, cast down to Hell:

The seal of Love, secure, not-to-be-rended:

The seventh seal, Equality: that, broken,

God sets His thunder and earthquake for a token.

Now if on France the iron clangours close,

Corruption's desperate hand, and lurking treason,<<1>>

Or alien craft,<<2>> or menace of strange blows

Wrought of her own sons,<<3>> in this bitter season: Lift up thy voice,
breathe fury on her foes,

Smite bigots yet again, and call on Reason,

Reason that must awake, and sternly grip

The unhooded serpent of dictatorship!<<4>>

<<1. Ultramontanism.>>

<<2. Dreyfusardism.>>

<<3. Militarism.>>

<<4. At the time this poem was written, French patriots looked with a
distrustful eye on General de Gallifet.>>

Or, if thou have laid aside the starry brand,

And scourge, whose knots with their foul blood are rotten Whom thou
didst smite; if thine unwearied hand

Sicken of slaughter; if thy soul have gotten
Its throne in so sublime a fatherland,
Above these miscreants and misbegotten;
If even already thy spirit have found peace,
Among the thronged immortal secrecies;

If with the soul of Aeschylus thy soul
Talk, and with Sappho's if thy music mingle;
If with the spirit infinite and whole

Of Shakespeare thou commune; if thy brows tingle With Dante's kiss; If
Milton's thunders roll

Amid the skies; if thou, supreme and single,
Be made as Shelley or as Hugo now,
And all their laurels mingle on thy brow —

Then (as Elijah, when the whirling fire
Caught him) stoop not thy spiritual splendour,
And sacred-seeking eyes to our desire,
But mould one memory yet, divinely tender, {65B}
Of earth, and leave thy mantle, and thy lyre,

A double portion of thy spirit to render,
That yet the banner may fling out on high,
And yet the lyre teach freemen how to die!

Master, the night is falling yet again.

I hear dim trappings of unholy forces:

I see the assembly of the foully slain:

The scent of murder steams: riderless horses

Gallop across the earth, and seek the inane:

The sun and moon are shaken in their courses:

The kings are gathered, and the vultures fall

Screaming, to hold their ghastly festival.

Master, the sons of Freedom are but few —

Yea, but as strong as the storm-smitten sea,

Their forehead consecrated with the dew,

Their heart made mighty: let all my voice decree, My spirit lift their
standard: clear and true

Bid my trump sound, “Let all the earth be free!”

With thine own strength and melody made strong,

And filled with fire and light of thine own song.

Only a boy's wild songs, a boy's desire,

I bring with reverent hands. The task is ended —

The twilight draws on me: the sacred fire

Sleeps: I have sheathed my sword, my bow unbended: So for one hour I
lay aside the lyre,

And come, alone, unholpen, unbefriended,

As streams get water of the sun-smit sea,

Seeking my ocean and my sun in thee.

Yea, with thy whirling clouds of fiery light

Involve my music, gyring fuller and faster!

Yea, to my sword lend majesty and might

To dominate all tumult and disaster,

That even my song may pierce the iron night,

Invoking dawn in thy great name, O Master!

Till to the stainless heaven of the soul

Even my chariot-wheels on thunder roll.

And so, most sacred soul, most reverend head,
The silence of deep midnight shall be bound,
And with the mighty concourse of the dead
That live, that contemplate, my place be found, {66A}
Even mine, through all the seasons that are shed
Like leaves upon the darkness, where the sound
Of all high song through calm eternity
Shall beat and boom, thine own maternal sea.

For in the formless world, so swift a fire
Shall burn, that fire shall not be comprehended: So deep a music roll, that
our desire

Shall hear no sound; shall beam a light so splendid That darkness shall be
infinite; the lyre

Fashioned of truth, strung with men's heart-strings blended, Shall sound
as silence: and all souls be still

In wisdom's high communion with will.

JEPHTHAH.

“A TRAGEDY.”

“O Jephthah! judge of Israel!” — HAMLET.

“CHARACTERS.”

JEPHTHAH.

ADULAH, “his Daughter.”

JARED, “A Gileadite, cousin to” Jephthah.

A Prophet of the Lord.

ELEAZAR, “Chief of the Elders of Israel.”

AHINOAM, “an aged Priest.”

First Messenger.

Second Messenger.

First Herald.

Second Herald.

Soldiers of Jephthah.

Soldiers of Israel.

Chorus of Elders of Israel.

Maidens of Israel.

SCENE: — “An Open Place before Mizpeh. In the midst an Altar.”

TIME: — “The duration of the play is from noon of the first day to dawn of the third.”

JEPHTHAH.

“Eleazar. Prophet. Chorus.”

CHORUS.

NOW is our sin requited of the Lord.

For, scorning Jephthah for an harlot's son,

We cast him forth from us, and said: Begone,

Thou shalt not enter in with us; thy throat {66B}

Shall thirst for our inheritance in vain;

Thou hast no lot nor part in Gilead.

And now, he gathers to himself vain men,

Violent folk, and breakers of the law,
And holds aloof in rocky deserts, where
The land, accurst of God, is barren still
Of any herb, or flower, or any tree,
And has no shelter, nor sweet watersprings,
Save where a lonely cave is hollow, and where
A meagre fountain sucks the sand. Our folk
Are naked of his counsel and defence
Against the tribe of Ammon, and stand aghast;
Our feeble arms sway doubtfully long swords,
And spears are flung half-heartedly; and he
With warlike garrison and stronger arms
Who might have helped us, laughs, and violence
Threatens the white flower of our homes: our wives, Daughters, and sons
are as a prey to them,
And where the children of the Ammonites
Throng not swift hoofs for murder, Jephthah's men
Blaspheme our sanctuaries inviolate,
And rob us of our dearest. Woe on woe
Hangs imminent to crush the slender sides

And battered bulwarks of our state. O thou
Whose hoary locks and sightless eyes compel
Our pity and our reverence, and whose mouth
Foams with the presence of some nearer god
Insatiate of thy body frail, give tongue,
If tongue may so far master deity
As give his fury speech, or shape thy words
From the blind auguries of madness.

PROPHET.

Ha!

The rose has washed its petals, and the blood
Pours through its burning centre from my heart.
The fire consumes the light; and rosy flame
Leaps through the veins of blue, and tinges them
With such a purple as incarnadines {67A}
The western sky when storms are amorous
And lie upon the breast of toiling ocean,
Such billows to beget as earth devours

In ravening whirlpool gulphs. My veins are full,
Throbbing with fire more potent than all wine,
All sting of fleshly pangs and pleasures. Oh!
The god is fast upon my back; he rides
My spirit like a stallion; for I hate
The awful thong his hand is heavy with.

ELEAZAR.

Speak, for the god compels, and we behold.

PROPHET.

A harlot shall be mother of Israel.

CHORUS.

He speaks of her who sighed for Gilead.

PROPHET.

A maiden shall be slain for many men.

CHORUS.

A doubtful word, and who shall fathom it?

PROPHET.

Thy help is from the hills and desert lands.

CHORUS.

Our help is from the hills: we know the Lord.

PROPHET.

Death rides most violently against the sun.

CHORUS.

And who shall bridle him, or turn his way?

For Fate alone of gods, inflexible,

And careless of men's deeds, is firm in heaven.

PROPHET.

I see a sword whose hilt is to thy hand.

CHORUS.

But which of us shall wield the shining blade? {67B}

PROPHET.

I see a dove departing to the hills

CHORUS.

I pray it bring an olive-branch to us.

PROPHET.

The god has overcome me; I am silent.

CHORUS.

He lies as one lies dead; none wakens him.

Nor life nor death must touch him now: beware!

ELEAZAR.

Beware now, all ye old wise men, of this.

For high things spoken and unjustly heard,

Or heard and turned aside, are fruitless words,

Or bear a blossom evil and abhorred,

Lest God be mocked. Consider well of this.

CHORUS.

A sword, a sword, to smite our foes withal!

ELEAZAR.

A help shall come from desert lands to us.

CHORUS.

Toward what end? For present help is much,

But uttermost destruction more, for we

Have no strong hope in any hand of man:

God is our refuge and our tower of strength.

