

Aleister Crowley

Collected Works, Volume I, Part 2



calibre 0.9.17

THE WORKS OF ALEISTER CROWLEY Vol. I, part 2 of 3 ASCII
VERSION

February 18, 1993 e.v. key entry by Bill Heidrick, T.G. of O.T.O.

January 4, 1994 e.v. proofed and conformed to the “Essay Competition
Copy”

edition of 1905 e.v. by Bill Heidrick T.G. of O.T.O.

File 2 of 3.

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MYSTERIES:

LYRICAL AND DRAMATIC.

1898.

{columns resume}

THE FIVE KISSES.<<1>>

I.

AFTER CONFESSION.

<<1. Crowley's biographer will note the astonishing coincidences of scene and incident between this poem and the events of 1903-4.>>

DAY startles the fawn from the avenues deep that look to the east in the heart of the wood:

Light touches the trees of the hill with its lips, and God is above them and sees they are good:

Night flings from her forehead the purple-black hood.

The thicket is sweet with the breath of the breeze made soft by the kisses of slumbering maids;

The nymph and the satyr, the fair and the faulty alike are the guests of these amorous shades;

The hour of Love flickers and falters and fades.

O, listen, my love, to the song of the brook, its murmurs and cadences, trills and low chords;

Hark to its silence, that prelude of wonder ringing at last like the clamour of swords

That clash in the wrath of the warring of lords.

Listen, oh, listen! the nightingale near us swoons a farewell to the blossoming brake;

Listen, the thrush in the meadow is singing notes that move sinuous, lithe as a snake;

The cushats are cooing, the world is awake. {90A}

Only one hour since you whispered the story out of your heart to my tremulous ear;

Only one hour since the light of your eyes was the victor of violent sorrow and fear;

Your lips were so set to the lips of me here.

Surely the victory ripens to perfect conquest of everything set in our way.

We must be free as our hearts re, and gather strength for our limbs for the heat of the fray:

The battle is ours if you say me not nay.

Fly with me far, where the ocean is bounded white by the walls of the northernmost shore,

Where on a lone rocky island a castle laughs in its pride at the billows that roar,

My home where our love may have peace evermore.

Yes, on one whisper the other is waiting patient to catch the low tone of delight.

Kiss me again for the amorous answer; close your dear eyelids and think it is night,

The hour of the even we fix for the flight.

II.

THE FLIGHT.

LIFT up thine eyes! for night is shed around,

As light profound,

And visible as snow on steeped hills,

Where silence fills

The shaded hollows: night, a royal queen

Most dimly seen {90B}

Through silken curtains that bedeck the bed,

Lift up thine head!

For night is here, a dragon, to devour

The slow sweet hour

Filled with all smoke of incense, and the praise

More loud than day's

That swings its barren censer in the sky

And asks to die

Because the sea will hear no hollow moan

Beyond its own,

Because the sea that kissed dead Sappho<<1>> sings

Of strange dark things —

<<1. Sappho, the great lyric poet of Greece, plunged from a rock into the sea, according to later tradition.>>

Shapes of bright breasts that purple as the sun

Grows dark and dun,

Of pallid lips more haggard for the kiss

Of Salmacis,<<1>>

<<1. A stream into which a man plunged, and was united, as a Hermaphrodite, with its attendant nymph. The reference is connected with Sappho's loves. See her Ode to Aphrodite and Swinburn's Anactoria and Hermaphroditus.>>

Of eager eyes that startle for the fear

Too dimly dear

Lest there come death, like passion, and fulfil

Their dreams of ill!

Oh! lift thy forehead to the night's cool wind!

The meekest hind

That fears the noonday in her grove is bold

To seek the gold

So pale and perfect as the moon puts on:

The light is gone.

Hardly as yet one sees the crescent maid

Move, half afraid,

Into the swarthy forest of the air

And breast made bare,

Gather her limbs about her for the chase

Through starry space,

And, while the lilies sway their heads, to bend

Her bow, to send {91A}

A swift white arrow at some recreant star.

The sea is far

Dropped in the hollows of the swooning land.

Oh! hold my hand!

Lift up thy deep eyes to my face, and let

Our lips forget

The dumb dead hours before they met together!

The snowbright weather

Calls us beyond the grassy down, to be

Beside the sea,

The slowly-breathing ocean of the south.

Oh, make thy mouth

A rosy flame like that most perfect star

Whose kisses are

So red and ripe! Oh, let thy limbs entwine

Like love with mine!

Oh, bend thy gracious body to my breast

To sleep, to rest!

But chiefly let thine eyes be set on me,

As when the sea

Lay like a mirror to reflect the shape

Of yonder cape

Where Sappho stood and touched the lips of death!

Thy subtle breath

Shall flow like incense in between our cheeks,

Where pleasure seeks

In vain a wiser happiness. And so
Our whispers low
Shall dim the utmost beauty of thy gaze
Through moveless days
And long nights equable with tranced pleasure:
So love at leisure
Shall make his model of our clinging looks,
And burn his books
To write a new sweet volume deeper much,
And frail to touch,
Being the mirror of a gossamer
Too soft and fair.
This is the hour when all the world is sleeping;
The winds are keeping
A lulling music on the frosty sea.
The air is free, {91B}
As free as summertime, to sound or cease:
God's utmost peace
Lies like a cloud upon the quiet land.
O little hand!

White hand with rose leaves shed about the tips,
As if my lips
Had left their bloom upon it when they kissed
As if a mist
Of God's delicious dawn had overspread
Their face, and fled!
O wonderful fresh blossom of the wood!
O purpling blood!
O azure veins as clear as all the skies!
O longing eyes
That look upon me fondly to beget
Two faces, set
Either like lowers upon their laughing blue,
Where morning dew
Sparkles with all the passion of the dawn!
The happy lawn
Leads, by the stillest avenues, to groves
Made soft by loves;
And all the nymphs have made a mossy dell
Hard by the well

Where even a Satyr might behold the grace

Of such a face

As his<<1>> who perished for his own delights,

So well requites

<<1. Narcissus, a beautiful youth, inaccessible to love. Echo, a nymph enamoured of him, died of neglect. To punish him, Nemesis caused him to behold his image in a pool; he pined of love for the reflection, and was changed into the flower which still bears his name.>>

That witching fountain his desire that looks.

Two slow bright brooks

Encircle it with silver, and the moon

Strikes into tune

The ripples as they break. For here it was

Their steps did pass,

Dreamy Endymion's and Artemis',<<1>>

Who bent to kiss

<<1. The reader may consult Keats's poem of "Endymion.">>

Across the moss-grown rocks that build the well:

And here they tell {92A}

Of one<<1>> beneath the hoary stone who hid

And watched unbid

<<1. A gentle sophistication of the story of Actaeon who beheld Artemis at the bath, and being changed into a stag, was torn to pieces by her hounds.>>

When one most holy came across the glade,

Who saw a maid

So bright that mists were dim upon his eyes,

And yet he spies

So sweet a vision that his gentle breath

Sighed into death:

And others say that her the fairies bring

The fairy king,<<1>>

<<1. From sophistication Crowley proceeds to pure invention.>>

And crown him with a flower of eglantine,

And of the vine

Twist him a throne made perfect with wild roses,

And gathered posies

From all the streams that wander through the vale,

And crying, "Hail!

All hail, most beautiful of all our race!"

Cover his face

With blossoms gathered from a fairy tree

Like foam from sea,
So delicate that mortal eyes behold
Ephemeral gold
Flash, and not see a flower, but say the moon
Has shone too soon
Anxious to great Endymion; and this
Most dainty kiss
They cover him him withal, and Dian sees
Through all the trees
No pink pale blossom of his tender lips.
The little ships
Of silver leaf and briar-bloom sail here,
No storm to fear,
Though butterflies be all their mariners.
The whitethroat stirs
The beech-leaves to awake the tiny breeze
That soothes the seas,
And yet gives breath to shake their fairy sails;
Young nightingales,
Far through the golden plumage of the night,

With strong delight {92B}
Purple the evening with amazing song;
The moonbeams throng
In shining clusters to the fairy throat,
Whose clear trills float
And dive and run about the crystal deep
As sweet as sleep.
Only, fair love of this full heart of mine,
There lacks the wine
Our kisses might pour out for them; they wait,
And we are late;
Only, my flower of all the world, the thrush
(You hear him? Hush!)
Lingers, and sings not to his fullest yet:
Our love shall get
Such woodland welcome as none ever had
To make it glad.
Come, it is time, cling closer to my hand.
We understand.
We must go forth together, not to part.

O perfect heart!

O little heart that beats to mine, away

Before the day

Ring out the tocsin for our flight! My ship

Is keen to dip

Her plunging forehead in the silvering sea.

To-morrow we

Shall be so far away, and then to-morrow

Shall shake off sorrow

And be to-morrow and not change for ever:

No dawn shall sever

The sleepy eyelids of the night, no eve

Shall fall and cleave

The blue deep eyes of day. Your hand, my queen!

Look down and lean

Your whole weight on me, then leap out, as light

As swallow's flight,

And race across the shadows of the moon,

And keep the tune

With ringing hoofs across the fiery way.

Your eyes betray

How eager is your heart, and yet — O dare

To fashion fair

A whole long life of love! Leap high, laugh low!

I love you — so! — {93A)

One kiss — and then to freedom! See the bay

So far away,

But not too far for love! Ring out, sharp hoof,

And put to proof

The skill of him that steeled thee! Freedom! Set

As never yet

Thy straining sides for freedom! Gallant mare!

The frosty air

Kindles the blood within us as we race.

O love! Thy face

Flames with the passion of our happy speed!

The noble steed

Pashes the first gold limit of the sand.

Ah love, thy hand!

We win, no foot pursuing spans the brow!

Yes, kiss me now!

III.

THE SPRING AFTER.

NORTH, by the ice-belt, where the cliffs appease

Innumerable clamour of sundering seas,

And garlands of ungatherable foam

Wild as the horses maddening toward home,

Where through the thunderous burden of the thaw

Rings the sharp fury of the breaking flaw,

Where summer's hand is heavy on the snow,

And springtide bursts the insuperable floe,

North, by the limit of the ocean, stands

A castle, lord of those far footless hands

That are the wall of that most monstrous world

About whose pillars Behemoth is curled,

About whose gates Leviathan is strong,

Whose secret terror sweetens not for song.

The hoarse loud roar of gulphs of raging brine
That break in foam and fire on that divine
Cliff-base, is smothered in the misty air,
And no sound penetrates them, save a rare {93}
Music of sombre motion, swaying slow.
The sky above is one dark indigo
Voiceless and deep, no light is hard within
To shame love's lips and rouse the silky skin
From its dull olive to a perfect white.
For scarce an hour the golden rim of light
Tinges the southward bergs; for scarce an hour
The sun puts forth his seasonable flower,
And only for a little while the wind
Wakes at his coming, and beats cold and blind
On the wild sea that struggles to release
The hard grip from its throat, and lie at ease
Lapped in the eternal summer. But its waves
Roam through the solitude of empty caves
In vain; no faster wheels the moon above;
And still reluctant fly the hours of love.

It is so peaceful in the castle: here
The night of winter never froze a tear
On my love's cheek or mine; no sorrow came
To track our vessel by its wake of flame
Wherein the dolphin bathed his shining side;
No smallest cloud between me and my bride
Came like a little mist; one tender fear,
Too sweet to speak of, closed the dying year
With love more perfect, for its purple root
Might blossom outward to the snowy fruit
Whose bloom to-night lay sleeping on her breast,
As if a touch might stir the sunny nest,
Break the spell's power, and bid the spirit fly
Who had come near to dwell with us. But I
Bend through long hours above the dear twin life,
Look from love's guerdon to the lover-wife,
And back again to that small face so sweet,
And downwards to the little rosy feet,
And see myself no longer in her eyes
So perfectly as here, where passion lies

Buried and re-arisen and complete.

O happy life too sweet, too perfect sweet,

O happy love too perfectly made one

Not to arouse the envy of the sun {94A}

Who sulks six months<<1>> for spite of it! O love,

<<1. In Arctic latitudes the sun hardly rises at all from September to March,
and is only visible in the south.>>

Too pure and fond for those pale gods above,

Too perfect for their iron rods to break,

Arise, awake, and die for death's own sake!

That one forgetfulness may take us three,

Still three, still one, to the Lethean sea;

That all its waters may be sweet as those

We wandered by, sweet sisters of the rose,

That perfect night before we fled, we two

Who were so silent down that avenue

Grown golden with the moonlight, who should be

No longer two, but one; nor one, but three.

And now it is the spiring; the ice is breaking;

The waters roar; the winds their wings are shaking

To sweep upon the northland; we shall sail
Under the summer perfume of the gale
To some old valley where the altars steam
Before the gods, and where the maidens dream
Their little lives away, and where the trees
Shake laughing tresses at the rising breeze,
And where the wells of water lie profound,
And not unfrequent is the silver sound
Of shepherds tuneful as the leaves are green,
Whose reedy music echoes, clear and clean,
From rocky palaces where gnomes delight
To sport all springtime, where the brooding night
With cataract is musical, and thrushes
Throb their young love beside the stream that rushes
Headlong to beat its foamheads into snow,
Where the sad swallow calls, and pale songs flow
To match the music of the nightingale.
There, where the pulses of the summer fail,
The fiery flakes of autumn fall, and there
Some warm perfection of the lazy air

Swims through the purpling veins of lovers. Hark!

A faint bird's note, as if a silver spark {94B}

Struck from a diamond; listen, wife, and know

How perfectly I love to watch you so.

Wake, lover, wake, but stir not yet the child:

Wake, and thy brow serene and low and mild

Shall take my kisses, and my lips shall seek

The pallid roses on thy perfect cheek,

And kiss them into poppies, and thy mouth

Shall lastly close to mine, as in the south

We see the sun close fast upon the sea;

So, my own heart, thy mouth must close on me.

Art thou awake? Those eyes of wondering love,

Sweet as the dawn and softer than the dove,

Seek no quick vision — yet they move to me

And, slowly, to the child. How still are we!

Yes, and a smile betokens that they wake

Or dream a waking dream for kisses' sake;

Yes, I will touch thee, O my low sweet brow!

My wife, thy lips to mine — yes, kiss me now!

IV.

THE VOYAGE SOUTHWARD.

HOLY as heaven, the home
Of winds, the land of foam,
The palace of the waves, the house of rain,
Deeper than ocean, dark
As dawn before the lark
Flings his sharp song to skyward, and is fain
To light his lampless eyes
At the flower-folded skies
Where stars are hidden in the blue, to fill
His beak with star-dropt dew,
His little heart anew
With love an song to swell it to his will;
Holy as heaven, the place
Before the golden face {95A}

Of God is very silent at the dawn.

The even keel is keen

To flash the waves between,

But no soft moving current is withdrawn:

We float upon the blue

Like sunlight specks in dew,

And like the moonlight on the lake we lie:

The northern gates are past,

And, following fair and fast,

The north wind drove us under such a sky,

Faint with the sun's desire,

And clad in fair attire

Of many driving cloudlets; and we flew

Like swallows to the South.

The ocean's curving mouth

Smiled day by day and nights of starry blue;

Nights when the sea would shake

Like sunlight where the wake

Was wonderful with flakes of living things

That leapt for joy to feel

The cold exultant keel
Flash, and the white ship dip her woven wings;
Nights when the moon would hold
Her lamp of whitest gold
To see us on the poop together set
With one desire, to be
Alone upon the sea
And touch soft hands, and hold white bosoms yet,
And see in silent eyes
More stars than all the skies
Together hold within their limits gray,
To watch the red lips move
For slow delight of love
Till the moon sigh and sink, and yield her sway
Unto the eastern lord
That draws a sanguine sword
And starts up eager in the dawn, to see
Bright eyes grow dim for sleep,
And lazy bosoms keep
Their slumber perfect and their sorcery,

While dawning winds arise,
And fast the white ship flies {95B}
To those young groves of olive by the shore,
The spring-clad shore we seek
That slopes to yonder peak
Snow-clad, bright-gleaming, as the silver ore
Plucked<<1>> by pale fingers slow
In balmy Mexico,
A king on thunder throned, his diadem
The ruby rocks that flash
The sunlight like a lash
When sunlight touches, and sweeps over them
A crown of light! Behold!
The white seas touch the gold,
And flame like flowers of fire about the prow.
It is the hour for sleep: —
Lulled by the moveless deep
To sleep, sweet wife, to sleep! Yes, kiss me now!

<<1. Referring to the story of the accidental discovery of the mine of Potosi by a man who, plucking of a plant, found its roots shining with silver.>>

V.

THE ULTIMATE VOYAGE.<<1>>

<<1. The Spiritual Journey towards the Supreme Knowledge which is life and bliss.>>

THE wandering waters move about the world,
And lap the sand, with quietest complaint
Borne on the wings of dying breezes up,
To where we make toward the wooded top
Of yonder menacing hill. The night is fallen
Starless and moonless, black beyond belief,
Tremendous, only just the ripple keeps
Our souls from perishing in the inane,
With music borrowed from the soul of God.
We twain go thither, knowing no desire
To lead us; but some strong necessity

Urges, as lightning thunder, our slow steps
Upward. For on the pleasant meadow-land
That slopes to sunny bays, and limpid seas
(That breathe like maidens sleeping, for their breast
Is silver with the sand that lies below,)

Where our storm-strengthened dragon rests at last, {96A}

And by whose borders we have made a home,

More like a squirrel's bower than a house.

For in this blue Sicilian summertime

The trees arch tenderly for lovers' sleep,

And all the interwoven leaves are fine

To freshen us with dewdrops at the dawn,

Or let the summer shower sing through to us,

And welcome kisses of the silver rain

That raps and rustles in the solitude.

But in the night there came to us a cry:

"The mountains are your portion, and the hills

Your temple, and you are chosen." Then I woke

Pondering, and my lover woke and said:

"I heard a voice of one majestic

With waving beard, most ancient, beautiful,

Concealed and not concealed;<<Macroprosopus.>> and awoke, Feeling a
stronger compulsion on my soul

To go some whither.” And the dreams were one

(We somehow knew), and, looking such a kiss

As lovers’ eyes can interchange, our lips

Met in the mute agreement to obey.

So, girding on our raiment, as to pass

Some whither of long doubtful journeying,

We went forth blindly to the horrible

Damp darkness of the pines above. And there

Strange beasts crossed path of ours, such beasts as earth Bears not,
distorted, tortured, loathable,

Mouthing with hateful lips some recent blood,

or snarling at our feet. But these attacked

No courage of our hearts, we faltered not,

And they fell back, snake’s mouth and leopard’s throat, Afraid. But others
fawning came behind

With clumsy leapings as in friendliness,

Dogs with men’s faces, and we beat them off

With scabbard, and the hideous path wound on.

And these perplexed our goings, for no light
Gleamed through the bare pine-ruins lava-struck, {96B}
Nor even the hellish fire of Etna's maw.
But lucklessly we came upon a pool
Dank, dark, and stagnant, evil to the touch,
Oozing towards us, but sucked suddenly,
Silently, horribly, by slow compulsion
Into the slipping sand, and vanishing,
Whereon we saw a little boat appear,
And in it such a figure as we knew
Was Death. But she, intolerant of delay,
Hailed him. The vessel floated to our feet,
And Death was not. She leapt within, and bent
Her own white shoulders to the thwart, and bade
Me steer, and keep stern watch with sword unsheathed
For fear of something that her soul had seen
Above. And thus upon the oily black
Silent swift river we sailed out to reach
Its source, no longer feeling as compelled,
But led by some incomprehensible

Passion. And here lewd fishes snapped at us,
And watersnakes writhed silently toward
Our craft. But these I fought against, and smote
head from foul body, to our further ill,
For frightful jelly-monsters grew apace,
And all the water grew one slimy mass
Of crawling tentacles. My sword was swift
That slashed and slew them, chiefly to protect
The toiling woman, and assure our path
Through this foul hell. And now the very air
Is thick with cold wet horrors. With my sword
Trenchant, that tore their scaly essences —
Like Lucian's sailor writhing in the clutch
Of those witch-vines — I slashed about like light,
And noises horrible of death devoured
The hateful suction of their clinging arms
And wash of slipping bellies. Presently
Sense failed, and — Nothing!
By-and-by we woke
In a most beautiful canoe of pearl

Lucent on lucent water, in a sun {97A}

That was the heart of spring. But the green land

Seemed distant, with a sense of aery height;

As if it were below us far, that seemed

Around. And as we gazed the water grew

Ethereal, thin, most delicately hued,

Misty, as if its substance were dissolved

In some more subtle element. We heard

“O passers over water, do ye dare

To tread the deadlier kingdoms of the air?”

Whereat I cried: Arise! And then the pearl

Budded with nautilus-wings, and upward now

Soared. And our souls began to know the death

That was about to take us. All our veins

Boiled with tumultuous and bursting blood;

Our flesh broke bounds, and all our bones grew fierce, As if some poison
ate us up. And lo!

The air is peopled with a devil-tribe

Born of our own selves. These, grown furious

At dispossession by the subtle air,

Contend with us, who know the agony
Of half life drawn out lingering, who groan
Eaten as if by worms, who dash ourselves
Vainly against the ethereal essences
That make our boat, who vainly strive to cast
Our stricken bodies over the pale edge
And drop and end it all. No nerve obeys;
But in the torn web of our brains is born
The knowledge that release is higher yet.
So, lightened of the devils that possessed
In myriad hideousness our earthier lives,
With one swift impulse, we ourselves shake off
The clinging fiends, and shaking even the boat
As dust beneath our feet, leap up and run
Upward, and flash, and suddenly sigh back
Happy, and rest with limbs entwined at last
On pale blue air, the empyreal floor,
As on a bank of flowers in the old days
Before this journey. So I think we slept.
But now, awaking, suddenly we feel

A sound as if within us, and without,
So penetrating and so self-inspired {97B}
Sounded the voice we knew as God's. The words
Were not a question any more, but said:
"The last and greatest is within you now."
Then fire too subtle and omniscient
Devoured our substance, and we moved again
Not down, not up, but inwards mystically
Involving self in self, and light in light.
And this was not a pain, but peaceable
Like young-eyed love, reviving; it consumed
And consecrated and made savour sweet
To our changed senses. And the dual self
Of love grew less distinct and I began
To feel her heart in mine, her lips in mine. ...
Then mistier grew the sense of God without,
And God was I, and nothing might exist,
Subsist, or be at all, outside of Me,
Myself Existence of Existences.

... .

We had passed unknowing to the woody crown
Of the little hill. There was a secret Vault.
We entered. All without the walls appeared
As fire, and all within as icy light;
The altar was of gold, and on it burnt
Some ancient perfume. Then I saw myself
And her together, as a priest, whose robe
Was white and frail, and covered with a cope
Of scarlet bound with gold: upon the head
A golden crown, wherein a diamond shone;
Within which diamond we beheld our self
The higher priest, not clothed, but clothed upon
With the white brilliance of high nakedness
As with a garment.<<1>> Then of our self there came
A voice: “Ye have attained to That which Is;
Kiss, and the vision is fulfilled.” And so
Our bodies met, and, meeting did not touch
But interpenetrated in the kiss
... . .

<<1. See the Description of the robes and crown of the Magus in the”Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage.”>>

This writing is engraved on lamina
Of silver, found by me, the trusted friend {98A}
And loving servant of my lady and lord,
In that abandoned Vault, of late destroyed
By Etna’s fury. Nothing else remained
(Save in the anteroom the sword we knew
So often flashing at the column-head)
Within. I think my lord has written this.
Now for the child, whose rearing is my care,
And in whose life is left my single hope,
This writing shall conclude the book of song
His father made in worship and true love
Of his fair lady, and these songs shall be
His hope, and his tradition, and his pride.
Thus have I written for the sake of truth,
And for his sake who bears his father’s sword —
I pray God under my fond guardianship

As worthily. Thus far, and so — the end.

THE HONOURABLE ADULTERERS

I.

I LOOKED beneath her eyelids, where her eyes
Like stars were deep, and dim like summer skies;
I looked beneath their lashes; and behold!
My own thought mirrored in their maiden gold.
Shame drew to them to cloud their light with lies,
And shrank back shamed; but Love waxed bright and bold.

The devilish circle of the fiery ring<<1>>
Became one moment like a little thing,
And Truth and God were near us to withdraw
The veil of Love's unalterable law.
We feared no fury of the jealous King,
But, lest in honour love should find a flaw. {98B}

<<1. “i.e.” the wedding ring.>>

Only our looks and trembling lips we dread,
And the dear nimbus of a lover's head,
The dreamy splendour and the dim-delight
That feels the fragrance fallen from the night,
When soul to soul is locked, and eyes are wed,
And lips not touched kiss secretly by sight.

These things we fear, and move as in a mist
One from the other, and we had not kissed.
Only the perfume of her lips and hair
Love's angel wafted slowly to me there,
And as I went like death away I wist
Its savour faded, nor my soul aware.

I turned and went away, away, away,
Out of the night that was to me the day,
And road to meet the sun to hide in light
The sorrow of the day that was the night.

So I rode slowly in the morning gray,
And all the meadows with the frost were white.

And lo! between the mountains there uprose
The winter sun; and all the forest glows,
And the frost burns like fire before my eyes,
While the white breeze awoke with slumberous sighs
And stirred the branches of the pine; it knows,
It surely knows how weary are the wise!

Even my horse my sorrow understands,
Would turn and bear me to those western lands;
In love would turn me back; in love would bring
My thirsty lips to the one perfect spring —
My iron soul upon my trembling hands
Had its harsh will; my bitterness was king.

So verily long time I rode afar.
My course was lighted by some gloomy star
That boded evil, that I would not shun,

But rather welcome, as the storm the sun,
Lowering and red, a hurtful avatar,
Whose fatal forehead like itself is dun {99A}

It was no wonder when the second day
Showed me a city on the desert way,
Whose brazen gates were open, where within
I saw a statue for a sign of sin,
And saw the people come to it and pray,
Before its mouth set open for a gin.

And seeing me, a clamour rose among
Their dwarfish crowds, whose barbarous harsh tongue
Grated, a hateful sound; they plucked me down,
And mocked me through the highways of the town,
And brought me where they sang to censers swung
A grotesque hymn before her body brown.

For Sin was like a woman, and her feet
Shone, and her face was like the windy wheat;

Her eyes were keen and horrible and cold,
Her bronze loins girdled with the sacred gold;
Her lips were large, and from afar how sweet!
How fierce and purple for a kiss to hold!

But somehow blood was black upon them; blood
In stains and clots and splashes; and the mud
Trampled around her by the souls that knelt,
Worshipping where her false lewd body dwelt,
Was dark and hateful; and a sleepy flood
Trickled therefrom as magic gums that melt.

I had no care that hour for anything:
Not for my love, not for myself; I cling
Desperate to despair, as some to hope,
Unheeding Saturn in their horoscope;
But I, despair is lord of me and king;
But I, my thoughts tend ever to the rope. {99B}

But I, unknightly, recreant, a coward,

Dare not release my soul from fate untoward
By such a craven's cunning. Nay, my soul
Must move unflinching to what bitter goal
The angry gods design — if gods be froward
I am a man, nor fear to drain the bowl.

Now some old devil, dead no doubt and damned,
But living in her life, had wisely crammed
Her fierce bronze throat with such a foul device
As made her belly yearn for sacrifice.
She leered like love on me, and smiled, and shammed,
And did not pity for all her breast of spice.

They thrust me in her hateful jaws, and I
Even then resisted not, so fain to die
Was my desire, so weary of the fight
With my own love, so willing to be quite
Sure of my strength by death; and eagerly
Almost I crossed the barrier keen and white.

When lo! a miracle! Her carven hand
Is lifted, and the little space is spanned,
And I am plucked from out her maw, and set
Down on the pedestal, whose polished jet
Shone like a mirror out of hell — I stand
Free, where the blood of other men is wet.

So slowly, while the mob stood back, I went
Out of the city, with no life content,
And certain I should meet no death at least.
Soon, riding ever to the stubborn east,
I came upon a shore whose ocean bent
In one long curve, where folk were making feast. {100A}

So with no heart to feast, I joined the mirth,
Mingled the dances that delight the earth,
And laughing looked in every face of guile.
Quick was my glance and subtle was my smile;
Ten thousand little loves were brought to birth,

Ten thousand loves that laughed a little while.

