

Aleister Crowley

Collected Works, Volume III, Part 2



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File 2 of 3.

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

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

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1906

A DRAMATIC VERSION<<1>> OF

R. L. STEVENSON’S STORY

THE SIRE DE MALETROIT’S DOOR

(“Written in collaboration with” GERALD KELLY) {columns resume}

<<1. This play has been publicly performed within the United Kingdom. It is entered at Stationers' Hall. All rights reserved.>>

SCENE I.

“The” SIRE DE MALETROIT “sitting before the fire. A chime of bells

eleven.”

ALAIN.

‘Leven ‘o the clock! Plague take these lovers! What? do they make a Maletroit wait? [“Picks up letter from table — reads”] “Mademoiselle” — um, um, — “my words might show that love which I cannot declare in writing” — very likely — “nor raise a blush on that alabaster brow” — um! um! ah! — “embrace of the eyes” — is the fellow an octopus? — “Tho’ you do not respond to my letters” — ah! — “yet I would not have you leave me” — I daresay not — “Pity me, moonlike queen” — moonlike? um! — “Leave the postern door ajar” — well, it is ajar — “that I may speak with your beauty on the stairs” — um — can’t meet him there. Cold! cold! [“Sniffs.”] A pretty letter. [“Throws it aside.”] Andrew! some more logs. [“Enter” ANDREW.] I expect company. [“Chuckles long.”] The old Burgundy, Andrew. [“Exit” ANDREW.] I propose to squeeze Duke Charles’ grapes, though fate and my age forbid me a smack at his forces — “neusinas Medos equitare inultos” — but our good King is no Augustus.

[“Strikes gong. Enter” PRIEST “quietly and quickly.” ALAN “does not turn round.”

Good evening, father. All is ready?

PRIEST.

All, my lord. {68A}

ALAIN.

It is near the time. She has remained in her room?

PRIEST.

All the day.

ALAIN.

Has she attempted no message? eh?

PRIEST.

Sir, she —

ALAIN.

[“Interrupts.”] She has not succeeded, at least?

PRIEST.

I am still Father Jerome.

[“Pause.”

ALAIN.

She is ready dressed as I ordered? And now praying in the Chapel?

[ALAN “gets up and can now see” PRIEST.

PRIEST.

As you ordered, my lord.

ALAIN.

Content?

[PRIEST “puts out his hands with the gesture ‘hardly.’”

PRIEST.

Young maids are wilful, my lord. {68B}

ALAIN.

Let her be resigned to the will of Heaven.

[“The” PRIEST “smiles subtly.” ALAIN “perceives it.”] And “my” will.

[“Strikes gong twice.”]

You may retire, father.

[PRIEST “bows and retires. Enter” CAPTAIN “and stands at salute.”]

Ah, Captain, you have your fifty men in readiness?

CAPTAIN.

Yes, my lord. [“Salutes.”]

ALAIN.

Let them be drawn up behind yon door. When I clap my hands you will raise the arras, but let no man move. And let ‘em be silent — the man I hear I hang. [CAPTAIN “salutes.”] You may go. [CAPTAIN “salutes, and exit.”] ALAIN “reaches to a tome on the table.”] Now, Flaccus, let us spend this night together as we have spent so many. The crisis of my life — my brother’s trust, God rest his soul! [“crosses himself and mutters silently in prayer”] — shall not find Alain de Maletroit unready or disturbed.

SCENE CLOSES

SCENE II.<<1>>

<<1. The play may be presented in a single scene, by omitting this Scene, and joining Scenes I. and III. by the noise of a banging door.>>

“A narrow dirty street in Paris, fifteenth century. Night pitch black.

Passers-by with lanterns.”

FIRST PASSER-BY “stumbles into” SECOND.

SECOND PASSER-BY.

Zounds, man! have a care with thy goings.

FIRST PASSER-BY.

Stand, or I strike. Who but a thief goes lanternless o’ nights? {69A}

SECOND PASSER-BY.

The saints be praised, 'tis my good gossip Peter Halse. What, knowest thou not thy old friend? [FIRST PASSER-BY "lifts his lantern to the other's face."

FIRST PASSER-BY.

Martin Cloche, by the Mass!

SECOND PASSER-BY.

Ay, Martin Cloche! And his lantern hath gone out, and his heart faileth him somewhat. But these be troublous times.

["Enter" FLORIMOND "and waits."

FIRST PASSER-BY.

The town is full of these drunken English men-at-arms.

SECOND PASSER-BY.

The English be bad, but God save us from the Burgundians! Their own cousin-germans be we, and for that they are but bitterer.

FLORIMOND.

Devil take them! What, will they stand here gossiping all night?

FIRST PASSER-BY.

‘Tis a cold night: I would be home.

SECOND PASSER-BY.

Light me, prithee, to my door: it lieth as thou knowest, but a stone’s-throw from St. Yniold’s.

FIRST PASSER-BY.

Well, let us be going.

[“Exeunt.”

FLORIMOND.

Now for the moment I have longed for this three months! Blanche! Blanche! I shall see thee, touch thee — who knows what {69B} maiden love may work on maiden modesty? Ah, fall deeper, ye blessed shadows! Ye are light enough for Florimond de Champdivers to move toward his bliss!

[“Noise of clashing armour, ribald laughter, &c. Enter the Watch,”

R., “drunk.”

A WATCHMAN.

Ho, boys! a gay night for thieves.

FLORIMOND.

Curse the sots!

[“Crouches back in the shadow.”

SECOND WATCHMAN.

(“Sings”)

The soldier’s life is short and merry,

His mistress’ lips are ripe as a cherry,

Then drink, drink!

The guns roar out and the swords flash clean,

And the soldier sleepeth under the green,

Oh, the soldier’s life for me!

But a scurvy night it is, comrades, when the streets are slippery, and the wine cold in a man’s belly, and never a little white rabbit of a woman scuttling along in the dark.

THIRD WATCHMAN.

What ho! my lads! Here's a scurvy Frenchman skulking along. What, will you make your lass attend you, master?

FLORIMOND.

Loose me, knave, I am for England, and a Captain in your army, or rather that of Burgundy — if you will be precise.

FIRST WATCHMAN.

What do you here, without a lantern, scaring honest folk?

FLORIMOND.

Honesty is no word for to-night. Will you the loyal man's word? {70A}

SECOND WATCHMAN.

That's it, my gallant cock! The word!

FLORIMOND.

Burgundy and freedom.

THIRD WATCHMAN.

So! Give a crown to the poor watchmen then to drink your Excellency's health, and luck to your honour's love. Ah! we're gay when we're young — I've a sweetheart myself.

FLORIMOND.

And now be off!

[“Gives money. Exeunt.”]

Cold! — the devil! Ah! but to-night — at last I shall touch my Blanche. May Blanche warm me well with a hearty kiss! The little white cat! Three months! And I've not so much as exchanged a word. There must be an end to all that. Faith, but she makes me think of Biondetta, that I knew in the Italian campaign. O my Blanche! One moment, and I am in thine arms! Blanche! Sweet, sweet Blanche. O little white-faced rose of France. A soldier's heart is thine — a soldier's arms shall be round thee in a moment! 'Tis a fine thing this love — the strong true abiding love of a brave man. How like little Florise her voice is when she sings!

[“By this fool's talk he loses his opportunity. Enter” DENYS.]

DENYS.

Cold is my word for it. [“Shudders.”] Where the devil have I got to now? Had I but vowed St. Denys a candle and put the same in my pocket, I would not now be in the dark. Here was a lane, and the folk had called it Wolf's Throat, and now here's a door and devil a name to it. Fool I was to stay winebibbing with Cousin Henri, and triple knave he to send me forth without a boy and a light. True! he was under the table — and seven times fool was I not to join him there. {70B}

FLORIMOND.

O this miserable sot!

["Crouches again," DENYS "sees him."

DENYS.

O thank God! Here's another poor devil, a gentleman by his clothes, and a thief by his manner, and I daresay a good fellow. ["Goes to" FLORIMOND "and slaps him on the back."] Sir, do you know this cursed Paris? My inn, which I have lost, is the Sign of the Green Grass — I should say the Field o' Spring — and 'tis hard by the Church of St. Anselm, that is hard by the river, and the hardest of all is that neither church, inn, nor river can I find this devil of a night.

["Catches" FLORIMOND "and shakes him by the shoulder."

FLORIMOND.

Know you are speaking to a captain in the army of Duke Charles!
Moderate thy drunkenness, man, or I will call the watch.

DENYS.

Know me for a captain in the army of His Majesty King Charles of France, whom God preserve!

FLORIMOND.

What, traitor?

DENYS.

Traitor in thy teeth! I have a safe-conduct from your pinchbeck duke. Oh, the devil! 'twill serve me but ill these Paris nights — a fool am I! Well, sir, I ask your pardon, and throw myself on your kindness.

FLORIMOND.

Ha! St. Gris! Then I have you, my fine cock. Watch, ho! A traitor! I will pay you your insolence.

["Calls." {71A}

DENYS.

Oh then, to shut your mouth. ["Draws."

[FLORIMOND "tries to draw, gets the flat of" DENYS' "sword on his shoulder, and runs away. Exit" DENYS "pursuing and" FLORIMOND "calling

out. Distant shouts. Re-enter" DENYS, "L."

DENYS.

Oh, my inn! my inn! What a fool am I! Where can I hide? The air is full of noises. I would change my safe-conduct for a pair of wings. I must steal

back the way I came, and St. Denys lend me prudence the next fool I meet.
What a night! O my God!

“Enter” WATCH, “r., running and shouting.”

Well, for France, then! My back to the door, and my sword to the foeman’s breast! [“Puts his back to the door.”] My father’s son could never have died otherwise! [“Enter” WATCH.] St. Denys for Beaulieu! The door’s open. May the luck turn yet!

[“Slides backwards gently through door.” WATCH “cross stage stumbling,

cursing, and crying, “A traitor, a traitor!””

[“Stage being clear for a little, suddenly the door bangs violently.”

DENYS.

[“Inside.”] What the devil was that? The door!

“Re-enter” FLORIMOND, “R.”

FLORIMOND.

At last! [“Goes to door and pushes it.”] The devil take all women! After all, the door is shut. Laugh, thou light little fool, laugh now. One day thou shalt moan upon the stones, and Florimond de Champdivers shall shut his door to thee. Damn and damn and damn! What served love shall serve hate: ‘tis a poor game that only works one way. [“Curtain.” {71B}

SCENE III.

“The” SIRE DE MALETROIT “as in Scene I. He is standing alert and intent,

listening. From below are growls and muttered curses; then a sharp sound like the snapping of a sword.”

ALAIN.

“Amat janua limen!” [“Closes book.”] Now, my friend, whoever you are — for your charming letter does not mention your honourable name — we shall very soon have the pleasure of seeing you. “Embrace of the eyes,” eh? You distrust my door, already, eh? Why do you knock so? [“Great noise below.”] No honester craftsman ever built a door — you waste time! Why so reluctant to move from the cold night to the “blush of an alabaster brow,” and the rest of your accursed troubabour’s jargon, to a bliss you little expect. “Gratia cum Nmphis geminisque sororibus audet ducere nuda choros.” But your “choros,” Blanche, is but your old uncle, who perhaps loves you better than you think just now. [“A sound of suppressed sobbing from the Chapel.”] Ah! you may weep if you will — but what choice have you left me? And Lord! Lord! what could a loving heart ask more? [“Stumbling on steps, and a muttering, “Perdition catch the fool who invented these circular stairs.] Ha! He seems a little uncertain of the stair. Hush!

[“Enter” DENYS, “who remains behind arras.” ALAIN “sits.”

DENYS.

[“Stumbles and swears.”] O these stairs! They go round and round, or “seem” to go round — faith! I have seen an entire castle do as much — and

lead nowhere. [“Pushes against arras and is seen by audience. He hastily withdraws.”] Oh, they do though! Shall I knock? Shall I go in? Shall I stay here till morning? There are three {72A} fools there, and I have a poor choice: to knock is polite, to wait is polite, and to introduce my charming self is the politest of all. [“Peeps in.”] Can’t see anybody! It’s clearly a gentleman’s house — and a fool he is to leave his postern door ajar. Whoever he is, he can hardly blame me for a misadventure — and a curious tale is a passport the world over. Well, let me go in! To go in boldly is to slap Luck the courtesan on the shoulder, and ‘tis Venus o’ the dice-box to an ace and a deuce but she call me a tall fellow of my hands and bid me sit to supper. Warily now! ...

[“Pushes past arras.”]

ALAIN.

Good evening, good evening, my dear young friend. Welcome, very welcome! Come to the fire, man, and warm yourself. “Jam satis terris nivi,” — if you know your Horace as you know your Ovid, we shall get along splendidly.

[DENNYS “stands stupefied.” ALAIN “waits.”]

DENYS.

I fear, sir, I don’t know my Ovid. [“With the air of one primed to repeat a lesson.”] I beg a thousand pardons, Monsieur.

ALAIN.

Don't apologise, don't apologise. I've been expecting you all the evening.

DENYS.

Excuse me, sir, there is some mistake — !

ALAIN.

No! No! There is no mistake. Be at ease, my young friend.

DENYS.

[“Shrugs his shoulders.”] But I had no wish to be here — er — er! —
Nothing was further from my thoughts than this most unwarrantable
intrusion. {72B}

ALAIN.

Well, well, that's all right. Here you are, which is the great thing after all, isn't it? Sit down, my dear young friend [DENYS “uncomfortably and slowly takes a chair”], and we shall — er — arrange our little affair. You arrive uninvited, but believe me, most welcome.

DENYS.

Sir, you persist in error. I am a stranger: Denys de Beaulieu is my name, and I am here under a safe-conduct. That you see me in your house is only owing to — your door.

ALAIN.

Ah! my door — a hospitable fancy of mine!

DENYS.

I don't understand. I did not wish ... oh!

ALAIN.

My dear sir, we old gentlemen expect this reluctance from young bloods. [“With bitter irony.”] We bear it. But [“flaming out”] if the matter touches one's honour — [“rises and looks sternly at” DENYS].

DENYS.

Your “honour?”

[DENYS “is amazed out of all measure.”

ALAIN.

We try to find some means of overcoming such modesty.

DENYS.

Is this Ovid or Horace?

ALAIN.

To business, then, if you will affect ignorance. [“Strikes gong; enter” PRIEST, “who gives” DENYS “a long keen glance and speaks in an undertone to” ALAIN.] Is she in a better frame of mind? {73A}

PRIEST.

She is more resigned, my lord.

ALAIN.

Now a murrain o’ these languishing wenches in their green-sickness! By ‘r Lady, she is hard to please. A likely stripling, not ill-born, and the one of her own choosing. Why, what more would she have?

PRIEST.

The situation is not usual to a young damsel, and somewhat trying to her blushes.

ALAIN.

She should have thought of that before. This devil's dance is not to my piping, but since she is in it, by 'r Lady, she shall carry it through.

[“Motions” PRIEST “to retire. Exit” PRIEST, “with a low reverence to”

ALAIN “and a courteous bow to” DENYS.

DENYS.

[“Rises and clears his throat.”] Sir, let me — explain that —

ALAIN.

Don't explain. May I beg you to be seated, my “dear” young friend. We've been expecting you all night: the lady is ready, though I believe a little tearful: a bride has so much to fear, you know — “et corde et genibus tremit” — eh, my Gaetulian lion?