In him if any man abide — But if

He put his faith in horsemen, or the sword,

The sword he trusted shall be for an end.

ELEAZAR.

But evils fall like rain upon the land.

CHORUS.

Let us not call the hail to give us peace.

ELEAZAR.

Nor on the sun, lest he too eat us up. {68A}

CHORUS.

The heart of a man as the sea

Beats hither and thither to find

Ease for the limbs long free,

Light for the stormy mind,

A way for the soul to flee,

A charm for the lips to bind;

And the struggle is keen as the strife to be,

And the heart is tossed by the thankless wind.

ELEAZAR.

Nay, for a man's sure purpose is of God.

CHORUS.

The large pale limbs of the earth are tanned
With the sun and the sea and the yellow sand;
And the face of earth is dark with love
Of the lords of hell and the spirits above
That move in the foggy air of night,
And the spirit of God, most like a dove,
Hovers, and lingers, and wings his flight,
Spurned and rejected and lost to sight;
But we desire him, a holy bird,
And we turn eyes to the hollow hills;
For God is strong, and His iron word
Mocks at the gods of the woods and rills.

For our God is as a fire
That consumeth every one
That is underneath the sun.
We, for uttermost desire,
Must abase, with rent attire,
Souls and bodies to His throne,
Where above the starry choir
Stands the jasper, where alone
Vivid seraphim respire
Perfumes of a precious stone,
Where beneath His feet the dire
World of shells is pashed with mire,
And the evil spirits' ire
Steams and fumes within the zone
Girt with manaret and spire
Broken, burst, and overthrown,
Dusty, and defiled, and dun,
Palled with smoke of fruitless altars {68B}
Cast beneath the ocean now,

Ruined symbols, changed psalters,
Where no lip no longer falters,
And the priest's deep brow
Pales not, flushes not for passion,
Clouds not with concealed thought,
And the worshipper's eye, wrought
To the stars in subtle fashion,
By no magic is distraught.

Ay! our hope is in His holy
Places, and our prayers ascend
Fervent, and may sunder slowly
The blue darkness at the end.
For we know not where to send
For a sword to cleanse the land,
For a sharp two-edged brand,
All our homesteads to defend.
Now amid the desert sand
Lives an outcast of our race,
Strong, immutable, and grand,

And his mighty hand
Grips a mighty mace.
He would shatter, did we call,
Sons of Ammon one and all,
Did we fear not lest his eye
Turn back covetous to try
For our pleasancess, to rule
Where the far blue Syrian sky
Stretches, where the clouds as wool
Mark the white Arabian border,
To become a tyrant king
Where his sword came conquering.
Out of chaos rises order
On her wide unwearying wing,
But the desolate marauder
Never over us shall swing
Such a sceptre as should bring
Sorrow to one home of ours.
Better bear the heavy hours
Under God's avenging breath,

Better brave the horrid powers,
Better taste the foreign death,
Humbling all our pride before
God's most holy throne, abasing
Every man's strong soul, and facing
All the heathen Ammon bore
On the angry shore, {69A}
Trusting to the mercy rare
Of Jehovah, than to bare
Hearts and bosoms to a friend
Who high truth and faith may swear,
And betray us at the end
To his robber bands.
So we clasp our humble hands,
Praying God to lift His sword
From our bleeding state, that stands
Tottering to its fall.
Though we call not Jephthah back
To repel the harsh attack,
Nor his followers call,

Hear thou, O Most High, give ear

To our pitiful complaint:

Under woes of war we faint.

Pity, Lord of Hosts, our fear!

Hear, Most High, oh, hear!

“Enter” Messenger.

MESSENGER.

My lords, take heed now, prayer is good to save

While yet the foemen are far off; but now

They howl and clamour at our very gates.

ELEAZAR.

Blaspheme not God, but tell thy woeful news.

CHORUS.

I fear me for the sorrow that he speaks.

MESSENGER.

The tribe of Ephraim went forth to fight
Armed, and with bows, and turned them back to-day.
For in the South a cloud of many men,
And desert horsemen fiery as the sun,
Swarmed on the plains, a crescent from the hills
That girdle Mahanaim: and behold!
Our men were hemmed before the city gates,
The elders having fortified them: so
They fled about the city, and the horsemen,
Dashing, destroyed them as the wind that sweeps {69B}
Sere leaves before its fury: then the city
With arrows darkened all the air; and luck
Smote down some few pursuing; but their captain
Riding his horse against the gate, drove in
His spear, and cried to them that followed him:
Who plucks my spear out shall be chief of all

That ply the short spear: and who breaks the gate
Shall lead my horsemen into Mizpeh: then,
Rushing, their spearmen battered in the gate
And overpowered the youths and aged men,
That put up trembling spears, and drew slack bows, And flung weak
stones that struck for laughter's sake.

So now the city is the spoil of them,
And all our women-folk are slain or violate,
And all our young men murderously slain,
And children spitted on their coward spears.

CHORUS.

How heavy is thy hand upon us, Lord!

MESSENGER.

Nor stayed they there; but, firing Mahanaim,
Sweep toward Mizpeh like a locust-cloud.

ELEAZAR.

Get thee to horse and carry me this message:

The Elders unto Jephthah, greeting: Help!

No single cry beyond that Help! Be gone!

[“Exit” Messenger.

CHORUS.

I fear me our necessity is sure.

But they come thither. Shall we rather flee?

ELEAZAR.

I stand here manly, and will die a man. {70A}

CHORUS.

For cowardice not pleases God, nor fear.

Shall we not take up weapons? Or shall he

Rather defend us with His Holy Arm

We nor presuming in our arrogance

To come with cunning, and defend ourselves?

ELEAZAR.

Nay, but God smites with sharpness of our swords.

CHORUS.

The sword is made sharp in our hands, but the point He shall guide; We grasp the tough ash of the spear, but His hand is beside; We drive in a cloud at the foe, but His chariots ride Before us to sunder the spears.

We trust in His arms, and His prowess shall fledge our song's wing; Our triumph we give to His glory, our spoil to the King; Our battles He fights as we fight them, our victories bring For His temple a tribute of tears.

“Enter” JEPHTHAH “amid his Soldiers, with
many young men of Israel.”

JEPHTHAH.

Yea, for a man's sword should not turn again
To his own bosom, and the sword of fear
Smites not in vain the heart of cowardice.
But who hath called me thither to what end?

ELEAZAR.

For these, and for the sake of Israel.

JEPHTHAH.

And who are these? And who are Israel?

CHORUS.

Turn not thy face from us in wrath, for we
Are thine own father's children, and his loins
With double fervour gat a double flower;

And we indeed were born of drudging wives, {70B}
Pale spouses whom his heart despised, but thou
Wast of a fairer face and brighter eyes,
And limbs more amorous assuaged thy sire;
And fuller blood of his is tingling thus
Now in thy veins indignant at our sin.
But thou art strong and we are weak indeed,
Nor can we bear the burden, nor sustain
The fury of the Children of the East
That ride against us, and bright victory
Is throned in their banners, while on ours
Perches the hideous nightbird of defeat.
Mourn, mourn and cry; bow down unto the dust
O Israel, and O Gilead, for your son
Comes with unpitying eyes and lips compressed
To watch the desecration of thy shrine,
Jehovah, and the ruin of our hearth.

JEPHTHAH.

I am your outcast brother. At my birth
My father did not smile, nor she who bore
These limbs dishonourable did not smile,
Nor did my kisses soothe a mother's woe.
Because my thews grown strong were impotent
To reign or be a captain any more,
Though I might serve the children who had grown
Less godlike from his loins who made me god.
So when the day was ripe, my brethren turned
And gnashed upon me, mocking, with their teeth:
Thou art the son of a strange woman, thou!
Begone from honest folk! — and I in wrath
Smote once or twice with naked hand, and slew
Two gibing cowards, and went forth an outcast,
And gathered faithful servitors, and ruled
Mightiest in the desert, and was lord
Of all the marches where my spear might throw
Its ominous shadow between night and noon.
Yet always I considered my revenge, {71A}
And purposed, seeking out those kin of mine,

To make them as those kings that Gideon slew
Hard by the bloody waters of a brook.
And now ye call me to your help, forsooth!