No; for one woman did not laugh, too wise!

But came so close, and looked within my eyes

So deeply that I saw not anything.

Only her eyes grew, as a purple ring

Shielding the sun. They grew; they uttered lies —

They fascinate and cleave to me and cling.

Then in their uttermost profound I saw

The veil of Love's unalterable law

Lifted, and in the shadow far behind

Dim and divine, within the shadow blind

My own love's face most amorously draw

Out of the deep toward my cloudy mind.

O suddenly I felt a kiss enclose

My whole live body, as a rich red rose

Folding its sweetness round the honey-bee!

I felt a perfect soul embracing me,

And in my spirit like a river flows
A passion like the passion of the sea.

II.

HE did not kiss me with his mouth; his eyes
Kissed mine, and mine kissed back; it was not wise,
But yet he had the strength to leave me; so
I was so glad he loved enough to go.

My arms could never have released his neck;
He saved our honour from a single speck.
And so he went away; and fate inwove
The bitterest of treason for our love. {100B}

For scarce two days when sickness took the King,
And death dissolved the violence of the ring.
I ruled alone: I left my palace gate
To see if Love should have the laugh at Fate.

And so I violated Death, and died;
But in the other land my spirit cried
For incarnation; conquering I came
Within my soulless body as a flame.

Endowing which with sacred power I sought
A little while, as thought that seeks for thought.
I found his changeless love endure as mine,
His passion curl around me as a vine.

So clinging fibres of desire control
My perfect body, and my perfect soul
Shot flakes of light toward him. So my eyes,
Seeking his face, were made divinely wise.

So, solemn, silent, 'mid a merry folk
I bound him by my forehead's silver yoke,
And grew immense about him and within,
And so possessed him wholly, without sin.

For I had crossed the barrier and knew
There was no sin. His lips reluctant grew
Ardent at last as recognizing me,
And love's wild tempest sweeps upon his sea.

And I? I knew not anything, but know
We are still silent, and united so,
And all our being spells one vast To Be,
A passion like the passion of the sea.

THE LEGEND OF BEN LEDI.<<1>>

<<1. The "Hill of God.">>

ON his couch Imperial Alpin<<1>>
In majestic grandeur lay,
Dying with the sun that faded
O'er the plain of granite gray. {101A}

<<1. The First King of all Scotland.>>

Snowy white his beard descended,
Flecked with foeman's crimson gore,
And he rose and grasped his broadsword,
And he prayed to mighty Thor:

“God of thunder, god of battle,
God of pillage and of war,
Hear the king of Scotland dying
On the Leny's thundrous shore!

“Thrice three hundred have I smitten
With my single arm this day;
Now of life my soul is weary,
I am old, I pass away.

“Grant me this, immortal monarch,
Such a tomb as ne'er before,
Such a tomb as never after

Monarch thought or monarch saw.”

Then he called his sons around him,

And he spake again and cried:

“Seven times a clansman’s bowshot

Lay me from the Leny’s side.

“Where the plain to westward sinketh,

Lay me in my tartan plaid,

All uncovered to the tempest,

In my hand my trusty blade.”

Hardly had he spake the order,

When his spirit passed away;

And his sons their heads uncovered

As they bore him o’er the brae.

Seven times did Phail McAlpine

Bend his mighty bow of yew;

Seven times with lightning swiftness

West the winged arrow flew.

Seven times a clansman's bowshot

From the Leny's western shore,

Laid they him where on to Achray

Spread the plain of Ian Vohr.

Hard by Teith's tumultuous waters

Camped his sons throughout the night,

Till the rosy blush of morning

Showed a vast majestic sight {101B}

Where of late the plain extended

Rose a mighty mass of stone,

Pierced the clouds, and sprang unmeasured

In magnificence — alone!

There the clansmen stood and wondered,

As the rock, supremely dire,

Split and trembled, cracked and thundered,

Lit with living flecks of fore.

Spake the chief: "My trusty clansmen,

This is not the day of doom;

This is honour to the mighty;

Clansmen, this is Alpin's tomb."

NYMPSFIELD RECTORY.

"December" 1893

A DESCENT OF THE MOENCH.<<1>>

<<1. The first guideless traverse of this mountain, one of the peaks of the Bernese Oberland.>>

July 14, 1896.

AN island of mist. White companies

Of clouds thronged wondrously against the hills,

And in the east a darkening of the winds

That held awhile their breath for very rage,
Too wild for aught but vaporous quivering
Of melting fleeces, while the sudden sun
Fled to his home. Afar the Matterhorn
Reared a gaunt pinnacle athwart the bank,
Where towered behind it one vast pillar of cloud
To thrice its height. Behold the ice-clad dome
On which we stood, all weary of the way,
And marked the east awaken into scorn,
And rush upon us. Then we set our teeth
To force a dangerous passage, and essayed
The steep slope not in vain. We pushed our way
Slowly and careworn down the icy ridge,
Hewing with ponderous strokes the riven ice
In little flakes and chips, and now again
Encountered strange and fearsome sentinels, {102A}
Gray pinnacles of lightning-riven rock
Fashioned of fire and night. We clomb adown
Fantastic cliffs of gnarled stone, and saw
The vivid lightning flare in purple robes

Of flame along the ridge, and even heard
Its terrible crackle, 'mid the sullen roar
Of answering thunder. Now the driven hail
Beat on our faces, while we strove to fling
Aloft the axe of forged steel, encased
In glittering ice, and smite unceasingly
On the unyielding slope of ice, as black
As those most imminent ghosts of Satan's frown
That shut us out from heaven, while the snow
Froze on our cheeks. Thus then we gained the field
Where precipice and overwhelming rock,
Avalanche, crag, leap through the dazzled air
To pile their mass in one Lethean plain
Of undulations of rolled billowy snow
Rent, seamed, and scarred with wound on jagged wound, Blue-rushing to
the vague expanse below
Of the unknown secrecies of mountain song.
Dragging behind us beautiful weary limbs,
We turned snow-blinded eyes towards the pass<<1>>
That shot a jasper wall above the mist

Into the lightning-kindled firmament,
Behind whose battlements a shelter<<2>> lay,
Rude-built of pine, whose parents in the storm
Of some vast avalanche were swept away
Into the valley. Thither we hasted on,
And there, as night stretched out a broken wing
Torn by the thunder and the bitter strife
Of warring flames and tempest's wrath, we came
And flung ourselves within, and laid us down
At last to sleep; and Sleep, a veined shape
Of naked stateliness, came down to us,
And tenderly stooped down, and kissed our brows. {102B}

<<1. The Monchjoch.>>

<<2. The Berglihutte.>>

IN A CORNFIELD.

O VOICE of sightless magic

Clear through day's crystal sky,

Blithe, contemplative, tragic,
As men may laugh or sigh;
As men may love or sorrow,
Their moods thy music borrow
To bid them live or die.
So sweet, so sad, so lonely,
In silent noontide only
Thy song-wings float and lie
On cloud-foam scarred and riven,
By God's red lightnings shriven,
And quiet hours are given
To him that lingers nigh.

Fain would I linger near thee
Amid the poppies red,
Forget this world, and hear thee
As one among the dead;
Amid the daffadillies,
Red tulips and white lilies,
Where daisies' tears are shed;

Where larkspur and cornflower
Are blue with sunlight's hour,
And all the earth is spread
As in a dream before me;
While steals divinely o'er me
Love's scented spring to draw me
From moods of dreamy dread.

O winged passion! traveller
Too near to God to see!
O lyrical unraveller
Of knotted life to me!
O song! O shining river
Of thought and sound! O giver
Of goodly words of glee!
Like to a star that singeth,
A flower that incense bringeth,
A love-song of the free!
Oh! let me sing thy glories
While spring winds whisper stories

Of winter past, whose shore is
Beyond a shoreless sea. {103A}

Sing on, thou lyric lover!
Sing on, and thrill me long
With such delights as cover
The days and deeds of wrong!
Live lyre of songs immortal
That pierce Heaven's fiery portal
With shafts of splendour strong,
Winged with thought's sharpest fires,
Arrowed with soul's desires
And sped from thunder's thong;
Heaven's gates rock, rage, and quiver,
Earth's walls gape wide and shiver,
While Freedom doth deliver
Men's spirits with thy song.

Ah, chainless, distant, fleeting,
To lands that know no sea,

Where ocean's stormy greeting
Fills no man's heart with glee;
Where lovers die or sever,
And death destroys for ever,
And God bears slavery: —
Fly thither, so thou leave us
That no man's hand may reave us
Of this — that we are free.
Free all men that may heed thee,
On freemen's praises feed thee,
Who chorus full, "God speed thee,
Live lyre of Liberty!"

DREAMS.

WHAT words are these that shudder through my sleep,
Changing from silver into crimson flakes,
And molten into gold
Like the pale opal through those gray may sweep
A scarlet flame, like eyes of crested snakes,

Keen, furious, and too cold.

What words are these? The pall of slumber lifts;

The veil of finiteness withdraws. The night

Is heavier, life burns low: {103B}

Yet to the quivering brain three goodly gifts

The cruelty of Pluto and his might

In the abyss bestow:

Change, foresight, fear. The pageant whirls and boils; Restricted not by
space an time, my dream

Foresees the doom of Fate;

My spirit wrestles in the Dream-King's toils

Always in vain, and Hope's forerunners gleam

Alway one step too late.

Not as when sunlight strikes the counterpane;

Half wakening, sleep rolls back her iron wave,

And dawn brings blithesomeness;

Not as when opiates lull the tortured brain

And sprinkle lotus on the drowsy grave

Of earth's old bitterness;

But as when consciousness half rouses up

And hurls back all the gibbering harpy crowd;

And sleep's draught deepeneth,

And all the furies of hell's belly sup

In the brain's palaces, and chant aloud

Songs that foretaste of Death.

Maddened, the brain breaks from beneath the goad,

Flings off again the foe, and from its hell

Brings for a moment peace,

Till weariness and her infernal load

Of phantom memory-shapes return to quell

The shaken fortresses.

Till nature reassert her empery,

And the full tide of wakefulness at last

Foam on the shore of sleep

To beat the white cliffs of reality
In vain, because their windy strength is past,
And only memories weep. {104A}

Why is the Finite real? And that world
So larger, so more beautiful and fleet,
So free, so exquisite,
The world of dreams and shadows, not impearled
With solitary shaft of Truth? Too sweet,
O children of the Night,

Are your wide realms for our philosophers,
Who must in hard gray balance-shackles bind
The essence of all thought:
No sorrier sexton in a grave inters
The nobler children of a poet's mind
Of wine and gold well wrought.

By the poor sense of touch they judge that this
Or that is real or not. Have they divined

This simplest spirit-bond,
The joy of some bad woman's deadly kiss;
The thought-flash that well tunes a lover's mind
Seas and gray gulfs beyond?

So that which is impalpable to touch,
They judge by touch; the viewless they decide
By sight; their logic fails,
Their jarring jargon jingles — even such
An empty brazen pot — wise men deride
The clouds that mimic whales.

My world shall be my dreams. Religion there
And duty may disturb me not at all;
Nor doubts, nor fear of death.
I straddle on no haggard ghostly mare;
Yea, through my God, I have leapt o'er a wall!
(As poet David saith.)

The wall that ever girds Earth's thought with brass

Is all a silver path my feet beneath,
And o'er its level sward {104B}
Of sea-reflecting white flowers and fresh grass
I walk. Man's darkness is a leathern sheath,
Myself the sunbright sword!

I have no fear, nor doubt, nor sorrow now,
For I give Self to God — I give my best
Of soul and blood and brain
To my poor Art — there comes to me somehow
This fact; Man's work is God made manifest;
Life is all Peace again.

And Dreams are beyond life. Their wider scope,
Limitless Empire o'er the world of thought,
Help my desires to press
Beyond all stars toward God and Heaven and Hope;
And in the world-amazing chase is wrought
Somehow — all Happiness.

THE TRIUMPH OF MAN.

BEFORE the darkness, earlier than being,
When yet thought was not, shapeless and unseeing,
Made misbegotten of deity on death,
There brooded on the waters the strange breath
Of an incarnate hatred. Darkness fell
And chaos, from prodigious gulphs of hell.
Life, that rejoiced to travail with a man,
Looked where the cohorts of destruction ran,
Saw darkness visible, and was afraid,
Seeing. There grew like Death a monster shade,
Blind as the coffin, as the covering sod
Damp, as the corpse obscene, the Christian God.
So to the agony dirges of despair
Man cleft the womb, and shook the icy air
With bitter cries for light and life and love.
But these, begotten of the world above, {105A}
Withdrew their glory, and the iron world
Rolled on its cruel way, and passion furred

Its pure wings, and abased itself, and bore
Fetters impure, and stooped, and was no more.
But resurrection's ghastly power grew strong,
And Lust was born, adulterous with Wrong,
The Child of Lies; so man was blinded still,
Garnered the harvest of abortive ill,
For wheat reaped thistles, and for worship wrought
A fouler idol of his meanest thought:
A monster, vengeful, cruel, traitor, slave,
Lord of disease and father of the grave,
A treacherous bully, feeble as malign,
Intolerable, inhuman, undivine,
With spite close girded and with hatred shod,
A snarling cur, the Christian's Christless God.
Out! misbegotten monster! with thy brood,
The obscene offspring of thy pigrity,
Incestuous wedlock with the Pharisees
That hail the Christ a son of thee! Our knees
Bend not before thee, and our earth-bowed brows
Shake off their worship, and reject thy spouse,

The harlot of the world! For, proud and free,
We stand beyond thy hatred, even we:
We broken in spirit beneath bitter years,
Branded with the burnt-offering of tears,
Spit out upon the lie, and in thy face
Cast back the slimy falsehood; to your place,
Ye Gadarean swine, too foul to fling
Into the waters that abound and spring!
Back, to your mother filth! With hope, and youth,
Love, light, and power, and mastery of truth
Armed, we reject you; the bright scourge we ply,
Your howling spirits stumble to your sty:
The worm that was your lie — our heel its head
Bruises, that bruised us once; the snake is dead.
Who of mankind that honours man discerns
That man of all men, whose high spirit burns, {105B}
Crowned over life, and conqueror of death,
The godhood that was Christ of Nazareth —
Who of all men, that will not gird his brand
And purge from priestcraft the uxorious land?

Christ, who lived, died, and lived, that man might be Tameless and
tranquil as the summer sea,

That laughs with love of the broad skies of noon,

And dreams of lazy kissings of the moon,

But listens for the summons of the wind,

Shakes its white mane, and hurls its fury blind

Against oppression, gathers its steep side,

Rears as a springing tiger, flings its tide

Tremendous on the barriers, smites the sand,

And gluts its hunger on the breaking land;

Engulphing waters fall and overwhelm: —

Christ, who stood dauntless at the shaken helm

On Galilee, who quelled the wrath of God,

And rose triumphant over faith, and trod

With calm victorious feet the icy way

When springtide burgeoned, and the rosy day

Leapt from beneath the splendours of the snow: —

Christ, ultimate master of man's hateful foe,

And lord of his own soul and fate, strikes still

From man's own heaven, against the lord of ill;

Stage thunders mock the once terrific nod
That spoke the fury of the Christian God,
Whose slaves deny, too cowardly to abjure,
Their desecrated Moloch. The impure
Godhead is powerless, even on the slave,
Who once could scar the forehead of the brave,
Break love's heart pitiful, and reach the strong
Through stricken children, and a mother's wrong.
Day after darkness, life beyond the tomb!
Manhood reluctant from religion's womb
Leaps, and sweet laughter flash for freedom's birth
That thrills the old bosom of maternal earth. {106A}
The dawn has broken; yet the impure fierce fire
Kindles the grievous furnace of desire
Still for the harpy brood of king and priest,
Slave, harlot, coward, that make human feast
Before the desecrated god, in hells
Of darkness, where the mitred vampire dwells,
Where still death reigns, and God and priests are fed, Man's blood for
wine, man's flesh for meat and bread, The lands of murder, of the obscene
things

That snarl at freedom, broken by her wings,
That prop the abomination, cringe and smile,
Caressing the dead fetich, that defile
With hideous sacraments the happy land.
Destruction claims its own; the hero's hand
Grips the snake's throat; yea, on its head is set
The heel that crushes it, the serpent wet
With that foul blood, from human vitals drained,
From tears of broken women, and sweat stained
From torturers' cloths; the sickly tide is poured,
And all the earth is blasted; the green sward
Burns where it touches, and the barren sod
Rejects the poison of the blood of God.
Yet, through the foam of waters that enclose
Their sweet salt bosoms, through the summer rose,
Through flowers of fatal fire, through fields of air
That summer squanders, ere the bright moon bare
Her maiden bosom, through the kissing gold
Where lovers' lips are molten, and breasts hold
Their sister bodies, and deep eyes are wed,

And fire of fire enflowers the sacred head
Of mingling passion, through the silent sleep
Where love sobs out its life, and new loves leap
To being, through the dawn of all new things,
There burns an angel whose amazing wings {106B}
Wave in the sunbright air, whose lips of flame
Chant the almighty music of One Name
Whose perfume fills the silent atmosphere,
Whose passionate melodies caress the ear;
An angel, strong and eloquent, aloud
Cries to the earth to lift the final shroud,
And, having burst Faith's coffin, to lay by
The winding-sheet of Infidelity,
And rise up naked, as a god, to hear
This message from the reawakened sphere;
Words with love clothed, with life immortal shod: —
“Mankind is made a little part of God.”<<1>>

<<1. “i.e.” the idea of God, dissociated from the legends of priests, and assimilated to the impersonal Parabrahma of the Hindu. This dual use of the word is common throughout Crowley: the context is everywhere sufficient

to decide. In the play “Jephthah,” however, conventional ideas are followed.>>

Till the response, full chorus of the earth,

Flash through the splendid portals of rebirth,

Completing Truth in its amazing span: —

“Godhead is made the Spirit that is Man.”

To whose white mountains, and their arduous ways,

Turn we our purpose, till the faith that slays

Yield up its place to faith that gives us life,

The faith to conquer in the higher strife;

Our single purpose, and sublime intent,

With their split blood to seal our sacrament,

Who stand among the martyrs of the Light;

Our single purpose, by incarnate might

Begotten after travail unto death,

To live within the light that quickeneth;

To tread base thoughts as our high thoughts have trod, Deep in the dust,
the carrion that was God;

Conquer our hatreds as the dawn of love

Conquered that fiend whose ruinous throne above

Broke lofty spirits once, now falls with fate,

At last through his own violence violate; {107A}
To live in life, breathe freedom with each breath,
As God breathed tyranny and died in death;
Secure the sacred fastness of the soul,
Uniting self to the absolute, the whole,
The universal marriage of mankind,
Free, perfect, broken from the chains that bind,
Force infinite, love pure, desire untold,
And mutual raptures of the age of gold,
The child of freedom! So the moulder, man,
Shake his grim shoulders, and the shadows wan
Fall to forgetfulness; so life revives
And new sweet loves beget diviner lives,
And Freedom stands, re-risen from the rod,
A goodlier godhead than the broken God;
Uniting all the universe in this
Music more musical than breezes' kiss,
A song more potent than the sullen sea,
The triumph of the freedom of the free;
One stronger song than thrilled the rapturous birth

Of stars and planets and the mother, earth;
As lovers, calling lovers when they die,
Strangle death's torture in love's agony;
As waters, shaken by the storm, that roar,
Sea unto sea; as stars that burn before
The blackness; as the mighty cry of swords
Raging through battle, for its stronger chords;
And for its low entrancing music, made
As waters lambent in the listening glade;
As Sappho's yearning to to the amorous sea;
As Man's Prometheus, in captivity
Master and freeman; as the holy tune
All birds, all lovers, whisper to the moon.
So, passionate and pure, the strong chant rolls,
Queen of the mystic unity of souls;
So from eternity its glory springs
King of the magical brotherhood of kings;
The absolute crown and kingdom of desire,
Earth's virgin chaplet, molten in the fire,
Sealed in the sea, betokened by the wind:

“There is one God, the Spirit of Mankind!” {107B}

THE DREAMING DEATH.<<1>>

<<1. The scene of this poem is a little spinney near the wooden bridge in Love Lane, Cambridge. — A.C.>>

MY beauty in thy deep pure love
Anchors its homage far above
All lights of heaven. The stars awake;
The very stars bend down to take
From its fresh fragrance for the sake
Of their own cloud-compelling peace.
On earth there lies a silver fleece
Of new-fallen snow, secure from sun,
In alleys, leafy every one
This year already with the spring.
The breeze blows freshly, thrushes sing,
And all the woods are burgeoning
With quick new buds; across the snow

The scent of violets to and fro
Wafts at the hour of dawn. Alone
I wait, a figure turned to stone
(Or salt for pain). A week ago
Thine arms embraced me; now I know
Far off they clasp the empty air:
Thy lips seek home, and in despair
Lament aloud over the frosted moor.
Sad am I, sad, albeit sure
There is no change of God above
And no abatement of our love.
For still, though thou be gone, I see
In the glad mirror secretly
That I am beautiful in thee.
Thy love irradiates my eyes,
Tints my skin gold; its melodies
Of music run over my face;
Smiles envy kisses in the race
To bathe beneath my eyelids. Light
Clothes me and circles with the might

Of warmer rosier suns. Thy kiss
Dwells on my bosom, and it is
A glittering mount of fire, that burns
Incense unnamed to heaven, and yearns
In smoke toward thy home. Desire
Bellies the sails of molten fire
Upon the ship of Youth with wind
Urgently panting out behind,
Impatient till the strand appear {108A}
And the blue sea have ceased to rear
Fountains of foam against the prow.
Hail! I can vision even now
That golden shore. A lake of light
Burns to the sky; above, the night
Hovers, her wings grown luminous.
(I think she dearly loveth us.)
The sand along the glittering shore
Is all of diamond; rivers pour
Unceasing floods of light along,
Whose virtue is so bitter strong

That he who bathes within them straight
Rises an angel to the gate
Of heaven and enters as a king.
Birds people it on varied wing
Of rainbow; fishes gold and fine
Dart like bright stars through fount and brine,
And all the sea about our wake
Foams with the silver watersnake.
There is a palace veiled in mist.
A single magic amethyst
Built it; the incense soothly sighs;
So the light stream upon it lies.
There thou art dwelling. I am ware
The music of thine eyes and hair
Calls to the wind to chase our ship
Faster toward; the waters slip
Smoothly and swift beneath the keel.
The pulses of the vessel feel
I draw toward thee; now the sails
Hang idly, for the golden gales

Drop as the vessel grates the sand.
Come, thou true love, and hold my hand!
I tremble (for my love) to land.
I feel thy arms around me steal;
Thy breath upon my cheeks I feel;
Thy lips draw out to mine: the breath
Of ocean grows as still as death;
The breezes swoon for very bliss.
The sacrament of true love's kiss
Accomplishes: I feel a pain
Stab my heart through and sleep again,
And I am in thine arms for ever.

... .

There came a tutor, who had never
Known the response of love to love;
He wandered through the woods above
The river, and came suddenly {108B}
Where he lay sleeping. Purity
And joy beyond the speech of man
Dwelt on his face, divinely wan.

“How beautiful is sleep!” he saith,
Bends over him. There is no breath,
No sound, no motion: it is death.
And gazing on the happy head
“How beautiful is Death!” he said.

A SONNET IN SPRING.

O CHAINLESS Love, the frost is in my brain,
Whose swift desires and swift intelligence
Are dull and numb to-day; because the sense
Only responds to the sharp key of pain.
O free fair Love, as welcome as the rain
On thirsty fallows, come, and let us hence
Far where the veil of Summer lies immense,
A haze of heat on ocean's purple plain.

O wingless Love, let us away together
Where the sure surf rings round the beaten strand;
Where the sky stands, a dome of flawless weather,

And the stars join in one triumphal band,
Because we broke the inexorable tether
That bound our passion with an iron hand.

DE PROFUNDIS.<<1>>

<<1. Composed while walking home through the starry streets from an evil evening in St. Petersburg. Vv. 1-3 are the feelings, vv.“sqq.” the reflections thus engendered.>>

BLOOD, mist, and foam, then darkness. On my eyes
Sits heaviness, the poor worn body lies
Devoid of nerve and muscle; it were death
Save for the heart that throbs, the breast that sighs.

The brain reels drowsily, the mind is dulled,
Deadened and drowned by noises that are lulled
By the harsh poison of the hateful breath.
All sense and sound and seeing is annulled. {109A}

Within a body dead a deadened brain

Beats with the burden of a shameful pain,
The sullen agony that dares to think,
And think through sleep, and wake to think again.

Fools! bitter fools! Our breaths and kisses seem
Constrained in devilry, debauch, and dream:
Lives logged in the morass of meat and drink,
Loves dipped in Phlegethon,<<1>> the perjured stream.

<<1. The fiery river of Hades.>>

Behold we would that hours and minutes pass,
Watch the sands falling in the eager glass;
To wile their weariness is pleasure's bliss;
But ah! the years! like smoke They fade, alas!

We weep them as they slip away; we gaze
Back on the likeness of the former days —
The hair we fondle and the lips we kiss —
Roses grow yellow and no purple stays.

Ah! the old years! Come back, ye vanished hours

We wasted; come, grow red, ye faded flowers!

What boots the weariness of olden time

Now, when old age, a tempest-fury, lowers?

Up to high God beyond the weary land

The days drift mournfully; His hoary hand

Gathers them. Is it so? My foolish rhyme

Dreams they are links upon an endless band.

The planets draw in endless orbits round

The sun; itself revolves in the profound

Deep wells of space; the comet's mystic track

By the strong rule of a closed curve is bound. {109B}

Why not with time? To-morrow we may see

The circle ended — if to-morrow be —

And gaze on chaos, and a week bring back

Adam and Eve beneath the apple tree.

Or, like the comet, the wild race may end
Out into darkness, and our circle bend
Round to all glory in a sudden sweep,
And speed triumphant with the sun to friend.

Love will not leave my home. She knows my tears,
My angers and caprices; still my ears
Listen to singing voices, till I weep
Once more, less sadly, and set hounds on fears.

She will not leave me comfortless. And why?
Through the dimmed glory of my clouded eye
She catches one sharp glint of love for her:
She will not leave me ever till I die: —

Nay, though I die! Beyond the distant gloom
Heaven springs, a fountain, out of Change's womb!
Time would all men within the grave inter: —
For Time himself shall no god find a tomb?

Glory and love and work precipitate

The end of man's desire — so sayeth Fate.

Man answers: Love is stronger, work more sure,

Glory more fadeless than her shafts abate.

Though all worlds fail, the pulse of Life be still,

God fall, all darken, she hath not her will

Of deeds beyond recall, that shall endure:

For us, these three divinest glasses fill,

Fill to the brim with lustrous dew, nor fail

To leave the blossom and the nightingale,

Love's earlier kiss, and manhood's glowing prime,

These us suffice. Shall man or Fate prevail? {110A}

Lo, we are blind, and dubious fingers grope

In Despair's dungeon for the key of Hope;<<1>>

Lo, we are chained, and with a broken rhyme

Would file our fetters and enlarge our scope.

<<1. See Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, where Hope unlocks the dungeon of Giant Despair. Crowley more wisely would use the key of Work.>>

Yet ants may move the mountain; none is small

But he who stretches out no arm at all;

Toadstools have wrecked fair cities in a night,

One poet's song may bid a kingdom fall.

Add to thy fellow-men one ounce of aid —

The block begins to shift, the start is made:

The rest is thine; with overwhelming might

The balance changes, and the task is paid.

Join'st thou thy feeble hands in foolish prayer

To him thy brain hath moulded and set there

In thy brain's heaven? Such a god replies

As thy fears move. So men pray everywhere.

What God there be, is real. By His might
Begot the universe within the night;
If he had prayed to His own mind's weak lies
Think'st thou the heaven and earth had stood upright?

Remember Him, but smite! No workman hews
His stone aright whose nervy arms refuse
To ply the chisel, but are raised to ask
A visionary foreman he may choose

From the distortions of a sodden mind.
God did first work on earth when woman-kind
He chipped from Adam's rib — a thankless task
I wot His wisdom has long since repined. {110B}

Christ touched the leper and the widow's son;
And thou wouldst serve the work the Perfect One
Began, by folding arms and gazing up
To heaven, as if thy work were rightly done.