DENYS.

[“Raises his hand authoritatively to check speech.”] Sir! this misunderstanding, for such I am convinced it is, must go no further. I am a stranger here —

ALAIN.

Well, well, you'll get to know the old place in time. Blanche — {73B}

DENYS.

Sir! pray let me speak. I know you not —

ALAIN.

“We” know “you.”

DENYS.

[“Ironically.”] I am too honoured.

ALAIN.

Well?

DENYS.

You speak of a lady to me. You mistake me —

ALAIN.

I hope so.

DENYS.

Do not entrust a stranger with your family secrets, is my advice — as a man of the world.

ALAIN.

But my nephew! —

DENYS.

I do not even know your lordship's honourable nephew.

ALAIN.

I may yet show you a sneaking rascal in his person.

DENYS.

This really cannot go on. I must beg you, sir, to allow me to go from your house. I came here by an ill chance enough — though it saved my life in sooth.

ALAIN.

And secured you a splendid marriage.

DENYS.

[“Aside.”] Never, never again will I mix my drinks. [ALAN “syrveys” DENYS “from had to foot, emitting satisfied chuckles at” {74A} “irregular intervals, while” DENYS “clears throat repeatedly. This continues long,” DENYS fidgeting more and more. DENYS, “politely:”] The wind has gone down somewhat.

[ALLAIN “falls into a fit of silent laughter.” DENYS “rises and puts on his hat with a flourish.”

DENYS.

Sir, if you are in your wits, I find you insolent: if not, I will not stand here parleying with a madman.

ALAIN.

I must apologise, no doubt, but the circumstances are peculiar. Is it your custom to steal into the houses of gentlemen after midnight, and accuse the owners of lunacy? [“Chuckles.”] Well — let us be polite if we cannot be friendly.

DENYS.

Then, sir, you will permit me to explain my intrusion.

ALAIN.

[“Laughing.”] Ha! Ha! a fine story, I wager. ‘Twill interest me much, i’ faith. [DENYS “shows signs of impatience;” ALAIN “begins to look a little doubtful. With sudden interest:”] Well, how “did” you come here?

DENYS.

[“With much quaint lively gesture — his story-telling powers are much in request by his mess, and he is very proud of them.”] Aye, sir! by ‘r Lady, when I think of it, ‘tis a curious adventure enough. [“Pause to collect thoughts. Then dashes off lively:”] Lost my way in this cursed town — night like hell’s mouth — groped about your dirty little black narrow streets — no lantern — quarrelled with an officer — I draw — captain bolts — up run guard — see open door — your door, sir! — in I go! and then all of a sudden bangs to the door and I am caught like a rat in a {74B} trap. I break my sword on the old beast — give it up — up come stairs — ah! stair come up — I mean “I come” — a murrain on these courtly phrases! and here I stand [“rises and bows”], Denys de Beaulieu, Damoiseau de Beaulieu, in the Province of Normandy, at your lordship’s service.

ALAIN.

That is you way of looking after the lady’s reputation. Hear mine! Allow me first to introduce myself as Alain de Maletroit, Sire de Maletroit, and Warden of the Marches under his Majesty King Charles —

DENYS.

Whom God preserve!

[“Waves his broken sword.”]

ALAIN.

What excellent sentiments, and what an unfortunate omen — dear, dear me! And I have the honour to offer you the hand — I presume you already possess the heart — of the Lady Blanche de Maletroit.

DENYS.

You — what?

ALAIN.

Tut! Tut! The marriage, if you please, will take place in an hour.

DENYS.

[“Aside.”] Oh, he is mad after all! [“Aloud.”] What nightmare is this?

ALAIN.

You are not very polite to the lady — not as polite as your letter.

DENYS.

My letter?

[ALAIN “takes up letter from table and reads.” {75A}

ALAIN (“reads”).

“O white-bosomed Blanche! I am pale and wan with suffering for thy love. Pity me, moonlike queen. Leave to-night the postern door” — my postern door — “ajar that I may speak with your beauty on the stairs” — my stairs. “Beware of thy lynx-eyed uncle” — me — ah! yes?

DENYS.

Sir, do you take me for the pernicious idiot that wrote that stuff?

ALAIN.

Sir, I know that there is a lady and a letter and a door and — a marriage.

[“Indicating the appropriate four quarters of the universe.”

DENYS.

And a sword. If it “be” broken —

ALAIN.

“Integer vitae scel” —

DENYS.

I know “that” tag at least.

[ALAIN “claps his hands, walks toward door behind” DENYS. “The arras

swings back and armed men appear.”

ALAIN.

“O maior tandem parcas, insane, minori.”

DENYS.

A truce to all this theatrical folly, Monsieur de Maletroit. Let me do you the honour to take your words seriously. I decline this marriage. I demand free passage from your house.

ALAIN.

I regret infinitely that I cannot comply with Monsieur’s most moderate demands — at least [“quickly”] in the sense he means. {75B}

DENYS.

I am a prisoner then?

ALAIN.

I state the facts, and leave the inference to Monsieur's indulgence. But before you altogether decline this marriage, it would be perhaps properer did I present you to the lady.

DENYS.

[“Sees that he must humour his strange host; rises and bows in acquiescence with inane smile and phrase.”] Ah, Monsieur, you make me too happy!

[“This speech is not ironical but conventional and absurd.” ALAIN

“strikes the gong. Enter” PRIEST “and bows.”

ALAIN.

Require the presence of the Lady Blanche de Maletroit, if you please, father.

PRIEST (“bows”).

My Lord.

[“Retires. Enter” BLANCHE “in a bridal dress, very shy and ashamed, with

downcast eyes.”

DENYS.

["Aside."] Ah! but she is beautiful!

ALAIN.

Mademoiselle de Maletroit, allow me to present you to the Damoiseau Denys de Beaulieu. Monsieur Denys, my niece. [BLANCHE "hears the strange name and is shocked, looks up and only sees the back of" DENYS' "head, so low is he bowing. She understands that he has given another name and regains her self-possession."] Forgive the formality of this introduction, but, after all, your previous acquaintance — [DENYS "stares wildly."] Under the circumstances, Blanche, I think I should give your little {76A} hand to kiss. ["A pause"] It is necessary to be polite, my niece.

[BLANCHE, "tormented beyond endurance, rises up as if to strike her uncle, sees" DENYS, "screams, covers her face with her hands, and sinks on the floor."

BLANCHE.

That is not the man! — my uncle — that is not the man!

ALAIN.

["Chuckles."] So? Of course not. I expected as much. I was so unfortunate you could not remember his name.

BLANCHE.

This is not the man.

ALAIN.

“A” man, niece. [“Turns airily to” DENYS.] “*Tempestiva sequi viro,*”
Monsieur Denys.

BLANCHE.

Indeed, indeed, I have never seen this person till this moment. [“Turns to”
DENYS “imploringly.”] Sir, if you are a gentleman, you will bear me out.
Have I seen you — have you ever seen me — before this accursed hour?

DENYS.

I have never had that pleasure. [“Turns to” ALAIN.] This is the first time,
my lord, that I have ever met your engaging niece. [“Aside”.] But he
doesn’t care, he’s mad — by ‘r Lady, perhaps I’m mad myself.

[“Goes off into silent laughter.” ALAIN checks him sternly.

ALAIN.

Sir, you will find I mean no jest.

DENYS.

Mademoiselle, I ask you a thousand pardons for this scene — none of my making, but of my strange fortune's. {76B}

ALAIN.

This gentleman drank a little too much for dinner.

DENYS.

Nay, by St. Denys, not enough, else had I been now along under Cousin Henri's table, and not in this house of maniacs and men-at-arms, and beauties in distress. Oh, pardon me, I am rude. ["With lively gallantry."] Mademoiselle! I wrong myself when I forget myself: what I would say is that if the arm or brain of Denys de Beaulieu can save you, it is at your disposal ["starts: but serious, struck"] — I mean — ["Aside".] St. Denys, what a coil is here! Is it possible that I love her?

["He stands back, aside, amazed. His attitude vibrates between tender pitiful courtesy, lighted with love, and ironical appreciation of his own dilemma."]

ALAIN.

I will leave you to talk alone.

["Turns to leave."]

BLANCHE.

["Jumps up, and flings her arms around him. He repulses her not ungently. She clasps his knees, and he for the first time appears a little awkward and at a loss."] Uncle, you cannot be in earnest. Why, I'll kill myself first — the heart rises at it — God forbids such marriages. Will you dishonour your white hair?

ALAIN.

Nay, mistress, I will save my brother's memory from shame.

BLANCHE.

O sir, pity me. There is not a woman in the world but would prefer death to such an union. Is it possible ["falters"] that you still think this ["points to" DENYS, "who stands embarrassed and ashamed"] to be the man?
{77A}

ALAIN.

Frankly, I do. But let me explain to you once for all, Blanche de Maletroit, my way of thinking about this affair. ["Sternly".] When you took it upon yourself to dishonour my family [BLANCHE "slides to floor and sobs"] and the name I have borne stainless in peace and war for more than threescore years, you forfeited not only the right to question my designs, but that of look me in the face. I am a tenderer man than your father — he would have spat on you and thrust you from his door. But married you shall be, and that to-night. ["Turns to" DENYS.] And you, Monsieur, will best serve her if you save her. What devil have I saddled your life with that you look at me so black?

[“Turns on his heel and exit. A short silence of embarrassment.”]

BLANCHE.

[“Turns on” DENYS “with flashing eyes.”] And what, sir, may be the meaning of all this?

DENYS.

God knows; I am a prisoner in this house, which seems full of mad people. But I understand one thing, [“doubtfully”] I “think:” that you are to be married to me, and that your wishes are to be consulted as little as mine.

BLANCHE.

Monsieur, I blame myself cruelly for the position I have place you in.

DENYS.

Mademoiselle, I have at least the delicacy to refrain from asking any answer to these riddles. But —

BLANCHE.

O how my head aches! It is only fair to you to tell you — {77B}

DENYS.

A moment, of your grace, Mademoiselle. Do not think that I am some obscure fortune-hunter who will jump at the chance so strangely offered him. My name is as noble as your own — ay! were things otherwise, I would still spare you. As it is, I have but to do as my duty and my interest — any yours — demand. We will see if Monsieur de Maletroit can cage me here for ever. [“Looks at sword meditatively.”] That is unfortunate.

BLANCHE.

I am so afraid, sir: I know my uncle well: but — thank you, — thank you!

DENYS.

Is Monsieur de Maletroit at hand?

BLANCHE.

There is a servant within call.

[“Strikes gong thrice.”]

[“A pause. Enter” ANDREW.]

DENYS.

Ask Monsieur the Sire de Maletroit to honour us with his presence.

[ANDREW “bows and exit.”

BLANCHE.

Monsieur, I don’t know what we — you — will do, but thank you — thank you.

DENYS.

[“Draw himself up.”] Ah! Mademoiselle, trust me, all will be well.

[“Enter” ALAIN “and ironically bow.s”

DENYS.

[“Grandly.”] Messire, I suppose that I am to have some say in the matter of this marriage, so let me tell you without further ado, I will be no party to forcing the inclinations of this lady. [ALAN “smiles,” DENYS “pauses.”] I — er — you understand me, sir? [ALAIN “still smiles.”] Had it been {78A} freely offered to me, I should have been proud to accept her hand, for I perceive she is as good as she is beautiful [ALAIN “still similes”], but as things are — er — I have the honour, Messire, of refusing [ALAIN “smiles more and more”] — I — er — er —

[ALAIN’S “smile become positively insupportable.” BLANCHE “smiles through her tears in gratitude and is secretly tickled at his confusion.” DENYS “gets annoyed, and swings away on his heel with an

expression of disgust.”

ALAIN.

I am afraid, Monsieur de Beaulieu, that you do not perfectly understand — the alternative. Follow me, I beseech you, to this window. [“They cross to the window,” DENYS “shrugging his shoulders.”] Look out! [DENYS “looks out into the blackness.” ALAIN “points to just below.”] Here are hooks. Iron hooks. Fastened into the wall. Strong. [“They turn back into room.”] And there [“points”] is the Lady Blanche. And so, Monsieur Denys de Beaulieu, Damoiseau de Beaulieu, in the province of Normandy, I do myself the honour to inform you that unless you are married to my niece in an hour’s time, from these hooks you will hang. [BLANCHE “screams aloud, and falls half fainting into a chair.”] I trust your good sense will come to your aid, for of course it is not at all your death that I desire, but my niece’s establishment in life. Your family, Monsieur de Beaulieu, is very well in its way, but if you sprang from Charlemagne you should not refuse the hand of a Maletroit with impunity — not if she had been as common as the Paris road, not if she were as hideous as the gargoyles on my roof. Neither my niece, nor you, nor my own private feelings move me in this matter. The honour of my house has been compromised: I believe you to be the guilty person: at least you are now in the secret; and though it will be no satisfaction to me {78B} to have your interesting relics kicking their heels from my battlements [“jerks his thumb toward the window”], if I cannot wipe out the dishonour, I shall at least stop the scandal.

DENYS.

Frankly, sir, I think your troubles must have turned your brain; there are other ways of settling such imbroglios among gentlemen.

ALAIN.

Alas, sir! I am old. When I was younger I should have been delighted to honour you; but I am the sole male member of my ancient house. Faithful retainers are the sinews of age, and I were a fool did I not employ the strength I have.

DENYS.

Oh, hang me now, and have done with it!

ALAIN.

No haste. An hour of life is always — an hour. And though one half that time is nigh lapsed already, yet — if you will give me your word of honour to do nothing desperate, and to await my return before you fling yourself from the window, — or, as I guess, — on the pikes of my retainers, I will withdraw myself and them that you may talk in greater privacy with the Lady Blanche. I fought at Arcy, and know what wonders may happen in an hour. [DENYS “turns bitterly, almost savagely, toward” BLANCHE.] You will not disfigure your last hour by want of politeness to a lady?

[DENYS “flushes, accepts the rebuke, bows to both and says simply:”

DENYS.

I give you my word of honour.

[“His decision is not uncoloured by the pathetic petitioning of the

mute” BLANCHE. {79A}

ALAIN.

I thank you sir; then I will leave you. [“Turns to go, stops.”] Sir, you are young, you think me a hard man, and perhaps a coward. Remember, pray, that the tears of age are frozen at the heart ere they can spring to the eyes. You may yet think better of the lonely old Sire de Maletroit, and the honour of his house may one day be your own. [“Exit.”]

[BLANCHE “comes over to” DENYS, “who remains leaving heavily on the

table.”

BLANCHE.

Oh, sir, how cruelly have I done in my girl’s folly, to being a gallant gentleman to such a pass.

DENYS.

Ah! life is a little thing, fair lady. [“Sighs, gradually getting pleased with himself as a martyr.”] My mother is married again — she needs neither my arm nor my affection; my brother Guichard will inherit my fiefs, and unless I am mistaken, that will console him amply for my death; as for my father — why, I go to join him in an hour. Ay! lady, we are soon forgotten. It is barely ten years since he fell, fighting desperately, with many noble gentlemen around him, and — to-day — I doubt me if the very name of the battle lingers in men’s minds! I go to join him in an hour.

BLANCHE.

[“Sighs.”} Ay! sir, you speak sad, but you speak true.

DENYS.