CHORUS.

Let no ill memory of an ancient wrong,
Most mighty, edge thy sword
Against the prayer of this repentant song.
Dire sorrow of the Lord
Consumes our vital breath, and smites us down,
And desecrates the crown.
For we have sinned against thee, and our souls
Scathe and devour as coals,
And God is wroth because of thee, to break
The spirit of our pride, our lips to make
Reverent toward thee, as of men ashamed.
And now we pray thee for our children's sake,
And thine own pity's sake, to come untamed,
And furiously to ride against our foes,

To be our leader, till one sanguine rose
Spread from thy standard awful leaves of blood,
And thy swords pour their long insatiate flood
Through ranks of many dead! then, then to close
The wounds of all the land, and bit it bud
And blossom; as when two-and-thirty men,
The sons of Jair, on milk-white asses rode,
And judged us righteously, and each abode
Safe in the shadow of his vine; as when
The peace of Joshua lay upon the land,
And God turned not away His piteous eyes,
Nor smote us with the fury of His hand,
Nor clouded over His mysterious skies.
Then storm and wind had no more might at all,
And death and pestilence forgotten were;
Then angels came to holy men that call,
And gracious spirits thronged the happy air;
Then God was very gracious to all folk;
He lifted from us the Philistian yoke,
And all the iron of power of Edom broke: — {71B}

Ah! all the Earth was fair!
Now, seeing that we are sinners, wilt not thou
Relent thy hateful brow,
Bend down on us a forehead full of peace,
Bidding thine anger cease,
Speaking sweet words most comfortable. O lose
The bitter memory of the wrong long dead!
O be the lord and prince we gladly choose
And crown the mercy of thy royal head!
Be thou the chief, and rule upon thy kin,
And be not wroth for sin.
For surely in the dusty days and years
There is a little river flowing still
That brings forgetfulness of woes and fears
And drinks up all the memory of ill.
Wherefore our tribute to thy feet we bring;
Conquer our foes, and reign our king!

JEPHTHAH.

Ye have no king but God; see ye to that!

ELEAZAR.

Behold, these people are as children, hiding
Thoughts beautiful and true in profuse words,
Not meaning all the lofty flight that fancy
And the strong urgency of a tune discover.
Be thou our judge, as Joshua long ago.

JEPHTHAH.

Swear by the Name unspoken that the truth
Flashes between the lips that tremble thus!
Ye love me not; yet fear me; ye might thrust
Some petty obstacle before my hands
When I would grasp your promise, and betray
Your faith for fear of me. I read thy thoughts,
Old man; I trust no word of thine; but these
Full-hearted mourners, them will I believe

Upon their oath most solemn and secure.

But take thou warning now! I shall not spare

Grey hairs or faltering limbs for treachery. {72A}

ELEAZAR.

Lift up your hands, all people of this land,

And swear with me this oath my lips pronounce:

By Wisdom, father of the world, we swear;

By Understanding, mother of the sea,

By Strength and Mercy, that support the throne,

By Beauty, Splendour, Victory, we swear,

And by the strong foundations, and the Kingdom,

Flower of all kingdoms, and by the holy Crown

Concealed with all concealments, highest of all,

We swear to be true men to thee and thine.

JEPHTHAH.

I thank you, people. Let the younger men

Gather their swords and spears, and pass before

This spear I strike into the earth, that so

I see how many fight for Israel.

CHORUS.

The young men are girded with swords;

The spears flash on high, and each shield

Gleams bright like the fury of lords

Through the steam of the well-foughten field.

The children of Ammon are broken, their princes and warriors yield, The
captain is chosen for fight;

The light of his eye is as fire,

His hand is hardy of might

And heavy as dead desire;

The sword of the Lord and of Jephthah shall build our dead women a
pyre.

The people are sad for his wrath;

The elders were bowed with despair,

And death was the piteous path;

With ashes we covered our hair;
The voice of the singer was dumb, the voice of the triumph of prayer.

{72B}

But God had pity upon us,
Our evil and fallen way;
His mercy was mighty on us;
His lips are as rosy as day
Broken out of the sea at the sunrise, as fragrant as flowers in May.

Our sin was great in His sight:
We chased from our gates our brother,
We shamed his father's might,
We spat on the grave of his mother,
We laughed in his face and mocked, looking slyly one to another.

But God beheld, and His hand
Was heavy to bring us grief;
He brought down fire on the land,
And withered us root and leaf

Until we were utterly broken, lost men, without a chief.

But whom we scorned we have set

A leader and judge over all;

His wrong he may not forget,

But he pitieth men that call

From the heart that is broken with fear and the noise of funeral.

JEPHTHAH.

Are all these ready for the hearth and altars

To perish suddenly upon the field,

Pavilioned with the little tents at noon,

And ere the nightfall tented with the dead,

And every hollow made a sepulchre,

And every hill a vantage ground whereon

Hard-breathing fighting men get scanty sleep,

Till the dawn lift his eyebrows, and the day

Renew the battle? Will ye follow me

Through slippery ways of blood to Ephraim

To beat with sturdy swords unwearying
Our foemen to their Ammon, and to grapple
With red death clutching at the throat of us,
With famine and with pestilence, at last
To reach a barren vengeance, and perchance
An hundred of your thousands to return {27A}
Victors — so best God speed us — and for worst
Death round our cities horrible and vast,
And rape and murder mocking at our ghosts?

A SOLDIER.

Better they taunt our ghosts than us for cowards!

Live through or die, I will have my sword speak plain To these damned
massacring invaders. Say,

My fellows, will ye follow Jephthah? Hail!

SOLDIERS.

We follow Jephthah to the death. All hail!

JEPHTHAH.

Go then, refresh yourselves. Sleep well to-night!

I will send messages to their dread lord

[“Enter a Herald.”

Demanding his fell purpose, threatening

My present aid to you with men of valour

Chosen of all your tribes, and charging him

As he loves life, and victory, to content

His army with their present brief success,

Lest he pass by the barrier of our suffering,

And find our wrath no broken sword, and find

Despair more terrible than hope. Go now!

A SOLDIER.

We go, my lord, less readily to sleep

Than if you bade us march. No man of us

But stirs a little, I warrant, in his dreams,
And reaches out for sword-hilt. All hail, Jephthah!

SOLDIERS.

Jephthah! a leader, a deliverer. Hail!

[“Exeunt Soldiers and Young Men.” {73B}

JEPHTHAH.

Hearken, Jehovah, to thy servant now;
Fill Thou my voice with thine own thunders; fill
My swift sharp words with such a lightning-fork
As shall fall venomous upon the host
Of these idolatrous that thus invade
Our fenced cities, these that put to sword
Our helpless. Hear the cry of widowed men!
Of young men fatherless! Of old men reft
Of children! Grant us victory to avenge
Their innocent shed blood, and ruined land.

So, to gain time for prayer and penitence
For grievous trespass of idolatry
Done to the accursed Baalim (“aside”) — and time
To gather fugitives, and make them men,
And straggling herdsmen for our armament! — (“aloud”) We send the,
herald, to the furious king
Who lies with all his power encamped somewhere
Hence southward toward Mahanaim. Say
Unto the king of Ammon: Thus saith Jephthah:
Why hast thou come with bloody hands against us?
Our holy God, that bound the iron sea
With pale frail limits of white sand, and said:
Thus far, and not one billowy step beyond!
Saith unto thee in like commandment: Thou
Who hast destroyed my people from the land
So far, shalt not encroach upon their places
One furlong more, lest quickly I destroy
Thee and thy host from off the earth. Say thus;
Ride for thy life, and bring me speedy word.

[“Exit Herald.”

CHORUS.

Not winged forms, nor powers of air,
Nor sundered spirits pale and fair,
Nor glittering sides and scales, did bring
The knowledge of this happy thing {74A}
That is befallen us unaware.

In likeness to the lips that sing
Ring out your frosty peal, and smite
Loud fingers on the harp, and touch
Lutes, and clear psalteries musical,
And all stringed instruments, to indite
A noble song of triumph, such
As men may go to fight withal.