I tell thee, He should say, if ye were met:

“Thou hadst a talent — ah, thou hast it yet

Wrapped in a napkin! thou shalt drain the cup

Of that damnation that may not forget

“The wasted hours!” Ah, bitter interest

Of our youth’s capital — forgotten zest

In all the pleasures of o’erflowing life,

Wine tasteless, tired the brain, and cold the breast!

Ah! but if with it is one good deed wrought,

One kind word spoken, one immortal thought

Born in thee, all is paid; the weary strife

Grows victory. “Love is all and Death is nought.”

Such an one wrote that word<<1>> as I would meet,

Lay my life’s burden at his silver feet,

Have him give ear if I say “Master.” Yea!

I know no heaven, no honour, half so sweet!

<<1. Browning, in “The Householder.”>>

He passed before me on the wheel of Time,
He who knows no Time — the intense sublime
Master of all philosophy and play,
Lord of all love and music and sweet rhyme.

Follow thou him! Work ever, if thy heart
Be fervent with one hope, thy brain with art,
Thy lips with song, thine arm with strength to smite: Achieve some act;
its name shall not depart.

Christ laid Love’s corner-stone, and Caesar built
The tower of glory; Sappho’s life was split
From fervent lips the torch of song to ignite:
Thou mayst add yet a stone — if but thou wilt. {111A}

And yet the days stream by; night shakes the day
From his pale throne of purple, to allay
The tremors of the earth; day smiteth dark

With the swift poignard dipped in Helios' ray.

The days stream by; with lips and cheeks grown pale

On their indomitable breast we sail.

There is a favouring wind; our idle bark

Lingers, we raise no sail to meet the gale.

The bank slips by, we gather not its fruit,

We plant no seed, we irrigate no root

True men have planted; and the tare and thorn

Spring to rank weedy vigour; poisons shoot

Into the overspreading foliage;

So as days darken into weary age

The flowers are fewer; the weeds are stronger born

And hands are grown too feeble to assuage

Their venom; then, the unutterable sea!

Is she green-cinctured with the earlier tree

Of Life? Do blossoms blow, or weeds create

A foul rank undergrowth of misery?

From the deep water of the bitterest brine

Drowned children raise their arms; their lips combine To force a shriek;
bid them go contemplate

The cold philosophy of Zeno's<<1>> shrine?

<<1. The Stoic. To be distinguished from the Eleatic and the Epicurean of the same name. He was born at Citium in Cyprus in 340 B.C. He preached GR:alpha-pi-alpha-theta-epsilon-iota-alpha, happiness in oneself independent of all circumstance, as the highest good.>>

Nay, stretch a hand! Although their eagle clutch

O'erturn thy skiff, yet it is overmuch

To grieve for that: life is not so divine —

I count it little grief to part with such! {111B}

We are wild serpents in a ring of fire;

Our necks stretch out, our haggard eyes aspire

In desperation; from the fearful line

Our coils revulse in impotence and ire.

An idle song it was the poet sang,

A quavering note — no brazen kettle's clang,

But gentle, drooping, tearful. Nay, achieve!

I can remember how the finish rang

Clear, sharp, and loud; the harp is glad to die

And give the clarion one note silver-high.

It was too sweet for music, and I weave

In vain the tattered woof of memory.

Ashes and dust!

Cold cinders dead!

Our swords are rust;

Our lives are fled

Like dew on glass.

In vain we lust;

Our hopes are sped,

Alas! alas!

From heaven we are thrust, we have no more trust.

Alas!

Gold hairs and gray!

Red lips and white!

Warm hearts, cold clay!

Bright day, dim night!

Our spirits pass

Like the hours away.

We have no light,

Alas! alas!

We have no more day, we are fain to say

Alas!

In Love's a cure

For Fortune's hate;

In Love's a lure

Shall laugh at Fate;

We have toiled Death's knell;

All streams are pure; {112A}

We are new-create;

All's well, all's well!

We have God to endure, we are very sure

All's well!

In such wise rang the challenge unto Death

With clear high eloquence and happy breath;

So did a brave sad heart grow glad again

And mock the riddle that the dead Sphinx saith.

When I am dead, remember me for this

That I bade workers work, and lovers kiss;

Laughed with the Stoic at the dream of pain,

And preached with Jesus<<1>> the evangel — bliss.

<<1. The allusion betrays Crowley's ignorance (at this time) of the results of modern criticism of the New Testament.>>

When I am dead, think kindly. Frail my song?

'Twas the poor utterance of an eager tongue;

I stutter in my rhyme? my heart was full
Of greater longings, more divinely wrung

By love and pity and regret and trust,
High hope from heaven that God will be just,
Spurn not the child because his mind was dull,
Still less condemn him for his father's lust.

Yet I think priests shall answer Him in vain:
Their gospel of disgrace, disease, and pain,
Shall move His heart of Love to such a wrath —
O Heart! Turn back and look on Love again!

Behold, I have seen visions, and dreamed dreams!
My verses eddy in slow wandering streams,
Veer like the wind, and know no certain path —
Yet their worst shades re tinged with dawning beams! {112B}

I have dreamed life a circle or a line,
Called God, and Fate, and Chance, and Man, divine.

I know not all I say, but through it all
Mark the dim hint of ultimate sunshine!

Remember me for this! And when I go
To sleep the last sleep in the slumberous snow,
Let child and man and woman yet recall
One little moment that I loved you so!

Let some high pinnacle my tombstone be,
My epitaph the murmur of the sea,
The clouds of heaven be fleeces for my pall,
My unknown grave the cradle of the free.

TWO SONNETS

ON HEARING THE MUSIC OF BRAHMS AND TSCHAIKOWSKY.

“To” C. G. LAMB.

I.

MY soul is aching with the sense of sound
Whose angels trumpet in the angry air;
Wild maenads with their fiery snakes enwound
In the black waves of my abundant hair.
Now hath my life a little respite found
In the brief pauses exquisite and rare;
In the strong chain of music I am bound,
And all myself before myself lies bare.

Drown me, oh, drown me in your fiery stream!
Wing me new visions, fierce enchanting birds!
Peace is less dear than this delirious fight!
For all the glowing fragrance of a dream
And all the sudden ecstasy of words
Deluge my spirit with a lake of light {113A}

II.

The constant ripple of your long white hands,

The soul-tormenting violin that speaks
Truth, and enunciates all my soul seeks,
That binds my love in its desirous bands,
And clutches at my heart, until there stands
No fibre yet unshaken, while it wreaks
In one sharp song the agony of weeks,
And all my soul and body understands.

The music changes, and I know that here,
In these new melodies, a tongue of fire
Leaps at each waving of the silver spear;
And all my sorrow dons delight's attire
Because the gate of heaven is so near,
And I have comprehended my desire.

A VALENTINE

(FEB. 14, 1897.)

WHY did you smile when the summer was dying

If it were not that the hours
Might bring in winter, while sad winds are sighing,
Some of Love's flowers?

Now is beginning of spring, and I ask not
Roses to flame o'er the lawn —
Who should know better that peonies bask not
In the sun's dawn?

Still, through the snow, it may be there is peeping
Veiled from the kiss of the sun
One lone white violet, daintily sleeping,
Hard to be won.

So with my fairy white maiden (you hear me?)
Winter may yet pass away;
Spring my arrive, (will it find your heart near me?)
Summer may stay. {113B}

Passionate roses I seek not, whose glories

Now are too fierce for the spring,
While the white flames of the frost flake that hoar is Flicker, on wing.

Only a primrose, a violet laden
With the pale perfume of dawn;
Only a snowdrop, my delicate maiden;
These have no thorn.

Old-fashioned love, yet you feel it a fountain
Springing for ever, most pure;
Old-fashioned love, yet as adamant mountain
Solid and sure.

Yes, tender thoughts on your lips will be breaking
By-and-by into a smile;
Love, ere he springs up divine at his waking,
Slumbers awhile.

So, my kissed snowdrop, you took its white blossom
Tenderly into your hand,

Kissed it three times, wear it yet in your bosom —

I understand.

ODE TO POESY.

UNTO what likeness shall I liken thee,

O moon-wrought maiden of my dewy sleep?

For thou art Queen of Thoughts, and unto me

Sister and Bride; the worn earth's echoes leap

Because thy holy name is Poesy.

Whereto art thou most like?

Thou art a Dian, crescent o'er the sea

That beats sonorous on the craggy shore,

Or shakes the frail earth-dyke.

So calm and still and far, that never more

Thy silken song shall quiver through the land;

Only by coral isle, by lonely strand

Where no man dwells, thy voice re-wakens wild and grand. {114A}

Thou art an Aphrodite. From the foam

Of golden grape and red thou risest up
Immaculate; thou hast an ebon comb
Of shade and silence, and a jasper cup
Wherein are mingled all desires. Thine home
Is in the forest shade.
Thy pale feet kiss the daffodils; they roam
By moss-grown springs, and shake the bluebell tips.
Each flower of the deep glade
Has whispered kisses for thy listening lips,
While Eos blushes in the sky, to find
A fairer, queenlier maiden, and as kind
To man and maid, whose eyes are lit by the same mind.

Thou hast, as Pallas hath, a polished shield,
Whose Gorgon-head is Hatred, and a sword
Sharper than Love's. Thy wisdom is revealed
To them who love, but thou hast aya abhorred
The children of revenge; to them is sealed
Thy book, so clear to me.
Thy book where seven sins their sceptres wield,

And seven sorrows track them, and one joy
Cancels their infamy;
Shame and regret are fused to an alloy,
Whose drossy weight sinks down and is consumed,
While o'er the ruddy metal is relumed
A purer flame of piece, with knowledge now perfumed.

Thy ways are very bitter. Not one rose
Twines in the crown of thorns thy spouse must wear; There is no Lethe
for the scoffs, the blows,
Nor find they a Cyrenian<<1>> anywhere
Amid the mob, to lift my cross, to share
Its burden: not one friend
Whose love were silence, whose affection knows
To press my hand and close my dying eyes
There, at the endless end.
I am alone on earth, and from the skies {114B}
Sometimes I seem so far — and yet, thy kiss
Requickens Hope; through aether's emptiness

Thou guidest me to touch the Hand of Him who Is.

<<1. Simon the Cyrenian, who bore the cross of Christ.>>

Thou hadst a torch to lume my lips to song;

Thou hast a cooler fountain for my thirst,

Lest my young love should work thy fame a wrong;

So the grape's veins in purple ardour burst,

And opiates in bloomless gardens throng,

And Life, a moon, wanes fast;

But to thy garden richer buds belong

And hardier flowers, and Love, a deathless sun,

Flames eager to the last,

And young desires in fleeter revels run,

And life revives, and all the flowers rejoice,

Bird and light butterfly have made their choice,

Creation hymns its God with an united voice.

There is a storm without. The hoary trees

Stagger; the foam is angry on the sea:

I know the secret mountains are at ease,
And in the deepest ice-embroidery
Where great men's spirits linger there is peace.
Heed not the unquiet wind!

Dawn's finger shall be raised, its wrath shall cease, The sun shall rouse us
whom the tempest lulled,

And thy poor poet's mind
For respite by its own deep anguish dulled
Shall wake again to watch the cruel day
Drift slowly on its chill and wasted way
With but thy smile to inspire some sad melodious lay.

From whose rude caverns sweep these gusty wings
That shake the steeples as they mock at God?
Who reared the stallion wind? Whose foaling flings
The billows starward? Whose the steeds fire-shod {115}
That sweep throughout the world? What spearman sings The fearful
chant of war
That fires, and spurs, and maddens all the kings
That rule o'er the earth, and air, and ocean?
Whose hand excites the star

To shatter into fiery flakes? No man,
No petty god, but One who governs all,
Slips the sun's leash, perceives the sparrow's fall,
Too high for man to fear, too near for man to call.

SONETS.<<1>>

<<1. The virulence of these sonnets is excusable when it is known that their aim was to destroy the influence in Cambridge of a man who headed in that University a movement parallel to that which at Oxford was associated with the name of Oscar Wilde. They had their effect.>>

TO THE AUTHOR OF THE PHRASE: "I AM
NOT A GENTLEMAN AND I HAVE NO FRIENDS."

I.

SELF-DAMNED, the leprous moisture of thy veins
Sickens the sunshine, and thine haggard eyes,
Bleared with their own corrupting infamies,
Glare through the charnel-house of earthly pains.

Horrible as already in hell. There reigns
The terror of the knowledge of the lies
That mock thee; thy death's double destinies
Clutch at the throat that sobs, and chokes, and strains.

Self-damned on earth, live out thy tortured days,
That men may look upon thy face, and see
How vile a thing of woman born may be.
Then, we are done with thee; go, go thy ways {115B}
To other hells, thou damned of God hereafter,
'Mid men's contempt and hate and pitiless laughter.

II.

Lust, impotence, and knowledge of thy soul,
And that foreknowledge, fill the fiery lake
Of lava where thy lazar corpse shall break
The burning surface to seek out a goal
More horrible, unspeakable. The scroll
Opens, and "coward, liar, monster" shake

Those other names of “goat” and “swine” and “snake”

Wherewith Hell’s worms caress thee and control.

Nay, but alone, intolerably alone,

Alone, as here, thy carrion soul shall swelter,

Yearning in vain for sleep, or death, or shelter;

No release possible, no respite known!

Self-damned, without a friend, thy eternal place

Sweats through the painting of thy harlot’s face.

“At the hour of the eclipse,”

“Wednesday, Dec.” 28.

BESIDE THE RIVER.

RAIN, rain in May. The river sadly flows,

A sullen silver crossed with sable bars,

Damp, gloomy, shivering, while reluctant stars,

Between swart masses of thick clouds that close,

Drive with drooped plumes their winged cars

Toward sleep, the scythe of woes.

Woes, woes in Spring. Ere summer deepeneth
The pink of roses to a purpler tint;
Ere ripening corn shafts back the sudden glint {116A}
Of sunshine that brings healing with the breath
Of western winds that sigh, they hint
Of sleep, twin soul with death.

Death, death ere dawn. The night is over dark;
Trees are grown terrible; the shadows wan
Make shudder all the tense desires of man;
No gleam of moonlight bears the golden mark
Of sunny lips, nor shines upon
Our sleep — Love's birchen bark.

Love, love to-night. To-night is all we know,
Is all our care; lips joined to lips we lie,
Tender hands touching, hearts in tune to die,
With willing kiss reluctant to let go;

So sweet love's last enduring sigh

For sleep, so sure, so slow.

Sleep, sleep to-night. Our arms are intertwined;

Breath desires breath and hand imprisons hand;

Breezes cool faces, rosy with the brand

Of long sweet kisses; sun shall dawn and find

Two lovers who have passed the land

Of sleep — and found Death kind.

MAN'S HOPE.

HERE fades the last red glimmer of the sun;

Ere day is night, when on the glittering bar

The waves are foaming rubies, and afar

Streaks of red water, gold on the horizon,

On summer ripples rhythmically run;

Ere dusk is weaned, there sails on silver car

From the expectant East, the evening Star;

And all the threads of sorrow are unspun. {116B}

So He who ordered this shall still work thus,
And ere life's lamp shall flicker into death,
And Time lose all his empire over us,
A gleam of Hope, of Knowledge, shall arise,
A star to silver o'er Death's glooming skies,
And gladden the last labouring torch of breath.

SONNET.

FOR G. F. KELY'S DRAWING OF AN
HERMAPHRODITE.

O BODY pale and beautiful with sin!
O breasts with venom swollen by the snakes
Of passion, whose cold slaver slimes and slakes
Thy soul-consuming fevers that within
Thy heart the fires of hell on earth begin!
O heart whose yearning after truth forsakes

The law of love! O heart whose ocean breaks
In sterile foam against some golden skin!

O thou whose body is one perfect prayer,
One long regret, one agony of shame,
Lost in the fragrance, speeding, subtle and rare,
Up to the sky, an avenue of flame!
My soul, thy body, in the same sin curled,
With vivid lust annihilate the world.

A WOODLAND IDYLL.

FRESH breath from the woodland blows sweet
O'er the flowery path we are roaming,
On the dimples of light lover's feet
In the mystical charm of the gloaming,
Yvonne!
On the buds that blush bright as we meet
In the mystical charm of the gloaming! {117A}

A tear for the stars of the night,
And a smile for the avenue shady,
A kiss for the eyelashes bright,
And a blush for the cheek of my lady,
Yvonne!

A laugh for the moon and her spite,
And a blush for the cheek of my lady!

We'll tread where the daffodils shake
And the primrose smiles up through her weeping,
Where the daisies dip down to the lake,
Where the wonderful thrushes are sleeping,
Yvonne!

By the marge of the maze of the brake
Where the wonderful thrushes are sleeping.

Where the brook trickles clear to the eye
Below dew-spangled frondlets of willow
We will wander to find by-and-by
The sward of our delicate pillow,

Yvonne!

Where the mosses so lusciously lie
For the sward of our delicate pillow.

For a bride fairer far than the flower
Is the couch spread by fingers of even,
The blossom of apples for bower,
Its roof-tree the sapphires of heaven,
Yvonne!

For the bride of the mystical hour,
Its roof-tree the sapphires of heaven!

With songsters the heavy sweet air
Is trembling and sighing and sobbing,
With meteors magically fair
The sky is deliciously throbbing,
Yvonne!

With splendour and subtlety rare
The sky is deliciously throbbing.

Sweet bride to fond arms with a sigh,
Strong arms to fond bosom, are curling;
The winds breathe more musically by;
The moon has a rosier pearling,
Yvonne!

The stars grow more dim in the sky,
The moon has a rosier pearling. {117B}

So, birds, are you shy to awake
Your voices to laughter-tuned numbers?
So, sun, do you tremble to shake
The dews of the night from our slumbers?
Yvonne!

So, breeze, to reluctant to take
The dews of the night from our slumbers?

Light breaks, and the breezes caress
Cool limbs and sot eyes and fair faces;
The nightingales carol to bless
The dawn of our maiden embraces,

Yvonne!

The woods wear a lovelier dress

In the dawn of our maiden embraces!

PERDURABO.<<1>>

<<1. "I shall endure to the end." This was the mystic title taken by Crowley at his first initiation.>>

EXILE from humankind! The snow's fresh flakes

Are warmer than men's hearts. my mind is wrought

Into dark shapes of solitary thought

That loves and sympathises, but awakes

No answering love or pity. What a pang

Hath this strange solitude to aggravate

The self-abasement and the blows of Fate!

No snake of hell hath so severe a fang!

I am not lower than all men — I feel

Too keenly. Yet my place is not above,

Though I have this — unalterable Love
In every fibre. I am crucified
Apart on a lone burning crag of steel,
Tortured, cast out; and yet — I shall abide.

ON GARRET HOSTEL BRIDGE.<<1>>

<<1. A bridge on the “Backs” at Cambridge.>>

HERE in the evening curl white mists and wreaths in their vapour All the
gray spires of stone, all the immobile towers; {118A}

Here in the twilight gloom dim trees and sleepier rivers, Here where the
bridge is thrown over the amber stream.

Chill is the ray that steals from the moon to the stream that whispers
Secret tales of source, songs of its fountain-head.

Here do I stand in the dusk; like spectres mournfully moving Wisps of the
cloud-wreaths form, dissipate into the mist, Wrap me in shrouds of gray,
chill me and make me shiver, Not with the Night alone, not with the sound
of her wing, Yet with a sense of something vague and unearthly stalking
(Step after step as I move) me, to annul me, quell

Hope and desire and life, bid light die under my eyelids, Bid the strong
heart despair, quench the desire of Heaven.

So I shudder a little; and my heart goes out to the mountain, Rock upon
rock for a crown, snow like an ermine robe; Thunder and lightning free

fashioned for speech and seeing, Pinnacles royal and steep, queen of the arduous breast!

Ye on whose icy bosom, passionate, at the sunrise,

Ye in whose wind-swept hollows, lulled in the moonrise clear, Often and oft I struggled, a child with an angry mother, Often and oft I slept, maid in a lover's arms.

Back to ye, back, wild towers, from this flat and desolate fenland, Back to ye yet will I flee, swallow on wing to the south; Move in your purple cloud-banks and leap your far-swelling torrents, Bathe in the pools below, laugh with the winds above, {118B}

Battle and strive and climb in the teeth of the glad wild weather, Flash on the slopes of ice, dance on the spires of rock, Run like a glad young panther over the stony high-lands, Shout with the joy of living, race to the rugged cairn, Feel the breath of your freedom burn in my veins, and Freedom!

Freedom! echoes adown cliff and precipitous ghyll.

Down by the cold gray lake the sun descends from his hunting, Shadow and silence steals over the frozen fells.

Oh, to the there, my heart! And the vesper bells awaken; Colleges call their children; Lakeland fades from the sight.

Only the sad slow Cam like a sire with age grown heavy Wearily moves to the sea, to quicken to life at last.

Blithelier I depart, to a sea of sunnier kindness;

Hours of waiting are past; I requicken to love.

ASTRAY IN HER PATHS.<<1>>

<<1. This satirical title is from Proverbs vii. 25. A poet's nature is to refine to purest gold even the sordidest of dross.>>

COPENHAGEN, "January," '97.

I FEEL thee shudder, clinging to my arm,
Before the battlements of the salt sea,
Black billows tipped with phosphorescent light,
Towering from where we stand to yonder shore
That is no earthly shore, but guards the coast
Of that which is from that which is to be;
Wherefore it kindles no evasive fire
Nor blazes through the night, but lies forgotten
Gray in the twilight; never a star is out {119A}
To light the broad horizon; only here
Behind us cluster lamps, and busy sounds
Of men proclaim a city; but to us
They are not here; for we, because we love,

Are not of earth, but, as the immortals, stand
With eyes immutable; our souls are fed
On a strange new nepenthe from the cup
Of the vast firmament. Nor do we dream,
Nor think we aught of the transient world,
But are absorbed in our own deity:
And our clear eyes reflect — (who dares to gaze
Shall see an die!) — the changeless empyrean
Eternity, the concentrated void
Of space, for being the centre of all things,
Time is to us the Now, and Space the Here;
From us all Matter radiates, is a part
Of our own thoughts and souls; because we love.
Thou shudderest, clinging to me; though the night
Jewels her empire with the frosty crown
Of thousand-twinkling stars, whose hoary crests
Burn where light touches them, with diamond points
Of infinite far fire, save where the sea
Is ebony with sleep, and though the wind
Pierces the marrow, since it is the word

Of the Almighty, and cuts through the air
That may not stay its fury, with a cold
Nipping and chill, it is not in the wind;
Nor though the thunder broke, or flashed the fire
From all the circle of eternity,
Were that the reason; for thou shudderest
To hear the Voice of Love; it is no voice
That men may hear, but an intensest rich
Silence, that silence when man waits to hear
Some faint vibration in the smitten air,
And, if he hear not, die; but we who love
Are beyond death, and therefore may commune
In that still tongue; it is the only speech
And song of stars and sun; nor is it marred
By one dissentient tremor of the air
That girds the earth, but in lone aether spreads {119B}
Its song. But now I turn to thee, whose eyes
Blaze on me with such look as flesh and blood
May never see and live; for so it burns
Into the inmost being of the spirit

And stains its vital essence with a brand
Of fire that shall not change; and shuddering I
Gaze back, spirit to spirit, with the like
Insatiable desire, that never quenched,
Nor lessened by sublime satiety,
But rather crescent, hotter with the flame
Of its own burning, that consumes it not,
Because it is the pure white flame of God.
I shudder, holding thee to me; thy gaze
Is still on me; a thousand years have passed,
And yet a thousand thousand; years they are
As men count years, and yet we stand and gaze
With touching hands and lips immutable
As mortals stand a moment; ...
The universe is One: One Soul, One Spirit,
One Flame, One infinite God, One infinite Love.

SONNET TO CLYTIE.

CLYTE, beyond all praise, thou goodliest

Of queens, thou royal woman, crowned with tears,

That could not move the dull stars from their spheres To kiss thee. For the
sun would fainter rest

In the gold chambers of the glowing west

Than answer thy love, thine, whose soul endears

All souls but his, whose slow desire fears

The fierce embraces of thine olive breast.

O Queen, sun-lover, we are wed with thee

In changeless love, in passion for a fire

Whose lips bind all men in their bitter spell;

A love whose first caress, hard won, would be

The final dissolution of desire,

A flame to shrivel us with fire of hell. {120A}

A VALENTINE, '98.<<1>>

<<1. Nothing more; be it well remembered! — A.C.>>

NOW on the land the woods are green;

A wild bird's note

Shrills till the air trembles between

His beak and throat.

And up through blue and gold and black

The shivering sound

Rushes; no echo murmurs back

From sky or ground.

In the loud agony of song

The moon is still;

The wind drops down the shore along;

Night hath her will.

The bird becomes a dancing flame

In leaf and bower.

The forest trembles; loves reclaim

Their own still hour.

The dawn is here, and on the sands

Where sun first flames,
I gather lilies from all lands
Of sad sweet names.

The Lesbian lily is of white
Stained through with blood,
Swayed with the stream, a wayward light
Upon the flood.

The Spartan lily is of blue,
With green leaves fresh;
Apollo glints his crimson through
The azure mesh.

The English lily is of white,
All white and clean;
There plays a tender flame of light
Her flowers between.

The English lily is a bloom

To cold and sweet;
One might say — in the twilight gloom
A maiden's feet. {120B}

Silent and slim and delicate
The flower shall spring,
Till there be born immaculate
A fair new thing.

Tall is the mother-lily, still
By faint winds swayed;
Tender and pure, without a will —
An English maid.

No tree of poison, at whose feet
All men lie dead;
No well of death, whose waters sweet
Are tinged with red.

No hideous impassioned queen

For whom love dies;
No warm imperious Messaline
That slew with sighs.

Fiercer desires may cast away
All things most good;
A people may forget to-day
Their motherhood.

She will remain, unshaken yet
By storm and sun;
She will remain, when years forget
That fierier one.

A race of clean strong men shall spring
From her pure life.
Men shall be happy; bards shall sing
The English wife.

And thou, forget thou that my mouth

Has ever clung
To flame of hell; that of the south
The songs I sung.

Forget that I have trampled flowers,
And worn the crown
Of thorns of roses in the hours
So long dropped down.

Forget, O white-faced maid, that I
Have dallied long
In classic bowers and mystery
Of classic song. {121A}

Eros and Aphrodite now
I can forget,
Placing upon thy maiden brow
Love's coronet.

Wake from the innocent dear sleep

Of childhood's life:

An English maiden must not weep

To be a wife.

So shall out love bridge space, and bring

The tender breath

Of sun and moon and stars that sing

To gladden Death.

I see your cheek grow pale and cold,

Then flush above.

Kiss me; I know that I behold

The birth of Love.

PENELOPE.

ULYSSES 'scaped the sorceries of that queen

That turned to swine his goodly company,

And came with sails broad-burgeoning and clean

Over the ripples of his native sea.

Yet for the shores his eyes had lately seen,

He kept a half-regretful memory;

And thought, when all the flower-strewn ways were green, “Better love
Circe than Penelope!”

Yes. A good woman’s love will forge a chain

To break the spirit of the bravest Greek;

While with an harlot one may leap again

Free as the waters of the western main,

And turn with no heart-pang the vessel’s beak

Out to the oceans that all seamen seek. {121B}

A SONNET OF BLASPHEMY.

EXALTED over earth, from hell arisen,

There sits a woman, ruddy with the flame

Of men’s blood spilt, and her uncleanly shame,

And the thrice-venomous vomit of her prison.

She sits as one long dead: infernal calm,

Chill hatred, wrap her in their poisonous cold.

She careth not, but doth disdainly hold

Three scourges for man's soul, that know no balm

They know not any cure. The first is Life,

A well of poison. Sowing dust and dung

Over men's hearts, the second scourge, above

All shameful deeds, is Lying, from whose tongue

Drops Envy, wed with Hatred, to sow Strife.

These twain are bitter; but the last is Love.

THE RAPE OF DEATH.