Will there be memory “there?” [DENYS “now fancies himself as a philosopher.”] For I would not marry you — nay! not though I loved you with my soul. In an hour you will be rid of me. {79B}

BLANCHE.

Oh, sir, do not be more cruel than our fate itself — to speak as if I could think so.

DENYS.

[“Pities himself.”] You will perhaps sigh once — I hope you will sigh once! — and then you will forget, and laugh, and go back to your old life. Ah! what can I think of all this?

BLANCHE.

I know what you must think, Monsieur de Beaulieu; you dare not say it — but you wrong me. Oh! before God, you wrong me.

DENYS.

["Distressed."} Don't! Don't!

BLANCHE.

Do yield: do marry me! Let me tell you how it all came about — you are so brave and young and handsome — I will not have you die.

DENYS.

You seem to think I stand in great fear of death.

BLANCHE.

["Flushes at this boyish rudeness."] But "I" will not have you die. I "will" marry you.

["With determination."

DENYS.

["Aside."] Here is love's language — and Lord knows who's meaning.
["Aloud."] What you are too generous to refuse I may be too proud to accept.

BLANCHE.

["Controls her indignation."] O sir! listen! I have no mother — no father. I am very lonely — how can I tell you? ["Goes over and crouches on chair

half-sobbing.”] Three months {80A} ago a young man began to stand near me in church. I — I could see I pleased him — and that pleased me; so I listened, when, as I went down the aisle, he whispered me such words as I passed — like poetry, they were so beautiful. I didn’t know it was any harm — I let him write me letters, I was so glad that any one should love me. And yesterday he asked me to meet him on the stairs, so that he might tell me with his own voice; but Uncle Alain found the letter, and oh! oh! [“Cries.”]

DENYS.

Poor child! [“Aside.”] By heaven, I do love her. Was ever a man so ill-placed to win a woman?

BLANCHE.

I would not have answered it — oh! Monsieur, I swear to you. I thought no wrong. But uncle shut me up in the chapel, and said I was to be married to-morrow — and — and — set a trap for you.

DENYS.

Mademoiselle, I never thought ill of you, believe me!

BLANCHE.

Then oh, sir! marry me! You shall never see me again, and I will — yes! I will — kill myself, and you shall be free and happy again. It can’t hurt you

much to say a few words in the chapel with me — and then go back. But pray for me when I am dead.

DENYS.

[“Struggling long with emotion, stops himself from crying and gives a forced laugh.”] Here’s romance, if ever there was any. Dog that I am! To laugh when your pale sweet little body is all shaken with weeping. Mademoiselle — Blanche — listen to me, and do not talk such wild nonsense. I will not {80B} marry you. I do not love you, or you me. [“Aside.”] Half a lie is better than no truth. [“Aloud.”] I will not ruin your life — and I can commit suicide by merest idleness, a talent I am master of, and one most agreeable to my nature.

BLANCHE.

Oh! Monsieur Denys, but I love you. [“Comes and clings to his knees.”] I do! I do! I will not kill myself, but I will make you love me —

DENYS.

A harder task than you think, little one.

BLANCHE.

Or tolerate me at least. [“Cries.”]

DENYS.

O bother! I shall cry too in a minute.

BLANCHE.

You are very unkind. I hate you.

DENYS.

How much of all this is truth? What with pity and drawing-room manners and so on, truth is the kernel of a devilish hard nut. They say she lives at the bottom of a well — where one is drowned. [“Looks down, craning, as if into a well.”] St. Denys grant I may find her at the end of a rope — where one is hanged. [“With gesture appropriate.”]

[BLANCHE “curls herself up in chair and sobs bitterly.” DENYS “goes to

window and looks gloomily out.”

[“Mimics” ALAIN.] Hooks. Iron hooks. Fastened into the wall. Strong. H’m! and there is the Lady Bl— oh! cursed luck — do you clap me on the shoulder like a good comrade? No! you get round my neck like a lover! Oh! was ever gallant {81A} in such a scrape before? But dawn cannot be far off: I shall — swing myself lightly out of it.

BLANCHE.

[“Sobbing.”] Monsieur Denys! Monsieur Denys!

DENYS.

She has my name pat enough. O poor little girl! If only I didn't love her, with what a good will would I marry her. The nearer one comes to it, the clearer one sees that death is a dark and dusty corner, where a man lies hidden and forgotten till the archangel's — broom. I have few friends now: Once I am dead I shall have none.

BLANCHE.

["Falters."] You forget Blanche de Maletroit.

DENYS.

You have a sweet nature, Mademoiselle, and you are pleased to estimate a little service far beyond its worth.

BLANCHE.

No, sir, I say more: I recognise in you a spirit that should not give the "pas" to the noblest man in France.

DENYS.

And yet here I die in a mousetrap — with no more noise about it than my own squeaking. ["A pause."]

BLANCHE.

I cannot have my champion think so meanly of himself.

DENYS.

[“Aside.”] Ah! could I forget that I was asked in pity and not in love!

[“Advances, checks himself, swings round and goes to window.” {81B}

BLANCHE.

I know how you must despise me — oh! you are right. I am too poor a creature to occupy one thought of your mind. Alas! although you must die for me to-morrow — [“She stops short, and waits for him to respond, but” DENYS “is indeed thinking of something else.”] What! You are too proud to link yourself with the dishonoured house of Maletroit? I too have my pride: and now — and now — I would no more marry you than I would marry my uncle’s groom.

[“Stamps her foot.” DENYS “turns round and looks at her inquiringly. He has not heard what she has been saying; he becomes again absorbed in his own thoughts.” BLANCHE “gets angrier and angrier, stamps again, and, not attracting his attention, falls into the chair and cries petulantly.”

BLANCHE.

It’s too hard. To ask and be refused — I, a Maletroit. [DENYS “comes back into the room and faces her. She rises and strikes him across the face

with her glove.”] Cowardly boy! [DENYS “turns furiously red, catches her suddenly in his arms and kisses her, flings her away, drops to the floor and groans in an agony of shame and love.”] Double coward! [“She reels away as if he had struck her: comes back to where he crouches, bends over him and strokes his hair.”] Denys! Monsieur Denys! I am so sorry. You are going to die so soon and I am rude to you — when it is all my fault.

[DENYS “rises and stands facing her manfully.”]

DENYS.

Die! Not I! Blanche, when I kissed you I loved you: I loved you when I saw you in the doorway, and I know you love me now. {82A}

BLANCHE.

Sir! I do not love you. How dare you speak to me so?

DENYS.

You love me. [“Laughing.”] Why, you “said” so!

BLANCHE.

You pass my patience, sir. I was acting, acting for your own safety. I made the most shameful declaration a maid can make for your sake — and you fling it in my teeth.

[DENYS “knows his triumph, and proceeds to enjoy it with laughing

speech, as one with a petulant child.”

DENYS.

I fail to see that my safety is any the more assured now — without it. Yes, Monsieur de Maladroit, {sic} I accept your offer with be best will in the world.

BLANCHE.

O you despicable coward! I will kill you at the very altar-steps.

DENYS.

Yours is a wonderful strong family for killing, little one.

BLANCHE.

Mademoiselle de Maletroit is my name.

DENYS.

For half-an-hour — nay! barely that.

[BLANCHE “stamps here foot and turns away angry. Breaks down and kneels in chair, crying.” DENYS “follows and stands above her.”]

DENYS.

O Blanche! Blanche! Do you not see how ever tear is like a drop of poisonous {82B} dew falling on my heart? You have seen whether I fear death. No love worth Love's name ever yet needed to be asked. And yet — in words! If you care for me at all, do not let me lose my life in a misapprehension! Tho' I would die for your blithely, faith, I had rather live on — in your service. Can you love me a little? Fool! Fool! Ay, there's a pair of us — why do we wait here and let our happiness stand in the cold and knock at our door all night?

BLANCHE.

Don't! Don't make me more miserable and hopeless than I am.

[DENYS “determines to make a general advance.”

DENYS.

[“Tenderly.”] Little fool!

[“He waits. She struggles in herself; and at last rueful and pouting, gets up and stands before him downcast, rubbing her eyes. He takes full advantage of his position.”

[“With mock severity.”] Aren't you ashamed of yourself?

BLANCHE.

[“Sobbing.”] After all you have heard? {83Atop}

DENYS.

[“With double entendre.”] I have heard nothing.

[“He opens his arms to her. She still stands about to sob again, breaks down, but this time flings herself on him and sobs on his breast. Enter” ALAIN “unseen.”

[“Softly.”] My darling!

[BLANCHE “raises her face.” DENYS “goes to kiss her, but she draws back.”

BLANCHE.

The captain’s name was Florimond de Champdivers.

DENYS.

I did not hear it. [“A pause.”] Blanche, will you kiss me?

[“They take one long look and then tenderly and very deliberately kiss.

They remain so, silently delighting in each other.”

ALAIN.

[“Comes forward with a chuckle.”] Good morning, nephew!

[“They leap up covered with confusion, recover their self-possession,
and curtsy and bow respectfully, hand in hand.” {83Btop}

{full page below}

CURTAIN.

GARGOYLES

BEING STRANGELY WROUGHT IMAGES OF LIFE AND DEATH

1907

{columns resume, but there is an upper section and a lower}

TO L. BENTROVATA.

Nec tamen illa mihi dextra deducta paterna

Fragrantem Assyrio venit odore domum

Set furtiva dedit muta munuscula nocte.

GO sunnily through my garden of flowers, dear maiden o'mine, and once in a while you shall come upon some grotesque Chinese dragon with huge and hideous eyes leering round the delight of the daffodils; or it may be some rude Priapus looking over the calm rock-shadowed beauty of the lake; or even, hanging amid the glory of elm or beech, an human skeleton, whose bones shall rattle in the breeze, and from whose eyeless sockets shall glare I dare not bid you guess what evil knowledge.

Then, an you be wise, you shall know that a wise gardener wisely put them there. For {84Atop} Every garden is the world; and in the world these

are.

So every cathedral is the world, and the architect of Notre Dame deserved his heaven.

To me life and death have most often appeared in majesty and beauty, in solemnity and horror; in emotions, to be brief, so great that man had no place therein. But there are moods, in which the heights are attained indirectly, and through man's struggle with the elemental powers.

In these poems you shall hear the laughter of the gods and of the devils; understand their terrors and ecstasies; live in their heavens and hells.

But I not only heard and understood and lived; I sounded and imposed and begat: you must also do both, or the universe will still be a mystery to you as to the others. {84Btop, columns end for next line only.}

IMAGES OF LIFE

PROLOGUE.

VIA VITAE.

I.

MY head is split. The crashing axe
Of the agony of things shears through
The stupid skull: out spurt the brains.
The universe revolves, then cracks,
Then roars in dissolution due;
And I am counting up the gains
And losses of a life afire
With dust of thought and dulled desire.

II.

So, all is over. I admit
Futility the lord of will.
Life was an episode, for me {84Abottom}

As for the meanest monad, knit
To man by mightier bonds than skill
Of subtle-souled psychology
May sever. Aim in chaos? None.
The soul rolls senseless as the sun.

III.

Existence, as we know it, spins
A fatal warp, a woof of woe.
There is no place for God or soul.
Works, hopes, prayers, sacrifices, sins
Are jokes. The cosmos happened so:
Innocent all of guide or goal.
Else, what were man's appointed term?
To feed God's friend, the coffin-worm! {84Bbottom}

IV.

Laugh, thou immortal Lesbian!
Thy verse runs down the runic ages.
Where shalt thou be when sun and star,

My sun, my star, the vault that span,
Rush in their rude, impassive rages
Down to some centre guessed afar
By mindless Law? Their death-embrace
A simple accident of space?

V.

Where is thy fame, when million leagues
Of flaming gas absorb the roll
Of many a system ruinous hurled
With infinite pains and dire fatigues
To build another stupid soul
For fools to call another world?
Where than thy fame, O soul sublime?
Where then thy victory over Time?

VI.

Wilt thou seek deeper than the fact?
Take refuge in a city of mind?
Build thee an house, and call it heaven?

Rush on! there foams the cataract,
Sole devil herald of the seven
Thy garnished halls should house, O Christ,
Thou being dead, thou sacrificed

VII.

Not for atonement, not for bliss;
Truly for nothing: so it was.
Nay, friends, think well! Renounce the dream!
Seek not some mystery in the kiss,
Some virtue in the chrysopras,
Some nymph or undine in the stream.
Things as we know them should be enough
To glut our misery and our love.

VIII.

Why must despair to madness drive
The myriad fools that fear to die?
God's but a fervid phantom drawn
Out of the hasty-ordered hive

Of thoughts that battle agony
In the melancholy hours of dawn.
When vital force at lowest ebbs
Anaemic nerves weave frailest webs. {8bA}

IX.

So, be content! Should science cleave
The veil of things and show us peace,
Well: — but by wild imagining
Think not a golden robe to weave!
Such moulder. By fantastic ease
Ye come not well to anything.
Work and be sober: dotage thinks
By worth of words to slay the Sphinx.

X.

Things as they are — of these take hold,
Their heart of wonder throb to thine!
All things are matter and force and sense,
No two alone. All's one: the gold

Of truth is no reward divine
Of faith, but wage of evidence.
The clod, the God, the spar, the star
Mete in thy measure, as they are!

XI.

So lifts the agony of the world
From this mine head, that bowed awhile
Before the terror suddenly shown.
The nameless fear for self, far hurled
By death to dissolution vile,
Fades as the royal truth is known:
Though change and sorrow range and roll
There is no self — there is no soul!

XII.

As man, a primate risen high
Above his fellows, work thou well
As man, an incident minute
And dim in time's eternity,

Work well! As man, no toy for hell
And heaven to wrangle for, be mute!
Let empty speculation stir
The idle fool, the craven cur!

XIII.

Myself being idle for an hour
I dare one thing to speculate:
Namely, that life hath cusps yet higher
On this our curve: a prize, a power
Lies in our grasp: unthinking Fate
Shall build a brain to nestle nigher
Unto the ultimate Truth: I burn
To live that later lives may learn. {85B}

XIV.

Simple to say; to do complex!
That we this higher type of man
May surely generate, o' nights
Our lesser brains we vainly vex.

Our knowledge lacks; we miss the plan.
Fools hope our luck will set to rights
Our skill that's baulked. Yet now we know
At least the way we wish to go.

XV.

This task assume! Colossal mind
And toil transcending, concentrate
Not on the metaphysic wild;
Not on the deserts vast and blind
Of dark Religion; not on Fate,
The barren ocean; but the Child
Shows us a beacon in the night;
A lens to lure and lend the light.

XVI.

Wisdom and Love, intenser glow!
Beauty and Strength, increase and burn!
Be brothers to the law of life!
Things as they are — their nature know!

Act! Nor for faith nor folly turn!

The hour is nigh when man and wife,

Knowing, shall worship face to face,

Beget and bear the royal race.

THE WHITE CAT.

HAIL, sweet my sister! hail, adulterous spouse,

Gilded with passionate pomp, and gay with guilt:

Rioting, rioting in the dreary house

With blood and wine and roses splashed and spilt

About thy dabbling feet, and aching jaws

Whose tongue licks mine, twin asps like moons that curl,

Red moons of blood! Whose catlike body claws,

Like a white swan raping a jet-black girl, {86A}

Mine, with hysteric laughter! O white cat!

O windy star blown sideways up the sky!

Twin cat, twin star, 'tis night; the owl and bat

Hoot, scream; 'tis us they call — to love or die.