For now a captain brave and strong
Shall break the fury of the thong
Wherewith the sons of Ammon scourge
Our country; and his war shall urge

Long columns of victorious men
To blackest wood and dimmest den,
Wherever fugitive and slave
Shall seek a refuge, find a grave;
And so pursue the shattered legions
Through dusty ways and desert regions
Back to the cities whence they came
With iron, massacre, and flame,
And turn their own devouring blade
On city fired and violate maid,
That Israel conquer, and men know
God is our God against a foe.

For the web of the battle is woven
Of men that are strong as the sea,
When the rocks by its tempest are cloven,
And waves wander wild to the lee;
When ships are in travail forsaken,
And tempest and tumult awaken;
When foam by fresh foam overtaken

Boils sanguine and fervent and free.

The sword is like lightning in battle,
The spear like the light of a star;
It strikes on the shield, and the rattle
Of arrows is hail from afar.

For the ways of the anger of lords
Are bloody and widowing swords,
And the roar of contention of chords
Rolls back from the heart of the war.

The fighters slip down on the dying,
And flying folk stumble on dead,
And the sound of the pitiless crying
Of slaughter is heavy and red, {74B}
The sound of the lust of the slayer
As fierce as a Persian's prayer,
And the sound of the loud harp-player
Like the wind beats to their tread.

A royal triumph is waiting
For the captain of Heaven's choice,
A noise as of eagles mating,
A cry as of men that rejoice.
For victory crowns with garlands
Of fame his valour in far lands,
And suns sing back to the starlands
His praise with a perfect voice.

JEPHTHAH.

Leave prophecy until I come again!

CHORUS.

A prophet told us thou shouldst fight for us
And save thy people from the Ammonites.

JEPHTHAH.

Why look you so? He told you other thing.

CHORUS.

Nay, lord, no saying that we understood.

JEPHTHAH.

Speak thou its purport; I may understand.

For, know you, in the desert where I dwelt

I had strange store of books obscure; books written Not openly for fools,
but inwardly

Toward the heart of wise men. And myself

Studied no little while upon these things,

And, seeking ever solitude, I went

Nightly upon a rock that stood alone

Threatening the sandy wilderness, and prayed

Where many visions came before mine eyes

So strange — these eyes have started from my head, And every hair,
grown fearful, like a steed

Reared in its frenzy: see, these lips of mine

Have blanched, these nails have bitten through my flesh {75A}

For sundry things I saw — and these informed

My open spirit by their influence,

And taught mine ears to catch no doubtful sound

Of prophecy, but fix it in my mind,

A lambent liquid fire of poetry

Full of all meaning as the very stars.

Yet of my own life they have never breathed

One chilly word of fear, or one divine

Roseate syllable of hope and joy.

Still less of love. For no sweet life of love

Lies to my hand, but I am bound by Fate

To the strong compulsion of the sword; my lips

Shall fasten on my wife's not much; nor those

Pure lips of innocent girlhood that call me

Father; but my lips must wreath smiles no more,

But set in fearful strength of purpose toward

The blood of enemies, in horrid gouts

And hideous fountains leaping from great gashes,

Rather than that beloved blood that wells

Fervent and red-rose-wise in loving breasts,
And little veins of purple in the arms,
Or cheeks that are already flushed with it,
To crimson them with the intense delight
Of eyes that meet and know the spirit dwells
Beyond their profound depth in sympathy.
Nay, my delight must find some dearest foe,
And cleave his body with a lusty stroke
That sets the blood sharp tingling in my arm.
Yet tell me if perchance I lay aside
One day the harness of cold iron, bind on
The lighter reins of roses deftly twined
By children loving me, to be a harness
To drive me on the road of happiness
To the far goal of heaven. Would to God
It might be so a little ere I die!

CHORUS OF ELDERS.

This doubtful word his fuming lips gave forth;

A maiden shall be slain for many men.

This only of his fury seemed obscure. {75B}

JEPHTHAH.

A maiden shall be slain for many men.

Surely, O people, and men of Israel,

The prophecy is happy to the end.

For see yon moon that creeps inviolate

Against the corner of the mountains so,

Slowly and gracefully to lighten us.

So, ere three nights be gone, the course of heaven Shall be most
monstrously o'erwhelmed for us

Ere sundown, as for Joshua, and the moon,

The maiden moon, be slain that we may see

By the large moveless sun to strike and slay,

More utterly proud Ammon to consume.

This is the omen. Shout for joy, my friends!

But who comes whirling in yon dusty cloud,

His eager charger dimly urging him

Toward our conclave? 'Tis our messenger.

“Re-enter Herald.”

Sir, you ride well. I pray your news be good.

HERALD.

So spake the haughty and rebellious Ammon

Defying your most gentle words with scorn:

Tell Jephthah: Israel took away my land

When they came out of Egypt from the river

Of Ammon unto Jabbok, and unto Jordan.

Wherefore, I pray thee, sheathe thy sword, restore Peaceably these my
lands, and go in peace,

Lest wrath, being kindled, consume thee utterly.

JEPHTHAH.

Let yet another herald stand before me

[“Enter Second Herald.”

Fresh, and go thou, swiftest of messengers,
And sleep and eat a little, and to-morrow
Thou shalt have guerdon of thy faithfulness.

[“Exit Herald.”

But now, sir, go to this rebellious king {76A}
And say to him: Thus Jephthah, judge of Israel,
With gentle words answers thy greediness:
Israel took not thy land, nor that of Moab:
And over wilderness, to Kadesh came.
Our people sent a message unto Edom
Unto the king thereof, and prayed his grace,
To let them pass through his dominions
And unto Moab: and they answered Nay.
So Israel abode in Kadesh: then
Passing through all the desert round about
Edom and Moab, pitched their weary tent
Beyond the bank of Ammon; and they sent
Messengers thence to Sihon, Heshbon’s king,
The lord of Amorites, and said to him:

I prithee, let us pass to our own place
Through thy dominions: but his crafty mind,
Fearing some treachery, that was not, save
In his ill mind that thought it, did determine
To gather all this people, and to pitch
Tents hostile in the plains before Jahaz.
And there he fought with Israel; but God
Delivered Sihon to our hands, and all
That followed him: whom therefore we destroyed
With many slaughters: so we dispossessed
The envious Amorites, and had their land,
A land whose borders were the Ammon brook
On the one hand, and on the other Jabbok
And Jordan: we, who slew the Amorites.
What hast thou, king of Ammon, here to do?
How thinkst thou to inherit their possessions
That the Lord God hath given us? Go to!
Chemosh your god hath given you your land;
Possess that peaceably; but whomsoever
The Lord or God shall drive before our spears,

His lands we will possess. And thou, O king,
Art thou now better than that bloody Balak
Whose iron hand was upon Moab? He, {76B}
Fought he against us, while three hundred years
We dwelt in Heshbon and her towns, and Aroer
And her white cities, and by Ammon's coast?
Why therefore did ye not recover them
Then and not now? I have not sinned against thee: But thou dost me foul
wrong to bring thy sword
And torch of rapine in my pleasant land.
Between the folk of Ammon and the folk
Of Israel this day be God the judge.
[“Exit Second Herald.”]

ELEAZAR.

Well spoken: but the ear that will not hear
Is deafer than the adder none may charm.

JEPHTHAH.

I know it, and will not await the answer.

But dawn shall see a solemn sacrifice,

And solemn vows, and long swords glittering,

And moving columns that shall shake the earth

With firm and manly stride; and victory

Most like a dove amid the altar-smoke.

CHORUS.

We, passing here the night in prayer, will wait

And with thee offer up propitious doves,

And firstling males of all the flocks of us.

JEPHTHAH.

Not so: but I will have you hence in haste

To gather food and arms and carriages,

That all our soldiers may have sustenance,

And fresher weapons. I alone will spend
The long hours with Jehovah, at His throne,
And wrestle with the accuser. So, depart!

CHORUS.