ARGUMENT. — Sir Godfrey, a knight of Normandy, leapeth into a light vessel of Jarl Hungard, while they sit at feast, and, slaying the crew, seeketh the high seas with the Lady Thurla. He slayeth the swiftest pursuers, and escapeth in a great tempest; which on the second day abating, he maketh the inside of a bar, and must await the breeze. Jarl Hungard coming with his men and two dragons, is wrecked, but a knave shooting, slayeth the Lady Thurla. Sir Godfrey forthwith sinketh the other dragon, and saileth forth

into the ocean, and is not heard of ever after.<<The argument is not founded on tradition.>>

PALE vapours like phantoms on the sea,
The tide swells slumberous beneath our keel,
The pulses of our canvas fail; and we {122A}

No faint sweet summons from the south wind feel:
The crimson waters of the west are pale,
And bloodless arrows like a stream of steel

Flash from the moon, that rises where the gale
Only a day past raged; the clouds are lost
In pleasant rains that ripple on the sail.

The sudden fascination of the frost
Touches the heavy canvas; now there form
Reluctant crystals, and the vessel, tossed

The wild night through in the devouring storm,

Glistens with dew made sharp and bright with cold.

For no north wind may drive us to the warm

Long-looked-for lands where day, with plumes of gold, Flaps like a lazy eagle in the air;

Where night, a bird of prey divinely bold,

Wings through the sky, intangible but fair,

And pale with subtle passion; and no wind

Turns our prow southward, till the canvas bear

No more up into it, but still behind

Follow like flame, and lead our love along

Into the valleys of the ocean, blind,

But seeing all the world awake with song

Of many lyres and lutes and reeds of straw,

And all the rivers musical that throng

In bright assemblage of unchanging law,

Like many flute-players; and seeing this,
(That all the mountains looked upon and saw)

The sweetness of the savour of a kiss,
And all its perfume wafter to the sky.

Nay, but no wind will drive our fortalice {122B}

(So strong against the sun) to where they ply
Those pallid wings, or turn our vessel's beak
With utmost fury to the North, to dye

Our prows with seaweed, such as wise men seek

For cleansing of their altars with slow blood

Wrenched from the long dark leaves, with fingers weak With age and toil;
to stem the restless flood

That boils between the islands; to attain

The ultimate ice, where some calm hero stood

And looked one last time for a sail in vain,

And looking upward not in vain, lay down

And died, to pass where cold and any pain

Are not. So still the night is, like the crown

Most white of the high God that glittereth!

The stars surround the moon, and Nereids drown

Their rippled tresses in her golden breath.

Let us keep watch, my true love, caught at last

Between my hands, and not remember death.

Only bethink us of the daylight past,

The long chase oversea, the storm, the speed

Whereby we ran before the leaping blast,

And left the swift pursuers at our need

With one wrecked dragon and one shattered; yea!

And on their swiftest many warriors bleed,

Having beheld, above the gray seaway

Between them and the sun, my sword arise,

Like the first dagger flashing for the day,

My sword, that darts among them serpentwise —

And all their warriors fell back a space,

And all the air rang out with sudden cries, {123A}

Seeing the death and fury of my face,

And feeling the long sword sweep out and kill,

Till there was won the slippery path, the place.

Whence I might sever the white cords, and fill

The ship with tangled wreckage of the sail.

All this I did, and bore the blade of ill

Back, dripping blood, to thee most firm and pale

Who held our rudder, all alone, and stood

Fierce and triumphant in the rising gale,

Bent to my sword, and kissed the stinging blood,

While the good ship leapt free upon the deep,

And felt the feet of the resistless flood

Run, and the fervour of the billows sweep

Under our keel — and we were clean away,

Laughing to see the foamheads sough and sleep,

As we kept pace with ocean all the day

And one long night of toil; until the sun

Lit on these cliffs his morning beams that play

With our sails rent and rifted white, and run

Like summer lightning all about the deck,

And laugh upon the work my sword had done

When the feast turned to death for us; we reck

Nothing to-night of all that past despair:

Only to-night I watch your curving neck,

And play with all the kisses of your hair,

And feel your weight, as if you were to be

Always and always — O my queen, how rare {123B}

Your lips' perfume; like lilies on the sea

Your white breasts glimmer; let us wait awhile.

There is no breeze to drive us down to lee

On the cold rocks of yonder icy isle,

And your sire's passion must forget the chase

As I forget, the moment that you smile,

And sea and sky are brighter for your face —

I hear the sound of many oars; perchance

Your father's, but within this iron place

The heavy dragons will not dare advance

Where our light vessel barely skimmed the rock:

Their anger may grow cool, the while they dance

Like fools before the bard we crossed, and mock

Pursuit. Behold! one dragon strikes the reef,

Breaks in the midst before the dreadful shock,

Shattered and stricken by the rousing sheaf

Of wild intolerable foam that breaks

Full on their stem: she sinks. One fierce foul thief Springs desperate upon
her poop; she shakes;

He strings a sudden arrow. Ocean sweeps

Over his cursed craft. The arrow takes

The straight swift road — Ah God! — to her who sleeps, To her bright
bosom as at peace she lies.

She is dead quickly, and the ocean keeps

The secret of my sorrow from her eyes.

I will not weep; I cannot weep; I turn

And watch the sail fill with the wind that sighs {124A}

A little for pure pity — I discern

The cowards shake with fear; the vessel springs

Light to the breezes, as the golden erne

That seeks a prey on its impetuous wings;

The reef is past; I crash upon the foe,

And all the fury of my weapon rings

On armour temperless; the waters flow

Through the dark rent within the side; I leap

Back to my dead love; back, desiring so

That they had killed me, for I cannot weep.

They killed her, and a mist of blood consumes

My sight; they killed my lover in her sleep.

The breeze has freshened, and the water fumes,

The vessel races on beneath the sky;

Beneath her bows the eager billow spumes.

I wonder whither, and I wonder why.

No ray of light this sea of blood illumines.

I wonder whether God will let me die.

IN THE WOODS WITH SHELLEY.

SING, happy nightingale, sing;

Past is the season of weeping;

Birds in the wood are on wing,

Lambs in the meadow are leaping.

Can there be any delight still in the buttercups sleeping?

Dawn, paler daffodil, dawn;

Smile, for the winter is over;

Sunlight makes golden the lawn,

Spring comes and kisses the clover;

All the wild woodlands await poet and songster and lover. {124B}

Linger, dew, linger and gem

All the fresh flowers in the garland;

Blossom, leaf, bud and green stem

Flash with your light to some far land,

Where men shall wonder if you be not a newly-born starland.

Ah! the sweet scents of the woods!

Ah! the sweet sounds of the heaven!

Sights of impetuous floods,

Foam like the daisy at even,

Folding o'er passionate gold petals that sunrise had riven!

See, like my life is the stream

Now its desire is grown quiet;

Life was a passionate dream

Once, where light fancy ran riot,

Now, ere youth fades, flows in peace past woody bank and green eyot.

Highest, white heather and rock,

Mountain and pine, with young laughter,

Breezes that murmur and mock

Duller delights to come after,

Wild as a swallow that dives whither the sea wind would waft her.

Lower, an ocean of flowers,

Trees that are warmer and leafier,

Starrier, sunnier hours
Spurning the stain of all grief here,
Bringing a quiet delight to us, beyond our belief, here.

Lastly, the uttermost sea,
Starred with flakes of spray sunlit,
Blue as its caverns that be
Crystal, resplendent, yet unlit;
So like a mother receives the kiss of the dainty-lip runlet.

Here the green moss is my seat,
Beech is a canopy o'er me,
Calm and content the retreat;
Man, my worst foe, cannot bore me;
Life is a closed book behind — Shelley an open before me. {125A}

Shelley's own birds are above
Close to me (why should they fear me?)
May I believe it — that love
Brings his bright spirit so near me

That, should I whisper one word — Shelley's swift spirit would hear me.

Heaven is not very far;

Soul unto soul may be calling

When a swift meteor star

Through the quick vista is falling.

Loose but your soul — shall its wings find the white way so appalling?

Heaven, as I understand,

Nearer than some folk would make it;

God — should you stretch our a hand,

Who can be quicker to take it?

Then you have pacted an oath — judge you if He will forsake it!

I have had hope in the spring —

Trust that the God who has given

Flowers, and the thrushes that sing

Dawnwards all night, and at even

Year after year, will be true now we are speaking of heaven.

Breezes caress me and creep
Over the world to admire it;
Sweet air shall sigh me to sleep,
Softly my lips shall respire it,
Lying half-closed with a kiss ready for who shall desire it.

A VISION UPON USHBA.<<1>>

<<1. A mountain in the Caucasus. Crowley never visited this district.>>

HERE in the wild Caucasian night,
The sleepless years
Seem to pass by in garments white,
Made white with tears,
A pageant of intolerable light
Across the sombre spheres,
And, mingling with the tumult of the morn,
Methought a single rose of blood was born. {125B}

Far on the iron peaks a voice

Crystal and cold,
Sharper than sounds the aurochs' choice
O'er wood and wold,
A summons as of angels that rejoice,
A paean glad and bold,
A mighty shout of infinite acclaim
Shrieks through the sky some dread forgotten Name.

<<1. The extinct Wild Bull of Europe. {WEH Note: No longer quite extinct;
breed back from mixed stock after the time of this poem. The same is true
of some breeds of wild horses.}>>

Trembles the demon on his perch
Of crags ice-bound;
Tremble near forest and far church
At that quick sound;
The silver arrows that bedeck the birch
Shiver along the ground:
Priest, fiend, and harpy answer to the call,
And hasten to their ghastly festival.

There in the vale below my feet

I see the crew

Gather, blaspheming God, and greet

Their shame anew.

A feast is spread of some unholy meat;

Oftimes there murmurs through

Their horrid ranks a cry of pain, as God

Bids them keep memory of His iron rod.

The vale is black with priests. They fight,

Wild beasts, for food,

The orphan's gold, the widow's right,

The virgin's snood.

All in their maws are crammed within the night

That hides their chosen wood,

Where through the blackness sounds the sickening noise Of cannibals
that gloat on monstrous joys.

The valley steams with slaughter. Here

Shall the pure snow

The bloody reek of murder rear
To crush the foe?
In Titan fury shall the rocks spring clear,
And smite the fiends below?
Shall poisonous wind and avalanche combine
To wreck swift justice, human and divine? {126A}

Priests thrive on poison. Carrion
Their eager teeth
Tear, till the sacramental sun
Its sword unsheath,
And bid their horrid carnival be done,
And smite beneath
In their cold gasping valleys, and bid light
Break the battalions of the angry night.

That sword that smote from Heaven was so keen,
Its silver blade
No angel's sight, no fairy's eye hath seen,
No tender maid

With subtle insight may behold its sheen
With light inlaid;
But God, who forged it, breathed upon its point,
And His pure unction did the hilt anoint.

Within the poet's hand he laid the sword:
With reverent ear
The poet listened to His word
Cleansed through of fear.
The brightness of the glory of the Lord
Grew adamant, a spear!
And when he took the flachion in his hand
Lo! kings and princes bowed to his command.

Then shall the flag of England flaunt
In peaceful might,
The sceptred isle of dying Gaunt<<1>>
Shall rule by right.
The sons of England shall bid Hell avaunt
And priest and harlot smite.

Then all the forces of the earth shall be
Untamable, a shield of Liberty.

<<1. See “Richard II.,” ii. I.>>

Freedom shall burgeon like a rose,
While in the sky
A new white sun with ardour glows
On liberty.
Men shall sing merrily at work as those
Who fear no more to die —
Ay! and who fear no more at last to live
Since man can love and worship and forgive. {126B}

Then on these heights of Caucasus
A fire shall dwell,
Pure as the dawn, and odorous
Of bud and bell;
A flower of fire, a flame from heaven to us
All triumph to foretell,

A glory of unspeakable delight,
A flower like lightning, adamant and white.

There needs no more of sun or sea
Or any light;
On golden wheels Eternity
Revolves in Night.
The island peoples are too proud and free
And full of might
To care for time or space, but glorious wend
A royal path of flowers to the end.

I pray thee, God, to weapon me
With this keen fire,
That I may set this people free
As my desire;
That the white lilies of our liberty
Grow on Life's crags still higher,
Till on the loftiest peaks their blossom flower,

The rampart of a people and their power.

ELEGY, "August" 27th," 1898.<<1>>

<<1. When Dr. John Hopkinson and three of his children perished on the
Petite Dent de Veisivi.>>

SO have the days departed, as the leaves
Smitten by wrath of Autumn blast;
So the year, fallen from delight, still grieves
Over the happy past.

The year of barren summer, when the wind
Blew from the south unlooked-for snow,
The year when Collon,<<1>> desolate and blind,
Gloomed on the vale below,

<<1. A mountain at the head of the Val d'Herens.>>

When logs of pinewood lit the little room,

And friendship ventured in to sit
Beside their blaze, to listen in the gloom
To wisdom and to wit; {127A}

When we discussed our hopes, and told the stories
Of happy climbing days gone by;
The stubborn battle with the cliffs, the glories
Of the blue Alpine sky.

The keen delight of paths untrodden yet,
And new steep ice and rocky ways
Too dangerous and splendid to forget.
Those dear strong happy days!

And now what happier fate to your brave souls
Than so to strive and fighting fall?
Think you that He who sees you, and controls,
Did not devise it all?

The mountains that you loved have taken you,

And we who love you will not weep.

Shall we begrudge? Your last look saw sky blue;

You will be glad to sleep.

Your pure names (thrice renowned, yours fresh with youth And full of
promise) shall be kept

Still in our hearts for monuments of truth,

As if you had not slept.

EPILOGUE.

HORACE, in the fruitful Sabine country,

Where the wheat and vine are most abundant,

Where the olive ripens in the sunshine,

Where the streams are voiced with Dian's whispers,

Lived in quiet, with a woman's passion

To inspire his lute and bring contentment

In the gray still days of early winter.

I, remote from cities, like the poet, {127B}

Tune my lesser lyre with other fingers,

Yet am not a whit the less beloved.
Unto me the stars are never silent,
Nor do sea and storm deny their music,
Nor do flower and breeze refuse their kisses:
So my soul is flooded with their magic;
So my love completes the joy of living.
I am like the earth, to whom there gather
Rays of gold to bid the gray horizon
Melt, recede, and brighten into azure.
Let me sing, O holy one, Apollo!
Sing as Horace sang, and flood the ocean
With a living ecstasy of music
Till the whole creation echo, echo,
Echo till the tune dissolve the heavens? {128A}
Still the song lingers; lamely from the lute string
Steals a breath of melody; the forest
Treasures in its glades the sighs I utter.
Yet may I be happy, storing honey
Lover's lips hold, gathering the sunlight
Eyes and hair have kept for me, delighting

In the bells far-off, in yonder thrushes,
In the tawny songster of the forest,
In the stream's song, all the words of passion,
Echoes of the deeper words unspoken
In thy breast and mine, O heart of silence!
Will they pierce one day to other nations
Clear and strong and triumphing?
It may be.
Then we shall not envy you, my Horace! {128

{ {full page below}

JEZEBEL;

AND OTHER TRAGIC POEMS.

BY COUNT VLADIMIR SVAREFF.<<1>>

Edited, with an Introduction and Epilogue, by ALEISTER CROWLEY.

1899.

<<1. Under this name the poet lay perdu in the heart of London,
prosecuting, under circumstances of romantic and savage interest, his first
occult studies.>>

{col. start below}

DEDICACE.

LONDRES, “Juin” 1898.

PEINTRE, que ton amour inspire

Des chansons toujours plus sublimes,

Malgre qu’aujourd’hui ma mauvaise lyre

Chante l’abime.

Nos espoirs, nos desirs nous rendent

Des amis chers aux dieux;

Demain, ma voix, plus haute et plus profonde,

Chante les cieux.

A GERALD.<<1>>

<<1. Gerald Kelly, the eminent painter.>>

PERDITA.

LIKE leaves that fall before the sullen wind
At summer's parting kiss and autumn's call,
Lost thoughts fly half-forgotten from my mind,
Like leaves that fall.

They shall not come again; the wintry pall
Of consciousness clouds o'er them; they shall find
No rest, no hope, no tear, no funeral.

Into the night, despairing, bleeding, blind,
They pass, nor know their former place at all,
Lost to my soul, to God, to all mankind,
Like leaves that fall. {129A}

JEZEBEL.

PART I.

A LION'S mane, a leopard's skin
Across my dusty shoulders thrown;
A swart fierce face, with eyes where sin
Lurks like a serpent by a stone.
A man driven forth by lust to seek
Rest from himself on Carmel's peak.

A prophet<<1>> with wild hair behind,
Streaming in fiery clusters! Yea,
Tangled with vehemence of the wind,
And knotted with the tears that slay;
And all my face parched up and dried,
And all my body crucified.

<<1. Not Elijah, as the sequel shows. Foolish contemporary reviews,
however, made this silly blunder.>>

Ofttimes the Spirit of the Lord
Descends and floods me with his breath;
My words are fashioned as a sword,
My voice is like the voice of death.
The thunder of the Spirit's wings
Brings terror to the hearts of kings.

Anon, and I am driven out
In desert places by desire;
My mouth is salt and dry; I doubt
If hell hath such another fire;
If God's damnation can devise
A lust to match these agonies. {129B}

The desert wind my body burns,
The voice of flesh consumes my soul;
My body towards the city turns,
My spirit seeks its fierier goal;
In wells of heaven to quench my thirst,

And take God's hand among the first.

I conquered self; I grew at last

A prophet chosen of the Lord;

I blew the trumpet's iron blast

That called on Zimri Omri's sword;

My voice inflamed the fiery steel

That was to smite upon Jezreel.

And now, I haste from yonder sands,

With fervour filled, to say God's doom

To Ahab of the bloody hands,

The spoiler of his father's tomb,

The slayer of the vineyard king.

God's judgment, and his fate, I bring.

The city gleams afar; I see

Samarina's white walls on high;

The mountains echo back to me

The vengeful murmur of the sky;

All heaven and earth on me attend
To prophesy the tyrant's end.

The gates are close because of night
Whose heavy breath infects the air;
The dog-star gleams, a devilish light:
I thought I saw behind me glare
The eyes of fiends. I thought I heard
An evil laugh, a mocking word.

The gates swing open at the Name,
Without a warder roused from sleep;
I pass, with face of burning flame,
That is not quenched, although I weep.
(For even my tears are tears of fire,
For loathing, madness, and desire.)

Ah God! the traps for fervent feet!
The morrow beacons, and I came
By where the golden groves of wheat

In summer glories fiercely flame;
To those white courts, by princes trod,
Where Ahab sat, and mocked at God. {130A}

Where Ahab sat: — but lo! I saw
No king, no tyrant to be curst;
But she, who filled me with blind awe,
She, for whose blood my thin veins thirst;
The blossom of a painted mouth
And bare breasts tinctured with the south.

For lo! the harlot Jezebel!
Her hands dropped perfume, and her tongue
(A flame from the dark heart of hell,
The ivory-barred mouth, that stung
With unimaginable pangs)
Shot out at me, and Hell fixed gangs.

Her purple robes, her royal crown,
The jewelled girdle of her waist,

Her feet with murder splashed, and brown
With the sharp lips that fawn and taste,
The crimson snakes that minister
To those unwearying lust of her.

And all her woman's scent did drift
A steam of poison through the air;
The haze of sunshine seems to lift
And toil in tangles of black hair,
The hair that waves, and winds, and bites,
And glistens with unholy lights.

For lo! she saw me, and beheld
My trembling lips curled back to curse,
Laughed with strong scorn, whose music knelled
The empire of God's universe.
And on my haggard face upturned
She spat! Ah God! how my cheek burned!

Then, as a man betrayed, and doomed

Already, I arose and went,
And wrestled with myself, consumed
With passion for that sacrament
Of shame. From the day unto this
My cheek desires that hideous kiss. {130B}

Her hate, her scorn, her cruel blows,
Fill my whole life, consume my breath;
Her red-fanged hatred in me glows,
I lust for her, and hell, and death.
I see that ghastly look, and yearn
Toward the brands of her that burn.

Sleep shuns me; dreams divide the night,
(My parched throat thirsty for her veins)
That she and I with deep delight
Suck from death's womb infernal pains,
Whose fire consumes, destroys, devours
Through night's insatiable hours.

And altogether filled with love,
And altogether filled with sin,
The little sparks and noises move
About the softness of her skin.
Her pleasures and her passions purr
For the delight I have of her.

Aching with all the pangs of night
My shuddering body swoons; my eyes
Absorb her eyelids' lazy light,
And read her bosom to devise
Fresh blossoms of the heart of hell
And secret joys of Jezebel.

Her lips are fastened to my breast
To suck out blood in feverish tides;
The token of her I possessed,
Still on my withered cheek abides.
Thus slowly the desire grows
To kill and have her yet — who knows?

PART II.

I know. When Ramoth-Gilead's field
Grew bloody with hot ranks of dead,
I smote amain with sword and shield;
My brows with mingled blood were red;
And on my cheek the kiss of hell,
The hatred of my Jezebel. {131A}

I waited many days. At last
The rushing of a chariot grew
Frightful through all the city vast:
Men were afraid. But I — I knew
Jehu was here, whose sword should dip
Deep in my love's adulterous lip.

The spirit filled me. "And behold!
I saw her dead stare to the skies.
I came to her; she was not cold,

But burning with old infamies.

On her incestuous mouth I fell,

And lost my soul for Jezebel.”

I followed him afoot, afire;

Beneath her window he drew rein;

She looked forth, clad in glad attire,

Haggard and hateful, once again;

And taunted him. His bastard blood

Quailed, but his violent soul withstood.

He blenched, and then with eyes of flame,

“Who is on my side? Who?” he said.

Three eunuchs, passionless, grown tame,

Grinned from behind her laughing head.

“Throw down that woman!” And my breath

Caught as they flung her out to death.

I think I died that moment. He,

Foaming for vengeance and blood-lust,

Laughed his coarse laugh of hideous glee.

Her sweet bad body in the dust

He trampled. Royal from the womb

A martyred murderess lacks a tomb!

A tigress woman, clad with sin,

And shod with infamy, who pressed

The bloody winepress of my skin,

And plucked the purple of my breast —

Her lovers in their hearts shall keep

Her memory passionate and deep.

They cast her forth on Naboth's field

Still living, in her harlot's dress;

Her belly stript, her thighs concealed,

For shame's sake and for love's no less.

Night falls; the gaping crowds abide

No longer by her stiffening side. {131B}

I crept like sleep toward the place

That held for me her evil head;
I bent like sin above her face
That dying she might kiss me dead.
I whispered “Jezebel!” She turned,
And her deep eyes with hatred burned.

“Ah! prophet, come to mock at me
And gloat on mine exceeding pain?”
“Nay, but to give my soul to thee,
And have thee spit at me again!”
She smiled — I know she smiled — she sighed,
Bit my lips through, and drank, and died!

Her murders and her blasphemies,
Her whoredoms, God has paid at last;
Upon my bosom close she lies;
Her carnal spirit holds me fast.
My blood, my infamy, my pain,
Seal my subjection and her reign.

My veins poured out her marriage cup,
For holy water her cruel tongue;
For blessing of white hands raised up,
These perfumed infamies unsung;
For God's breath, her sharp tainted breath;
For marriage bed, the bed of death.

The hounds that scavenge, fierce and lean,
Snarl in the moonlight; in the sky
The vulture hangs, a ghost unclean;
The lewd hyaena's sleepless eye
Darts through the distance; these admit
My lordship over her — and it.

The host is lifted up. Behold
The vintage spilt, the broken bread!
I feast upon the cruel cold
Pale body that was ripe and red.
Only, her head, her palms, her feet,
I kissed all night, and did not eat.

So, and not otherwise, the word
Of God was utterly fulfilled.
So, and not otherwise. I heard
Her spirit cry, by death not stilled:
“My sin is perfect in thy blood,
And thou and I have conquered God.” {132A}

Now let me die, at last desired,
At last beloved of thee my queen;
Now let me die, with blood attired,
Thy servant naked and obscene;
To thy white skull, thy palms, thy feet,
Clinging, dead, infamous, complete.

Now let me die, to mix my soul
With thy red soul, to join our hands,
To weld us in one perfect whole,
To link us with desirous bands.
Now let me die, to mate in hell

With thee, O harlot Jezebel.

CONCERNING CERTAIN SINS.

SOME sins assume a garb so fine and white
That the blue veil of Heaven seems to shade
Their purity. They are winged so wide and bright
That even angels' pinions seem to fade,
And the archangel's wing recedes in night: —
Ay! even God seems perturbed and afraid
Because it wears so holy a garb of light
Of perfumed fire immaculately made.

These sins are deadly. God is merciless
For Love that joins Man's passion with His power,
And makes to bloom on earth a fairer flower
Than heaven bears. Our token of success
Is that displeasure toward our sin unnamed
Of a fierce demon jealous and ashamed.

A SAINT'S DAMNATION.

YOU buy my spirit with those peerless eyes
That burn my soul; you loose the torrent stream
Of my desire; you make my lips your prize,

And on them burns the whole life's hope: you deem
You buy a heart; but I am well aware
How my damnation dwells in that supreme {132B}

Passion to feed upon your shoulders here,
And pass the dewy twilight of our sin
In the intolerable flames of hair

That clothe my body from your head; you win
The devil's bargain; I am yours to kill,
Yours, for one kiss; my spirit for your skin!

O bitter love, consuming all my will!
O love destroying, that hast drained my life

Of all those fountains of dear blood that fill

My heart! O woman, would I call you wife?

Would I content you with one touch divine

To flood your spirit with the clinging strife

Of perfect passionate joy, the joy of wine,

The drunkenness of extreme pleasure, filled

From sin's amazing cup? Oh, mine, mine, mine,

Mine, if your kisses maddened me or killed,

Mine, at the price of my damnation deep,

Mine, if you will, as once your glances willed!

Take me, or break me, slay or sooth to sleep,

If only yours one hour, one perfect hour,

Remembrance and despair and hope to steep

In the infernal potion of that flower,

My poisonous passion for your blood! Behold!

How utterly I yield, how gladly dower

Our sin with my own spirit's quenched gold,

Clothe Love with my own soul's immortal power,

Give thee my body as a fire to hold —

O love, no words, no songs — your breast my bower! {133A}

LOT.

“And while he lingered ... they brought him forth, and set him without the city.” - GEN. xix. 16.

TURN back from safety: in my love abide,

Whose lips are warm as when, a virgin bride,

I clung to thee ashamed and very glad,

Whose breasts are lordlier for the pain they had,

Whose arms cleave closer than thy spouse's own,

Thy spouse — O lover, kiss me, and atone!

All my veins bleed for love, my ripe breasts beat

And lay their bleeding blossoms at thy feet!