Twin cat, our broomsticks wait: we'll fly afar!

We'll blaze about the unlighted sky, twin star!

ALI AND HASSAN.

FROM THE ALF LAYLAH WA LAYLAH.

ALI bade Hassan to his house to sup.

They ate, passed round the full forbidden cup,

Till, in the interval of dance and song,

Hassan forgot his manners — loud and long.

Struck with confusion, forth he fares, takes ship

To utmost Ind and far-off Serendip.

Full forty years he there abides: at last,

Rich and respected, he contemns the past: —

“If I declare myself, there's hope, I wot,

Hassan's remembered, and his fault forgot! —”

Determines to revisit home. Sweet airs

Accomplishing the voyage, he repairs

Unto the barber. “Tell me of the state!

Haroun still holds the royal Caliphate?”

“Nay,” said the barber, “long ago he passed
Where all delights are ‘stinguished at the last,
And all good things forgotten, wallahy!
He died — aha now! — no — yes — let me see!
Ten years, three months, four days, as I’m a sinner,
Since Hassan let the — shame — at Ali’s dinner.”

AL MALIK

A GHAZAL OF AL QAHAR.

AL MALIK the magnificent
Was sitting in his silken tent.

But when he saw the boy Habib
I wis his colour came and went. {86B}

Quoth he: By Allah, 'tis a star
Struck from the azure firmament!

Habib: I pour the wine of love
For Al Awaz the excellent.

The king: I envy him thy shape,
Thy voice, thy colour, and thy scent.

Habib: In singing of his slave

Hath Al Awaz grown eminent.

The king: But I, to taste thy lip,
My kingdom willingly had spent.

Habib: Asylum of the World!
My master bade me to present

My loveliness to thee, whose brows
Like to a Scythian bow are bent.

The king accepted him to bear
His cup of wine, and was content.

Let Al Qahar their praises sing:
Three souls, one love, one element.<<1>>

<<1. This poem is very much taboo in Persia, as it is supposed to be little better than a pamphlet in favour of Christianity. The later work of Al Qahar, and especially his masterpiece, the Bagh-i-muattar, are, however, if not

quite above suspicion, so full of positive piety of the Sufi sort that even the orthodox tolerate what the mystic and the ribald silently or noisily admire.

WEH NOTE: Of course, Al Qahar = Aleister Crowley.>>

SONG.

I.

DANCE a measure

Of tiniest whirls!

Shake out your treasure

Of cinnamon curls!

Tremble with pleasure,

O wonder of girls! {87A}

II.

Rest is bliss,

And bliss is rest,

Give me a kiss

If you love me best!

Hold me like this

With my head on your breast!

ANICCA.

HE who desires desires a change.

Change is the tale of life and death.

Matter and motion rearrange

Their endless coils; the Buddha saith:

“Cease, O my sons, to desire!

Change is the whole that we see

By the light of a chaos on fire.

Cease to desire — you are free!”

Your words, good Gotama, are brave and true;

Easy to say, but difficult to do!

TARSHITERING.

NEPALI LOVE-SONG.<<1>>

<<1. Possibly the original of the well-known Hindustani song: —

“Thora thairo, Tenduk! thora thairo, tum!

Thora thairo, thairo thora, thora thairo tum!”

A. C.>>

O KISSABLE Tarshitering! the wild bird calls its mate — and I?

Come to my tent this night of May, and cuddle close and crown me king!

Drink, drink our full of love at last — a little while and we shall die,

O kissable Tarshitering!

Droop the long lashes: close the eyes with eyelids like a bettle’s wing!

Light the slow smile, ephemeral as ever a painted butterfly,

Certain to close into a kiss, certain to fasten on me and sting!

Nay? Are you coy? Then I will catch your hips and hold you wild and shy

Until your very struggles set your velvet buttocks all a-swing,

Until their music lulls you to unfathomable ecstasy,

O kissable Tarshitering! {87B}

A FRAGMENT.<<1>>

<<1. Intended as the prologue to a history of an initiate in semi-dramatic form.>>

“In the midst of the desert of Libya, on a mound of sand, lieth a young man

alone and naked. Nightfall.”

NIGHT the voluptuous, night the chaste

Spreads her dark limbs, a vaulted splendour,

Above the intolerable waste.

Night the august one, night the tender

Queens it and brides it unto me.

I am the soul serenely free;

I dare to seek the austere ordeal

That drags the hoodwink of the Real

Back from the Maker's livid eyes

Lustred with hate. At noon I came

Blind in the desert, saw the sun

Leap o'er the edge, a fury of flame

Shouting for rapture over his prize,
The maiden body of earth. Outrun
The violent rays; the dawn is dashed
In one swift moment into dust.
Long lies the land with sunlight splashed,
Brutally violate to his lust.
Alone and naked I watched through
The appalling hours of noon; I parched;
I blistered: all the ghastly crew
Of mind's sick horror mocked me; arched
The flaming vault of hell and pressed
Its passionate murder in my breast.
Seven times I strove to slay me: filled
My mouth with sand to choke my breath.
In vain! No loftier purpose willed
The iron miracle of death.
So, blind and strangled, I survive.
So, with my skin a single scar,
I hail the night, the night alive
With Hathor for the evening star.

O beauty! See me broken, burned
Lone on the languorous Lybian plain!
I there one lesson to be learned
From this my voluntary pain,
My dread initiation, long
Desired and long deferred? The Master —
Is he the secret of the song,
Portent of triumph or disaster {88A}
The night wind breathes upon the air
Still shimmering from the fearful heat?
Can I still trust who have learned to dare?
All others I have known effete,
Bid them await. Who knows to-day
The purpose of the dread essay?
Surely I, earlier, further fared!
I knew the deed that closes clay,
Division's sword by sense unbared,
A living lie. The deep delusion!
Dividuality — confusion!
These I unmasked of yore. To-day

The hideous blue, the hideous gold
Of sky and sand their wrath unrolled,
Their agony and hate proclaimed.
Is it that night shall kiss to peace
The furious carnival that flamed
Its ruinous ardour from the sun!
Nay, let all light, all things, but cease!
Sense is the seal of double rule.
The million oracles that run
Out of the mouth of God the fool
Are not myself. To nothing turn!
To nothing look! Then, then! — discern
Nothing, that one may one remain.
So I am paid the horrible pain
That these my brothers ordered me.
I look upon their brows — I see
Signs many and deep of torture past;
A star, yon star, true peace at last.

(“There approacheth an aged man, riding upon an ass, with a led ass, and
a

Nubian servant.”)

“The Adept.” In the name of God, the One, the Great,

Merciful and compassionate,

Acclaim the perfect period

Of ordeal past!

“The Neophyte.” There is no God!

“A.” Rise! in the name of obscure Fate,

Ruthless and uncompassionate.

“N.” Of endless life, of toil and woe

I am the burned and branded foe.

I came to this torture to endure

That I might make my freedom sure.

“A.” No soul is free. {88B}

N. There is no soul.

See yonder gleams the starry shoal

Of orbs incalculably vast.

They are not present: they are past,

Since the long march of shuddering light

Made years the servants of its might.

There is no soul.

“A.” These star thou seest

Are but the figuring of thy brain.

“N.” Then of all things the soul were freest.

“A.” Move then the centre of thy pain!

“N.” ‘Tis done.

“A.” A trick to cheat a child.

“N.” It is the truth that I am nought.

Hear what I have gathered in the wild,

Flowers of imperishable thought

With glory and with rapture clothed.

This being, thinking, loved or loathed,

Hath attributes. This sand is gold: —

Deem’st thou a gilder lurks within

The atom? What should Nature hold

Of aureate save a mind begin

Colour-conception? Then we win

To think our thought itself a chance

Grafted upon the circumstance

Of cerebrin and lethicin.

“A.” Ill fares the rifleman that holds

The muzzle to his eye. Yon gold’s

Mental: enough! the mind is all.

“N.” No: this is but a slave in thrall

To matter’s motion. We deny

A causeless cause, an entity

Beyond experience, that tricks

Our folly with its idle claim

To be because we feel it.

“A.” Sticks

The reason there?

“N.” We choose a name

To cover all the host of facts

Comprised in thought.

“A.” (“aside”) The elixir acts.

Then backward work; the name becomes

With pomp of metaphysic drums

A “causa causans” — God, soul, truth.

So raves the riot, age and youth,
The cart before the horse. Revered
And reverend master, is your beard
Darwin's survival of some tail? {89A}
Who rants of soul were best to saddle
His face, his arms the ass to straddle,
Since for his voice the part thus bare
Would serve as well to scent the air.
“A.” Where reverence ceases, ribald jest
Breaks forth, the wise allow the rest.
The perfect master stands confessed.
“N.” Why! I supposed your wrath would burst;
My name and number stand accurst
In the great Order of the West!
“A.” Nay: Buddha smiles; 'twas Jesus wept!
Arise, O brother and adept!
“N.” Master!
“A.” The torture-hours are past.
“N.” The peace of pain is mine at last.
“A.” Ere the moon rise, the brethren meet.

Come, let us turn toward the South.

“N.” Lord, I embrace thy holy feet.

“A.” Nay, let me kiss thee on the mouth.

“Desunt cetera.”

THE STUMBLING-BLOCK.

I ALMOST wonder if I ought

To hymn this height of human pain:

To enter into Jones’s thought

I’d have to work with Jones’s brain.

Terrestrial speech is wholly vain

To carry meaning as it ought: —

To enter into Jones’s thought

I’d have to work with Jones’s brain.

This is the High God’s cruel sport:

To enter into Jones’s thought

And make its inner meaning plain,

I'd have to work with Jones's brain.

WOODCRAFT.

THE poet slept. His fingers twine
In his wife's hair. He dreams. Divine
His dream! Nay then, I'll tell you it.

He wandered in a forest dim.
A wood cutter encountered him
Where a felled oak required his wit. {89B}
This man with a light axe did lop
The little branches at the top.
Then said the poet: Thus why tax
Your force? This double-handed axe
Were better laid to the tree-trunk."
"Friend, are you natural, or drunk?"
Replied the woodsman; "leaf and twig
Divert the impact of the big
Axe; chop them first, the trunk is fit

For a fair aim, a certain hit.

How do you work yourself?" He spoke

To empty space — the poet woke;

And catching up a carving-knife

He slit the throat of his wife.

A NUGGET FROM A MINE.

A MINER laboured in a mine.

(The poet dreamed) By coarse and fine

He shovelled dust into a trolley.

"But this" (the poet said) "is folly!

Take up your pick, engage in shock

At the foundation of the rock!"

The miner swore. "You – fool!

You clever – ! go to school

And college and be – ! Strike you!

There ain't no sense in being like you!

If I don't clear this muck, the pick

Will foul and jam, slip, swerve, or stick.

Clear off the chips, the blow goes true.

Now, mister, off, my – to you!”

The last oath faded in the air.

The poet woke and was aware

Of property and children. Claims

His breech a vesta.<<1>> Up the flames

Leap; he stalks forth, free among men,

With just a notebook and a pen.

<<1. WEH NOTE: A vesta is a type of match. The kids set fire to his pants.>>

AU CAVEAU DES INNOCENTS.

“Oct.” 28, 1904.

NIGHT, like a devil, with lidless eyes,

Stands avenging over the Halls.

Sleep there is none, for day awaits

Tokens of toil; there is none that dies, {90A}

Death being rest; there is none that calls,

Voice being human; only the Fates
Rattle the dice at a sombre game,
Game without goal of peace or fame.
Sinister, sombre, horrors and hates
Lurk in the shadows, under the walls.
Light deceives, and the darkness lies.

Love there is none; he is child of peace:
Joy there is none; she is bride of force:
Thought there is none; it is birth: — there fell
Ages ago all hope of these.
Lust is awake, and its friend remorse.
Crime we snatch, between spell and spell.
Man is aglare, and is off unheard.
Woman hath speech, of a single word.
Hell may be heaven, for earth is hell!
So do I laugh, and the hideous coarse
Peals like applause re-echo and cease.

Here in the close and noisome cave,

Drunk on the breath of the thieves and whores
Close as they cram in the maw of the pit,
Sick with the stench of the kisses that rave
Round me, surfeiting sense, in scores;
Mad with their meaning, I smoke and sit
Rhyming at random through my teeth,
Grey with the mire of the slough beneath,
Deep in the hearts that revel in it,
Drowned in the breath of the hell that pours
In the heart of Paris its infamous wave.

Damning the soul of God, I rise,
Stumble among the dissolute bands,
Grove to the steep inadequate stairs
Scrawled with villainous names. My eyes
Loathe the flare of the flickering brands.
Out I climb through the greasy airs
Into the cold and desolate road.
Horror is sure of a safe abode
Here in this heart, too pale for prayers,

While over the Halls avenging stands

Night, like a devil, with lidless eyes. {90B}

ROSA INFERNI.<<1>>

<<1. Being the necessary sequel to Rosa Mundi. — A. C.>>

“Ha ha! John plucketh now at his rose

To rid himself of a sorrow at heart.

Lo, — petal on petal, fierce rays uncloset;

Anther on anther, sharp spikes outstart;

And with blood for dew, the bosom boils;

And a gust of sulphur is all its smell:

And lo, he is horribly in the toils

Of a coal-black giant flower of hell!”

— BROWNING, “Heretic’s Tragedy,” ix.

I.

ROSE of the world! Ay, love, in that warm hour

Wet with your kisses, the bewitching bud

Flamed in the starlight; then our bed your bower
Heaved like the breast of some alluring flood
Whereon a man might sleep for ever, until
Death should surprise him, kiss his weary will
Into the last repose, profounder power
Than life could compass. Now I tax my skill
To find another holier name, some flower
Still red, but red with the ecstasy of blood.
Dear love, dear wife, dear mother of the child
Whose fair faint features are a match for mine,
Lurks there no secret where your body smiled,
No serpent in the generous draught of wine?
Did I guess all, who guessed your life well given
Up to my kiss? Aha! the veil is riven!
Beneath the smiling mask of a young bride
Languorous, luscious, melancholy-eyed;
Beneath the gentle raptures, hints celestial
Of holy secrets, kisses like soft dew,
Beneath the amorous mystery, I view
The surer shape, a visage grim and bestial,

A purpose sly and deadly, a black shape,
A tiger snarling, or a grinning ape
Resolved by every devilish device
Upon my murder. This I clearly see
Now you are — for an hour — away from me.
I see it once; no need to tell me twice! {91A}

II.

Some Yankee yelled — I tag it to a rime —
“You can’t fool all the people all the time.”
So he of politics; so I of love.
I am a-many folk (let Buddha prove!)
And many a month you fooled the lot of us —
Your spell is cracked within the ring! Behold
How Christ with clay worth more than any gold
Cleared the man’s eyes! So the blind amorous
Is blinded with the horror of the truth
He sees this moment. Foolish prostitute!
You slacked you kiss upon the sodden youth
In some excess of confidence, decay

Of care to hold him — can I tell you which?
Down goes the moon — one sees the howling bitch!
The salmon you had hooked in fin and gill
You reel unskilfully — he darts away.
Alas! you devil, but you hold me still!

III.