When the countenance fair of the morning
And the lusty bright limbs of the day
Race far through the west for a warning
Of night that is evil and gray; {77A}
When the light by the southward is dwindled,
And the clouds as for sleep are unfurled,
The moon in the east is rekindled,
The hope of the passionate world.
The stars for a token of glory
Flash fire in the eyes of the night,
And the holy immaculate story
Of Heaven is flushed into light.
For the night has a whisper to wake us,
And the sunset a blossom to kiss,

And the silences secretly take us
To the well of the water that is<<1>>;
For the darkness is pregnant with being,
As earth that is glad of the rain,
And the eyes<<2>> that are silent and seeing
Are free of the trammels of pain.
Like light through the portals they<<3>> bounded,
Their lithe limbs with cruelty curled,
And the noise of their crying resounded
To kindle the death of the world.
For the heaven at sunset is sundered;
Its gates to the sages unclosed,
And through waters that foamed and that wondered
There flashes the heart of a rose;
In its petals are beauty and passion,
In its stem the foundation of earth,
Its bloom the incarnadine fashion
Of blessings that roar into birth;
And the gates<<4>> that roll back on their hinges
The soul of the sage may discern,

Till the water<<5>> with crimson that tinges

Beyond them miraculous burn;

And the presence of God to the senses

Is the passion of God in the mind,

As the string of a harp that intensens

The note that its fire may not find.

For here in the tumult and labour

And blindness of cowering man, {77B}

The spirit has God for a neighbour,

And the wheels unreturning that ran

Return to the heart of the roses,

And curl in the new blossom now,

As the holiest fire that encloses

Gray flame<<6>> on the holiest brow.

So midnight with magic reposes,

And slumbers to visions bow.

For the soul of man, being free, shall pass the gates of God, And the spirit
find the Sea by the feet of Him<<7>> untrod, And the flesh, a lifeless
ember, in ashen fear grow cold, As the lives before remember the perished
hours of gold.

[“Exeunt all but” JEPHTHAH.

<<1. This emphatic use of “to be” as a principal verb is very common with Crowley, who thereby wishes to distinguish between the noumenon and the phenomenon.>>

<<2. The eyes of Jehovah: they are 700,000 spirits. See Idra Rabba Qadishah, xxxi.>>

<<3. The eyes.>>

<<4. The gates of Binah — understanding.>>

<<5. Binah, the great Sea. The colour of crimson is attributed to it by certain Qabalists.>>

<<6. The flame of Chokmah — wisdom — which is gray in colour. “Cf.” the Hindu Ajna.>>

<<7. Microprosopus, who reacheth not so high as Understanding.>>

JEPHTHAH.

Surely, my God, now I am left alone

Kneeling before Thy throne,

I may grow beautiful, even I, to see

Thy beauty fair and free.

For on the vast expanses of the wold

I hear the feet of gold,

And over all the skies I see a flame

That flickers with Thy Name.

Therefore, because Thou hast hid Thy face, and yet Given me not to forget

The foaming cloud that shaped itself a rose,

Whose steady passion glows

Within the secretest fortress of my heart,

Because, my God, Thou Art,

And I am chosen of Thee for this folk

To break the foreign yoke,

Therefore, Existence of Existence, hear!

Bend low Thine holy ear,

And make Thyself, unseen, most terrible

To these fierce fiends of hell

That torture holiest ears with false complaint:

Bend down, and bit me faint {78A}

Into the arms of night, to see Thine hosts

March past the holy coasts,

A wall of golden weapons for the land,

And let me touch Thy hand,
And feel Thy presence very near to-night!
I sink as with delight
Through places numberless with fervid fires
Oh holiest desires
Into I know not what a cradle, made
Of subtle-shaped shade,
And arms most perdurable.<<1>> I am lost
In thought beyond all cost —
Nay, but my spirit breaks the slender chain
That held it down. The pain
Of death is past and I am free. Nay, I,
This body, dead, must lie
Till thou come home again, O soaring Soul.
The gates supernal roll!
Flash through them, O white-winged, white-blossom ghost!
Ah, God! for I am lost.
[JEPHTHAH “remains motionless.”<<2>>
[“Morning dawns.”

<<1. Able to endure “to the end”.>>

<<2. The description is of a certain spiritual exercise familiar to mystics.>>

“Enter” JARED, “Soldiers, Prophet.”

SOLDIERS.

Hail, captain! We are ready now for death,

Or victory, if shining wings are fain

To hover over dauntless hearts. Behold

Our ready bands to follow to the fray.

JEPHTHAH.

Welcome! hail ye this happy dawn as one

That shall see freedom smile on us, and peace,

And victory, and new hours of happiness. {78B}

CHORUS OF SOLDIERS.

Out of the waters of the sea
Our father Abraham beheld
The lamp of heaven arise to be
The monarch quenchless and unquelled;
But we on this far Syrian shore
See dawn upon the mountains pour.<<1>>

<<1. Abraham before his migration saw dawn rise over the Persian Gulf;
but to the east of Palestine are mountains.>>

The limit of the snows is bright;
As spears that glitter shine the hills;
The foaming forehead of the light
All air with cloudy fragrance fills;
And, born of desolation blind,
The young sweet summer burns behind.

The Altar of the Lord is set
With salt and fire and fervid wine,
And toward the east the light is let

For shadow for the holiest shrine:
One moment hangs the fire of dawn
Until the sacrament be sworn.

Behold, the priest, our captain, takes
The sacred robes, the crown of gold,
The light of other sunlight<<1>> breaks
Upon his forehead calm and cold;
And other dawns more deep and wise
Burn awful in his holy eyes.

<<1. “i.e.” the light of the Divine Presence.>>

A moment, and the fire is low
Upon the black stone of the altar,
The spilt blood eagerly doth glow,
And lightnings lick the light, and falter,
Feeling the vast Shekinah<<1>> shine
Above their excellence divine.

<<1. The presence of God.>>

The Lord is gracious to His own,
And hides with glory as a mist
The sacrifice and smitten stone,
And on the lips His presence kissed
Burn the high vows with ample flame
That He shall swear to by the Name. {79A}

JEPHTHAH.

Highest of Highest, most Concealed of all,
Most Holy Ancient One, Unnamable,
Receive for these Thy servants this our oath
To serve none other gods but Thee alone.
And for my own part who am judge of these
I vow beyond obedience sacrifice,
And for the victory Thou shalt give, I vow
To sacrifice the first of living things
That with due welcome shall divide the doors

Of my house, meeting me, an offering
Burnt before Thee with ceremony meet
To give Thee thanks, nor take ungratefully
This first of favours from the Hand Divine.

SOLDIERS.

A noble vow: and God is glad thereat.

PROPHET.

I charge you in the name of God, go not!
I see a mischief fallen on your souls
Most bitter. Aye! an evil day is this
If ye go forth with such a sacrifice,
And vows most hideous in their consequence.

SOLDIERS.

It is the prophet of the Lord.

JEPHTHAH.

Possessed

By Baal; scourge him hence; he lies, for God

With powerful proof and many lightnings came

Devouring up the offering at the altar.

PROPHET.

O Jephthah, it is thou on whom it falls,

The sorrow grievous as thy life is dear.

A SOLDIER.

He is the prophet of the Baalim

We have enough of such: in God's name, home!

[“Stabbing him.” {79B}]

PROPHET.

Thy spear shall turn against thyself, alas!

But welcome, death, thou looked-for spouse of mine!

Thy kiss is pleasant as the shaded well

That looks through palm leaves to the quiet sky.

[“Dies.”]

JEPHTHAH.

Thou didst no evil in the slaying him,

For God is a consuming fire; high zeal

Against idolatry lacks not reward.

And now the sun is up: for Israel, march!

JARED.

Good luck be with your spears; and homecoming

Gladden victorious eyes ere set of sun.

[“Exeunt” JEPHTHAH “and Soldiers.”

“Enter” ELEAZAR, AHINOAM, “Chorus of Elders.”

CHORUS.

The sun is past meridian. No sound
Of trampling hoofs assails the unquiet wind,
Nor trembles in the pillared echo-places,
And windy corridors of pathless snow.
But let us wait, expecting victory.
No fugitive returns, no messenger:
They have not shocked together, or perchance
The grim fight rolls its sickening tide along
Homeward or southward, undecided yet;
Or victory made certain but an hour
Lends no such wings to jaded horses as
May bear a jaded rider to our gates.
Wait only, friends, and calm our troubled mind,
Nor stir the languid sails of our desire

With breath or expectation or despair.