Spurn me no more! O bid these strangers go;
Turn to my lips till their cup overflow;
Hurt me with kisses, kill me with desire,
Consume me and destroy me with the fire
Of bleeding passion straining at the heart,
Touched to the core by sweetnesses that smart;
Bitten by fiery snakes, whose poisonous breath
Swoons in the midnight, and dissolves to death!
Ah! let me perish so, and not endure
Thy falsehood who have known thy love was sure,
Built up by sighs a palace of long years —
Lo! it was faery, and the spell of tears
Dissolves it utterly. O bid them go,
These white-faced boys, where calmer rivers flow
And birds less passionate invoke the spring
Or seek their loves with weaker, wearier wing.
Turn back from safety! Let God's rivers pour
Brimstone and fire, and all his fountains roar
Lava and hail of hell upon my head,
So be he leave us altogether dead,

Burnt in that shameful whirlwind of his ire,
Consumed in one tall pyramid of fire {133B}
Whose bowers of flame shall tell the sky of God
How we despised his feet with thunder shod,
And conquered, clasping, all the host of death.
Turn to me, touch me, mix thy very breath
With mine to mingle floods of fiery dew
With flames of purple, like the sea shot through
With golden glances of a fiercer star.
Turn to me, bend above me, you may char
These olive shoulders with an old-time kiss,
And fix thy mouth upon me for such bliss
Of sudden rage rekindled. Turn again,
And make delight the minister of pain,
And pain the father of a new delight.
And light a lamp of torture for the night
Too grievous to be borne without a cry
To rend the very bowels of the sky
And make the archangel gasp — a sudden pang,
Most like a traveller stricken by the fang

Of the black adder whose squat head springs up,
A flash of death, beneath a cactus cup.
Ah turn! my bosom for thy love is cold;
My arms are empty, and my lips can hold
No converse with thee far away like this.
O for that communing pregnant with a kiss
That is reborn when lips are set together
To link our souls in one desirous tether,
And wield our very bodies into one.
Ah fiend Jehovah, what then have we done
To earn thy curse — is love like ours too strong
To dwell before thee, and do thy throne no wrong?
Art thou grown jealous of the fiery band?
Lo! thou hast spoken, and thy strong command
Bade earth and air divide, and on the sea
Thy spirit moved — and thou must envy me!
Gird all thy godhead to destroy a man
Whose little moment is a single span,
Whose small desire is nothing — and thy power
Must root from out his bosom the fair flower {134A}

Of passion! Listen to thine own voice yet;
“A rich man many flocks and herds did get
And took the poor man’s lamb.” Thou art the man!
Our love must lie beneath thy bitter ban!
Thou petty, envious God! My king, be sure
His brute force shall not to the end endure;
Some stronger soul than thine shall wrest his crown
And thrust him from his own high heaven down
To some obscure forgetful hell. For me
Forsake thy hopes in him! We worship, we,
Rather the dear delights we know and hold;
The first cool kiss, within the water cold
That draws its music from some bubbling well,
Looks long, looks deadly, looks desirable,
The touch that fires, the next kiss, and the whole
Body embracing, symbol of the soul,
And all the perfect passion of an hour.
Turn to me, pluck that amaranthine flower,
And leave the doubtful blossoms of the sky!
You dare not kiss me! dare not draw you nigh

Lest I should lure you to remain! nor speak
Lest you should catch the blood within your cheek
Mantling. You dared enough — so long ago! —
When to my bosom body clean as snow
You pressed your bosom till desire was pain,
And - then - that midnight - you did dare remain
Though all my limbs were bloody with your mouth
That tore their flesh to satiate its drouth,
That was not thereby satisfied! And now
A pallid coward, with sly, skulking brow,
You must leave Sodom for your spouse's sake
Coward and coward and coward! who would take
The best flower of my life and leave me so,
Still loving you — Ah! weak — and turn to go {134B}
For fear of such a God! O blind! O fool!
To heed these strangers, and to be the tool
Of their smooth lies and monstrous miracles!
O break this bondage and cast off their spells!
Fire righteous! Thou a righteous man! A jest!
A righteous man — you always loved me best,

And even when lured by lips of wanton girls
Would turn away and sigh and touch my curls
And slip half-conscious to the old embrace: —
And now you will not let me see your face
Or hear your voice or touch you. Ah! the hour!
He moves. Come back, come back, my life's one flower!
Come back. One kiss before your leave me. So!
Stop — turn — one little kiss before you go;
It is my right - you must. Oh no! Oh no! {135A}

EPILOGUE.

To die amid the blossoms of the frost
On far fair heights; to sleep the quiet sleep
Of dead men underneath the snowy steep
Of many mountains; ever to have lost
These cares and these distrusts; to lie alone,
Watched by the distant eagle's drowsy wing,
Stars and grey summits, and the winds that sing
Slow dirges in eternal monotone.

Such is my soul's desire, being weary of

This vain eternity of sleepless dreams

That is my life; withal there still may be

In other worlds, the hope of other love

That this that floods my veins with poisonous streams, And wastes with
wan desire the soul of me. {135B}

AN APPEAL TO THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC.

1899.

{columns resume}

THOU fair Republic oversea afar,
Where long blue ripples lap the fertile land,
Whose manifest dominion, like a star,
Fixed by the iron hands and swords of war,<<1>>
Now must for aye, a constellation, stand —
Thou new strong nation! as the eagle aspires
To match the sun's own fires,
Children of our land, hear the children of your sires.

<<1. This poem was written shortly after the Spanish war.>>

We stretch out hands to-day when the white wings
Of Peace are spread beneath you and your foe.

O race of men that slay the slaves of kings!

We, whom the foam-crowned ocean still enrings,

We, whose strong freedom never brooked a blow,

Hail you now victors, hail you of the sword

Proved in the west the lord,

Hail you, and bid you sound quick friendship and accord.

The eagle of your emblem would not stoop

To the proud vaults of that outrageous wing

That Bismark reared, and strengthened, and bade swoop Fierce upon
France, whose pallid pinions droop

To own an Emperor where she mocked a king: {136A}

Their challenge you hurled back across the foam:

Vienna and tall Rome

Trembled for their ally: you stirred our hearts at home.

The fire of love no waters shall devour;

The faith of friendship stands the shocks of time;

Seal with our voice the triumph of this hour,

Your glory to our glory and our power,

Alliance of one tongue, one faith, one clime!
Seal and clasp hands; and let the sea proclaim
Friendship of righteous fame,
And lordship of two worlds that time can never tame.

Stoop not and tender not an hour's regret
For those wild words in trivial anger passed:
Forget your fools, as we their words forget,
And join our worlds in one amazing net
Of empire and dominion, till aghast
The lying Russian cloke his traitor head
More close, since Spain has bled
To wake in us the love that lay a century dead.

Let all the world keep silence at our peace;
Let France retreat and Russia step aside
From their encroachments, bid their envy cease
Stricken by Fear, who see our strength increase
By comradeship that quickens to abide,
A bond of justice, light, and liberty,

To make the wide earth free

As the wild waves that slake the passion of the sea. {136B}

Let all the world keep silence and behold

The wrath of two great nations that are friends

Against who bartered Poland, and who sold

Italy, weighed out Hungary for gold,

And shattered Greece to serve no noble ends.

The traitors and the peoples and the kings

That love not righteous things;

They shall behold our wrath, and find our anger stings.

White slaves shall look up and behold a light

Grow in the islands of the sacred sea,

And on the land whose forehead kisses night

And has the dawn upon its wings, whose might

Is mightier for the lips of Liberty

Pressed on its new-born cheeks, when Church and State Drove forth to
baffle Fate

Our sires and yours, whose fame is grown this year so great.

That morning of deliverance is at hand;

The world requickens, and all folk rejoice,

Seeing our kingdom look toward your land,

And both catch hands, indissolubly grand

In the proud friendship of a better choice.

Your winds that wrought wild wreckage of our shore

Shall sink and be no more,

Or waft your barks, with wheat gold-laden swiftly o'er.

Our foamcaps, that your rocks disdainful flung

Back to the waves that left our beaten coast,

Shall be like echoes of sweet songs unsung,

And all the ocean noises find a tongue

To voice the clamour of a righteous boast —

That friendship and dominion shall be wrought

Out of the womb of thought,

And all the bygone days be held for things of nought. {137/a}

What matter though our fathers did you wrong?

Though brave sons brake our bitter yoke? Though we strove to compel
you to a cruel thong?

What, though the stronger did defeat the strong?

Both, wild and patient as the steep strong sea?

What matter that some strive to waken hate,

Traitors to either state,

Hang them in chains! Our way to Freedom cannot wait!

The petty partisans of party war,

The hireling quillmen, and the jingo crowd,

The well-paid patriots, scenting from afar

Silence, their doom — shall they eclipse the star

Now crescent in the sky, whose music loud

Rejoices humble hearts and true men all,

And sounds the funeral

Dirge of slave, tyrant, priest, that snarl, and snarling fall?

These we forget — remembering only this:

Ye are blood-brothers, and our tongues are one;

Our hopes and conquests in one splendid kiss

Unite and struggle not for empire. Is

Our land and yours too little for the sun

To gladden, to illumine, to bid increase,

Bound by two mighty seas

In one fraternal clasp of admirable peace?

Ye are our brothers; ye have spurned the power

That bound the islands of your eastern shore;

Ye have restored to freedom that fair flower,

Cuba, in her most agonising hour,

And east and west have thundered with red war.

We freed us from the slavery of Spain,

And laid upon the main

Our hand three centuries back — and ye have struck again. {137B}

Priestcraft and tyranny in this defeat

Shake, and the walls of hell with fear resound;

The sun laughs gladlier on the heavier wheat,

Because the fates must weave a winding-sheet

At last for Fear. Deliverers are found
Who will deliver. Mountain, stream, and brake,
Lone wood, and sleepy lake,
Are peopled with bright shapes that sing for freedom's sake.

Rocks, and pale fountains, and tall trees that quiver, And all the clouds
that deck the sunset sky

Move like the music of a mighty river
Where ripples break, and rapids gleam and shiver,
And calm rebuilds her empire by-and-by.
For joy of this alliance all the earth
Forgets her day of dearth,
In her new birth forgets, and maddens into mirth.

The stars swing censers of pale gold to God,
Whose incense is the love-song of the free;
Angels with mercy and with beauty shod
Move in the mazes of an Eden, trod
Not by the seemly spirits of the sea,
But by brave men built wholly of desire

And freedom's mystic fire,
To clothe its habitants with glorious attire.

Clasp hands, O fair republic of the west,
And leave the kingdoms to their sudden fate.
With new-born love and ardour unrepressed,
Let Lethe steep in its unquiet rest
The old years whose red hands have made us great.
O fair republic, strong and swift, unbind
The shackles of thy mind:
More than our kin ye are; henceforth not less than kind. {138A}

Bind on the splendid sandals, and unloose
The burning horses, and fling wide the reins!
From cold Archangel unto Syracuse
Europe shall see and tremble and ask truce,
And new blood pour through Asia's wasted veins.
Our Empire from Guiana to Hong Kong,
In your new love made strong,

Shall last while earth is glad because of sun and song.

And O! ye desert places of the sea,

Ye plains and mountains rugged with the wind,

And all ye hollow caverns whence there flee

Foamheads and blustering waves, give ear to me,

And O thou thunder, follow hard behind!

O womb of night, reverberate these chords,

Ye clouds, ye stormy lords,

With clamour and shrill voice as of ten thousand swords.

Swords that clang sharp on heaven's anvil, white

With heat of God's own forehead that beholds

The building broken that is made of might,

Nor builded firm on justice' iron height,

Nor is not cast in mercy's sliver mould: —

Swords sharp to slay, when vengeance must its fill

Drink of the bloody rill

Wherein men lave their mouths, arise and smite and kill.

Listen all lands, and wonder! For the night
Rolls back her beaten iron, and the day
Breaks, and the passionate heralds of the light,
Armoured with love for panoply of might,
Rush on the portals of the falling way.
The lamps of heaven are dim while swords strike fire
From rocks whose crests burn higher: —
At their assault hell's dogs gasp, totter, and expire {138B}

All the gold gates re open of the East;
The rugged columns of the hills uphold
A dome of changeless turquoise, and they feast,
The sun's lips, on the woods that have increased
Since dawn with store of unimagined gold.
The steam of many exhalations fair
Sweetens the midday air;
Echo and tree and bud chant and give birth and bear.

The broad Pacific brightens into blue,
And coral isles are white with beating flame

Of living water on their strand, live through
With million flames candescent as the dew,
Red flowers too queenly for a mortal name!
The sea is pregnant with green stars; the land,
The sky, like lovers stand
With kiss half-consciously exchanged, hand fast in hand.

O lovers fair and free, the wings of peace
Bear this voice onward; linger as your will
By moon-wrought glades, and softly murmuring seas,
Lands white with summer, and the quiet leas!
Linger, and let no word of music thrill
Your hearts; young love is all the harp ye need:
Your kiss in very deed
Is keen to echo song well tuned from Milton's reed.

O lovers, and ye happy groves that hear
Their whispers, and ye vales that know their feet,
And all ye mountains that incline your ear
To the still murmur of the love-lorn sphere,

And all ye caves their murmurs who repeat;
Your music throbs in unison with mine;
The world is flushed with wine
Bubbling from Freedom's well, warm, luminous, divine. {139A}

Burn, changeful purple of the vine's cool stream!
Burn, like the sunset of a stormy sky
When white winds gather, and white horses gleam
Upon the ocean, and the meadows steam
With haze of thunder, when the crimson eye
Dips, and deep darkness falls and lies, and breaks
In lightning's awful flakes,
When thunder unto thunder calls and the storm awakes.

With maddening hoofs, ye coursers of the sun,
Spurn the reverberant air and paw the day,
Make east and west indissolubly one,
And night fall beaten, for its day is spun,
And bid light gird its sword to thigh, display
The shield of heaven's blue, and call the deep

To watch the warrior sleep
Of two fast friends that wake only if brave men weep.

Wake, western land so fair, and this shall be!
Speak and accomplish, let no ardour slip,
A sullen hound, ad be brought shamefully
Back, and resurge the tremor of the sea,
And spoil a perfect kiss from free land's lip.
Of fair free sister country, for our sake,
Who at thy side would break
All bars, all bonds, and bid the very dead awake.

Are not our veins made purple with our blood,
And our dominions touch they not afield?
Pours not the sea its long exultant flood
On either's coast? The rose has one same bud,
And the vine's heart one purple pledge doth yield.
Are we not weary of the fanged pen?
Are we not friends, and men?

Let us look frankly face to face — and quarrel then! {139B}

For by the groves of green and quiet ways,
And on the windy reaches of the river,
In moonlit night and blue unbroken days,
And where the cold ice breaks in pallid bays,
And where dim dawns in frosty forest shiver;
Where India burns and far Australia glows;
Where cactus blooms, where rose,
Let our hearts' beat be heard, to lighten many woes.

Sister and daughter of our loyal isle,
Our hands reach out to you, our lips are fain
To wreath with yours in one delicious smile
Of budding love, to grow a kiss awhile,
And laugh like bride and groom, and kiss again!
Let our alliance like a marriage stand,
Supreme from strand to strand,
The likeness of our love, the clasp of hand in hand.

And men who come behind us yet unborn,
Nor dimly guessed at down the brook of time,
Shall celebrate the brave undying morn
When the free nations put aside their scorn
For friendship, rock no sundering surge may climb, {140A}
When their strong hands gripped hard across the sea,
Flushed with fresh victory,
Lands royal, leal, and great, vast beautiful, and free.

Our children's children shall unsheathe the sword
Against the envy of some tyrant power:
The leader of your people and our lord
Shall join to wrest fro slavery abhorred
Some other race, a fair storm-ruined flower!
O fair republic, lover and sweet friend,
Your loyal hand extend,
Let freedom, peace and faith grow stronger to the end!

O child of freedom, thou art very fair!
Thou hast white roses on thy eager breast,

The scent of all the South is in thy hair,
Thy lips are fragrant with the blossoms rare
Blown under sea waves when the white wings rest!
Come to our warrior breast, where victory
Sits passionate and free —
Ring out the wild salute! Our sister over sea! {140B}

{full page below}

THE FATAL FORCE.<<1>>

<<1. This play deals with the effect of shattering all the solid bases of a young man's mind. Here we find him strong enough to win through. In the "Mother's Tragedy" is a similar case with a weaker nature. It is well to note that in the former play the mother is evil; in the latter good. Hence also in part the tragedy. For a good mother is an affliction against which none by the strongest may strive. It is fortunately rare.>>

1899.

"She

In the habilments of the goddess Isis

That day appeared.” — “Anthony and Cleopatra,” iii, 6, 16

“Stoop not down, for a precipice lieth beneath the earth, reached by a descending ladder which hath Seven Steps, and therein is established the throne of an evil and fatal force.” — ZOROASTER. {col. start below}

“PEOPLE.”

RATOUM, “Queen of Egypt.”

THE LEPER, “her divorced husband.”

KHOMSU, “their son” (dead).

S’AFI, “son of” KHOMSU “and” RATOUM.

THE KING OF SYRIA.

AMENHATEP, “High Priest.”

Chorus of Priests.

Soldiers of Egypt.

Syrian Troops.

S’AFI.

WHY is thy back made stiff, unrighteous priest,

Thy knee reluctant? Thine old eyes, grown blind,
Stare into silence, and behold no god
Longer. Thy forehead knows no reverence
Nor sign of worship. Or sits mutiny
Blasphemous on thy brows? For in thine eyes
I see full knowledge, and some glittering fire
Lurks in the rheumy corners; yea, some fire
Malignant, terrible — nay, pitiable,
Thou poor fool stricken with senility,
How spurred to passion? Yet behold thy god, {141A}
Horus, lest anger take benignancy
From his left hand and smite thee with his strength.
Thou hearest? Nay, thou pitiful old man,
For I have loved thee. yet my godhead must
Get Worship. Anger not the god, but stoop,
My faithful priest, and worship at my feet.

AMENHATEP.

I am most miserable. But truth must leap

In this tremendous moment from my lips,
Its long-shut barrier. For I pity thee
With my old heart's whole pity. Thou art young,
And beautiful, and proud, and dear to me,
Whom I have served thy life through. Now that love
Demands a deadlier service — to speak truth.
Thou art not Horus, but a man as I.

CHORUS.

Thou art not Horus, but a man. Thy life
Is not of the immortals, but, as ours,
Stands at the summons of the hooded death. {141B}

S'AFI.

Speak! I have this much of a god in me —
I am not shaken at your cries; my lips
Are silent at your blasphemy; my ears
Are strong to hear if there be truth at all

In your mixed murmurs: I command you, speak!

AMENHATEP.

The burden of the madness of the Queen

Lies on the land: the Syrian is near;

And she, believing that her godhead guards

Her people, sleeps. The altars are thrown down;

The people murmur. She hath done thee wrong,

But be thou mighty to avenge!

S'AFI.

To-day

I, Horus, shall become Osiris. Yea,

Strange secret dreams of some mysterious fate

Godlike have come upon me, and the throne

Totters for your disloyalty.

AMENHATEP.

Beware!

How died thy father?

S'AFL.

That amazing god

Incarnate in him chose a nobler form,

And in my mother's body sought his home,

Whose double incarnation is divine

Beyond the old stories. Yes, I am a god.

AMENHATEP.

Beware the fatal magic of her heart!

For she is great and evil, and her voice

Howls blasphemy against yet living gods.

Thou knowest not the story of thy birth,

The truth. {142A}

S'AFL.

Then speak the truth, if so a priest
May tune his tongue to anything but lies.

AMENHATEP.

Sixteen strange seasons mingle gold and grey
Since in this very temple she, the Queen,
Spake, and threw open to our reverent gaze
A royal womb made pregnant with that seed
Of which thou art the harvest. She spake thus:
“Princes, and people of the Egyptian land,
And broken priests of broken deities
Discrowned this hour, look up, behold your god!
For I am pregnant with my own son's child,
The fruit of my desire's desire. Most pure,
The single spirit of my godhead yearned
From death to reap dominion, and from birth

To pluck the blossom of its fruitful love,
And be the sun to ripen and the rain
To water it. My soul became the bride
To its own body, and my body leapt
With passion from mine own imperial loins
Begotten, and made strong from my own soul
To answer it. I hail thee, son of mine,
Thou royal offspring of a kingly sire,
Less kingly for the single flower of love!
I hail thee, son, the secret spouse of me,
King of my body and this realm to-day!
For lo! the child leapt up within my womb,
Hailing me mother, and my spirit leapt,
Hailing him brother! Son and spouse and king,
Exulting father of the royal soul
That lies here, loving me, assume thy crown
And sit beside me, equal to thy queen.
For look ye to the burning south, and see
The sun grown amorous, and behold his fire
Leap to my godhead. For without a man

I single, I the mother, have conceived
Of my own loins, and made me no less god
Than all your gods! Ye people and ye priests,
Behold the burden of my life, and fear, {142B}
And know me Isis. Worship me, and praise
The goodliest ruler of the world, the queen
Of all the white immeasurable seas,
And that vast river of our sowing-time,
And of your Sun. Behold me made a god
Of my own godhead, and adore the sun
Of my queen's face, and worship ye the fount
And fertile river of my life. Bow down,
Ye people and ye priests, and worship me,
And him co-equal. I am very god!"

So spake the Queen; but I arose and said:

"Queen and our lord, we worship! Let the smoke
Of this divinest incense be a smell
Sweet to thy nostrils! For three times I cast
Its faint dust in the tripod, and three times

The smoke of adoration has gone up
To greet our gods; for the old gods are dead.”

Then there came forth a leper in the hall,
In the most holy temple. So amazed
All shrank. And he made prophecy and said:
“The child that shall be born of thee is called
Fear.<<1>> He shall save a people from their sin;
For the old gods indeed go down to death,
But the new gods arise from rottenness.”

Then said the goddess: “I indeed am pure
In my impurity; immaculate
In misconception; maiden in my whoredom;
Chaste in my incest, being made a god

Through my own strength.” The leper with smooth words Turned, and
went laughingly towards the west,

And took of his own leprosy and threw
Its foul flakes in the censer. So he passed,
Laughing, and on the altar the flame fell,
Till a great darkness was upon the room,

And only the Queen's eyes blazed out. So all {143A}

Silently went, and left her naked there,

Crowned, sceptred, and exultant, till a chant

Rolled from her moving lips; and great fear fell

Upon us, and the flame lept, and we fled,

Worshipping. but the mood passed, and we see

A lecherous woman whose magician power

Is broken, and the balance of her mind

Made one with the fool's bauble, and her wand,

That was of steel and fire, like a reed, snapped!

<<1. S'afi is the Egyptian for fear.>>

S'AFI.

So lived my father. Tell me of his death.

AMENHATEP.

At thy first breath the gods were patient still,

Till the abomination filled its cup,
And hatred took her heart. She slew thy sire,
And made his body the banquet of her sin
In the infernal temple. "So," she said,
"I reap the incarnation of the god."
So, gloomy and hideous, she would prowl about
Seeking fresh human feasts, and bloody rites
Stained the white altar of the world. And yet
Her power is gone, and we behold her go,
Haggard and weary, through the palace courts
And through the temple, lusting for strange loves
And horrible things, and thirsting for new steam
Of thickening blood upon her altar steps.
Her body wearies of desire, and fails
To satisfy the fury of her spirit;
The blood-feasts sicken her and yield no strength;
She is made one with hell, and violent force
Slips and is weakness, and extreme desire
Spends supple. {143B}

S'AFI.

I have heard you as a god

Immutable.

CHORUS.

Thou art as proud and calm

As statued Memnon. Thou art more than god

And less than man. Thine eyelids tremble not.

S'AFI.

I shall avenge it as a god. The land

Shall be made free.

AMENHATEP.

And the old gods have sway,

Re-born from incorruption.

S'AFI.

The old gods!

I must muse deeply. Keep your ancient ways

A little. I must play the part through so.

CHORUS.

In the ways of the North and the South

Whence the dark and the dayspring are drawn,

We pass with the song of the mouth

Of the notable Lord of the Dawn.

Unto Ra, the desire of the East, let the clamour of singing proclaim The
fire of his name!

In the ways of the East and the West

Whence the night and the day are discrowned,

We pass with the beat of his breast,

And the breath of his crying is bound.

Unto Toum, the low Lord of the West, let the noise of our chant be the
breath

Proclaiming him Death! {144A}

In the ways of the depth and the height,

Where the multitude stars are at ease,

There is music and terrible light,

And the violent song of the seas.

Unto Mou, the most powerful Lord of the South, let our worship declare
Him Lord of the Air!

In the mutable fields that are sown

Of a seed that is whiter than noon,

Whose harvest is beaten and blown

By the magical rays of the moon,

In the caverns and wharves of the wind, in the desolate seas of the air,
Revolveth our prayer!

In the sands and the desert of death,

In the horrible flowerless lands,

In the fields that the rain and the breath

Of the sun make as gold as the sands

With ripening wheat, in the earth, in the infinite realm of its seed, The
hearts of us bleed!

In the wonderful flowers of the foam,

Blue billows and breakers grown grey,

When the storm sweeps triumphantly home

From the bed of the violate day,

In the furious waves of the sea, wild world of tempestuous night, Our
song is as light!

In the tumult of manifold fire,

Multitudinous mutable feet

That dance to an infinite lyre

On the heart of the world as they beat,

In the flowers of the bride of the flame, in the warrior Lord of the Fire,

There burns our desire!

AMENHATEP.

Cry now, bewail the broken house, bewail

The ruin of the land; cry out on Fate! {144B}

CHORUS.

Slow wheels of unbegotten hate

And changeless circles of desire,

Formless creations uncreate,

Swift fountains of ungathered fire,

The misty counterpoise of time,

Dim winds of ocean and sublime

Pyramids of forgotten foam

Whirling, vague cones of shapeless sleep

And infinite dreams, and stars that roam,

And comets moving through the deep

Unfathomable skies,

Darker for moonlight, and the glow-worm eyes

Of dusky women that were stars,

And paler curves of the immutable bars

That line the universe with light,

Great eagle-flights of mystic moons
That dip, while the dull midnight swoons
About the skirts of Night:
These bowed and shaped themselves and said:
“It shall be thus!”
And the intolerable luminous
Death that is god bent down his head
And answered: “Thus immutably,
Above all days and deeds, shall be!”
And the great Light that is above all gods
Lifted his calm brow, spake, and all the seas,
And all the air, and all the periods
Of seasons and of stars gave ear, and these
Vaults of heaven heard
The great white Light that shaped its secrecies
Into one holy terrible word,
Higher than all words spoken; for He said:
“Death is made change, and only change is dead.”
For the most holy spirit of a man
Burns through the limit of the wheels that ran

Through all the unrelenting skies
When Icarus died,
And leaps, the flight of wise omnipotent eyes,
When Daedalus espied
An holy habitation for the shrine
Solitary, 'mid the night of broken brine {145A}
That foamed like starlight round the desolate shore.<<1>>
So to the mine of that crystalline ore
Golden, the electric spark of man is drawn
Deep in the bosom of the world, to soar
New-fledged, an eagle to the dazzling dawn
With lidless eyes undazzled, to arise,
Son of the morning, to the Southern skies;
And fling its wild chant higher at the fall
Of even, and of bright Hyperion;
To mix its fire with dew, to call
The spirit of the limitless air, made one
In the amazing essence of all light.
Limitless, emanation of the might
Of the great Light above all gods, the fire

Of our supreme desire,
So out of grievous labyrinths of the mind
The soul's desire may find
Some passionate thread, the clear note of a bird,
To make the dark ways of the gods as light,
And bring forth music from slow chants unheard,
And visions from the fathomless night.
So is the spirit of the loftier man
Made holy and most strong against his fate;
So is the desolate visage of the wan
Lord of Amenti<<2>> covered, and the gate
Of Ra made perfect. So the waters flow
Over the earth, throughout the sea,
Till all its deserts glow,
And all its salt springs vanish, and night flee
The pinions of the day wide-spread, and pure
Fresh fountains of sweet water that endure
Assume the crown of the wide world, and lend
A star of many summits to his head
That rules his fate and compasses his end.

And seeks the holy mountain of the dead
To draw dead fire, and breathe, and give it life!

<<1. See Vergil, "Aen." vi. II. 14-19.>>

<<2. The West: the Egyptian Land of the Dead.>>

But thou, be strong for strife,
And, as a god, cry out, and let there be
The mark of many footsteps on the sea {145B}
Of angels hastening to fulfil
Thy supreme, single will!
Alone, intense, unmoved, not made for change,
Let thy one godhead rise
To move like morning, and like day to range,
A furnace for the skies,
That all men cry: "The uncreated God!
Formless, ineffable, just, whose period
Is as his name, Eternity!" So bear
The sceptre of the air!
So mayest thou avenge, all-seeing, blind,

The wrath of this consuming fire, that licks
The rafters and the portals of the house,
The gateways of the kingdom, where behind
Lurk ruinous fates and consequence; where fix
Their fangs the scorpions; where hide their brows
The shamed protectors of the Egyptian land.
Go forth avenging; men shall understand
And worship, seeing justice as a spouse
Lean on thine iron hand.

For Murder walks by night, and hides her face,

But righteous Wrath in the light, and knows his place; For hate of a
mother is ill, and the lightning flashes But foil a harlot's will, burn the earth
to ashes,

Cleanse the incestuous sty of a whore's desire,

Scatter the dung to the sky, and burn her with fire!

So the avenging master shall cleanse his fate of shame, Set his seal of
disaster, a royal seal to his name.

["Exeunt."

S'AFI.

I am not Horus, but I shall be King.

“Enter” THE LEPER.

THE LEPER.

I am a leper, but I am the king. {146A}

S'AFI.

Monstrous illegible horror, let thy mouth

Frame from its charnel-house some pregnant word

Intelligible.

THE LEPER.