O first and fairest of Earth's darling daughters!
How could I sing you? — you have always seemed
Unto the saucy driveller as he dreamed
Like a rich sunset seen on tropic waters —
(Your eyes effulgent from a thousand slaughters
Looked tenderly upon me!) all the red
Raving round you like a glory shed
Upon the excellent wonder of your head;
The blue all massed within your marvellous eyes;
The gold a curtain of their harmonies
As in a master canvas of de Ryn;<<1>>
But ever central glowed the royal sun,
A miracle cartouche upon the edge

Of the opalescent waters slantwise seen.
This oval sealed with grave magnificence
Stamped you my queen. Thus looked your lips to one {91B}
Who stood a casual on life's slippery ledge,
A blind bat hanging from the tree of sense
Head downward, gorged with sweet banana juice,
Indifferent to — incapable of — aught
Beyond these simple reflexes. Is thought,
Even the highest thought, of any use?

<<1. Rembrandt.>>

IV.

We are not discussing metaphysics now.
I see below the beautiful low brow
(Low too for cunning, like enough!) your lips,
A scarlet splash of murder. From them drips
This heart's blood; you have fed your fill on me.
I am exhaust, a pale, wan phantom floating
Aimless in air, than which I am thinner. You

I see, more brilliant, of that sanguine hue
(If anything be true that I can see)
Full fed; you smile, a smile obscenely gloating
On the voluptuous wreck your lust hath wrought.
See the loose languor of precipitate thought
These versicles exhale! How rude the rime!
There is no melody; the tune and time
Are broken. Thirteen centuries ago
They would have said, “Alas! the youth! We know
This devil hath from him plucked the immortal soul.”
“I” say: you have dulled my centres of control!

V.

If you were with me, I were blind to this:
Ready to drain my arteries for your kiss,
Feel your grasp tighten round my ribs until
You crush me in the ecstasies that kill.
Being away and breathing icy air
I am half love, caring not to care;
Half-man again — a mere terrestrial ball

Thus breaking up a spiritual thrall —

Eh, my philosophers? — half-man may yet determine

To get back manhood, shake the tree from bats: {92A}

To change the trope a shade — get rid of vermin

By using William Shakespeare's "Rough on Rats."<<1>>

<<1. Meaning that by study of Shakespeare he would resume higher interests, and baffle the sensual seductions of this siren.>>

VI.

Ah, love, dear love, sole queen of my affection,

Guess you not yet what wheel of thought is spun?

How out of dawn's tumultuous dejection

And not from noon springs up the splendid sun?

Not till the house is swept and garnished well

Rises seven other devils out of hell.

VII.

This is the circle; as the manhood rises

And laughter and rude rhyme engage my pen;

As I stalk forth, a Man among mere men,
The balance changes; all my wit surprises
That I who saw the goblins in your face,
That I who cursed you for the murderous whore
Licking up life as a cat laps its milk,
Now see you for a dream of youth and grace,
Relume the magic aura that begirt you,
Bless you for purity and life — a store!
An ever-running fountain-head of virtue
To heal my soul and buckler it and harden!
Your body is like ivory and silk!
Your lips are like the poppies in the garden!
Your face is like a wreath of flowers to crown me!
Your eyes are wells wherein I long to drown me!
Your hair is like a waterfall above me,
A waterfall of sunset! In your bosom
I hear the racing of a heart to love me.
Your blood is beating like a wind-blown blossom
With rapture that you mingle it in mine!
Your breath is fresh as foam and keen as wine!

Intoxicating glories are your glances!
Your bodily beauty grips my soul and dances {92B}
Its maddening measures in my heart and brain!
Is it that so the wheel may whirl again,
That some dull devil in my ear may show me:
“For John the Baptist’s head — so danced Salome!”?

VIII.

Then, in God’s name forbear! It does not matter.
Life, death, strength, weakness, are but idle chatter.
Nothing is lost or gained, we know too well.
For heaven thy balance as an equal hell.
We discard both; an infinite Universe
Remains; we sum it up — an infinite curse.
So — am I man? I lack my wife’s embrace.
Am I outworn? I see the harlot’s face.
Is the love better and the knowledge worse?
Shall I seek knowledge and count love disgrace?
Where is the profit in so idle a strife?

The love of knowledge is the hate of life.

DIOGENES.

“ALL things are good” exclaimed the boy.

Who taste the sweetmeat find it cloy.

“All things are ill” the dotard sang.

Who stir the serpent feel the fang.

“All is a dream!” the wise man spake.

Who grasp the bubble find it break.

Aye, to all three the saga saith:

There is no joy in life but death.

There is this limit set to lust:

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

O fools and blind that sickly strive

To amass, to glut yourselves, to swive,

To drink to acquire respect and praise: —

These visions perish as you gaze.

Eternal mockery is the real;

Eternal falsehood, the ideal. {93A}

Choose: nay, abstain from choice of these.

Go, be alone, and be at ease!

Retire: renounce: the hermit's cell

Hath all of earth, and nought of hell.

Renouncing all, keep nought enshrined

A lurking serpent is the mind.

Deem not to catch some goodlier gain

Than these; the goodliest prize were pain.

Know that the utmost heaven is void
Of aught save star or asteroid!

Or, an it please thee, idly dream
A God therein, a force supreme,

A heart of love, a crown of light,
An infinite music of delight; —

This, but no more; let fancy sway
But never fix the transient ray!

All things are lawful, so they be
At most a marshalled imagery.

Dream of Earth's glories higher and higher,
Mounting the minaret, desire;

Never attaining to the sky,
Realization — lest thou die.

So dream, possessing all; so dream,

Possessing nothing: I esteem

These twain as one, since dreams they are.

Thus mayst thou journey far and far

And far! to climes unguessed, to seas

Proud with seignorial argosies,

To mountains strange with golden snows,

To gardens green with many a rose,

To secrets past the sense of sense,

Skies virgin of experience,

Untrodden avenues of mind,

Things far from hurrying humankind.

Thus spins out life its splendid charm: —

Live, love, enjoy yet do no harm.

No rose of thought may bear or breed

The poisonous thorn of word and deed. {93B}

Call “homo sapiens” him who thinks;

Talkers and doers — missing links!

... ..

Such songs are twilight’s, when I stretch

My limbs, and wander down to fetch

My water from the cool cascade,

My wood from the enchanted glade,

My berries from the rustling bough: —

Return, and eat, and sleep. Allow

For me, the silence and the night;

Life, peace; and death, a welcome wight.

SAID.

THE spears of the night at her onset

Are lords of the day for a while,

The magical green of the sunset,

The magical blue of the Nile.

Afloat are the gales

In our slumberous sails

On the beautiful breast of the Nile.

We have swooned through the midday, exhausted

By the lips — they are whips — of the sun,

The horizon befogged and befrosted

By the haze and the greys and the dun

Of the whirlings of sand

Let loose on the land

By the wind that is born of the sun.

On the water we stand as a shadow,

A skeleton sombre and thin
Erect on the watery meadow,
As a giant, a lord of the Djinn
Set sentinel over
Some queen and her lover
Beloved on the Gods and the Djinn.

We saw the moon shudder and sink
In a furnace of tremulous blue;
We stood on the mystical brink
Of the day as it sprang to us through
The veil of the night,
And the babe of the light
Was begotten in the caves of the dew. {94A}

My lover and I were awake
When the noise of the dawn in our ears
Burst out like a storm or a snake
Or the rush of the Bedawi spears.
Dawn of desire!

But thy kiss was as fire
To thy lovers and princes and peers.

Then the ruin of night we beheld
As the sun stormed the heights of the sky
With his myriad swords, and compelled
The pale tremblers, the planets, to fly.
He drove from their place
All the stars for a space,
From their bastioned towers in the sky.

Thrilled through to the marrow with heat
We abode (as we glode) on the river.
Every arrow he launched from his seat,
From the white inexhaustible quiver,
Smote us right through,
Smote us and slew,
As we rode on the rapturous river.

Sweet sleep is perfection of love.

To die into dreams of my lover,
To wake with his mouth like a dove
Kissing me over and over!
Better sleep so
Than be conscious, and know
How death hath a charm to discover.

Ah! float in the cool of the gloaming!
Float wide in the lap of the stream
With his mouth ever roving and homing
To the nest where the dove is adream.
Better wake so
Than be thinking, and know
That at best it is only a dream.

So turn up thy face to the stars!
In their peace be at peace for awhile!
Let us pass in their luminous cars
As a sob, as a sigh, as a smile!
Love me and laze

Through the languorous days

On the breast of the beautiful Nile!

“May” 1905. {94B}

EPILOGUE

PRAYER.

THE light streams stronger through the lamps of sense.

Intelligence

Grows as we go. Alas; its icy glimmer

Shows dimmer, dimmer

The awful vaults we traverse. Were the sun

Himself the one

Glory of space, he would but illustrate

The night of Fate.

Are not the hosts of heaven in vain arrayed?

Their light dismayed

Before the vast blind spaces of the sky?

O galaxy

Of thousands upon thousands closely curled!

Your golden world

Incalculably small, its closest cluster

Mere milky lustre

Staining the infinite darkness! Base and blind
Our minion mind
Seeks a great light, a light sufficient, light
Insufferably bright,
Hence hidden for an hour: imagining
This vast vain thing,
We called it God, and Father. Empty hand
And prayer unplanned
Stretch fatuous to the void. Ah! men my friends,
What fury sends
This folly to intoxicate your hearts?
Dread air disparts
Your vital ways from these unsavoury follies,
Black melancholies
Sit straddled on your bended backs. The throne
Of the unknown {95A}
Is fit for children. We are too well ware
How vain is prayer,
How nought is great, since all is immanent,
The vast content

Of all the universe unalterable.

We know too well

How no one thing abides awhile at all,

How all things fall,

Fall from their seat, the lamentable place,

Before their face,

Weary and pass and are no more. So we,

Since hope must be,

Look to the future, to the chance minute

That life may shoot

Some flower at least to blossom in the night,

Since vital light

Is sure to fail us on the hideous way.

What? Must we pray?

Verily, O thou littlest babe, too weak

To stir or speak,

Capable hardly of a thought, yet seed

Of word and deed!

To thine assured fruition we may trust

This weary dust.

We who are old, and palsied, (and so wise!)

Lift up our eyes

To little children, as the storm-tossed bark

Hails in the dark

Some hardly visible harbour light; we hold

The hours of gold

To our own breasts, whose hours are iron and brass: —

So swift they pass

And grind us down: — we hold the wondrous light

Our scattering sight

Yet sees, the one star in a night of woe.

We trust, and so

Lift up our voices in the dying day

Indeed to pray:

“O little hands that are so soft and strong,”

“Lead us along!” {95B}

{full page next line only}

IMAGES OF DEATH

PROLOGUE.

PATCHOULI.

LIKE memories of love they come,
My perfumes in the silver vase:
The fragrant root, the odorous gum,
Myrrh, aloes, or olibanum: —
Anon, like memories of love, they pass!

They pass, and all the wonder-web
Of thought and being is unrolled.
Like sombre tides there flow and ebb
Wonderful things! not to be told:
Beautiful things! and images of gold.

The touch of brown Habiba's breast,
The brimming lip, the cheek of down,

The dainty dovelet in its nest:
These fade, as ever a palimpsest
Like autumn vanishes from gold to brown.

Zuleikha, on whose marble knees
My bearded head is lazily lain,
Shows like some stirring of the breeze
Fluctuant in the popped grain,
No more at all: the vulgar sense is slain.

Of all the world alone abides
The faint perfume of Patchouli,
That subtle death in love; it glides
Across the opening dream, derides
The fetich folly, immortality.

Awake, O dream! Let distant bells
And vague muezzins haunt the ear,
Gaunt camels kneel by dusky wells,
Imagination greyly hear:

Allahu akbar! Allahu kabir!

Over inhospitable sands

Let the simoom its columns spin!

In snowy vales, untrodden lands,

Let there be storm, and bearded bands

Of robbers pass around the bubbling skin! {96A}

Let there be caves of treasure rare

Deep hidden in sepulchral seas;

And birds unheard-of darken air

With royal wings, like argosies

Sailing beneath magnificent promontories!

Let Caliphs mete fantastic law

And ebon eunuchs swing the sword

So swift, so curved, — let voiceless awe

Sit on the palace dome, to draw

Some god's destruction on its smiling lord!

May many a maiden comely clad
Revolve in convoluted curls,
Till from each pliant pose I had
(By virtue of her wondrous whirls)
The illusion of a thousand dancing-girls!

Let harlots robed in gold and green
Sit slowly waving ivory plumes
And wings of palm; the while their queen
Lurks in some horror-house unseen,
Damned to be smothered in divine perfumes!

Let there be scenes of blood and pain,
Some Slav beneath the Cossack knout,
Some mother ripped, some baby slain;
Let lust move silently about: —
Soft laughter hid in all, song whispering out!

Then let these things of form decay,
Some subtler dream dissolve their form,

As I have seen a cloudlet lay
Its forehead on the sea, and pray
Some idle prayer to sunset, or the storm!

Yea! as a cloud in worship-trance
Swoons in invisible delight,
Let slave and king, let death and dance
Shake off their forms, and clothe their light
In shrouds of sepulchre, the starless night! {96B}

Let song and cry leave tune and tone,
Perish uncried and die unsung!
Nature, the monotonic moan
Roared by the river, thunder alone: —
The Hoang-Ho, its note, the monstrous Kung!<<1>>

<<1. The fundamental tone in Chinese music; supposed to be given by the
Hoang-Ho river, according to Professor Rice.>>

Or let Kailasha's<<1>> godded peak

Summon the oread and the gnome
To leave their toils, the word to speak
That shakes its azure-splitting dome
With the reverberation — listen! — Aum!

<<1. Sacred mountain in the Himalaya, the abode of Shiva.>>

Let olive fail, and mangostin!
O'erturn the dark forbidden draught!
Give me the taste, the taste unclean
Of human flesh and blood that mean
Some infinite horror to the light that laughed!

So let the scent of lily and rose,
Of jasmine, taggara,<<1>> pass away!
Let patchouli, patchouli, repose
My nostrils with your odour grey,
Dead darlings exquisite in your decay!

<<1. An eastern perfume. “Cf.” Max Muller’s Dhammapada.>>

So, silk and velvet, fur and skin,
Your sensuous touch shall quit me quite:
I am at swiving strain with sin —
I’ll touch the stars, the blood run thin
From the torn breast of Night, my mother Night.

Nor shall the mind revoke at ease
These myriad cressets from the sun;
Constrained in sober destinies
Thought’s river shall its ripples run
Into the one, the one, the one, the one. {97A}

Bursting the universe, a grip
Girds me to god; aha! the bliss!
Begone, frail tortures wrung from whip,
Weak joys sucked hard from leman’s lip,
Ye are nought at all, are nought at all, in this!

... ..

But brown Habiba's fawn-wide gaze
And white Zuleikha's drowsy glance
Woo me to waking unto day's
Delight from night's unmeasured trance: —
To drink to dally, to desire, to dance.

Ah! beautiful and firm your hips,
Habib! ah! coolthsome your caress,
Zuleikha! soft your honey lips —
The tongue of pleasure subtly sips
The wine that age distils, and calls distress.

Enough! when all is ended, when
The popped pleasure purples pain —
Death — shall I laugh or smile? Amen!
I'll wake, one last fond cup to drain,
And then — to sleep again, to sleep again!

KALI.<<1>>

<<1. The most popular form, in Bengal, of Sakti, the Hindu Isis.>>

THERE is an idol in my house

By whom the sandal alway steams.

Alone, I make a black carouse

With her to dominate my dreams.