Rather give place to those untroubled thoughts

That sit like stars immobile in the sky

To fathom all the desolate winds of ocean,

And draw their secrets from the hidden mines

Whose gold and silver are but wisdom, seeking

Rather things incorruptible above {80A}

Than sordid hopes and fears. But look you, friends, Where in the sun's
eye rolls a speck of cloud

Lesser than the ephemeral gnat may make

Riding for sport upon a little whirl

Of moving breezes, so it glows and rolls,

Caught in the furnace of the sun, opaque

To eyes that seek its depth, but penetrable

By those long filaments of light beyond.

See, the spot darkens, and a horseman spurs

A flagging steed with bloody flanks, and waves

A cloudy sword to heaven — I am sure

He brings us eagle-winged victory,

And tiding of no battle lost for Israel.

Yes, he grows great before the sun, and stands
Now in his stirrups, and shouts loud, and waves
A blade triumphant. Now the weary horse
Stumbles with thundering strides along the last
Furlong, and greets us with a joyous neigh
As if he understood the Victory.

“Enter Second Messenger.”

SECOND MESSENGER.

Rejoice, O Israel, for this day hath seen
Utter destruction overtake, and death
Ride furious over, trampled necks of men
Desperate in vain; hath seen red hell gape wide
To swallow up the heathen. Victory
Swells the red-gleaming torrent of pursuit,
And Israel shakes her lazy flanks at last
A lion famished, and is greedy of death.

CHORUS.

O joyful day! And where is Jephthah now?

MESSENGER.

Faint with the heat of a hard battle fought,
But following hard after with the horse.
For from Aroer even unto Minnith
He smote them with a slaughter most unheard,
And twenty cities saw from trembling walls {80B}
Twice twenty thousand corpses; stragglers few
Call to the rocks and woods, whose dens refuse
Shelter and refuge to the fugitives,
But, in revolt against the natural order,
Gape like the ravening jaws of any beast
To let the furious invaders down
Into the bowels of the earth, and close
Upon those grisly men of way, whose life

Groans from the prison that shall crush it out.

CHORUS.

Be thou most blessed of the Lord for ever!

FIRST ELDER.

But what shall he that hath delivered us

Have for his guerdon when he comes in triumph?

SECOND ELDER.

A milk-white ass shall bear him through the city.

THIRD ELDER.

And wreaths of roses be instead of dust.

FOURTH ELDER.

And dancing girls —

FIFTH ELDER.

And feet of maidens most
Shall strike a measure of delight.

SIXTH ELDER.

And boys
With bright unsullied curls shall minister
Before him all the days of life God grants.

SEVENTH ELDER.

And all his platters shall be made of gold.

EIGHTH ELDER.

And jewels beyond price shall stud them all. {81A}

ELEAZAR.

What sayest thou, O wisest of our race,
Ahinoam, the aged priest of God,
Who weighest out the stars with balances,
And knowest best of men the heart of man?

AHINOAM.

Ye are as children, and nowise your tongues
Speak sense. I never hear your voice but know
Some geese are gabbling. Sing to him perchance!
The voice of old men is a pleasant thing.

CHORUS.

What say ye, brethren? Shall we sing to him
Some sweet low ditty, or the louder paeon?

AHINOAM.

They verily think I speak, not mocking them.

CHORUS.

Who shall uncover such a tongue for wiles,
And pluck his meaning from his subtle words?

AHINOAM.

Who shall speak plain enough for such as these
To understand? Or so debase his thought
As meet their minds, and seem as wisdom's self?

CHORUS.

Leave now thy gibing in the hour of joy,
And lend sweet wisdom to awaiting ears.
Thy voice shall carry it, thy words shall bear
Full fruit to-day. Speak only, it is done.

AHINOAM.

I am grown old, and go not out to wars.
But in the lusty days of youth my face
Turned from the battle and pursuit and spoil
Only to one face dearer than my soul. {81B}
And my wife's eyes were welcome more desired
Than chains of roses, and the song of children,
And swinging palm branches, and milk-white — elders.

CHORUS.

Fie on thy railing! But his wife is sick,
And cannot leave the borders of her house.

AHINOAM.

But he hath one fair only daughter! Friends,
With maidens bearing trimbrels, and with dances,
Let her go forth and bring her father home.

JARED [“aside”].

Horrible! I must speak and silence this
Monstrous impossible villainy of fate.

CHORUS.

O wise old man, thou speakest cleverly.

AHINOAM.

So do, and praise be given you from God.

ELEAZAR.

God, Who this day has slumbered not, nor slept;
He only keepeth Israel: He is God!

CHORUS.

When God uplifted hands to smite,
And earth from chaos was unrolled;
When skies and seas from blackest night
Unfurled, twin sapphires set with gold;
When tumult of the boisterous deep
Roared from its slow ungainly sleep,
And flocks of heaven were driven to fold;
Then rose the walls of Israel steep,
For in His promise we behold
The sworded Sons of glory leap
Our tribes in peace to keep.

Deep graven in the rocky girth

Of Israel's mountains, in the sky,
In all the waters of the earth,
In all the fiery steeds that ply {82A}
Their champing harness, and excel
The charioteers of heaven and hell,
In all the Names writ secretly
And sacred songs ineffable;
In all the words of power that fly
About the world, this song they spell
He keepeth Israel.

AHINOAM.

Ye praise God of full heart: I would to God
Your minds were somewhat fuller, and could keep
Discretion seated on her ivory throne.
What folly is it they will now be at,
Gray beards, and goatish manners? Hark to them!

CHORUS.

In the brave old days ere men began
To bind young hearts with an iron tether,
Ere love was brief as life, a span,
Ere love was light as life, a feather,
Earth was free as the glad wild weather,
God was father and friend to man.

AHINOAM.

Then when with mildness and much joy our judge
Draw hither, let us send to meet his steps
In sackcloth clad, with ashes on their heads,
His cruel brethren, that he spare their lives.

CHORUS.

In the heart of a conqueror mercy sits
A brighter jewel than vengeance wroken.
Grace is the web that his people knits,

And love is the balm for the hearts nigh broken.

Peace is arisen, a dove for token;

Righteousness, bright as the swallow flits.

JARED [“aside”].

So, in his victory is our disgrace. {82B}

CHORUS.

Fair as the dawn is the maiden wise;

Pale as the poppies by still white water!

Sunlight burns in her pure deep eyes;

Love lights the tresses of Jephthah’s daughter.

Kissing rays of the moon have caught her,

Rays of the moon that sleeps and sighs.

JARED [“aside”].

In our disgrace, behold! our vengeance strikes.

I am inspired with so profound a hate —
He shall not triumph: in the very hour
When his o’ermastering forehead tops the sky
I strike him to the earth. I need not more.
Silence — no more — and all accomplishes.
Leviathan, how subtle is thy path!

CHORUS.

Not now may the hour of gladness fade,
The wheel of our fate spins bright and beaming.
God has fashioned a sun from shade.
Mercy and joy in one tide are streaming.
Fortune is powerless, to all good seeming.
Fate is stricken, and flees afraid.

JARED.

Bring me the sackcloth and the ashes now!

ELEAZAR.

Behold! the crown of all our maiden wreath,
Adulah, white and lissome, with the flames
Of dawn forth blushing through her flower-crowned hair.

CHORUS.

Behold a virgin to the Lord!
Behold a maiden pale as death,
Whose glance is silver as a sword,
And flowers of Kedar fill her breath,
Whose fragrance saturates the sword,
Whose sunny perfume floating saith:
From my ineffable desire is drawn
The awful glory of the golden dawn. {83A}

Behold her bosom bare and bold
Whose billows like the ocean swing!
The painted palaces of gold

Where shell-born maidens laugh and sing
Are mirrored in those breasts that hold
Sweet odours of the sunny spring.
Behold the rising swell of perfect calm
In breezy dells adorable of balm!