I am the king; thy mother's limbs

Clung fast to mine when I begot thy father.

S'AFI.

He died in battle; thou art not the king.

THE LEPER.

I did not fall in battle; but my queen

Saw on my breast the livid mark of sin

That was the leprosy of her own soul,

And drove me forth to compass by disgrace

With infamies ineffable.

S'AFI.

I shall avenge. The old gods come again.

THE LEPER.

Nay! I have lived through all these barren years,
Discrowned, diseased, abominable, cast out,
And meditating on the event of life,
And that initiated Hope that we,
Royal, inherit, of the final life,
Nor newer incarnation, and possessed
Of strange powers, who have moved about this court
Loathed, and unrecognised, and shunned, have thought
That the old bondage was as terrible
As thine incestuous mother's iron hand,
Rending the entrails of her growing realm
To seek her bloody fate, whose violence
Even now makes the abyss of wrath divine
Boil in the deep. Thou mayest be that great
Osiris, bidding man's high soul be free,
Justified in its own higher self, made pure
And perfect in its own eyes, being a god. {146B}
Destroy this priestcraft! We are priests indeed,
Highest among the secret ones; and we —
See where our heritage is made; I, king,

A leper, and thyself, the hideous fruit
Of what strange poisons? But in mine own self
I am the king and chief of all the priests;
And thou, in thine own eyes, art a young god,
Strong, beautiful, and lithe, a leaping fawn
Upon the mountains.

S'AFI.

Yea, I am a god.
I am fire against the fountain of my birth,
The storm upon the earth that nurtured me!<<1>>
Leave me: we twain have no more words to speak.

<<1. Fire and Water, Air and Earth, are the “antagonisms” of
the”elements.”>>

THE LEPER.

Neither in heaven nor in hell. I go,

The dead king, worshipping the living man.

[“Exit.”

S’AFI.

I have been a god so long, my thoughts run halt

From many contemplations. Like the flow

Of a slow river deep and beautiful,

My even life moved onward to full scope,

The ocean of profounder deity,

And — suddenly — the cataract! My soul,

Centered eternally upon itself,

Comprehends hardly all this violence

Of wayward men intemperate. I am calm,

And contemplate, without a muscle moved

Or nerve set shrieking, all these ruinous deeds

And dissolution of the royal house.

I see this grey unnatural mother of mine

Now, as she is, disrobed of deity,

And like some reeling procuress grown wolf

By infamous bewitchment, haunt the stairs, {147A}

And pluck the young men by the robe, and take

The maidens for her sacrifice, and burn

With great unquenchable dead lustrous eyes

Toward impossible things grown possible

In Egypt. I will cleanse the land of this.

Let me remember I am yet a god!

“Re-enter” THE LEPER.

THE LEPER.

Thou must be brought before her presently

Borne in a coffin. See thou fill it not,

But take the lion’s mask and play his part

Before the throne. Be ready, and be strong.

S’AFI.

I shall do so. Come, let us go together

In hateful love and sacrilegious hate,
Disease and godhead. I am still the god.

[“Exeunt.”

“Enter” RATOUM.

RATOUM.

I stood upon the desert, and my eyes
Beheld the splendid and supernal dawn
Flame underneath the single star that burns
Within the gateway of the golden East
To rule my fate; but I have conquered Fate
Thus far, that I am perfect in myself,
The absolute unity and triple power
Engrafted. For the foolish people see
An old grey woman, wicked, not divine,
Who<<1>> shall this hour assume the royal self
And the old godhead, and the lithe strong limbs
And supple loins and splendid bosom bare

Full of bright milk, the breast of all the world.
This lesser mastery I have made mine-own
By strange devices, by unheard-of-ways
Of wisdom, by strong sins, and magical
Rituals made righteous of their own excess
Of horror; but I have not made myself {147B}
So absolute as I shall do to-day
In this new infamy. For I must pass
Desolate into the dusk of things again,
Having risen so far to fall to the abyss,
Deeper for exaltation; I must go
Wailing and naked into the inane
Cavernous shrineless place of misery,
Forgetful, hateful, impotent, except
The last initiation seize my soul,
And fling me into Isis' very self,
The immortal, mortal. Let me know this night
Whether my place is found among the stars
That wander in the deep, or made secure
As the high throne of her that dwells in heaven,

Fruitful for life and death, Wisdom her name!
This hour the foolish ones shall see their souls
Shrink at my manifest deity. This night
My spirit on my spirit shall beget
Myself for my own child. Behold! they come,
Fantastically moving through the dance,
The many mourners, and the fatal bier
Looms in the dimness of the anteroom.
It is enough. My hour is at hand!

<<1. This antithetical use of the relative is uncommon.>>

CHORUS “enter and circumambulate”.

Even as the traitor’s breath
Goeth forth, he perisheth
By the secret sibilant word that is spoken unto death.

Even as the profane hand
Reacheth to the sacred sand,

Fire consumes him that his name be forgotten in the land.

even as the wicked eye

Seeks he mysteries to spy,

So the blindness of the gods takes his spirit: he shall die.

Even as the evil priest,

Poisoned by the sacred feast,

Changes by its seven powers to the misbegotten beast: {148A}

Even as the powers of ill,

Broken by the wanded will,

Shriek about the holy place, vain and vague and terrible: Even as the
lords of hell,

Chained in fires before the spell,

Strain upon the sightless steel, break not fetters nor compel: So be distant,
O profane!

Children of the hurricane!

Lest the sword of fire destroy, lest the ways of death be pain!

So depart, and so be wise,

Lest your perishable eyes

Look upon the formless fire, see the maiden sacrifice!

So depart, and secret flame

Burn upon the stone of shame,

That the holy ones may hear music of the sleepless Name!

Now the sacred and obscene

Kiss, the pure and the unclean

Mingle in the incense steaming up before the goddess queen.

Holy, holy, holy spouse

Of the sun-engirdled house,

With the secret symbol burning on thy multiscient brows!

Hear, O hear the mystic song

Of the serpent-moving throng,

Isis mother, Isis maiden, Isis beautiful and strong!

Even as the traitor's breath

Goeth forth, he perisheth

By the secret sibilant word that is spoken unto death.

RATOUM.

The hour is given unto death. Bring in

Dead Horus, for the night is shed above.

[“Coffin brought in.” {148B}

CHORUS.

The noise of the wind of the winter; the sound

Of the wings of the charioted night;

The song of the sons of the seas profound;

The thunder of death; the might

Of the eloquent silence of black light!

RATOUM.

The noise of many planets fallen far!

CHORUS.

Death listens for the voice of life; night waits
The dawn of wisdom: winter seeks the spring!

RATOUM.

The music of all stars arisen; the breath
Of God upon the valley of the dead!

CHORUS.

The silence of the awaiting soul asleep!

RATOUM.

The murmur of the fountain of my life!

CHORUS.

The whole dead universe awaits the Word.

RATOUM.

Now is the hour of life; my voice leaps up
In the dim halls of death, and kindling flame
Roars like the tempest through forgetfulness.
This is my son, whose father is my son,
From my own womb complete and absolute,
And in this strong perfection of myself
Stands the triumphant power of my desire,
Manifest over self, and man, and god!
For in the sacred coffin lies his corpse
Who shall arise at the enormous word
Of my creating deity; his life
Shall quicken in him, and the dead man rise, {149A}
Osiris; and all power be manifest
In our supreme reunion; let the priest

Cast incense on the fire, upon the ground
Let water of the fertilising Nile
Be spilt, because these dark maternal breasts
That gave their milk to that divinest child
Are not yet full of the transcending stream
That knows its fountain in my deity.
The incense fumes before me: I am come,
Isis, within this body that ye know,
Transmuting! Look upon me, ye blind eyes!
Behold, dull souls and ignorant desires!
See if I be not altogether god!

[“She assumes the appearance of her mature beauty, standing before them
with the wand upraised.”]

Wonder and worship! Sing to me the song
Of the extreme spring! Rejoice in my great strength
And infinite youth and new fertility,
And lave your foreheads in this holy milk
That springs, the fountain of humanity,
Luminous in the temple! Raise the hymn.

CHORUS.

Through fields of foam ungarnered sweeps

The fury of the wind of dawn;

Through fiery desolation creeps

The water of the wind withdrawn.

With fire and water consecrate

The foam and fire are recreate.

With air uniting fire and water,

The springtide's unbegotten daughter

Blossoms in oceans of blue air,

Flowers of new spring to bear.

The sorrowful twin fishes glide

Silent and sacred into sleep;

The joyful Ram exalts his pride,

Seeing the forehead of the deep

Glow from his palace, as the sun

Leaps to the spring, whose coursers run

Flaming before their golden master,

As death and winter and disaster
Fall from the Archer's bitter kiss
Fast to their mute abyss. {149B}

The pale sweet blooms of lotus burn;
The scent of spring is in the soul;
Men's spirits to the loftiest turn;
Light is extended and made whole.
The waters of the whispering Nile
Lisp of their loves a little while,
Then break, like songsters, into sighing,
Because the lazy days are dying;
And swift and tawny streams must rise
World's world to fertilise.

The lotus is afire for love,
Its yearnings are immortal still;
But in its bosom, fed thereof,
Lust, like a child, will have his will.
Immortal fervour, strangely blent

With mystic sensual sacrament,
Fills up its cup; its petals tremble
With faint desires that dissemble
The fierce intention to be wed
One with the spring sun's head.

The fountains of the river yearn
Toward the sacred temple-walls,
They foam upon the sands that burn
With spring's delirious festivals.
They flash upon the gleaming ways,
They cry, they chant aloud the praise
Of Isis, and our temple kisses
Their flowery water-wildernesses,
Whose foamheads nestle to the stones
With slumberous antiphones.

All birds and beasts and fish are fain
To mingle passion with the hope
All creatures hold, that cycled pain

May make its stream the wider scope
Of many lives and changing law,
Till to the sacred fountains draw
Essences of dim being, mated
With lofty substance uncreated,
Concluding the full period
That makes all being God.

S'AFI “(disguised in the mask of a lion)”.

I lift the censer. Hail, immortal queen,
From the vast hall of death! Dead Horus cries {150A}
Towards the dawn. Bid me awake, O mother!
O mother! from the darkness of the tomb,
That live Osiris may cry back to thee,
O spouse! O sister! from the halls of life,
The profound lake, the immeasurable depth,
The sea of the three Loves! O mother, mother!
Isis, the voice that even Amenti hears,
Speak, that I rise from chaos, from the world

Of shapeless and illusionary forms,
Of dead men's husks, and unsubstantial things.
O mother, mother, mother! I arise!

RATOUM.

Horus, dread godhead, child of me, arise!
Arise Osiris, to the sacred rites
And marriage-bed of fuller deity.
Now, at the serpent-motion of this wand,
Rise from the dead! Arise, dead Horus, rise
To be Osiris. Isis speaks! Arise!

["The coffin is opened." THE LEAPER "is raised out of it swathed in bandages."

Our of the sleep of ages wake and live!

["The wrappings fall off."

THE LEPER.

I am the resurrection and the death!

[RATOUM “falls back shrieking. The priests raise a chant to stifle the sound.”

S’AFI “(tearing off his mask)”.

I am the hideous poison of thy veins
And foulest fruit of thy incestuous womb.

RATOUM.

I am thy mother! I have nurtured thee
With woman’s tenderness and godhead’s strength.

S’AFI.

I am the avenger of my own false birth. {150B}

RATOUM.

I have loved thee ever; I have made thee god.

S'AFI.

I hate myself, and therefore I hate thee.

RATOUM.

I am still goddess, still desire thy love.

That leper lies: thou art indeed a god.

S'AFI.

I am a god to execute my will.

[“Threatens her with his dagger.”]

RATOUM.

Mercy! Thou canst not strike a woman down!

S'AFI.

So! The thin casing of the godhead rots,
Mere mummy-cloth: the rotten corpse within,
Dust and corruption! I am still the god,
And gods slay women: therefore I slay thee.

RATOUM.

Then thou shalt seem me once again a god!

[“By a tremendous effort she towers before him. Silently they gaze at one another for a while, he vainly endeavouring to force himself to strike. At last she collapses into the throne; he springs forward and drives his knife into her.”

THE LEPER.

It is finished! The sacrament is made! The god
Has flamed within the altar-cake: ‘tis done!

[“Silence: presently” THE LEPER “breaks into a horrible, silent, smooth laughter. Again silence.” {151A}

S’AFI.

I am done with godhead: let me be a man.

CHORUS.

Hail, S’afi, king of Egypt and the Nile!

Hail, S’afi, Lord of the two lands,<<1>> all hail!

<<1. Upper and Lower Egypt.>>

S’AFI.

King of himself and lord of life and death,

No lesser throne! I have borne me as a god,

Avenging on my nearest blood the sin

That brought me shameful to the shameless light.

I have not faltered nor turned back at all,
Nor moved my purpose for a moment's thought.
Nor will I now. The god is gone from me,
And as a man I feel the living shame
of my existence, and the biting brand
Of murder set upon me, and the sting
Of my discrowned forehead. I shall die
Having this proof of my own nobleness
To soothe the rancour of my stricken soul
In the abodes of night, that I have dared,
With the first knowledge to make good my spirit
Against its fate, to steel my flinching heart
Against all men, dominions, shapes, and powers,
Seen and unseen, to justice and to truth,
Sought out by desolate ways of hateful deeds,
And so set free myself from my own fate,
Whom I will smite to end the coil of things
Here, to begin — what life? For Life I know
Stands like a living sentinel behind
The rugged barrier of death, the gates

Where the rude valley narrows, and man hears
The steep and terrible cataract of time
Break, and lose shape and substance in the foam
And spray of an eternity of air!
My death, and not my life, may crown me king! {151B}
So let me not be buried in that state
Due to the hateful rank that I abjure
By this proud act, but let my monument
Say to succeeding peoples and dim tribes
Unthought of: "This was born a living man
Bound, and he cut the chain of circumstance,
And spat on Fate." And all the priests shall say
And all the people: "Verily and Amen."
["Stabs himself."

CHORUS.

Spirit of the Gods! O single,
Sacred, secret, let the length
East and west, the depth and height,

North and south, with music tingle,
Ring with battled clarion choirs of the far-resounding light!
Let the might of
Osirian sacrifice
Dwell upon the self-slain king!
Spirit of the Gods! Unite
Streams of sacramental light
In the soul, thrice purified,
Consecrated thrice,
Till Osiris justified
In the supreme sacrifice
Take his kingdom. Hear the cry
That the wailing vultures make,
Circling in the blackening sky
Over the abysmal lake.
Spirit, for our spirit's sake
Give the token of thy fire
Trident in the lambent air,
Till our spirits unaware
Worship and aspire!

Hear, beyond all periods,
Timeless, formless, multiform,
Thou, supreme above the storm,
Spirit of the Holy Ones, Spirit of the Gods!

“Enter” MESSENGER.

MESSENGER.

The battle rages: even now the shock
Of hostile spears makes the loud earth resound,
The wide sky tremble. {152A}

AMENHATEP.

Here lies Horus dead,
There Isis slain. We have no leader left.

MESSENGER.

The fight is doubtful. We may conquer still.

AMENHATEP.

By this shed blood and desecrated shrine
And horrible hour of madness, may it be
That all the evil fortune of the land,
Created of these dead iniquities,
Burn its foul flame out. Are ye not appeased,
Even ye, O powers of Evil, at this shame
And sacrilege? And ye, Great Powers of Good,
Hath not enough of misery been wrought,
Enough of expiation? We have sinned,
But our iniquity he purged away,
Who as avenger hath denied his life,
To be made one with ye. O by his blood
And strong desire of holiness, and might
And justice, let him mediate between
And mitigate your anger, that the name
Of Egypt may not perish utterly.

Make, make and end!

THE LEPER.

All things must work themselves

To their own end. Created sin grown strong

Must claim its guerdon. Ye abase yourselves

Well for repentance; but ye shall not ward

With tears and prayers the ruin ye have made,

Nor banish the enormous deities

Of judgment so invoked by any prayers,

Or perfumes or libations. What must be

Will be. Material succour ye demand

In vain. But ye may purify yourselves.

AMENHATEP.

Knows then thy prophecy of our final doom? {152B}

THE LEPER.

Inquire not of your fate! Myself do know,
Mayhap. Ye shall know. I await the event.

AMENHATEP.

We shall be patient, and we shall be strong.

THE LEPER.

The noise of rushing feet! The corridor
Rings with their scurrying fear. This is the end.
[“Enter a flying soldier, crying aloud, and seeks a hiding-place.”
Speak not, thou trembling slave: we understand!
[“The soldier slips on the marble floor, and lies groaning.”

AMENHATEP.

See that due silence greets catastrophe!

No word from now without command of mine.

[“Silence. Then grows a noise of men fighting, &c.; above this after a while rises a shrill laughter, terrifying to hear. Then cries of victory and the triumphant laugh of a great conqueror. His heavy step, and that of his staff, &c., is next heard coming masterfully down the corridor. The soldier gives a shriek.”]

THE LEPER.

The Syrian must not see a cur like this

Cower at death. For Egypt's honour, then! {153A}

Give me that spear. [“Aside.”] That royalty's own hand Should send this thing to his long misery!

[“Taking a spear, he runs through the soldier.”]

“The” KING OF SYRIA, “attended, enters.”

KING OF SYRIA.

Your armies beaten back before my face,

Your weapons broken, I am come to take

The crown from her pale brows that sitteth there.

THE LEPER.

The Queen is dead: I am the King of Egypt.

To-day I saved the house from its own shame

By strange ways: I will strike one blow to save

The land from its invaders. In the name

Of all our gods, I here invoke on thee

The spirit of my leprosy. Have at you!

[“Springs at the” KING OF SYRIA, “only to be transfixed on his drawn sword; but he succeeds in clasping the king, who staggers. His soldiers, with a shout, rush forward, drag down” THE LEPER “and attack the priests. All are slain. Silence: then a shield drops, clanging on the ground.”

KING OF SYRIA “(assuming crown and sitting on throne)”.

Salute the conqueror of the Egyptian land!

[“The soldiers salute and cheer.”

I am a leper: get ye hence!

[“Exeunt soldiers.”

Unclean! [“Silence.”

This was the hour that my ambitious hopes

Centered upon; and now I grasp the hour —

So fares mortality. [“Silence.”

Unclean! unclean! {153B}

{full page below}

CURTAIN. {153}

THE MOTHERS’S TRAGEDY.<<1>>

1899. {col. start below}

<<1. The justification of this play, both in subject and construction, is to be found in the Introduction to the “Ion” of Euripides. [Verral, Camb. Univ. Press, 1890.] The chief of its many morals is that sin must reap its harvest in spite of repentance, prayer, and the other dodges by which men seek to elude Fate.>>

SCENE. — “The room is furnished with comfort as well as luxury. A crucifix is in the window to the East, and the room is flooded with a ray of

sunlight.”

CORA VAVASOUR “(late of the Halls)”.

ULRIC, “illegitimate son of” CORA, “ignorant of his parentage.”

MADELINE, “girl in love with” ULRIC.

THE SPIRIT OF TRAGEDY, “as Chorus, sits in the back, crouched, brooding over the scene. It is veiled and throned.”

SPIRIT OF TRAGEDY.

HERE, in the home of a friend,

Here, in the mists of a lie,

The pageant moves on to the desolate end

Under a sultry sky.

Noon is upon us, and Night,

Spreading her wings unto flight,

Visits the lands that lie far in the West,

Where the bright East is at peace on her breast:

Opposite quarters unite.

Soon is the nightfall of Destiny here;

Nature's must pass as her hour is gone by.

Only another than she is too near,

Gloom in the sky.

One who can never pass over shall sever

Links that were forged of Love's hand;

Love that was strong die away as a song,

Melt as a cable of sand.

But I am watching, with unwearied eye,

The wayfare of the tragedy. {154B}

I see the brightness of the home; I see

The grisly phantom of despair to be.

I see the miserable past redeemed,

(Intolerable as its purpose seemed,)

Redeemed by love: I see the jealous days

Pass into sunshine, and youth-beaming rays,

Quicken the soul's elixir. Let me show

How these air-castles tumble into woe.

["Raises sceptre as if to start action of play."]

CORA.

Why did your eyelids quiver as I spoke?

A smile, a tear? that trembling, in their deep

Violet passion, of the beautiful

Eyes that they half discover? Speak to me.

I have long thought a secret was your spouse,

Shared your deep fancies and your lightest word,

Partook your maiden bed, and gave you dreams

Somewhat too troublous to be virginal.

MADELINE.

My dear kind Cora, do they lie to you,

These fancies of my idle hours? Believe,

I seem to tremble at my inward thought;

My heart is full of wonder. When I go

Nightward beneath the moon, and take my thoughts

Past here pale beauty through some glowing skies {154B}

Not unfamiliar, through exulting gates —

“Lift up your heads,” I hear the angels cry;
“Be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors.
A child-heart seeks the Lover of the Child!”
O meek and holy Jesus, hath Thy heart
Yearned unto me, Thy maiden? For I knew
A bliss so pregnant with the unforeseen
As brought me to the very feet of Christ,
Weeping. How clouded that mysterious
Passion! I fell a-weeping in my bed,
Forgetting, or not knowing. For a fire
Too perfect for my sinful soul to touch
Gathered me closely in itself, to hide
Its utter glory from me. Now I feel
Swift troubled tremblings in myself: I seek
Again those visionary skies. Alas!
That angel chorus swells another note
I cannot understand.

CORA.

I am so moved,
I cannot find it in my heart to say
The words I purposed. Let my folly pass
As an old worldly woman's talk.

MADELINE.

O no!
Your bear the sainted fragrance of your love
Higher than even my dreams. In earthly life
Your are not earthly. I have often thought
The Virgin has some special care for you,
And given of her beauty and her peace
A special dower. Your thoughts are ever pure;
Your soul in sweet communion with God!
Why, you are crying?

CORA.

You say this to me?

O could you look within a magic glass,
Holding my hand, such sights would come to you
Beyond your knowledge — ay, beyond belief!
I am no saintly virgin wrapped in prayer, {155A}
Nor is my life one river of clear water
Drawn from the wells of God. You foolish child!
My love for you you cannot understand,
Nor the low motive — you have shown it me —
Of this beginning of our talk.

MADELINE.

Say on!

CORA (“meaningly”).

Much less you understand the love I bear
To Ulric!

MADELINE “gives a little cry.”

Heart of Christ! it cannot be!

CORA.

No, child; I tricked you. Is your secret out?

MADELINE.

I am dismayed at my discovery.

(“Slowly.”) I never guessed my own poor silliness

Until that moment when you frightened me.

CORA.

And now you know how dear he is to you!

Come, child, I love you both. Your happiness

Is my life’s purpose. I have seen the truth

Of this in you; it comes to every one.

I know that he is half in love with you.

Look once again as you did look just now,

And he would die for you. O foolish girl!

[MADELINE “weeps quietly for a little,” CORA “caressing her.”

MADELINE.

Please let me go: you are too kind to me! {155B}

CORA.

Rest, sunny head! A little while to sleep,

And then — perhaps the Mother in a dream

May comfort you. A woman’s love is this

To have one heart, an undivided love;

But Hers — division in the universe

Makes multiple each part. Sweet Madeline,

Believe me, She will come to maiden dreams,

Bestow Her peace, and so direct the life

That is not unto God unconsecrate

For being dedicated unto love!

[“Exit” MADELINE.

CORA “remains thinking”.

I was no bolder twenty years ago!

Time, Time, thou maker and destroyer both,

Only in resurrection hast no part!

[“Broods.”

SPIRIT OF TRAGEDY “(with light enjoyment)”.

How light and how agreeable,

Paved pathway to the gate of hell!

See how all virtues, graces, shine,

Till woman half appears divine!

But I am waiting, watching still

The treason of the powers of ill.

Soft, moveless, as a tigress glides,

Strange laughing devilry abides

Its hour to poison. How they gloat,
The fiends, upon her lips and throat!
They touch her heart, they spear<<1>> her eyes,
They linger on the lovely prize!
O dead she thought them! It is written:
“Eve’s heel is by the serpent bitten,
His head she bruises.” No indeed!
Not woman, but the woman’s seed!
Hark! in the cloak of “Love of Truth”
They whisper “Memory of Youth”;
And, mindful of the deadliest sin,
Hint: “Sinful woman, look within!” {156A}

<<1. To search, with the idea of looking more deeply. The grotesque word is used to suggest the quaint inspection of the malicious goblins.>>

CORA.

Ah me! if she could look within a glass<<1>>

With spells and pantacles<<2>> well fortified!

I have a glass whose bitter destiny
No wizard may conjure. Arise ye there,
Old hours of horror, clear by one and one,
In the confused and tossing ocean,
Where memory picks spar and spar from out
The dreadful whirlpool hardly yet appeased,
To join together in imagination
The ship — the wreck! And yet I stand at last
Secure in my unselfish love to them,
Repaid in mine own currency. I trust
God that made smooth the road beneath the hearse
Of my forgetful age. All must be well.

<<1. The crystal sphere is habitually used by clairvoyants and others for the purposes of divination. Such a globe should be ceremonially consecrated and vitalised.>>

<<2. From GR:pi-alpha-nu, all, a diminutive. The word thus means “a universe in little.” It is usually a square or circle of vellum or other material, designed and painted appropriately to its purpose; a spirit is then evoked and commanded to dwell therein, that it may do the required office.>>

SPIRIT OF TRAGEDY “(with sombre joy)”.

Mortals never learn from stories
How catastrophe becomes;
How above the victor's glories
In the trumpets and the drums,
And the cry of millions "Master!"
Looms the shadow of disaster.
Every hour a man hath said
"That at least is scotched and dead."
Some one circumstance: "At last
That, and its effects, are past."
Some one terror — subtle foe! —
"I have laid that spectre low!"
They know not, learn not, cannot calculate
How subtly Fate {156B}
Weaves its fine mesh, perceiving how to wait;
Or how accumulate
The trifles that shall make it master yet
Of the strong soul that bade itself forget.

CORA.

Let me not shrink! Truth always purifies.

I will go through those two impossible

Actual years. The city was itself;

Hard thinking if hard drinking — sober-sides!

One night I stepped up tremulous on the stage,

Sang something, found my senses afterward

Only to that intolerable sound

Of terrible applause. They shook the sky

With calling me to answer. And I lay —

A storm of weeping swept across my frame —

Till the polite, the hateful manager

Led me to face a nation's lunatic

Roar of delight. I soon got over that,

And over — yes, the other thing. Three months —

They used to quote me on the Stock Exchange!

I will say this to me, I will not shrink:

Look up you coward, Cora Vavasour!

Which fathered me the bastard? Every rag,<<1>>

Prurient licksores of society,
Gave it a different father. Am I sure
Myself? The shameful Mammon was his name,
Glittering gold! I loved my opulence,
Cursed my “misfortune.” Childbirth sobered me.
I loved the child, the only human love
I ever tasted, and I sacrificed
The popularity, the infamy,
Of my old life; I sought another world.
I “got religion” — how I hate the phrase! —
So jest the matron newspapers. The end. {157A}
Since then I live, as I am living still,
Wrapped in the all-absorbing love of him
My child, my child! And now my selfishness
Is shamed, and I have made the sacrifice
To give this pure heart to that maidenly,
And let mine old age grow upon my hair,
Finding my happiness in seeing him
The all-devoted, and in God’s good pleasure
Have little children playing at my knees,

That I may listen, in their innocent prayers,
For Jesus' voice. And I will never break
The secret of his being to my boy
Lest he despise me. This one reticence
I think my long-drawn agony may earn.
For I will do without a mother's name
If only I may keep a son's love still!
["Exit."]

<<1. Society papers.>>

SPIRIT OF TRAGEDY "(with sarcastic verve)".

She will not break an oath so wisely sworn,
Unlock her secret to disdain.
Wisdom is hers — what angel need to warn?
Since angels only seek to gain
That wisdom of the unprofane.
All future happiness I surely see.

I am the Soul of Tragedy!

“Enter” ULRIC “(musing, with love-light in his eyes).”

{“At his entrance,” SPIRIT OF TRAGEDY “changes to a shape of incarnate Horror, and continues:”

Naked as dawn, the purpose of the hour

Grows on my vision, and my cynic laughter

Chills in my veins: the old avenging power

Shows me the thing that is to be hereafter.