With skulls and knives she keeps control

(O Mother Kali!) of my soul.

She is crowned with emeralds like leaves,

And rubies flame from either eye;

A rose upon her bosom heaves,

Turquoise and lapislazuli.

She hath a kirtle like a maid: —

Amethyst, amber, pearl, and jade! {97B}

Her face is fashioned like a moon;

Her breasts are tongues of pointed jet;

Her belly of opal fairly hewn;
And round about her neck is set
The holy rosary, skull by skull,
Polished and grim and beautiful!

This jewelled shape of gold and bronze
Is seated on my bosom's throne;
She takes my mused orisons
To her, to her, to her alone.
Oh Kali, Kali, Kali, quell
This hooded hate, O Queen of Hell!

Her ruby-studded brow is calm;
Her eyes shine like some sleepy flood;
Her breast is oliban and balm;
Her tongue lolls out, a-dripping blood;
She swings my body to and fro;
She breaks me on the wheel of woe!

To her eternal rapture seems

Mere nature; underneath the crown
Of dusky emeralds there streams
A river of bliss to sluice me down
With blood and tears, to drown my thought,
To bring my being into nought.

The cruel teeth, the steady sneer,
The marvellous lust of her, I bring
Unto my body bright and clear
(Dropped poison in a water spring!)
To fill me with the utmost sense
Of some divine experience.

For who but she, the adulterous queen,
Made earth and heaven with all its stars,
The storm, the hunger epicene,
The raging at invisible bars,
The hideous cruelty of the whole? —
These are of Kali, O my soul!

The sterile force of bronze and gold
Bends to my passion, as it grips
With feverish claws the metal cold,
And burns upon the brazen lips
That, parted like a poppy bud,
Have gemmed curves like moons of blood. {98A}

The mazes of her many arms
Delude the eye; they seem to shift
As if they spelled mysterious charms
Whereby some tall grey ship should drift
Out to a windless, tideless sea
Motionless from eternity.

This then I seek, O woman-form!
O god embowelled in curves of bronze!
The shuddering of a sudden storm
To mix me with thy minions
The lost, who wait through endless night,
And wait in vain, to see the light.

For I am utterly consumed
In thee, in thee am broken up.
The life upon my lips that bloomed
Is crushed into a deadly cup,
Whose devilish spirit squats and gloats
Upon the thirst that rots our throats.

Gape wide, O hideous mouth, and suck
This heart's blood, drain it down, expunge
This sweltering life of mire and muck!
Squeeze out my passions as a sponge,
Till nought is left of terrene wine
But somewhat deathless and divine!

Not by a faint and fairy tale
We shadow forth the immortal way.
No symbols exquisitely pale
Avail to lure the secrets grey
Of his endeavour who proceeds

By doing to abolish deeds.

Not by the pipings of a bird
In skies of blue on fields of gold,
But by a fierce and loathly word
The abomination must be told.
The holy work must twist its spell
From hemp of madness, grown in hell.

Only by energy and strife
May man attain the eternal rest,
Dissolve the desperate lust of life
By infinite agony and zest.
Thus, O my Kali, I divine
The golden secret of thy shrine! {98B}

Death from the universal force
Means to the forceless universe
Birth. I accept the furious course,
Invoke the all-embracing curse.

Blessing and peace beyond may be

When I annihilate the “I.”

Therefore, O holy mother, gnash

Thy teeth upon my willing flesh!

Thy chain of skulls wild music clash!

Thy bosom bruise my own afresh!

Sri Maharani!<<1>> draw my breath

Into the hollow lungs of death!

<<1. Holy Queen — one of the many thousand titles of the Goddess.>>

There is no light, nor any motion.

There is no mass, nor any sound.

Still, in the lampless heart of ocean,

Fasten me down and hold me drowned

Within thy womb, within thy thought,

Where there is nought — where there is nought!

THE JILT.

“WHO is that slinkard moping down the street,
That youth — scarce thirty — bowed like sixty” “Oh,
A woman jilted him.” “Absurd!” “Conceit!
Some youths take life — are Puritans, you know!”

I heard it, sitting in the window — glowed,
Rushed to my wife and kissed her. Lithe and young
The rapture of some ardent madness flowed;
And — bye-and-bye — its miracle found tongue.

... ..

Guess, guess the secret why I burn for you
These years so cold to woman as I was!
Guess why your laugh, your kiss, your touch run through
My body, as it were a tuned glass! {99A}

You cannot guess? — false devil that you are!
To Cruelty's add calm's analysis!

You love me? Yes — then crown me a bearded Sar

Bull-breasted by my sleek Semiramis!<<1>>

<<1. Queen of Assyria, famous for glory and debauchery. Sar is the royal title.>>

Did you not hear those men below? They spoke

Of one I think you have forgotten long;

Talked of his ruined life — half as a joke —

But I — But I — it is my whole heart's song!

I love you when I think of his pale lips

Twitching, and all his curls of gold awry;

Your smile of poison as he sighs and sips;

Your half-scared laughter as his heart-beats die —

Let him creep on, a shattered, ruined thing!

A ship dismasted on a dreadful sea!

And you — afar — some word of largesse fling

Pitifully worded for more cruelty!

His death lends savour to our passionate life;

His is the heart I taste upon your tongue;

His death-spasms our love-spasms, my wife;

His death-songs are the love-songs that you sung!

Ah! Sweet, I love you as I see him stagger

On with hell's worm a-nuzzling to his heart,

With your last letter, like a poisoned dagger,

Biting his blood, burning his bones apart.

Ah! Sweet, each kiss I drink from you is warm

With the dear life-blood of a man — a man!

The scent of murder lures me, like a charm

Tied by some subtlety Canidian.

Ay! as you suck my life out into bliss,

Its holier joy is in the deadlier thirst

That drank his life out into the abyss

Of torture endless, endless and accurst. {99B}

I know him little; liking what I know.

But you — you offer me his flesh and blood.

I taste it — never another vintage owe,

Nor bid me sup upon another food!

This is our marriage; firmer than the root

Of love or lust could plant our joy, my wife,

We stand in this, the purple-seeded fruit

Of yon youth's fair and pitiable life.

... ..

Do I not fear that you may treat me so?

One day your passion slake itself somehow,

Seek vigour from another murder? No!

You harlot, for I mean to kill you — now.

THE EYES OF PHARAOH.

DEAD Pharaoh's eyes from out the tomb
Burned like twin planets ruby-red.
Enswathed, enthroned, the halls of gloom
Echo the agony of the dead.

Silent and stark the Pharaoh sate:
No breath went whispering, hushed or scared.
Only that red incarnate hate
Through pylon after pylon flared.

As in the blood of murdered things
The affrighted augur shaking skries
Earthquake and ruinous fate of kings,
Famine and desperate destinies,

So in the eyes of Pharaoh shone
The hate and loathing that compel
In death each damned minion
Of Set, <<1>> the accursed lord of Hell.

<<1. The ass-headed deity of the Egyptians, slayer of Osiris.>>

Yea! in those globes of fire there sate
Some cruel knowledge closely curled
Like serpents in those halls of hate,
Palaces of the Underworld. {100A}

But in the hell-glow of those eyes
The ashen skull of Pharaoh shone
White as the moonrays that surprise
The invoking Druse on Lebanon.

Moreover pylon shouldered round
To pylon an unearthly tune,
Like phantom priests that strike and sound
Sinister sistrons at the moon.

And death's insufferable perfume
Beat the black air with golden fans
As Turkis rip a Nubian's womb

With damascened yataghans.

Also the taste of dust long dead

Of ancient queens corrupt and fair

Struck through the temple, subtly sped

By demons dominant of the air.

Last, on the flesh there came a touch

Like sucking mouths and stroking hands

That laid their foul alluring smutch

Even to the blood's mad sarabands.

So did the neophyte that would gaze

Into dead Pharaoh's awful eyes

Start from incalculable amaze

To clutch the initiate's place and prize.

He bore the blistering thought aloft:

It blazed in battle on his plume:

With sage and warrior enfeoffed,<<1>>

He rushed alone through tower and tomb.

<<1. Accompanied by those sages and warriors who owed him feudal service.>>

The myriad men, the cohorts armed,
Are shred like husks: the ensanguine brand
Leaps like a flame, a flame encharmed
To fire the pyramid heaven-spanned

Wherein dead Pharaoh sits and stares
Swathed in the wrappings of the tomb,
With eyes whose horror flits and flares
Like corpse-lights glimmering in the gloom, {100B}

Till all's a blaze, one roar of flame,
Death universal, locked and linked: —
Aha! one names the awful Name —
The twin red planets are extinct.

BANZAI!

THERE lept upon a breach and laughed

A royally maniac man.

A bitter craft

Is mine, he saith,

O soldiers of Japan!

I am the brothel-knave of death,

The grimly courtesan.

Now who will up and kiss her lips,

Or grip her breast and bone?

The subtle life she shears and snips

Is harder gained than gone;

The lover's laughter whom she clips

Is but a dying groan.

She lieth not on a gilded bed

In the city without the city.<<1>>

One kiss is hers full rank and red —

Do you sip at her lip? Hell hangs on her fangs!

She loves; love laughs at pity!

<<1. The prostitutes of Japan live in a city by themselves, whenever they re sufficiently numerous to make this practicable.>>

Then who will up to taste her mouth?

Who on her mount and ride?

Look to the North, the West, the South!

There is carnage vulture-eyed.

Then who will suck the breath of death,

The swift and glittering bride?

The bride that clings as a snare with springs

To the warrior's stricken side?

A shudder struck the hidden men

As the maniac's mouthings ceased.

Then, kindling, rose a roar:

“Spread, spread the furtive feast!

The wine of agony pour!

The fruit of valour pluck!

The meat of murder suck! {101A}

Sweet are the songs of her throat!

Sort are the strokes of her fan!

She hath love by rhyme and rote,

She is subtle and quick to man!

She danceth? Say she doth float!

Rapture is gold in her eyes!

She sigheth honey-sweet sighs

Of the glory of Japan!

Red are her lips and large,

The delicate courtesan!”

Then the officer’s voice

Caught in his throat for joy.

Like birds in spring that rejoice,

Clearly and softly the boy

Whispered: “Now, let us charge!”

Then leaping sheer o’er trench and mound,

They rise as a single man;
They bound like antelopes over the ground
For the glory of Japan.

With glittering steel they wheel — they reel?
They are steady again and straight!
The dull brute Christians red with the weal
Of the knout — they will not wait!
The ringing cries of the victors peal
In, in at the captured gate!

... ..

Then o'er the field the maniac passed
And closed the dead men's eyes.
“They re sleeping close with death at last!”
The wanton warrior cries.
But he who saw the dead man's jaw
Grind at the last was aware
That the harlot's kiss was Paradise
That the soldier tasted there.

And beyond the magnificent joy of death

Shears through the sky, as a flame

Ripping the air, the lightning breath

Of the nation's resonant fame.

Hail! to the Hachiman<<1>> deed well done!

To the virile strength of a man!

To the stainless blaze of the Rising Sun

The glory of Japan! {101B}

<<1. Japanese God of War.>>

LE JOUR DES MORTS.

AT Paris upon Dead Man's Day

I danced into the cemetery.

The air was cool; the sun was gay;

The scent of the revolving clay

Made me most wondrous merry.

Earth, after an agonising bout,

Had swallowed up a widow clean.

The issue hung for long in doubt: —

— Oh! anybody can make out

The mystery I mean.

The dead were dancing with the worms;

The live were laughing with their lemans;

The dead-alive were making terms

With God, and notaries, and germs,

With house-agents and demons.

All Paris keeping sacrament

Of musing or of melancholy,

Impatient of the next event,

To spend, to barter, to be spent; —

I chuckled at the folly.

“I would that I were dead and damned,”

Thinks every wiser human.

“Corpses have room, and men are jammed;

Those offer food, and these are crammed: —

And cheaper, too, is woman!”

I, being neither God nor ghost,

A mere caprice of matter,

Hop idly in the hideous host,

Content to chaff the uttermost,

To cackle and to chatter.

They bring their wreaths to deck the dead,

As skipping-ropes that devils use them.

One through the immortelles perks his head.

[These sights to ghosties are as bread;

The luckless living lose them.]

Grotesque and grim the pageant struts;

We sit a-straddle on the crosses.

Our soulless missiles take for butts

The passers' hats, or in their guts

Distrub their dinner's process. {102A}

Thus one man's work is one man's play;

The melancholy help the merry.

All tread the ordered stupid way

At Paris, upon Dead Man's Day,

In Pere Lachaise his cemetery.

AVE MORS.

O VIRGIN! O my sister! Hear me, death!

The tainted kisses of the harlot life

Sicken me; hers is foul and fevered breath,

This noisome woman I have made my wife.

She lies asweat, aslime. O hear me, thou!

Wash with thy tears this desecrated brow!

With cool chaste kisses cleanse me! Lay me out

Wrapped in a spotless winding-sheet, and soothe

These nerves ill nuzzled by the black swine's snout

With thine eternal anodyne of truth!

The foul beast grunts and snorts; but hear me, death!

Thy wings are wind-white as her hoofs are dunged.

Thy songs are faint and pale with honey breath,

Honey and poppy! as her mouth hot-tongued

Spews out its hideous list. O loathed life!

Thou nameless horror of the bestial strife

Of love and hate. I straitly charge thee quit

This bed of nastiness, this putrid sea;

For not by any amorous tricks of wit

Shalt thou regain thine empire over me.

O virgin, O my sister! Hear me, death!

Thou hast a sleep compelling soul and mind.

Thine is the sweet insufferable breath

That comes like Bessarabia's twilight wind

To bring a quiet coolth from day's long heat,

Peace to the belly gorged with blood and meat, {102B}

Stars for the sun that smote, for fire slow streams,

For the simoom the zephyr's cooling kiss,
Deep sleep at last from all the evil dreams,
And rest, the possibility of bliss.

THE MORIBUND.<<1>>

<<1. A meaning maybe found for this poem by any really profound student
of the Qabalah.>>

I.

THE Seven Wise Men of Martaban<<1>>

Sate round the dying man.

<<1. Gulf of Martaban, South of Burma.>>

They were so still, one would have said:

If he were dying, they were dead!

The first was aged; in his beard

He muttered never a weird.

The next was beautiful and gay:

He had no word to say.

The third was wroth and rusty red,

Yet not a word he said.

The fourth was open and bold:

His silence girt him like fine gold.

The fifth was ruddy and fair of face;

He held his tongue a space.

The sixth was many-coloured, but

He kept his lips well shut.

The last was like a full great moon;

He knew, but uttered not, his rune.

II.

Now when the time was fully come

The dying man was dumb,

But with his failing hand did make

A sign: my heart doth ache. {103A}

At that kingly man, the fourth,

Rose up and spat against the North.

Then made the dying man a sign:

My head is running like strong wine.

The aged man lifted his mouth

And spat against the South.

He clutched his throat in pang of death,

As if he cried for breath.

Whereat the second beat his breast

And frowned upon the West.

Then the man sighed, as if to say:

The glow of life is gone away.

At this the rusty and wroth released

His eyes against the East.

Then the man touched his navel, as

He felt his life thence pass.

Also he smote his spine; the base

Of life burnt up apace.

Then rose the many-coloured sage;

He was right sad with age.

With him arose the ruddy and fair;

He was right debonair.