Behold the tender rosy feet
Made bare for holiness, that move
Like doves amid the waving wheat,
Or swallows silver in the grove
Where sylph and salamander meet,
And gnome and undine swoon for love!
Her feet that flit upon the windy way
Twin fawns, the daughters of the rosy day.

Behold, the arms of her desire
Wave, weave, and wander in the air,
Vines life-endued by subtle fire
So quick and comely, curving bare.
The white diaphanous attire

Floats like a spirit pale and fair.

The dance is woven of the breeze; the tune

Is like the ocean silvered by the moon.

Behold the maidens following!

O every one is like a flower,

Or like an ewe lamb of the king

That comes from water at the hour

Of even. See, the dancers swing

Their censures; see, their tresses shower

Descending flames, and perfumes teem divine,

And all the air grows one pale fume of wine.

Their songs, their purity, their peace,

Glide slowly in the arms of God;

His lips assume their sanctities,

His eyes perceive the period

Of woven webs of lutes at ease,

And measures by pure maidens trod,

Till, like the smoke of mountains risen at dawn,

The cloud-veils of the Ain<<1>> are withdrawn. {83B}

<<1. The Negative, surrounded by a triple veil in the Theogony of the Qabalists, from which all things spring and to which all shall return. See “Berashith” in a subsequent volume.>>

Pure spirits rise to heaven, the bride.

Pure bodies are as lamps below.

The shining essence, glorified

With fire more cold than fresh-fallen snow,

And influences, white and wide,

Descend, regather, kindle, grow,

Till from one virgin bosom flows a river

Of white devotion adamant for ever.

“Enter” ADULAH “and her Maidens.”

ADULAH.

Fathers of Israel, we are come to you

With many maidens praising God, for this

The victory of my father. Happy girls!
Whose brothers struck to-day for Israel,
Whose fathers smote the heathen; happiest,
Ye blushing flowers, beyond your younger spring
That bends in you toward summer, faint and fair,
Whose lovers bared their swords to-day; and ye,
O reverend heads, most beautiful for gray,
The comely crown of age, that doth beseem
Your wise sweet beauty, as the ivy wreathes
The rugged glory of the sycamore,
Have ye heard aught of Jephthah's homecoming?
For our cheeks tingle with the expected kiss
Of hardy warriors dear to us, and now
By double kinship rendered doubly dear.
For O! my father comes to gladden me
With those enduring kisses that endow
Heart, hope, and life with gladness. Comes he soon?

ELEAZAR.

Maiden most perfect, daughter of our lord,
And ye, most fairest branches of our tree,
Maidens of Israel, we await you here
That ye, no other, may go forth to meet
The chief victorious. And after you {84A}
Those villains that once cast him out shall forth
In sackcloth to his feet, if haply so
He spare their vagabond and worthless lives.

ADULAH.

Not so, my father. In my father's name
I promise unto all great happiness,
And vengeance clean forgotten in the land;
“Vengeance is mine, Jehovah will repay.”
My father shall not frown on any man.

JARED [“aside”].

She is most gracious: I must speak and save.

["Aloud."] Friends! ["Aside".] Stay — Is this a tempter voice that soothes

My conscience? Art thou that Leviathan,

Thou lipless monster, gnashing at my soul

Abominable teeth? Art thou the fiend

Whom I have seen in sleep, and waking served?

O horrible distortion of all truth

That I must serve thee still!

Yet — dare I speak,

Those eyes upon me, torturing my soul

And threatening revenge? Those fingers gross,

Purple, and horrible, to blister me

With infamous tearing at my throat. O Hell!

Vomit thy monsters forth in myriads

To putrefy this fair green earth with blood,

But make not me the devilish minister

Of such a deed as this! No respite? — Must?

Irrevocable? I dare not call on God.

Thou, thou wilt serve me if I do this thing?

Oh, if this be a snare thou settest now,

Who hast once already mocked our pact, I swear

By God, I cast thee off. Leviathan!

Accept the bargain. And I seal it — thus.

[“Writing in the air.”

I will keep silence, though they tear my tongue

Blaspheming from my throat. Mr servant now! {84B}

ELEAZAR.

Mingled emotions quickly following

Fear upon fear, and joy and hope at last

Crowning, have maddened Jephthah’s kinsman here.

Mark his lips muttering, and his meaningless

Furious gestures, and indignant eyes

Starting, and hard-drawn breath! Him lead away

Tenderly, as beseems the mercy shown

To his repentance by this maiden queen.

The Lord is merciful to them that show

Mercy, and all such as are pure of heart;

Thy crown, Adulah, wears a double flower

Of these fair blossoms wreathed in one device
Of perfect love in perfect maidenhood.

JARED [“recovering himself”].

Nay, but my voice must fill the song of joy
With gratitude, and meet thanksgiving. Me
More than these others it beseems, who love
Less dearly for their innocence than I,
Pardoned of my unpardonable sin.

ADULAH.

The flowers turn westerward; the sun is down
Almost among those clouds that kiss the sea
With heavy lashes drooping over it,
A mother watching her own daughter swoon
To sleep. But look toward the southern sky;
It is my father. Let us go to him,
Maidens, with song and gladness of full hearts.

SEMICHORUS OF MAIDENS I.

The conqueror rides at last

To home, to love;

The victory is past,

The white-wing dove

Sails through the crystal air of eve with a paean deep and vast.

Jephthah! {85A}

SEMICHORUS OF MAIDENS II.

Forth, maidens, with your hands

White with new lilies!

Forth, maidens, in bright bands,

Virgins whose one sweet will is

To sing the victory of our God in all sky-girdled lands!

Jahveh!

SEMICHORUS I.

With dancing feet, and noise
Of timbrels smitten,
With tears and tender joys,
With songs unwritten,
With music many-mouthed, with robes in snowy equipoise.
Jephthah!

SEMICHORUS II.

With hearts infused of fire,
Eyes clear with many waters,
With lips to air that quire,
We, earth's desirous daughters,
Lift up the song of triumph, sound the lutes of our desire!
Jahveh!

SEMICHORUS I.

With branches strewn before us,

And roses flung

In all the ways, we chorus

With throat and tongue

The glory of our warrior sires whose victor swords restore us Jephthah!

SEMICHORUS II.

With angels vast and calm

That keep his way,

With streams of holy balm,

The prayers of them that pray,

We go to bring him home and raise to Thee our holy psalm, Jahveh!
{85B}

ELEAZAR.

Go ye, make ready for the happy march.

["Exeunt" ADULAH "and Maidens."

And we too, changing these funereal vestments

Will clothe in moonlike splendour, candid robes

Of priestly purity, our joyous selves.
Of fortunate day! O measured steps of noon,
Quicken, if once ye stayed for Joshua,
To keep sweet music to our hearts. Away!
[“Exeunt all but” JARED.

JARED.

I will await, and hide myself away
Behind yon bushes, to behold the plot
Bud to fulfilment. Then, Leviathan,
I am thy master. Mockery of a God
That seest this thing prosper — Ha! thine Altar!
Let me give thanks, Jehovah! O thou God
That rulest Israel as sheep and slaves,
But over me no ruler; thou proud God
That marshallest these petty thunder-clouds
That blacken over the inane abyss
Buts canst not tame one fierce desire of mine,
Nor satiate my hatred, nor destroy

This power of mine over thy devil-brood,
The hatchment of thine incest, O thou God
Who knowest me, me, mortal me, thy master,
Thy master — and I laugh at thee, the slave!
Down from Thy throne, impostor, down, down, down
To thine own Hell, immeasurable -

A VOICE.

Strike!

[“The storm, gathering to a climax, bursts in a tremendous flash of lightning, and” JARED “is killed.” {86A}

“Enter” JEPHATHAH “and Soldiers.”

JEPHATHAH.

A terrible peal of thunder! And the sky
Seems for an hour past to have been in labour
And, safely now delivered, smiles again.

For see, the sun! O happy sunlight hours —

What is this blackened and distorted thing?

A SOLDIER

Some fellow by the altar that kept watch,
Some faithful fellow — he is gone to God.

JEPHTHAH.

How is't the cattle have been driven home?
I trusted we had found a tender lamb,
A lamb of the first year, unblemished, white,
To greet me, that we do meet sacrifice,
Fulfilling thus my vow, and all our duty.
[“A noise of timbrels and singing.”
Surely some merriment — our news hath reached.
Glad news and welcome: God is very good.