I gloated on the coming of the curse —

I did create an hearse,

Black plumes and solemn mourners; and I saw

The triumph of some natural law

Fit for a poet’s verse.

I saw some common fate to lure, to tempt;

(No mortal of the ages is exempt) {157B}

Some notable disaster to the house

Wherein such piety and love abide;

I saw some hateful spouse
Carry away the bride.
That feeble prescience of events to come,
That stultified imagining, hath lied;
And I can see, though all the signs be dumb
And auguries unfruitful — I can see,
Now, some intolerable tragedy
Fit for a god to picture, not a man!
I see the breaking of the rosary,
And Fate's cold fingers snap the span
Of three most innocent and pleasant lives.
So terrible a happening dives
Swift from God's hand to the abyss of hell,
And in its torment thrives,
Gathering curses from the darkest cave,
Calling corruption from the grave
to form one shape of aspect multiple
Divided in its single spell;
One spectre smooth and suave,
More horrible than any fear or active doom,

Beckoning with its lewd malignant finger,

Beckoning, beckoning, to no pious tomb

Where pitiable memory might linger.

A creeping, living horror hems me in,

A masterpiece of sin!

Even my soul, inured to contemplate

The dreadful, the perverse design of Fate,

In many stories never meant to win

Applause of mortals or of gods, but made

To choke man's spirit in its shade,

And make him, in his pride and happiness,

In virtue's mantle and love's seemly dress,

Immeasurably afraid.

The hour is on them — let its weight express

All blood, all life, from the disastrous grape!

In God, in mercy, there is no escape,

No anchor for distress.

The hour strikes mournfully upon the bell

Of the most awful precipice

That merges hell in hell.

There is deep silence in that dread abyss;

There is deep silence in the sphered sun;

There is deep silence where the planets run, {158A}

Majestic fires! Before the throne of God

Deep silence waits the lifting of the rod,

The moving nod.

Silence, reflected thence, still and intense, into the firmament; Such
silence as befits the event.

“Re-enter” CORA.

CORA.

This is the hour, O child whom I have loved

With love more tender than a mother's love,

Bring thy friend; this moment have I sought,

Awaiting always the propitious time,

To speak some purpose grown more definite

Than is our wont. We spend the honey days

In gentle intercourse: high souls have stood

Watching us drink from their crystalline stream
Meandering through language: mighty kings
Have listened as we read of their dead pomp;
Fair women blushed as their imagined shapes
Flitted before us in the tender page.

We too have followed every curve and line
In fairy fancies on our canvas drawn
Of stately people, and the changing rhyme
Of virgins dancing before Artemis;
In all the pleasures that delight the mind,
Invigorate the soul, lend favour to
The body of the youth — for I am old —

ULRIC.

My Cora! old! But urgently a word
Came of some purpose. I am half afraid
To hear it — and yourself! Reluctance sits
Dogged against the will to speak. Dear friend,

Let us sit close and whisper.

CORA.

Listen, then!

You are grown man: young men seek happiness.

Is there one joy your soul hath never felt?

One pure sweet passion? {158B}

ULRIC “(surprised)”.

Sweet! you speak of love!

You must have guessed I meant to question you,

And smoothed the passage to my modesty.

CORA “(with bitter sorrow at her heart)”.

You make me very glad. Yes, yes, indeed,

Love is my meaning. Does it shame me much

To talk so openly of love to you?

But I am old enough to be — to be —

ULRIC “(breaking right out)”.

My wife! O Cora, I have loved you so!

My heart is like a fountain of the sea.

I burn, I tremble; in my veins there swims

A torrid ecstasy of madness. Ah!

Ah God! I kiss you, kiss you! O you faint!

Sweetheart, my passion overwhelms your soul.

Your virginal sweet spirit cannot reach

My fury. You are silent. Yet you love!

I read it in the terror of your eyes,

The crimson of your burning face. I know,

I know you love me! Cora, Cora, tell me!

O she will die! I would not — I was rough —

My overmastering desire to you —

My queen, my wife, this maddens me.

CORA “(recovering)”.

You fool!

You beast! I hate you for your stupid self!

I am defiled! Go! touch me not! Speak not!

I am accursed of the Lord my God.

[“Shrieks.” {159A}]

ULRIC “(still passionate, yet full of tender concern)”.

Darling! my darling! How have I done this?

CORA.

Fool! It is madness! Yes, and punishment.

O God, that all my love should come to this!

You, you are mad! I speak of love, and you,

You — you are acting! I was taken in!

Let’s laugh about it!

[“Tries to laugh, sinks back.”]

It was not well done.

[ULRIC “is silent, and, puzzled, waits for her to go on.”

Surely you know that it was Madeline!

ULRIC.

What! I should wed that pretty Puritan?

The downcast eyes and delicate white throat,

The lily, when I saw the rose before me?

Your full delicious beauty was as God!

You are a bunch of admirable grapes

Fit to intoxicate my being! Yes!

I would not give that sunny fruit of yours

For twenty such frail flowers as Madeline.

I am a man — you mate me with a girl!

CORA.

Stop! not a word! My blasphemy to hear,

Yours to speak out — when you are told the truth!

ULRIC.

What truth? This word hath first an ugly sound.

The truth! God curse it to His blackest hell

If but it stand between us and our love! {159B}

CORA.

O Ulric, Ulric! bear with me awhile!

Speak no more words — each syllable strikes here,

[“Hand to heart.”

A cloud of winged scorpions, that rage

In mine own deepest self; for there I know

Tame harpies that had ceased to torture me;

And this more ghastly brood renews their sting,

Adding a triple poison! O my soul

Is torn with pangs more horrible than hell,

Scorching the very marrow of my bones,

Corrupting me — corrupting me, I say, —
O God! is any safety at Thy feet?
Be silent, O be silent for awhile,
And I will shrivel up thy wretched ears,
Give thee to curse the hour that saw thee first,
To curse thy parents and thine own young head.
May God forbid that thou should rail on Him!
Leave me a little to my torment yet,
That I may quell the host of devil forms
That eat my soul up, many torturing,
And one — ah! one accursed beyond all —
Soothing! O heart of Jesus, bleed with mine!
[“Kneels towards East.”]
See, see! I seek Thee on maternal knees!
Conceive Her pangs that bore Thee, when her shame
Devoured Her, with no memory of love —
As mine, as mine! O bitter memories!
[“A pause.”]

ULRIC.

Tell me, dear friend! anxiety and love
Are like to kill me. Tell me in three words.

CORA “(slowly and deliberately)”.

I am a dancer and a prostitute! {160A}

ULRIC “smiles contemptuously”.

Why trick me with so pitiful a lie?
Where you the vilest woman on the earth,
Mere scum of filth shed off the city’s dregs —
Were you the meanest and most treacherous —
Were you the sordid soul that most contrasts
With your true, noble, and unselfish self —
Were you the synthesis of all I hate,
In mind and body leprous and deformed —
Did every word and gesture fill my soul
With hatred and its parody, disgust —

It touches not my question! This one fact
O'ermasters all eccentric circumstance:
I love you — you, and not your attributes!

CORA.

Great noble soul! I hate myself the more
That I must wound you further with the truth.
A double prong this poisoned poinard
Snaps in our hearts. I kept the secret long.
Your breath, that burns upon me, wraps me round
With whirling passion, pierces through my veins
With its unhallowed fire, constrains, compels,
Drags out the corpse of twenty years ago
From the untrusty coffin of my mind,
To poison, to corrupt, to strike you there
Blind with its horror.

ULRIC.

Leave these bitter words!

They torture me with terrible suspense,

And you with fear. I see by these dread looks,

Tedious prologues, that there is a truth

You are afraid to speak. {160B}

CORA “(aside)”.

What subterfuge?

What shield against the lightning of his love?

“(Hastily.)” I have a husband living.

ULRIC.

Think you, then,

I have lived so long and looked into you eyes

To listen to so hastily disgorged

A prentice falsehood not grown journeyman?

Then, had you fifty husbands, am I one,

Reared in the faith of high philosophy,

Schooled from my childhood in the brotherhood
Of poets, to descend to this absurd
Quibble of tedious morality?
Shame not your truth with that ignoble thought!
And also — tell me, once for all, the truth!
[“Bitterly.”]
Say that you love him — it is on your tongue

CORA.

Learn the momentous horror of thy birth!
[“A pause.”]

ULRIC.

I would not urge my suit against that plea,
But — I have known you, and your own pure soul
Should cast no doubt against me — you have said
“Rather we love such as the child of love;
And pity — he is not unpitiful

In this vile system; and respect him too —

He stands alone, the evidence of Strength!”

You move your purpose with no bastardy!

Only you claim to speak the generous thought:

For you I wait, for you, to offer love! {161A}

CORA.

All is too true — my own philosophy

Mars my world’s wisdom. “(Suddenly.)” Can you tell me why I loved
you as a child, and why I dare

Now take your head between my hands and kiss

Your forehead with these shameful lips of mine,

These harlot lips, and kiss you unashamed?

ULRIC.

Strange are these words, and this emotion strange!

CORA.

Strange is the truth, and deadly as an asp.

ULRIC.

Wear me no more with this anxiety.

CORA.

How can I speak? For this will ruin us.

ULRIC.

Unspoken, I demand thy heart of thee.

CORA.

My heart is broken. This will murder thine.

ULRIC.

Kill, but not torture! Let me know the truth.

CORA.

This shaft is aimed even against thy life. {161B}

ULRIC.

What is my life without the love of thee?

CORA.

I hate each word as I do hate the devil.

ULRIC.

I, each evasion. I am bound a slave

To this wild passion. I will eat me up.

CORA.

You cannot guess the horror that you speak.

I tell you, if I know your golden heart,

This detestation of yourself shall cry

The cry of OEdipus — “I have profaned —”

ULRIC.

What sphinx more cruel? What new OEdipus?

You riddle, Cora, and it breaks my heart.

[“He sinks exhausted.”

“(Rallying.)” By God, I swear to you no lie shall keep Its Dead Sea bar
against our marrying.

CORA.

The truth! The truth! The truth! I am indeed
That whore I told you. That makes nothing here.
I am the mother of thy bastard birth!

ULRIC “(the conventional criticism is nearest the surface.)”.

Stop! stop! I did not hear you. O my God!
What agony is this? What have I done
To earn this infamy? Or rather, Thou,
What have I not done? Have Thou pity yet;
Sustain me in this vile extremity!
[“He prays silently.” {162A}]

CORA “(watching him)”.

How wonderful! He will abide the shock.
Death and mute horror fight within his face
Against a will made masterful to Fate.

ULRIC “(raises his eyes and lifts his arm in act to strike)”.

Then I detest you! Mother! Treacherous!

Vile as the worm that battens on the dead!

CORA.

Ulric! He’s mad! Sweet heaven! what is this?

[CORA “is now hysterical.” URIC “does not notice. She shrieks at each new insult.”

ULRIC.

Say rather, what are you? I loved you once

Childlike; then came the power of reasoning,

And I beheld you, the unselfish one,

Befriending me, the angel of my life.

See what it rested on, my happiness!

Your sacrifice is utter selfishness;

Me, the sole pledge of your debaucheries

You keep — your love, the mere maternity
You share with swine and cattle! All your care
Is duty: let the harlot cleanse herself —
Tardy repentance! — In the name of God!
Worse, you have lied, and built me up a house
Of trust in you as being truth and love,
Who are in truth all lies, all treachery!
You made me love you as an honest man!
You watched this passion, this intolerable
Desire, this flame of hell; you fed it full,
Sunned it and watered — O my brain will snap! —
Only to blast it. Take your story back; {162B}
Be what you will except that infamous!
For as my mother — I should spit on you!
[CORA “is at his feet grovelling. She half rises to listen.”
Ignoble is your foul maternity,
The cattle-kinship. But the other crime
Is viler than the first one. “Look!” you say:
“His passion threatens to defile my bed!”
And put a hideous abiding curse

On both our lives to save your modesty
From my incestuous embrace! O God!
My love is nobler — to defy the past,
Deny! — your love is merely natural;
Mine, against Nature, is the love Divine!
What crime is this? Thy pale Son's martyrdom
Cleansed earth from no such vile hypocrisy
As this my mother's. And I call thee, God,
To witness; and I call mankind to hear;
This is my faith: I live and die by it.
I, nobler, cast away the infamy,
Break with my hands these rotten barricades,
[“He picks up his mother's Bible, tears it, and casts it into the fire,”
And swear before the Spirit of the World,
In sight of God, this day: I love you still
With carnal love and spiritual love!
And I will have you, by the living God,
To be my mistress. If I fail in this,
Or falter in this counsel of despair,
May God's own curses dog me into hell,

And mine own life perpetuate itself

Through all the ages of eternity.

Amen! Amen! Come, Cora, to my heart!

[“He stoops to embrace her. Horror and madness catch him, and he runs about the room wildly, crying for” CORA, “whom he cannot see.”

MADELINE “enters.”

MADELINE.

O Cora! Cora! Ulric! Help! Help! Help! {163A}

ULRIC “(regains his self-control)”.

Hush! All is well! I cannot tell you now.

Some news — a letter — it has frightened her.

MADELINE.

But you were crying as a madman would.

ULRIC.

Believe me, I am nervous and distraught.

You know me, how excitable I am.

A moment, and you see me calm again.

Come, Cora, do not frighten Madeline!

["He raises her to lead her from the room."]

CORA.

Where would you lead me? I am blind with tears.

ULRIC.

I have no tears. Mine eyes are hard and cold

As my intention. Help me, Madeline.

CORA.

God will avenge me bitterly on you

If you stretch hand to aid this infamy.

ULRIC.

You shall not wreck her life. Be silent now!

Believe me, it is nothing, Madeline!

She often falls into a fit like this.

Excess is danger, equally in prayer

(Her vice is prayer) as in debauchery.

[“He is again going mad. He drags” CORA “from the room.” {163B}

MADELINE.

[MADELINE “is uncertain what to do during this scene: so fidgets about and does nothing.”

It is not illness that hath made them mad.

I cannot guess what storm has lashed itself

Thus in one hour from peace and happiness

To such a fury that the very room

Seems to my fancy to be tossed about,

Rocking and whirling on some dizzy sea.

There is a horrible feeling in the air.

[“She shudders”

SPIRIT OF TRAGEDY.

[“During this speech sighs, cries, voices from without indicate the action.”

The keystone of this arch of misery

Is set by the unfaltering hands

Of Fate. How desperate the anarchy

Wrought in one hour!

The fickle sands

Run through the glass, and all the light is gone.

Abysses without name the mighty power

Spans with spread fingers; on the horizon

Blood stains the setting sun,

The shattered sun; it shall not rise again!

No resurrection to the trampled flower,

No hope to angels watching as in vain

Love — lies — slain!

Madness and Terror and the deadly mood of Fortitude,

A misbegotten brood

Of all things shameful — O the desolate eyes

Of the cold Christ enthroned! The weeping heaven

Answers for angels: the oppressive skies

See them dislink from bodily form and shape,

Unloved and unforgiven,

Unwept, unpenitent, unshriven!

Their hell of horror knows no gate of any escape.

This tragedy is terrible to me.

Even I, its spirit, shudder as I see;

I, passionless, the moulder of men's hope,

The slayer of the, cast no horoscope {164A}

Divining what befell. And I am moved:

Both love, and both are worthy to be loved,

Ah Fate! if thou hadst cast the dies

Whence no appeal, in any other wise!

I am the soul of the grim face of things:

Mine are the Sphinx's wings;

Mine own live lives with this event!

Yet even I, its very self, lament

The execrable tyranny,

The rayless misery

Of this wild whirlpool sea of circumstance.

Mine old eyes look askance:

It is my punishment to dwell

In mine own self-created hell.

[CORA “rushes in.”

MADELINE.

What curse of God hath smitten you? I see

Exceeding horror in abiding shape

Blasting the countenance of peace and love

With some distortion. O your mouth’s awry!

CORA “(in a hoarse, horrible voice)”.

You cannot tell! I cannot tell myself.

Some vital mist of blood is shrouding sight
From all but my corruption's self. Come here
And look within mine eyes, if you can see
Remembrance that there was a God! I say
I see the whole bright universe a tomb,
With creeping spectres moving in the mist,
Some suffocating poison that was air.
O Phaedra!<<1>> lend me of thy wickedness,
Lest I go mad to contemplate myself!
I choke — I grope — I fall!
What name is this
That strikes my spirit as a broken bell
Struck by some devilish hammer? In my brain
Reverberates some word impossible.
O I am broken on the wheel of death;
My bones are ground in some infernal mill;
My blood is as the venom of a snake,
Striking each vessel with unwonted pangs,
Killing all good within me. I am — ah! {164B}

<<1. Wife of Theseus, in love with his son Hippolytus, by whom she was repulsed.>>

MADLINE.

Dear friend, dear friend, seek comfort in my arms!

Look to Our Lady of the Seven Stars!

CORA.

Can you not see? I am cut off from God!

Loathsome bull-men in their corruption linked

Whisper lewd fancies in my ear. Great fish,

Monstrous and flat, with vile malignant eyes,

And crawling beetles of gigantic strength,

Crushed, mangled, moving,<<1>> are about me. Go!

Go! do not touch the carcase of myself

That is abased, defiled, abominable.

<<1. The descriptions of demons are from a little-known Rabbinical MS. on the “Qliphoth,” or shells (larvae) of the dead. They are known also as the “cut off from God.”>>

MADELINE.

O Heart of Jesus! Thou art bleeding still!

This was Thy true disciple. Leave her not,

Sweet Jesus, in this madness. Who is this?

“Enter” ULRIC; “He carries a razor.”.

ULRIC.<<1>>

<<1. “Cf.” the speech of the Dweller of the Threshold in
Lytton’s”Zanoni.”>>

I have a lovely bride at last, by dear!

A phantom with intolerable eyes

Came close and whispered: I am Wisdom’s self,

Thy spouse from everlasting. Mortal king

Of my immortal self, I claim thy love!

So, we are wedded close. Justice demands

The punishment of this accursed one,

Originator of the cruel crimes

My mother-mistress carried to their close.

It was your vile affection, Madeline,

And your perverted hankering for me {165A}

That caused this thing abominable. Come!

I will not hurt you in the killing you!

[“He catches” MADELINE “gently by the hair, bending back her head.”

CORA “sits thunderstruck, unable to move or speak.”]

MADELINE.

Help, Cora, help! he means to murder me!

Jesus, my Saviour, save them from this deed!

Help! [ULRIC “cuts her throat.”

ULRIC.

So perish the Queen’s enemies!

Well, little lover, have I done it well?

Cora, my sweetheart, we are happy now

To think our troubles should be ended so

In perfect love and — I am feeling ill —

[CORA “recovers her mental balance.”

CORA.

A blood-grey vapour and a scorpion steam

To poison the unrighteous life of God!

[ULRIC “looks on in a completely dazed manner, uncomprehending.”

CORA “(takes razor and puts it in his hand)”.

Kill yourself.

ULRIC “(smiling, as if with some divine and ineffable joy, draws the razor across his throat, cutting in deeply. He falls bleeding.)”

My dear!

CORA.

That is my duty to my motherhood.

Let me now think of all this happening.

{“She sinks slowly into a chair trembling. She puts her hand to her throat as if choking. She bites her lip and sits easily back, looking straight before her with uncomprehending eyes.” {1565B}}

{full page below}

CURTAIN.

THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY GHOST.<<1>>

1901.

<<1. At the publisher’s suggestion, this volume was split up into”The Soul of Osiris” and “The Mother’s Tragedy.” The original design of the poet is now restored.>>

I. THE COURT OF THE PROFANE. {col. start below}

PROLOGUE.

OBSESSION.

TO CHARLES BAUDELAIRE.

“Car ce que ta bouche cruelle
Eparpilie en l’air,
Monstre assassin, c’est ma cervelle,
Mon sang et ma chair!”

THY brazen forehead, and its lustre gloom,
Great angel of Night’s legion chosen chief,
Beam on me like the hideous-fronted tomb,
Whereon are graven strange words of misbelief;
Thy brazen forehead, and its lustre gloom!

Sinister eyes, you burn into my breast,
Creating an infernal cavern of woe,
Where strange sleek leopards lash them in unrest,
And furtive serpents crawling to and fro —
Sinister eyes, you burn into my breast!

All hell, all destinies of death are written
Like litanies blaspheming in those eyes;
And where the lightning of high God hath smitten
Lie the charred brands of monstrous infamies,
Wherein all destinies of death are written. {166A}

Thou cam'st to obsess me first that Easter Eve,
When, from the contemplation of His pain,
I turned to look into my own heart's heave,
And saw the bloody nails made fast again.
Thou cam'st to obsess me first that Easter Eve!

The lustre of old jet was over thee,
And through thy body coursed the scented blood;
Thy flesh was full of amorous ecstasy:
Polished, and gloomier than some black full flood,
The lustre of old jet was over thee!

In thy great brazen blackness I am bathed;

Through all thy veins, like curses, my blood runs;
In all thy flesh my naked bones are swathed,
My womb is pregnant with mad moons and suns.
In thy great brazen blackness I am bathed!

Imminent over me thy hatred hangs;
Thy slow blood trickles on my swollen sides,
Thy curdling purple where those poison-fangs
Struck, slays desire; and only death abides.
Imminent over me thy hatred hangs! {166B}

Thy jet smooth body clung to mine awhile,
Descending like the thunder-pregnant night.
Ominous, black, thy secret cruel smile
Lured me. We lay like death; until the light
Thy jet smooth body clung to mine awhile!

Thou was a lion as an angel then,
In copper-glowing lands that gnaws the prey
He has regotten from the tribes of men.

We lay like passion all that deadly day —

Thou wast a lion as an angel then!

Great angel of the brazen brows, great lover,

Great hater of my body as my soul,

To whom I gave my life and love thrice over,

Fill me one last caress — the poison-bowl!

Great angel of the brazen brows, great lover!

FAME.

O IF these words were swords, and I had might

From some old prophet in whose tawny hair

The very breath of the Jehovah were

To smite the Syrian, and to smite, and smite,

And splash the sun's face with the blood, for spite

Of his downgoing, till I had made fair

All glories of my master, I could bear

To sink myself in the abundant night.

O if these words were lightnings, and their flame
Deluged the world, and drowned the seed of shame
In these ill waters where alone Truth's ark
May float, where only lovers may embark,
I were contented to abandon fame
And live with love for ever in the dark. {167A}

THE MOTHER AT THE SABBATH.<<1>>

<<1. The Sabbath of the Witches. The reader should consult Payne Knight, "Two Essays on the Worship of Priapus"; Eliphaz Levi, "Historie de la Magie" and "Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie"; P. Christian, "Histoire de la Magie"; and Goethe, "Faust." Also J. Glanvil, "Saducismus Triumphatus.">>

COME, child of wonder! it is Sabbath Night,
The speckled twilight and the sombre singing!
Listen and come: the owl's disastrous flight
Points out the road! Hail, O propitious sight!
See! the black gibbet and the murderer swinging!

Come, child of wonder and the innocent eyes!
Come where the toad his stealthy way is taking.
Flaps the bat's wing upon thy cheek? How wise,
How wicked are those faces! And the skies
Are muffled, and the firmament is quaking.

Spectres of cats misshapen nestle close,
And rub their phantom sides against our dresses.
Come, child of wonder! in these souls morose
Keen joys may shudder — how the daylight goes! —
Night shall betray thee to the cold caresses!

Yes; it is night the hour of subtlety
And strange looks meaning more than Hell can utter: —
Come, child of wonder! watch the woman's eye
Who lurks towards us through the stagnant sky.
Hark to the words her serpents hiss or mutter! {167B}

Close we are come; before us is the Cross
To trample and defile: the bones shall shudder

Of many a self-slain darling. From the moss
Swamp-adders greet us. How the dancers toss
The frantic limb, the unreluctant udder!

See, how their frenzy peoples all the ground!
Strange demon-shapes take up the unholy measure,
Strange beast and worm and crab: the uncouth sound
Of the unheard-of-kisses: the profound
Gasps of the maniac, the devouring pleasure!

A curse of God is on them! — ha! the curse,
The curse that locks them in obscene embraces!
See how love mocks the melancholy hearse
Dressed as an altar: is she nun or nurse,
The priestess chosen of the half-formed faces?

An abbess, child of the unsullied eyes!
Why? To blaspheme! Sweet child, the dance grows madder.
O I am faint with pleasure! Ah! be wise;
One measure more, and then — the sacrifice?

What victim? Guess — a woman or an adder?

Nay, fear not, baby! In your mother's hand

You must be safe? You trust the womb that bare you!

Who comes towards us? Why, our God, the Grand!

Our Baphomet!<<1>> Come, baby, to the band:

Our God may kiss you — yes, he will not spare you! {168A}

<<1. Supposed to be the abbreviation of the Templar's Order spelt backwards: Tem. o. h. p. ab. = Templi Omnium hominum pacis pater (Heb. Ab, father). Some assert the word to be really a synthesis of a great body of secret doctrine, discoverable by any one who knows the Qabalistic meaning of each letter.>>

Fall down, my baby; worship him with me.

There, go; I give you to his monster kisses!

Take her, my God, my God, my infamy,

My love, my master! take the fruit of me!

— Shrieks every soul and every demon hisses!

Out! out! the ghastly torches of the feast!

Let darkness hide us and the night discover
The shameless mysteries of God grown beast,
The nameless blasphemy, the slimed East —
Sin incarnated with a leprous lover!

“Hoc est enim”<<1>> — the victim! ah! my womb,
My womb has borne the victim! Now I queen it
To-night upon the damned — thy love makes room,
My goat-head godhead, for my hecatomb!
I am thy mistress, and thy slaves have seen it!

<<1. “Hoc est enim corpus meum,” the words used in the Mass at the elevation of the Host.>>

Even as thy cold devouring kisses roll
Over my corpse; I hear its death-cry thrill me!
Thine! — O my god! I render thee the whole,
My broken body and my accursed soul!
Come, come, come, come! Ah! conquer me and kill me!

THE BRIDEGROOM.

No passion stirs the cool white throat of her;

No living glory fills the deep dead eyes;

No sleep that breaks her Southern indolence;

Not all the breezes out of heaven, that stir

The sleepy wells and woodlands, bid her rise;

Nor all a godhead's amorous violence.

She is at peace; we will go hence. {168B}

Warm wealth of draperies, the brodered room,

And delicate tissues of pale silk that shine

About her bed: all kiss the dead girl's face

With shadowy reluctances that gloom

Over and under, and the cold divine

Presence of Death bedews the quiet place.

She was so gracious; she was grace.

Once, in the long insidious hours that steal

Through summer's pleasant kingdom, she would weave

Such songs, such murmurs of the dusky breeze
That passed, like silken tapestries that feel
The silkier cheeks of maidens as they cleave
Tender to patient lovers, for the ease
Of lips fulfilled of harmonies.

Such songs were hers. What song is hers to-night
When she is smitten in her bridal bed,
Because I would not trust the God that gave
Her smooth virginity to godlier might,
My glory? There she lies divine and dead
Because I would not trust the sullen wave
Of time; and chose this way — her grave.

I had not thought the poison left her so —
Smiling, enticing, exquisite. I meant
Rather that beauty to destroy, to leave
No subtle languors on that breast of snow,
No curves by God's caressing finger bent,
To bid me think of her: I would deceive

My memory — now I can but grieve.

Perhaps our happiness, despite of all,

Would have grown comelier and never tired;

Perhaps the pitiful pale face had been {169A}

Always my true wife's; let me not recall

Her first shy glance! This woman I desired,

And sealed my own for ever by this keen

Death that crowns her Death's queen.

Death's and not mine: I was a fool to kiss

Her dead lips — ay, her living lips for that!

I cannot bid her rise and live again.

I would not. Nay, I know not; for is this

My triumph or my ruin, satiate

Of death, insatiate always of pain?

What have I done? In vain, in vain!

I will not look at her; I dare not stay.

I will go down and mingle with the throng,

Find some debasing dulling sacrifice,
Some shameless harlot with thin lips grown grey
In desperate desire, and so with song
And wine fling hellward. Yes, she does not rise —

O if she opened once her eyes!

THE ALTAR OF ARTEMIS.