They twain to upper air and lower
Advanced the eyes of power.

Ay! but above the dead man's head
A lotus-flower was spread.

Thence dripped the Amrita, whereby
Life learneth not to die.

The seventh in silence tended it
Against the horror of the pit.

III.

Thus in a cage of wisdom lay
The dead man, live as they. {103B}

They hold him sacred from the sun,
From death and dissolution.

Within the charmed space is nought

Possible unto thought.

There in their equilibrium

They float — how still, how numb!

There must they rest, there will they stay

Innocent of the judgment day.

Remote from cause, effect retires.

Act slays its dams and sires.

There is no hill, there is not pit.

They have no mark to hit.

It is enough. Closed is the sphere.

There is no more to hear.

They perish not; they do not thrive.

They are at rest, alive,

The Seven Wise Men of Martaban;

And, moribund, the man.

THE BEAUTY AND THE

BHIKKHU:

A TALE OF THE TENTH IMPURITY.

(“From the Pali.”)

I.

LISTEN! The venerable monk pursued
His path with downcast eyes; his thought revolved
Ever in closed coils serenely screwed
About the Tenth Impurity. Dissolved
All vision of his being but of one
Thing only, his sun-whitened skeleton.

II.

A dainty lady sick of simple life,
Chained to the cold couch of some vapid man,
Put on her jewels, off the world of wife,

Resolved to play the painted courtesan, {104A}

So ran along the village path. Her laughter

Wooed all the world to follow tumbling after.

III.

Then when she met the venerable monk

Her shamelessness desired a leprous wreath

Of poisonous flowers, seducing him. He shrunk

Back from her smile, seeing her close white teeth.

Bones! he exclaimed, and meditating that,

From a mere Bhikkhu grew an Arahāt.

IV.

Her husband found her gone, in fury followed

Lashing the pale path with his purple feet,

Heedless of stones and serpents. Hail! he halloaed

To the new Rahan<<1>> whom he bowed to greet

Kissing the earth: O holy master, say

If a fair female hath passed by this way!

<<1. Arahata.>>

V.

The Bhikkhu blessed the irritated man.

Then the slow sloka<<1>> serpentine began:

“Friend! neither man nor woman owns

This being’s high perception, owed

Only to Truth; nor beams nor stones

Support the Arahata’s abode.

Who grasps one truth, beholds one light,

Becomes that truth, that light; discedes

From dark and deliquescent night,

From futile thoughts and fatuous deeds.

Your girl, your gems, your mournful tones

Irk not perfection with their goad.

One thing I know — a set of bones

Is travelling on upon this road!”

<<1. Stanza.>>

{104B}

{full page at head of next}

IMMORTALITY

“From this tale, Callicles, which I have heard and believe, I draw the following inferences: — Death, if I am right, is in the first place the separation from one another of two things, soul and body; nothing else. And after they are separated they retain their several natures, as in life; the body keeps the same habit, and the results of treatment or accident are distinctly visible in it: for example, he who by nature or training or both was a tall man while he was alive, will remain as he was, after he is dead; and the fat man will remain fat; and so on; and the dead man who in life had a fancy to have flowing hair, will have flowing hair. And if he was marked with the whip and had the prints of the scourge, or of wounds in him when he was alive, you might see the same in the dead body; and if his limbs were broken or misshapen when he was alive, the same appearance would be visible in the dead. And in a word, whatever was the habit of the body during life would be distinguishable after death, either perfectly, or in a great measure and for a certain time. And I should imagine that this is equally true of the soul, Callicles; when a man is stripped of the body, all the natural or acquired affections of the soul are laid open to view.” — PLATO, “Gorgias.” {columns resume}

IMMORTALITY.

I.

I MOVED. remote from fear and pain

The white worms revelled in my brain.

Who travelled live may travel dead;
The soul's no tenant of the head.
They had hanged my body by the neck;
Bang went the trap. A little speck
Shot idly upon consciousness
Unconscious of the head's distress
When with dropped jaw the body swung
So queer and limp; the purple tongue
Shooting out swollen and awry.
Men cheered to see the poisoner die.
Not he! He grinned one visible grin,
The last; then, muffled in his sin,
He lived and moved unseen of those
Nude souls that masquerade in clothes,
Confuse the form and the sensation,
And have the illusion, incarnation.
I bore myself. Death was so dull.
The dead are strangely beautiful
To the new-comer; it wears off.

II.

They told me I was damned. The Shroff<<1>>

Gave me ten dollars Mex. (For ease

Of English souls the dead Chinese {105A}

Are taxed) to pay my way in hell.

On one pound sterling one lives well.

For luxuries are cheaply paid

Since Satan introduced Free Trade;

And necessities — woe is me! —

Are furnished to the damned soul free.

<<1. Money-changer. Mexican dollars were long the sole currency on the Chinese coast.>>

III.

God's hell, Earth's heaven, are not so far.

Dinner brought oysters, caviar,

Anchovies, truffles, curried rabbit

(Bad for the apoplectic habit),

While ancient brandy and champagne

Washed down the dainties. Once again
I seemed to haunt the Continental.<<1>>
A saucy little elemental
Flitted across; I heard it sneer;
“You won’t get water, though, I fear.”
That’s hell all over. Good-bye, greens,
Water, cold mutton, bread, and beans!
They feed us well, like gentlemen,
On chilis, seasoned with cayenne.
Worse, one must finish every course.
‘S truth, I had rather eat boiled horse!

<<1. Smart restaurant in London.>>

IV.

My first friend was an aged monk.
He fed on rice and water. Sunk
His cheeks and cold his blood. You see
The fool was a damned soul like me; {105B}
He had starved himself on earth in hope

In heaven to banquet with the Pope,
With God and Christ on either hand
And all the angels' choral band
Playing sweet music. O the fool
To treat earth as a baby's school!
In hell one lives as one is wont.
"Punch" said to would-be bridegrooms: Don't!
Might I advise the same to those
Shapeless and senseless embryos
Who seek to live? Yes, God is wise
Enough to set a snare for lies
As well as truths. The soul content
On earth in his own element
Will be content from flesh released.
But he who strives to be a beast
Or strives to be a god; would gain
Long bliss for a few hours of pain,
Or struggles for no matter what,
Continues. I would rather not.

V.

That puzzle's grief I did not share

Because on earth I did not care.

I met a grave philosopher —

'Had sought most nobly not to err

Probing God's Nature. See his lobes

Swell with hell's torment! Still he probes

The same fool's problem. I explain

The simple state of things in vain.

He chose to study God, and die in it.

He made his bed, and he must lie in it.

VI.

After my dinner I debate

(Urged to the task by habit's Fate)

The project of a poisoning.

In hell one finds that everything

Is easy. Poison to my hand;

A cunning potion cool and bland

Fit to administer the draught: —

How like old times! I nodded, laughed,
Poisoned my neighbour, a young girl
Sent here for marrying an earl.
Of course she did not die. But then
On earth I never killed my men; {106A}
They only die whom one forgets.
Remember that each action sets
Its mark still deeper in the mind!

VII.

O piteous lot of humankind
Whose history repeats itself!
Dinner is cleared by gnome and elf;
I pay the bill, take Baal's receipt,
And stroll off smoking. Soon I meet
The fairest foulest whore that burns.
High feeding pays: desire returns.
She willing (for a copper rin)<<1>>
For any ecstasy of sin
Gaily embraces me. A room

Starts up in the half-light, half-gloom,
Perfectly purposed for debauch.
In mirrors shines a wicked nautch,
And on the floor Hawaian bells
Rave in a hula-hula<<2>> — Hell's!
Fragonard, Rops, had lined the walls
with wild indecent bacchanals,
And bawdy photographs attest
The Devil's taste to be the best.

<<1. Japanese coin worth a small portion of a penny.>>

<<2. The indecent dance of the South Seas.>>

VIII.

I did not sleep at all: but she: —
O face of deathless agony!
O torture of hell's worm, to wrest
From peace that miserable breast!
Me, me she strikes in mid-delight
Staggered and shattered at the sight,

The moment that she slept. I laughed
Thereat: the bowl I idly quaffed
Was nectar: she amused me, so.
You see, my friend. I did not know.
I also slept at morn. Then, then,
A low voice whispered in the den:
“Lucky young fellow! Brave and clever!
This sort of thing goes on for ever.”

IX.

On earth I dreaded impotence,
Age, death. You see, I had no sense.
Best be an old man ere you die;
They wish insensibility, {106B}
So are their pains the duller. Hell
Is managed infinitely well
From the peculiar standpoint of
A god who says that he is Love.

X.

That was the poet Crowley's point.
I think "his" nose is out of joint;
He bet on justice being done;
And here — it's really rather fun! —
The unlucky devil devil-spurred
Writes, climbs, does Yoga like a bird;
Just as he was before he "died,"
The ass is never satisfied.
He has only been here forty days,
And has already writ six plays,
Made eight new passes, one new peak,
Is bound to do two more this week,
And as for meditation! Hard he
Soars from Dhyana to Samadhi;
Writes wildly sloka after sloka,
Storms the Arupa-Brahma-Loka,
Disdains the mundane need of Khana,<<1>>
Slogs off, like Buddha, to Nibbana: —
Poor devil!

<<1. Dinner.>>

XI.

One thing makes me weep.

He was wise one way, and scorned sleep.

Wherefore he sleeps not, does not hear

That still small dreadful voice of fear.

Therefore he realises not

That this is his eternal lot.

Therefore he suffers not at all.

XII.

Luckier is he than one, a small

Wild girl, whose one desire on earth

Was to — be blunt with it! — give birth

To children. Here she's fairly in it!

Pumps out her fourteen babes a minute;

Her (under chloroform) the voice

Bids to be gleesome and rejoice:

“No sterile God balks “thine” endeavour.

This sort of thing goes on for ever.” {107A}

XIII.

I was a humorous youth enough

On earth: I laughed when things were rough.

Therefore, I take it, now in Hades

The funny side of things — and ladies —

Engages my attention. Well!

You know enough of life in Hell.

I was an altruist, my brothers!

My life one long kind thought for others:

For me six maidens wear the willow: —

Poisoning is a peccadillo.

Hence I’m disposed to give advice

Simple, if possibly not nice;

Shun life! an awkward task and deep.

But if you cannot, then — shun sleep!

(Suppose I thus had prophesied,

Gone to my wife to bed, and died!)

EPILOGUE.

THE KING-GHOST.

THE King-Ghost is abroad. His spectre legions
Sweep from their icy lakes and bleak ravines
Unto these weary and untrodden regions
Where man lies penned among his Might-have-beens.
Keep us in safety, Lord,
What time the King-Ghost is abroad!

The King-Ghost from his grey malefic slumbers
Awakes the malice of his bloodless brain
He marshals the innumerable numbers
Of shrieking shapes on the sepulchral plain.
Keep us, for Jesu's sake,
What time the King-Ghost is awake! {107B}

The King-Ghost wears a crown of hopes forgotten;
Dead loves are woven in his ghastly robe;
Bewildered wills and faiths grown old and rotten
And deeds undared his sceptre, sword, and globe.
Keep us, O Mary maid,
What time the King-Ghost goes arrayed!

The Hell-Wind whistles through his plumeless pinions;
Clanks all that melancholy host of bones;
Fate's principalities and Death's dominions
Echo the drear discord, the tuneless tones.
Keep us, dear God, from ill,
What time the Hell-Wind whistles shrill.

The King-Ghost hath no music but their rattling;
No scent but death's grown faint and fugitive;
No light but this their leprous pallor battling
Weakly with night. Lord, shall thee dry bones live?
O keep us in the hour

Wherein the King-Ghost hath his power! {108Atop}

The King-Ghost girds me with his gibbering creatures,

My dreams of old that never saw the sun.

He shows me, in a mocking glass, their features,

The twin fiends “Might-have-been” and “Should-have-done.”

Keep us, by Jesu’s ruth,

What time the King-Ghost grins the truth!

The King-Ghost boasts eternal usurpature;

For in this pool of tears his fingers fret

I had imagined, by enduring nature,

The twin gods “Thus-will-I” and “May-be-yet.”

God, keep us most from ill,

What time the King-Ghost grips the will!

Silver and rose and gold what flame resurges?

What living light pours forth in emerald waves?

What inmost Music drowns the clamourous dirges?

— Shrieking they fly, the King-Ghost and his slaves.

Lord, let Thy Ghost indwell,

And keep us from the power of Hell!

Amen. {108Btop, full page follows}

Kneel down, dear maiden o'mine, and let your eyes

Get knowledge with a soft and glad surprise!

Who would have thought you would have had it in you?

Say nothing! On the contrary, continue!

{108}

RODIN IN RIME

1907

AUTHOR'S NOTE

AUGUSTE RODIN AND THE NOMENCLATURE OF HIS WORKS
{columns resume}

A STUDY IN SPITE

WHEN illegitimate criticism is met with a smart swing on the point of the jaw, and has subsided into an unpleasant and unpitiful heap; when its high-well-born brother has shaken hands — not without many years of friendly sparring — with the new pugilist, all his family are very disappointed, for Society takes no notice of them in its (to them unseemly) adulation of the rising star. Their unfraternal feeling may even lead them to employ a sandbagger and a dark night to rid them of this dreamer Joseph.

In the case of the success, in the heavy weights, of the Meudon Chicken (M. Rodin will forgive us for the lengths to which we carry our analogy), envy has given up hope even of sandbags, and is now engaged in the ridiculous task of attempting to disconcert the eye of the Fancy Boy by flipping paper pellets at him across the arena. They do not reach him, it is true; but as I, who happen to be sitting in a back row, admiring the clean, scientific sequences of rib-punchers, claret-tappers, &c., &c., recently received one of these missiles in the eye, my attention was called to the disturber. I will now do my part as a law-abiding citizen and take my boot to the offender, as a warning to him and all of his kidney. I shall not mention his name: that he would enjoy: that is perhaps what he hoped. I will merely state that he is one of those unwashed and oleaginous individuals who are a kind of Merodack-Jauneau without the Merodack, “i.e.”, without the gleam of intention in their work which to the lay mind redeems even the most grotesque imbecility of technique, and the most fatuous ignorance of all subjects connected or unconnected with art. By philosophy he understands “Science and Health”: by poetry Lake Harris or Eric Mackay: he expects a painting to tell a pretty story or to upset a metaphysical position. His conversation is {109A} like that of Planchette: or if William Horton were vocal — But Heaven forbid!

What he said, though parrot-talk, caught up in some fifth-rate sculptor’s studio, no doubt, had so much truth in it, carefully concealed by the lying misinterpretation he had put on it, that, as I said, the pellet hit me. This was

what it came to. Rodin's works, it is said, "mean" nothing. He makes a study: people see it in his studio: A. goes up and says to the Master: "Ah, how beautiful," &c., "ad nauseam" — "I suppose it is 'Earth and the Spring.'" B. follows, and suggests "Hercules and Cacus"; C. thinks "The Birth of a Flower"; D. calls it "Despair"; E. varies it with "Moses breaking the Tables of the Law"; F. Cocks his eye warily, and asks if it is not meant for "Mary Magdalene"; G. votes for "The Beetle-Crusher and his Muse," and so on, day after day, till Z. comes round and recognises it for Balzac. Rodin shakes him warmly by both hands: Balzac it is for all time — and one ceases to wonder that it was rejected!