“Enter” ADULAH, “running, followed by singing Maidens.”

ADULAH.

Father!

JEPHTHAH.

My daughter!

[“He suddenly stops, and blanches, understanding.”

Alas my daughter!

[“He continues in a dazed, toneless voice.

Thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me;
for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back
ADULAH.

My father, O my father! {86B}

“Enter” ELEAZAR “and Chorus.”

ELEAZAR.

Most welcome, conqueror!

[JEPHTHAH “waves him aside.”

What is this! What is this!

CHORUS.

Speak, Jephthah, speak! What ill has fallen? Speak!

[“Silence. After a little the Chorus of Maidens understand, and break into wailing. The old men gradually understand and fill the air with incoherent lamentations. Behind” JEPHTHAH “the soldiers, with white lips, have assumed their military formation, and stand at attention by a visible effort of self-control.”

ADULAH.

My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth

Unto the Lord, fulfil the oath to me,

Because the lord hath taken vengeance for thee

Of all thine enemies, the Ammonites.

Let this be done for me, that I may go

Two months upon the mountains, and bewail,

I and my fellows, my virginity!

JEPHTHAH.

Go!

CHORUS OF MAIDENS.

O the time of dule and teen!

O the dove the hawk has snared!

Would to God we had not been,

We, who see our maiden queen,

Love has slain whom hate had spared.

Sorrow for our sister sways

All our maiden bosoms, bared

To the dying vesper rays,

Where the sun below the bays

Of the West is stooping;

All our heats together drooping,

Flowers the ocean bears.

All the garb that gladness wears {87A}

To a rent uncouth attire

Changed with cares;
Happy songs our love had made
Ere the sun had sunk his fire,
In the moonrise fall and fade,
And the dregs of our desire
Fall away to death;
Tears divide our labouring breath
That of our sister — O our sister!
Moon and sun and stars have kissed her!
She must touch the lips of death,
Touch the lips whose coldness saith:
Thou art clay.
Let us fare away, away
To the ice whose ocean gray
Tumbles on the beach of rock,
Where the wheeling vultures mock
Our distress with horrid cries;
Where the flower relenting dies,
And the sun is sharp to slay;
Where the ivory dome above

Glimmers like the dawn of love
On the weary way;
Where the ibex chant and call
Over tempest's funeral;
Where the horned beast is shrill,
And the eagle hath his will,
And the shadows fall
Sharp and black, till day is passed
Over to the ocean vast;
Where the barren rocks resound
Only to the rending roar
Of the shattering streams that pour
Rocks by ice eternal bound,
Myriad cascades that crowned
Once the far resounding throne
Of the mountain spirits strong,
All the treacherous souls that throng
Desolate abodes of stone,
Barren of all comely things,
Given to the splendid kings,

Gloomy state, and glamour dark,
Swooping jewel-feathered wings,
Eyes translucent with a spark
Of the world of fire, that swings
Gates of adamant below
Lofty minarets of snow.
Thence the towering flames arise, {87B}
Where the flashes white and wise
Find their mortal foe.
Let us thither, caring not
Anything, or any more,
Since the sorrow of our lot
Craves to pass the abysmal door.
Never more for us shall twine
Rosy fingers on the vine.
Never maiden lips shall cull
Myriad blossoms beautiful.
Never cheeks shall dimple over
At the perfume of the clover.
Never bosoms bright and round

Shall be garlanded and bound
With the chain of myrtle, wreathed
By the fingers of the maid
Each has chosen for a mate,
When the west wind lately breathed
Murmurs in the wanton glade
Of the day that dawneth late
In a maiden's horoscope,
Dawning faith and fire and hope
On the sprig that only knew
Flowers and butterflies and dew,
Skies and seas and mountains blue,
On the spring that wot not of
Fruit and falling leaves and love.
Never dew-dasked foreheads fair
Shall salute the idle air.
Never shall we wander deep
Where the fronds of fern, asleep,
Kiss her rosy feet that pass
On the spangled summer grass,

Half awake, and drowse again.
Never more our feet shall stain
Purple with the joyous grape,
Whence there rose a fairy shape
In the fume and must and juice,
Singing lest our eyes escape
All his tunic wried and loose
With the feet that softly trod
In the vat the fairy god.
Never more our eyes shall swim,
Looking for the love of him
In the magic moon that bent
Over maidens moon-content,
When the summer woods were wet
With our dewy songs, that set {88A}
Quivering all seas and snows,
Stars and tender winds that fret
Lily, lily, laughing rose,
Sighing, sighing violet,
Dusky pansy, swaying rush,

And the stream that flows
Singing, ringing softly: Hush!
Listen the the bird that goes
Wooing to the brown mate's bough;
Listen to the breeze that blows
Over cape and valley now
At the silence of the noon,
Or the slumber-hour
Of the white delicious moon
Like a lotus-flower!
Let us sadly, slowly, go
To the silence of the snow!

ADULAH ["embracing" JEPHTHAH].

Whose crystal fastnesses shall echo back
The lamentations of these friends of mine,
But not my tears. For I will fit myself
By solitude and fasting and much prayer
For this most holy ceremony, to be

A perfect, pure, accepted sacrifice.

Only this sorrow — O father, father, speak!

JEPHTHAH.

Go!

ADULAH.

Most unblamable, we come again.

I would not weep with these; I dare not stay,

Lest I weep louder than them all. Fare well,

My father, O my father! I am passing

Into the night. Remember me as drawn

Into the night toward the golden dawn.<<1>>

[“Exeunt” ADULLAH “Maidens.” {88B}

<<1. The “Golden Dawn” meant at this time to Crowley all that”Christ” means to an Evangelical, and more. The symbol constantly recurs in this and many other poems, and always in the sense of a rescuing force.>>

CHORUS.

Toward the mountains and the night
The fruitless flowers of Gilead go;
Toward the hollows weird and white,
Toward the sorrow of the snow;
To desolation black and blind
They move, and leave us death behind.

The Lord is great: the Lord is wise
Within His temple to foresee
With calm impenetrable eyes
The after glory that shall be;
But we, of mortal bodies born,
Laugh lies consoling unto scorn.

The God of Israel is strong;
His mighty arm hath wrought this day
A victory and a triumph-song —
And now He breathes upon His clay,

And we, who were as idols crowned,
Lie dust upon the empty ground.

She goes, our sorrow's sacrifice,
Our lamb, our firstling, frail and white,
With large sweet love-illuminated eyes
Into the night, into the night.
The throne of night shall be withdrawn;
So moveth she toward the dawn.

All peoples and all kings that move
By love and sacrifice inspired
In light and holiness and love,
And seek some end of God desired,
Pass, though they seem to sink in night,
To dawns more perdurably bright.

So priest and people join to praise
The secret wisdom of the Lord,
Awaiting the arisen rays

That smite through heaven as a sword;
Remembering He hath surely sworn:
Toward the night, toward the dawn! {89A}

Behold the moon that fails above,
The stars that pale before the sun!
How far, those figures light as love
That laughing to the mountains run!
Behold the flames of hair that leap
Above her forehead mild and deep!

She turns to bless her people still:
So, passes to the golden gate
Where snow burns fragrant on the hill,
Where for her step those fountains wait
Of light and brilliance that shall rise
To greet her beauty lover-wise.

The silver west fades fast, the skies
Are blue and silver overhead;

She stands upon the snow, her eyes

Fixed fast upon the fountainhead

Whence from Eternity is drawn

The awful glory of the dawn!

ELEAZAR.

Let every man depart unto his house.

CHORUS.

He hath made His face as a fire; His wrath as a sword; He hath smitten our soul's desire; He is the Lord.

He hath given and taken away, hath made us and broken; He hath made the blue and the gray, the sea for a token; He hath made to-day and to-morrow; the winter, the spring; He bringeth us joy out of sorrow; Jehovah is King.

[“Exeunt.” JEPHTHAH “is left standing with white set face.

Presently tears come into his eyes, and he advances and kneels at the altar.”

{89B}

{full page follows}