WHERE, in the coppice, oak and pine
With mystic yew and elm are found,
Sweeping the skies, that grow divine
With the dark wind's despairing sound,
The wind that roars from the profound,
And smites the mountain-tops, and calls
Mute spirits to black festivals,
And feasts in valleys iron-bound,
Desolate crags, and barren ground; —
There in the strong storm-shaken grove

Swings the pale censer-fire for love.

The foursquare altar, rightly hewn,
And overlaid with beaten gold,
Stands in the gloom; the stealthy tune
Of singing maidens overbold
Desires mad mysteries untold, {169B}
With strange eyes kindling, as the fleet
Implacable untiring feet
Weave mystic figures manifold
That draw down angels to behold
The moving music, and the fire
Of their intolerable desire.

For, maddening to fiercer thought,
The fiery limbs requicken, wheel
In formless furies, subtly wrought
Of swifter melodies than steel
That flashes in the fight: the peal
Of amorous laughters choking sense,

And madness kissing violence,
Rings like dead horsemen; bodies reel
Drunken with motion; spirits feel
The strange constraint of gods that dip
From Heaven to mingle lip and lip.

The gods descent to dance; the noise
Of hungry kissings, as a swoon,
Faints for excess of its own joys,
And mystic beams assail the moon,
With flames of their infernal noon;
While the smooth incense, without breath,
Spreads like some scented flower of death,
Over the grove; the lover's boon
Of sleep shall steal upon them soon,
And lovers' lips, from lips withdrawn,
Seek dimmer bosoms till the dawn.

Yet on the central altar lies
The sacrament of kneaded bread

With blood made one, the sacrifice
To those, the living, who are dead —
Strange gods and goddesses, that shed
Monstrous desires of secret things
Upon their worshippers, from wings
One lucent web of light, from head
One labyrinthine passion-fed
Palace of love, from breathing rife
With secrets of forbidden life.

But not the sunlight, nor the stars,
Nor any light but theirs alone,
Nor iron masteries of Mars,
Nor Saturn's misconceiving zone,
Nor any planet's may be shone, {170A}
Within the circle of the grove,
Where burn the sanctities of love:
Nor may the foot of man be known,
Nor evil eyes of mothers thrown
On maidens that desire the kiss

Only of maiden Artemis.

But horned and huntress from the skies,

She bends her lips upon the breeze,

And pure and perfect in her eyes,

Burn magical virginity's

Sweet intermittent sorceries.

When the slow wind from her sweet word

In all their conched ears is heard.

And like the slumber of the seas,

There murmur through the holy trees

The kisses of the goddess keen,

And sighs and laughters caught between.

For, swooning at the fervid lips

Of Artemis, the maiden kisses

Sob, and the languid body slips

Down to enamelled wildernesses.

Fallen and loose the shaken tresses;

Fallen the sandal and girdling gold,

Fallen the music manifold
Of moving limbs and strange caresses,
And deadly passion that possesses
The magic ecstasy of these
Mad maidens, tender as blue seas.

Night spreads her yearning pinions;
The baffled day sinks blind to sleep;
The evening breeze outswoons the sun's
Dead kisses to the swooning deep.
Upsoars the moon; the flashing steep
Of heaven is fragrant for her feet;
The perfume of the grove is sweet
As slumbering women furtive creep
To bosoms where small kisses weep,
And find in fervent dreams the kiss
Most memoried of Artemis.

Impenetrable pleasure dies
Beneath the madness of new dreams;

The slow sweet breath is turned to sighs
More musical than many streams
Under the moving silver beams, {170}
Fretted with stars, thrice woven across.
White limbs in amorous slumber toss
Like sleeping foam, whose silver gleams
On motionless dark seas; it seems
As if some gentle spirit stirred
Their lazy brows with some swift word.

So, in the secret of the shrine,
Night keeps them nestled; so the gloom
Laps them in waves as smooth as wine,
As glowing as the fiery womb
Of some young tigress, dark as doom,
And swift as sunrise. Love's content
Builds its own mystic monument,
And carves above its vaulted tomb
The Phoenix on her fiery plume,
To their own souls to testify

Their kisses' immortality.

THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE.

O CRIMSON cheeks of love's fierce fever!

O amber skin, electric to the kiss!

O eyes of sin! O bosom of my bliss!

Sorrow, the web, is spun of Love the weaver.

Twelve moons have circled in their seasons;

The earth has swept, exultant, round the sun;

Our love has slept, and, sleeping, made us one.

The thirteenth moon, be sure, the time of treasons!

Another spirit waves its pinions.

Love vanishes: we hate each other's sight.

In sullen seas sinks our sun-flaming light,

Darkness is master of the dream-dominions.

Lo! in thy womb a child! How rotten

Seems love to me who love it as my soul!

The love of thee hath broken its control,

The misconceived become the misbegotten. {171A}

In thee the love of me is broken.

Fear, hatred, pain, discomfort mock thy days;

Thou canst disdain; these solitary bays

Twine with decaying myrtles for a token.

Dislike, disgust (you say repulsers)

Link me to thee despite — because of — this

Skeleton key to charnel-house. My kiss

Is the dog's kiss to Lazarus his ulcers!

Mock me, ye clinging lovers, at your peril!

God turns to dust the blossom of your youth.

The fruit of lust is poisonous with — truth!

Its immortality is — to be sterile!

This lie of Love hath no abiding:

“Two loves are ended; one, the infant band,
Rises more splendid.” Spin the rope of sand!
Two loves are one; but O to their dividing!

Fertility — distaste’s adoption!
Her body’s growth — desire’s mortality!
I look and loathe. Behold how lovers die,
And immortality puts on corruption!

ASMODEL.<<1>>

<<1. One of the “Intelligences” of the Planet Venus.>>

CALL down the star whose tender eyes
Were on thy bosom at thy birth!
Call, one long passionate note that sighs!
Call, till its beauty bend to earth,
Meet thee and lift thee and devise
Strange loves within the gleaming girth,
And kisses underneath the star

Where on her brows its seven rays are.

Call her, the maiden of thy sleep,

And fashion into human shape

The whirling fountains fiery and deep,

The incense-columns that bedrape {171B}

Her glimmering limbs, when shadows creep

Among blue tresses that escape

The golden torque that binds her hair,

Whose swarthy splendours drench the air.

She comes! she comes! The spirit glances

In quick delight to hold her kiss;

The fuming air shimmers and dances;

The moonlight's trembling ecstasies

Swoon; and her soul, as my soul, trances,

Knowing no longer aught that is;

Only united, moving, mixed,

A music infinitely fixed.

Music that throbs, and soars, and burns,
And breaks the possible, to dwell
One moving monotone, nor turns,
Making hell heaven, and heaven hell,
The steady impossible song that yearns
And brooks no mortal in its swell —
This monotone immortal lips
Make in our infinite eclipse!

Formless, above all shape and shade;
Lampless, beyond all light and flame;
Timeless, above all age and grade;
Moveless, beyond the mighty name;
A mystic mortal and a maid,
Filled with all things to fill the same,
To overflow the shores of God,
Mingling our proper period.

The agony is passed: behold
How shape and light are born again;

How emerald and starry gold
Burn in the midnight; how the pain
Of our incredible marriage-fold
And bed of birthless travail wane;
And how our molten limbs divide,
And self and self again abide.

The agony of extreme joy,
And horror of the infinite blind
Passions that sear us and destroy,
Rebuilding for the deathless mind {172}
A deathless body, whose alloy
Is gold and fire, whose passions find
The tears of their caress a dew,
Fiery, to make creation new.

This agony and bloody sweat,
This scarring torture of desire,
Refine us, madden us, and set
The feast of unbegotten fire

Before our mouths, that mingle yet
In this; the mighty-moulded lyre
Of many stars still strikes above
Chords of the mastery of love.

This subtle fire, this secret flame,
Flashes between us as she goes
Beyond the night, beyond the Name,
Back to her unsubstantial snows;
Cold, glittering, intense, the same
Now, yesterday, for aye! she glows
No woman of my mystic bed;
A star, far off, forgotten, dead.

Only to me looks out for ever
From her cold eyes a fire like death;
Only to me her breasts can never
Lose the red brand that quickeneth;
Only to me her eyelids sever
And lips respire her equal breath;

Still in the unknown star I see

The very god that is of me.

The day's pale countenance is lifted,

The rude sun's forehead he uncovers;

No soft delicious clouds have drifted,

No wing of midnight's bird that hovers;

Yet still the hard blind blue is rifted,

And still my star and I as lovers

Year to each other through the sky

With eyes half closed in ecstasy.

Night, Night, O mother Night, descend!

O daughter of the sleeping sea!

O dusk, O sister-spirit, lend

Thy wings, thy shadows, unto me! {172B}

O mother, mother, mother, bend

And shroud the world in mystery

That secrets of our bed forbidden

Cover their faces, and be hidden!

O steadfast, O mysterious bride!

O woman, O divine and dead!

O wings immeasurably wide!

O star, O sister of my bed!

O living lover, at my side

Clinging, the spring, the fountain-head

Of musical slow waters, white

With thousand-folded rays of light!

Come! Once again I call, I call,

I call, O perfect soul, to thee,

With chants, and murmurs mystical,

And whispers wiser than the sea:

O lover, come to me! The pall

Of night is woven: fair and free,

Draw to my kisses; let thy breath

Mingle for love the wine of death!

MADONNA OF THE GOLDEN EYES.

NIGHT brings madness; moonlight dips her throat to madden us; Love's swift purpose darts, the flash of a striking adder.

Love that kills and kisses dwells above to sadden us; Dawn brings reason back and the violet eyes grows sadder.

O Madonna of the Golden Eyes!

Swooned the deep sunlight above the summer stream;

Droned the sleepy dragon-fly by the water spring;

Stood we in the noontide in a misty dream,

Fearful of our voices, of some sudden thing.

O Madonna of the Golden Eyes! {173A}

Dared we whisper? Dared we lift our eyes to see there In their desperate depth some mutual flame of treason?

Dared we move apart? So glad were we to be there,

Nothing in the world might change the constant season.

O Madonna of the Golden Eyes!

Did a breath of wind disturb the lazy day?

Did a soul of fear flit phantom-wise across?

Suddenly we clasped and clave as spirit unto clay;

Suddenly love swooped to us as swoops the albatross.

O Madonna of the Golden Eyes!

Did thy husband's venom breathe on the trembling scale?

Did that voice corrupting cry across the midnight air?

What decided? Gabriel may spin the foolish tale.

What decided? We were lovers — who should care?

O Madonna of the Golden Eyes!

How we clave together! How we strained caresses!

How the swooning limbs sank fainting on the sword!

For the fiery dart raged fiercer; in excesses

Long restrained, it cried, "Behold! I am the Lord!"

O Madonna of the Golden Eyes!

Yes, we sat with modest eyes and murmuring lips

Downcast at the table, while the husband drank his wine.

So thy sly, slow hand stretched furtively; there slips Deadly in his throat
the poison draught divine!

O Madonna of the Golden Eyes! {173B}

Then we left his carcase with the stealthy tread

Reverent, in presence of the silent place;

Then you burned, afire, caught up the ghastly head,

Looked like Hell right into it, and sat upon the face!

O Madonna of the Golden Eyes!

“Come with me,” you whispered, “come, and let the moon Lend her light
to madden us through the hours of pleasure; Let the dayspring pass and
brighten into noon!

Yet no limit find our love, nor passion find a measure!”

O Madonna of the Golden Eyes!

Dawn brought reason back, and the violet eyes are sadder: —

O they were golden once, and I call them golden still!

Dawn has brought remorse, the sting of a foul swamp-adder —

I hate you! beast of Hell! I have snapped Love’s manacle!

O Murderess of the Golden Eyes!

O and you fix them on me! your lips curse now — ‘tis fitter!

Snarl on! eat out your heart with the poison that is its blood.

Speak! and her lips move now with blasphemies cruel and bitter.

Slow the words creep forth as a sleepy and deadly flood.

They glitter, those Satanic eyes!

“Beast! I gave you my soul and my body to all your lust!

Beast! I am damned in Hell for the kisses we sucked from death!

Now remorse is yours, and love is fallen in dust —

I shall seek Him again for its sacramental breath!

Yes, fear the gold that glitters from these eyes!” {174A}

She took a dagger, and I could not stir.

She pierced my silent fascinated breast.

She held me with the deadly look of her.

I cried to Mary in the House of Rest;

“O Madonna of the Virgin eyes!”

*

I pierced him to the very soul: I took
His whole life's love to me before he died;
Mad kisses mingled that enduring look
Of death-caught passion: in his death he cried,
“O Madonna of the Golden Eyes!”

LOVE AT PEACE.

THE valleys, that are splendid
With sun ere day is ended
And love-lutes take to tune,
See joyless and unfriended
The perfect bowstring bended,
Whose bow is called the moon.
They see the waters slacken
And all the sky's blue blacken,
While in the yellow bracken
Love lies in death or swoon.

The stars arise and brighten;

The summer lightnings lighten,

Faint and as midnight mute.

Afar the snowfields tighten

The iron bands that frighten

No fairy's tender foot.

Across the stiller river

Stray flowers of ice may shiver,

Before the day deliver

The murmur of its lute.

The sleep of bird and flower

Proclaims that Heaven has power

To guard its gentlest child.

The lover knows the hour,

And goes with dew for dower

To wed in woodland wild.

The silvern grasses shake,

And through the startled brake

Glides the awakened snake,

Untamable and mild. {174B}

The song of stars; the wail
Of women wild and pale,
Forlorn and not forsaken;
The tremulous nightingale;
The waters wan that fail
By frost-love overtaken,
Make sacred all the valley;
And softly, musically,
The breezes lull and rally;
The pine stirs and is shaken.

Beneath whose sombre shade
I hold a lazy maid
In chaste arms and too tender.
Lo! she is fair! God said;
And saw through the deep glade
How sweet she was and slender.
But I — could I behold her
Curved shapeliness of shoulder?

I, whose strong arms enfold her
Immaculate surrender.

Pure as the dawns that quicken
On snow-topped mountains stricken
By first gray light that grows,
By beams that gather, thicken,
A web of fairy ticken<<1>>

To make a fairy rose:
Pure as the seas that lave
With phosphorescent wave
The sombre architrave
Of Castle No-man-knows.

<<1. A closely woven fabric.>>

Pure as the dreams, undreamt
(That men have in contempt,
That wise men yearn to see),
Of angel forms exempt

From mockeries that tempt
Who fly about the lea;
Proclaiming things unheard.
Unknown to brightest bird,
Things, whose unspoken word
Is utmost secrecy. {175A}

So pure, so pale we lie,
Like angels eye to eye,
Like lovers lip to lip.
So, the elect knight, I
Keep vigil to the sky,
While the dumb moments slip.
So she, my bride, my queen,
So virginal, so keen,
Swoons, while the moon-rays lean
To fan their silver ship.

No sleep, but precious kisses
In those pale wildernesses,

Mark the dead hours of night,
No sleep so sweet as this is,
Whose pulse of purple blisses
Beats calm and cool and light.
No life so fair with roses,
No day so swift to close is;
No cushion so reposes
Fair love so sweet and slight.

MORS JANUA AMORIS.

“None but the dead can know the worth of Love.” — KELLY.

IN the night my passion fancies
That an incense vapour whirls,
That a cloud of perfume trances
With its dreamy vapour-curls
All my soul, with whom their dances
The one girl of mortal girls.
The one girl whose wanton glances

Soften into living pearls
Comes, a fatal, fleeting vision,
Turns my kisses to derision,
Smiles upon my breast, and sighs,
Flits, and laughs, and fades, and dies.

By the potent starry speeches;
By the spells of mystic kings;
By the magic passion teaches;
By the strange and sacred things {175B}
By whose power the master reaches
To the stubborn fiery springs;
By the mystery of the beaches
Where the siren Sibyl sings;
I will hold her, live and bleeding;
Clasp her to me, pale and pleading;
Hold her in a human shape;
Hold her safe without escape!

So I put my spells about her

As she flew into my dreams;
So I drew her to the outer
Land of unforgetful streams;
So I laid her (who should doubt her?)
Where enamelled verdure gleams,
Drew her spirit from without her!
In her eyelids stellar beams
Glow renascent, now I hold her
Breast to breast, and shining shoulder
Laid to shoulder, in the bliss
Of the uncreated kiss.

Lips to lips beget for daughters
Little kisses of the breeze;
Limbs entwined with limbs, the waters
Of incredible blue seas;
Eyes that understand, the slaughters
Of a thousand ecstasies
Re-embodied, as they wrought us
Garlands of strange sorceries;

New desires and mystic passion
Infinite, of starry fashion;
The mysterious desire
Of the subtle formless fire.

Vainly may the Tyanaean<<1>>
Throw his misconceiving eye
To bewitch our empyrean
Splendours of the under sky!
If the loud infernal paeon
Be our marriage-melody,
We are careless, we Achaean
Moulders of our destiny. {176A}
Hell, it may be, for his playing,
Renders Orpheus the decaying
Love — in Hell, if Hell there be,
I would seek Eurydice!

<<1. Apollonius of Tyana, the sage whose glance dissolved the illusion
which Lamia had cast about herself. See Keats's poem.>>

If she be the demon sister
Of my brain's mysterious womb;
If she brand my soul and blister
Me with kisses of the tomb;
If she drag me where the bistro
Vaults of Hell gape wide in gloom;
Little matter! I have kissed her!
Little matter! as a loom
She has woven love around me,
As with burning silver bound me,
Held me to her scented skin
For an age of deadly sin!

So I fasten to me tighter
Fetters on her limbs that fret;
So my kisses kindle brighter,
Fiercer, flames of Hell, and set
Single, silent, as a mitre
Blasphemous, a crown of jet

On our foreheads, paler, whiter
Than the snowiest violet.
So I forge the chains of fire
Round our single-souled desire.
Heaven and Hell we reck not of,
Being infinite in love.

Come, my demon-spouse, to fashion
The fantastic marriage-bed!
Let the starry billows splash on
Both our bodies, let them shed
Dewfall, as the streams Thalassian
On Selene's fallen head!
Let us mingle magic passion,
Interpenetrating, dead,
Deathless, O my dead sweet maiden!
Lifeless, in the secret Aidenn!<<1>>
Let our bodies meet and mix
On the spirit's crucifix! {176B}

<<1. This word is taken direct from Poe's "Raven" in the sense in which it is used by him.>>

THE MAY QUEEN.<<1>>

(OLD STYLE)

<<1. See Frazer, "The Golden Bough," for proof of the universality of the ritual described. The parallelism is accidental, Crowley having read no sociology at this time.>>

IT is summer and sun on the sea,

The twilight is drawn to the world:

We linger and laugh on the lea,

The light of my spirit with me,

Sharp limbs in close agony curled.

The noise of the music of sleep,

The breath of the wings of the night,

The song of the magical deep,

The sighs of the spirits that weep,

Make murmur to tune our delight.

Slow feet are our measures that move;
Swift songs are more soft than the breeze;
Our mouths are made mute for our love;
Our eyes are made soft as the dove;
We mingle and move as the seas.

The light of the passionate dawn
That kissed us, and would not awaken,
Grew golden and bold on the lawn;
The rays of the sun are withdrawn
At last, and the blossoms are shaken.

Oh, fragrant the breeze is that stirs
The grasses around us that lean!
Oh, sweet is the whisper that purrs
From those wonderful lips that are hers,
From the passionate lips of a queen.

A queen is my lover, I say,
With a crown of the lilies of light —
For a maiden they crowned her in May,
For the Queen of the Daughters of Day
That are flowers of the forest of Night.

They crowned her with lilies and blue,
They crowned her with yellow and roses;
They gave her a sceptre of rue,
And a girdle of laurel and yew,
And a basket of pansies in posies. {177A}

They led her with songs by the stream;
They brought her with tears to the river;
They danced as the maze of a dream;
They kissed her to roses and cream,
And they cried, “Let the queen live for ever!”

They took her, with all of the flowers
They had girded her with for God’s daughter;

They cast her from amorous bowers
To the river, the horrible powers
Of the Beast that lurks down by the Water!

My was was more swift than a bow
That flings out its barb to the night:
My sword struck the infinite blow
That smote him, and blackened the flow
Of the amorous river of light.

I plunged in the stream, and I drew
My queen from the clasp of the water;
I crowned her with roses and blue,
With yellow and lilies anew;
I called her my love and God's daughter!

I gave her a sceptre of may;
I gave her a girdle of green;
I drew her to music and day;
I led her the beautiful way

To the land where the Winds lie between.

So still lingers sun upon sea;

Still twilight draws down to the world;

The light of my spirit is she;

The soul of her love is in me;

Lithe kisses with music are curled.

Like light on the meadows we dwell;

Like twilight clings heart unto heart;

Like midnight the depth of the spell

Our love weaves, and stronger than hell

The guards of our palace of art.

We are one as the dew that is drawn

By the sun from the sea: we are curled

In curves of delight an of dawn,

On the lone, the immaculate lawn,

Beyond the wild way of the world. {177B}

SIDONIA THE SORCERESS.<<1>>

<<1. For her history see Wilhelm Meinhold.>>

SIDONIA the Sorceress! I revel in her amber skin,

Dream in her eyes and die in her caress.

She is for me the avatar of sin,

Sidonia the Sorceress.

The one unpardonable wickedness,

Strange serpent-blasphemies, are curled within

The heart of her Hell gives me to possess.

Her hair is fastened with a dagger thin;

A dead man's heart is woven with each tress.

I murdered Christ before my lips could win

Sidonia the Sorceress.

THE GROWTH OF GOD.

(AS DEVELOPED ON A MOONLESS NIGHT IN THE TROPICS.)

<<1>>

<<1. When Crowley was benighted on the way from Iguala to Mexico City,
whither he was riding unattended.>>

EVEN as beasts, where the sepulchral ocean
Sobs, and their fins and feet keep Runic pace,
Treading in water mysteries of motion,
Witch-dances: where the ghastly carapace
Of the blind sky hangs on the monstrous verge:
Even as serpents, wallowing in the slime;
So my thoughts raise misshapen heads, and urge
Horrible visions of decaying Time.

For in the fiery dusk arise distorted
Grey shapes in moonless phosphorus glow of death;
The keen light of the eyes thrust back and thwarted,
The quick scent stabbed by the miasma breath. {178A}
The day is over, when the lizard darted,
A flash of green, the emerald outclassed;

Night is collapsed upon the vale: departed

All but the Close, suggestive of the Vast.

The heavy tropic scent-inspiring gloom

Clothes the wide air, the circumambient aether.

The earth grins open, as it were a tomb,

And struggling earthquakes gnash their teeth beneath her.

The night is monstrous: in the flickering fire

Strange faces gibber as the brands burn low;

Old shapes of hate, young phantoms of desire

More hateful yet, shatter and change and grow.

There is a sense of terror in the air,

And dreadful stories catch my breath and bind me,

Soft noises as of breathing: unaware

What devils or what ghosts may lurk behind me!

Even my horse is troubled: vain it is

Invoking memory for sweet sound of youth;

The song, the day, the cup, the shot, the kiss!

This night begets illusion — ay! the truth.

I know the deep emotion of that birth,
When chaos rolled in terror and in thunder;
The abortion of the infancy of earth;
The monsters moving in a world of wonder;
The Shapeless, racked with agony, that grew
Into these phantom forms that change and shatter;
The falling of the first toad-spotted dew;
The first lewd heaving ecstasy of matter.

I see all Nature claw and tear and bite,
All hateful love and hideous: and the brood
Misshapen, misbegotten out of spite;
Lust after death; love in decrepitude. {178B}
Thus, till the monster-birth of serpent-man
Linked in corruption with the serpent-woman,
Slavering in lust and pain — creation's ban.
The horrible beginning of the human.

The savage monkey leaping on his mate;
The upright posture for sure murder taken;
The gibberings modified to spit out hate:
Struggle to manhood — surely God-forsaken.
The bestial cause of Morals — fear and hate.
At last the anguish-vomit of despair,
The growth of reason — and its pangs abate
No whit: the knife replaces the arm bare.

Fear grows, and torment; and distracted pain
Must from sheer agony some respite find;
When some half-maddened miserable brain
Projects a God in his detesting mind.
A God who made him — to the core all evil,
In his own image — and a God of Terror;
A vast foul nightmare, and impending devil;
Compact of darkness, infamy, and error.

Some bestial woman, beaten by her mates,
In utter fear broke down the bar of reason;

Shrieked, crawled to die; delirium abates
By some good chance her terror in its season.
Her ravings picture the cessation of
Such life as she had known: her mind conceives
A God of Mercy, Happiness, and Love;
Reverses life and fact: and so believes.

So man grew up; and so religion grew.
Now in the aeons shall not truth dis sever
The man and maker, smite the old lie through,
Cast God to black oblivion for ever?
Picture no longer in fallacious thought
A doer for each deed! the real lurks
Nowhere thus hidden: there is truly nought
Substantial in these unsubstantial works. {179A}

But work thou ever! Thou who art or art not,
Work that the fever of thy life abate;
Work! though for weary ages thou depart not,
At last abideth the sequestered state.

Sure is the search! O seeker, as the bird,
Homing through distant skies toward its rest,
Shall surely find — and thou shalt speak the word
At last that shall dissolve thee into rest.

TO RICHARD WAGNER.

O MASTER of the ring of love, O lord
Of all desires, and king of all the stars,
O strong magician, who with locks and bars
Dost seal that kingdom silent and abhorred
That stretches out and binds with iron cord
The hopes and lives of men, and makes and mars!
O thou thrice noble for the deadly scars
That answered vainly thy victorious sword!

Wagner! creator of a world of light
As beautiful as God's, bend down to me.
And whisper me the secrets of thy heart,
That I may follow and dispel the night,

And fight life through, a comrade unto thee,
Under Love's banner with the sword of Art!

THE TWO EMOTIONS.

HOW barren is the Valley of Delight!

Swift the gaunt hounds that nose the warm close trail Of all my love's
content; in vain I veil

My secret of remorse; from their keen sight

And scent my poor deception takes to flight.

I borrow perfume from young loves waxed pale;

I borrow music from the nightingale.

In vain: she knows me, and I hate her quite. {179B}

Not altogether: in my patchwork brain

Some rag of passion tears its woof asunder.

Strange, that its own insatiable pain

Should find an opiate in her eyes of wonder!

Yes, though I hate her well enough to kill,

I know that then my soul would love her still.

THE SONNET.

I.

THE solemn hour, and the magnetic swoon

Of midnight in a poet's lonely hall!

Grave spirits answer (angels if he call)

The invocation of his lofty tune.

Thus in his measure nature craves the boon

To be reflected; and his rhymes appal

Or charm mankind as tides that flow or fall,

Waxes or wanes the tempestival moon.

Her course is measured in the sonnet's tether.

Waxes the eightfold ecstasy; exceeds

The minor sestet, where some passion bleeds

Or truth discovers: or eclipse may end,

Proof against thought; but if man comprehend

The stars in all their stations sing together.

II.

What power or fascination can there lie
In this fair garden of the straight-kept rows,
The sonnet? Surely some archangel knows
Why, having written in mere ecstasy
One sonnet-thought, the metre cannot die
But urges, but compels me to compose
More and still more,<<1>> and still my spirit goes
Striving up glittering steepes of symphony. {180A}

There is an angel who is guardian.
Surely her wings are rosy, and her feet
Black as the wind of frost; but oh! her face!
Whoso may know it is no more a man,
But walks with God, and sees the Lady sweet
Whose body was the vehicle of grace.

<<1. This is a singular psychological fact.>>

WEDLOCK.

A SONNET.

I SAW the Russian peasants<<1>> build a ring
Of glowing embers of the bubbling pine.
In the green heart o' the salamander line
They scatter roses. Now the youngsters spring
Within, who with hard-shut eyes hope to bring
From out the fiery circle one divine
Blossom of rose, as from a poisonous mine
Gold comes to gird the palace of a king.

Envious I sprang — and found the last rose gone.
So in the fiery ring of wedlock, blind,
Mad, one may leap, no rose perhaps to find
(Or, if no rose, good fortune finds no thorn),
But — mark the difference — palpable and plain:
Rose or no rose, one leaps not out again.

<<1. In my mind's eye, Horatio. The story is a pretty fiction.>>