Now, of course, this paper pellet is in any case very wide of its mark. Rodin can easily sculp himself a tabernacle and go in with Whistler — and even drag in Velasquez; but here am I illustrating, however feebly, the Works, in Poetry: and poetry cannot, unfortunately, ever be pure technique. I have long wished to write "A Sonnet in W. and P." (with Whip as the keynote); a triolet in U. and K.; an ode in S. Sh. Sw. Sp. and Str. — and so on; but people would merely say "Nonsense Verses" (so they do now, some of them!). So that my work is liable to the most vital misinterpretation. My best friend tells the utterly false, utterly funny story about me that I wrote one sonnet for "L'Ange dechu" and another for "Icare."

The real heart of the attack is, of course, against Rodin's intention, and it is my object to show what rubbish it is, even granting the literary basis of criticism to be valid. I am {109B} given to understand that something of the sort described above does sometimes take place in the naming of a statue (of the allegorical description especially). But that is a question of felicity, of epigram; never of subject.

In "La Main de Dieu," for example, the meaning is obvious, and not to be wrested or distorted. What does it matter if we call it as at present, or ("a") The Hand of Creation,

("b") The First Lovers,

("c") The Security of Love,

("d") The invisible Guard

— anything in reason? These are only ways of looking at one idea, and as you are theologian, poet, lover or mystic, so you will choose. And it is the Master's merit, not his fault, if his conception is so broad-based as to admit of different interpretations. The phenomenon is possible because Rodin is the master and not the slave of his colossal technique. The naming of a masterpiece is perhaps harder work than the producing it, and Rodin begin a sculptor and not an illicit epigram distiller, is perfectly justified in picking up what he can from the witty and gifted people who throng his studio as much as he will let them.

Let there be an end, then, not to the sordid and snarling jealousy which greatness must inevitably excite, not to the simian tooth-grindings which must always accompany the entrance of a man into the jungle, but to this peculiarly senseless and sidelong attack. One accepts the lion as a worthy antagonist; one can enjoy playing with a fine dog; one can sympathise with sincere and honourable labour, though it be in vain; {110Atop} one ignores laughingly the attack of tiny and infuriated puppies; but there are insects so loathsome, so incredibly disgusting, worms whose sight is such an abomination, whose stink is so crapulous and purulent, that, ignoring their malignity, but simply aware of their detestable presence, the heel is ground down on one generous impulse, and the slimy thing is no more. Decomposition, already far advanced, may be trusted speedily to resolve the remains into the ultimate dust of things, mere matter for some new and hopefuller avatar.

Such a worm are you, M. D—, who once, as above described, voided your noxious nastiness in my presence, trusting to conciliate me by the intended compliment that my poems on Rodin were from myself and not from him, and that any other statues would have done as well.

I am as little susceptible to flattery as I am to the venomous dicta of spite and envy, and I resent that when I see it employed as the medium for this.

Without your compliment, M. D—, I might have left you to crawl on, lord of your own muck-heap; with it, I take this opportunity of stamping on you.

NOTE. — I had intended<<1>> to include reproductions of photographs of those few statues which I have written upon; but I prefer to pay my readers the compliment of supposing that they possess the originals in either bronze or marble. {110Btop. Full page next}

<<1. “I.e.,” in the large first edition, which contains seven of M. Rodin’s water-colours. “Vide” Bibliographical Note.>>

RODIN IN RIME

{columns resume}

FRONTISPIECE

RODIN.

HERE is a man! For all the world to see

His work stands, shaming Nature. Clutched, combined

In the sole still centre of a master-mind,

The Egyptian force, the Greek simplicity,

The Celtic subtlety. Through suffering free,

The calm great courage of new art, refined

In nervous majesty, indwells behind

The beauty of each radiant harmony. {110Abottom}

Titan! the little centuries drop back,

Back from the contemplation. Stand and span

With one great grip his cup, the Zodiac!

Distil from all time's art his wine, the truth!

Drink, drink the mighty health — an age's youth —

Salut, Auguste Rodin! Here is a man. {110Bbottom, full page next}

VARIOUS MEASURES

{columns resume}

THE TOWER OF TOIL.

(LA TOUR DE TRAVAIL.)

THE old sun rolls; the old earth spins;

Incessant labour bends the stars.

Hath not enough of woes and sins

Passed? Who shall efface their senseless scars?

One makes, one mars. The aeons foil

All purpose; rise, O Tower of Toil.

Rise in thy radiance to proclaim

The agony of the earth alive!

Stand by the sea, a marble flame,

A lighthouse wedded to an hive!

Still upward strive! O tower, arise

An endless spiral to the skies!

Stand on the weather-beaten coast

A flaming angel in the noon;

A silver, fascinated ghost

In midnight's revel with the moon;

In silent swoon be still! the spoil

Of years is thine, O Tower of Toil.

Let day, a glowing vigour, male;

And night, a virgin bowed and curled,

Stand at the foot; their ardours pale

Systole and diastole of the world!

With life impearled (their eyes absorb)

They visibly sustain the orb.

Then let the tower in seven tiers

Rise in its splendour marmorean,

Unite the chill divided years

In plain perception of the aeon.

Cry clear the paeon! Its tunes recoil

About thy flanks, O Tower of Toil.

Below be miners fashioned fair,

And all that labour in the sea

Sepulchred from the ambient air,

A fatal weird of dole to dree.

No time to be, no light to live.

Earth's need to these hath hope to give. {111A}

Above be various shapes of labour,

The bodily strength, the manual skill;

They shape the anvil and the sabre,

The ploughshare and the bolt; they fill

The myriad will of brains that boil:

Their fame be thine, O Tower of Toil!

Here set the travailers of land;

Here the young shepherd, fluteless now;

The mariner with tarry hand;

The clerk, with pale and foolish brow,
His brain bought cheap for brainless grind:
The bloodless martyr of the mind!

Grow up the grades, O godlike hand,
Rodin, most rightly named “August”!
Thy splendid sons and daughters stand
Obedient to the master “must.”
The decadent dust thy spells assoil;
Death lives in this, thy Tower of Toil.

Grow up the grades! record the tasks
These arduous phantoms have achieved!
The growth of mind to mortals asks
A power not swift to be believed.
What blossoms heaved ere Nature’s age
From monkey-man deduced the sage!

So be thy spiral tower the type
Of higher convolutions drawn

From hunger's woe and murder's gripe
And lust's revulsion to the dawn
Of days that spawn on holier soil
Thy loftier sons, O Tower of Toil.

There is a flower of native light
That springs eternal on the earth.
Carve us, O master-hand, aright
That ecstasy of pain and mirth,
A baby's birth! That prize of fear
Engrave upon the loftiest tier! {111B}

Nor in the solitary woe
(The silent, the unwitting strain)
Forget the miracles that grow
In the austere ordered brain!
Darwin and Taine, Descartes and Boyle,
Inscribe thou on the Tower of Toil!

Those who have striven to limn the mind,

Paint, model, tune, or hymn the light,
Their vision of the world refined
By mastery of superior sight:
Honour their might! the gain have these
Of all men's woes and ecstasies!

High soul; no benediction seek
From any spirit but our own!
Crown not the mighty with the weak!
The Tower be a Tower, and not a Throne!
In man-carved stone the endless coil
Arise untopped, the Tower of Toil!

Deem not that prayer or sacrifice
Will ever cause the work to end!
Serene, sufficient, let it rise
Alone; it doth not ask a friend,
Nor shall it bend a fatuous knee
To a fantastic deity.

What crest or chrism were so good
To work as Art, the crown upon
Work's brow? thy will with love endued
Lift up this loftier Parthenon!
Thine art the consecrative oil
To hallow us the Tower of Toil!

LA BELLE HEAULMIERE.

AGE and despair, poverty and distress
Bend down the head that once was blithe and fair.
Embattled toward the ancient armouress
Age and despair!

Where is the force of youth? The beauty where?
What two-edged memory of some lost caress
Lurks in the sorrowful pose and lingers there? {112A}

O melancholy mother! Sorceress,
No more enchantress! What the harvest rare

Sprung from the seed of youth and happiness?

Age and despair.

FEMME ACCROUPIE

SWIFT and subtle and thin are the arrows of Art:

I strike through the gold of the skin to the gold of the heart.

As you sit there mighty in bronze I adore the twist

Of the miracle ankle gripped by the miracle wrist.

I adore the agony-lipped and the tilted head,

And I pay black orisons to the breasts aspread.

In multiple mutable motion, whose soul is hid.

And the toils of confused emotion the Master bid

Lurk in the turn of the torso for poets to see

Is hid from the lesser and dull — hidden from me.

She squats, and is void and null; I know her not;

As God is above, but more so, she sits, to blot

Intelligence out of my brain, conceit from my ken;

And I class myself, idle and vain, with the newspaper men.

CARYATIDE

SHALL beauty avail thee, Caryatid, crouched, crushed by the weight of a
world of woe?

By birthright the burden is thine: on thy shoulders the sorrow hath slid
From the hand of the Healer: behold, in the steady, continuous throe,
Shall beauty avail thee, Caryatid? {112B}

Thou was proud of thy beauty: the burden of beauty was hid
From thy eyes: how is't now with thee, now? By the sweat dropping slow
From the brows of thy anguish, we see what the weight of it did
To the patient despair of the brain. Shall no god strike a blow?
Shall no hero be found the unbearable burden to rid?
And if these be extinct — 'tis a fiend that laughs eager and low:
“Shall beauty avail thee, Caryatid?”

JEUNE MERE

SURELY the secret whisper of sweet life
Shakes in the shell-ear murmurous memories
Of the old wonder of young ecstasies
In the first hours when the white word of wife
She won so hardly out of dark wild strife
And mystery of peace; thine utter ease,
Abandoned rapture! Caught and cut by seas
Of sudden wisdom, stinging as a knife
Swift struck sets all the blood a-tingle. Woe!
What wakes within? What holiest intimation
Of intimate knowledge of the lords of nature?
She sees her fate smile out on her, doth know
Her weird of womanhood, her noble station
Among the stars and ages; and her stature
Soars o'er the system; so the scarred musfeature
Of death avails her for the isolation
Of high things ever holy; this the throe
Of swiftly-comprehended motherhood

Once taught her. Now the whisper of the child
Bids her be great, who was supremely good.
For, mark you! babes are ware of wiser things,
And hold more arcane matters in their mild
Cabochon eyes than men are ware of yet. {113A}
Therefore have poets, lest they should forget,
Likened the little sages unto kings.
But look! the baby whispers — hush! Nay! nay!
We shall disturb them loving — come away!

L'AMOUR QUI PASSE.

LOVE comes to flit, a spark of steel
Struck on the flint of youth and wit;
Ay, little maid, for woe or weal,
Love comes to flit.

Hermes one whisper thrills. Admit!
Kupris one smile aims — do you feel?

Eros one arrow — has he hit?

Why do you sit there immobile?

A spark extinct is not relit.

Beyond resource, above appeal,

Love comes to flit.

TETE DE FEMME (MUSEE DU LUXEMBOURG).

IT shall be said, when all is done,

The last line written, the last mountain

Climbed, the last look upon the sun

Taken, the last star in the fountain

Shattered, the you and I were one.

What shall they say, who come apace

After us, heedless, gallant? Seeing

Our statues, hearing of our race

Heroic tales, half-doubted, being

So far beyond a rime to trance.

What shall they say? For secret we
Have held our love, and holy. Splendour
Of light, and music of the sea
And eyes and heart serene and tender,
With kisses mingled utterly.

These were our ways. And who shall know?
What warrior bard our nuptial glories
Shall sing? Historic shall we go
Down through our country's golden stories?
Shall lovers whisper "Even so {113B}

As he loved her do I love you"?
So much they shall know, surely; never
The truth, how lofty and fresh as dew
Our love began, abode for ever:
They cannot know us through and through.

We have exceeded all the past.

The future shall not build another.

This is the climax, first and last.

We stand upon the summit. Mother

Of ages, daughter of ages, cast

The fatal die, and turn to death!

Let evolution turn, involving

As when the gray sun sickeneth —

Ghostly September! so dissolving

Into the pale eternal breath.

When all is done, shall this be said.

When all is said, shall this be done

The aeon exhaust and finished,

And slumber steal upon the sun,

My dear, when you and I are dead.

LA CASQUE D'OR

A NINA OLIVER.

YOU laughing little light of wickedness, low ripples round you love and
coils

And twists the Casque of Gold about the child-face with a child-caress.

O glory of the tangled net! O subtle vase of scented oils!

You laughing little light of wickedness!

Through all the misty wind of light that glammers round you, sorceress,

Your face shines out with feline grace, exults, a tiger in the toils!

They shall not hold your passion in: fling, fling your lips, my murderess,

{114A}

On mine that I may pass away, a vapour that your passion boils,

A rose whose petals flutter down as cruel lips and fingers press.

Hear one last careless laugh acclaim my corpse the latest of your spoils,

You laughing little light of wickedness.

LES BOURGEOIS DE CALIS

PERFECTLY sad and perfectly resolved,
They are ready, ready to be hanged. They go
(Forlorn ones!) against Calais' overthrow;
And all their fate in Calais' is involved
Unto the utmost. Who will save his folk
From vengeful ire of the tyrant? Six are these,
Perfectly said, and steady, and at ease.
Self-slain, they shall save others from the yoke.
Seven then are these found faithful unto death;
From Calais six; and one from Nazareth.

REVEIL D'ADONIS.<<1>>

ADONIS, awake, it is day; it is spring!
It is dawn on the lea, it is light on the lake!
The fawn's in the bush and the bird's on the wing!
Adonis, awake!

Adonis, awake! We are colour and song
And form, we are Muses most tender to take
Thy life up to Art that was lost over long.
Adonis, awake!

Adonis, awake! thou hast risen above
The fear in the forest, the brute in the brake.
Thou art sacred to shrines that are higher than Love!
Adonis, awake! {114B}

<<1. Properly the sequel to Mort d'Adonis on p.122.>>

LA MAIN DE DIEU

THE Hand. From mystery that is cloud control
The mystery that is emptiness of air,
Purpose and power. What blossom do they bear?
Stability and strength inform — what soul?

“Turn to me, love! the banks of air are soft.”

“Turn to me, love! the skies are blue,”

“Fleeced with the clouds that hang aloft,”

“Buds that may blossom into dew.”

“Turn to me, love! lie close and breathe”

“The smooth waves of the wind!”

“The zephyr in thy locks I’ll wreathe,”

“The breeze entwined.”

“We are so safe; so happy we:”

“Our love can never falter; fate can never close”

“Hard on the flower of land and sea.”

“Life, O rose petals of my rose,”

“Toward me, rest, dream on, we are here, we love.”

“There is no shadow above,”

“No ghost below: we are here. Kiss! Kiss!”

“For ever. Who would have believed, have thought of this?”

Outside is nothing. Let what will uproll,

Within all's certain. Are we not aware

(Who see the hand) What brain must know — and care?

What wisdom formed the racers, find a goal?

Careless and confident, let us love on.

Life, one or many, rises from a seed,

Sprouts, blooms, bears fruit, and then is gone — is gone.

Let go the future, ominous and vast!

Loose the bound mind from the unavailing past!

Live, love for ever, now, in every deed! {115}

DESESPAIR.

INTO the inmost agony of things
She sees, through glamour of untrusty sense,
The full corruption of omnipotence,
The infinite rage of fishes to have wings,
The lust of beasts for tentacles; caught thence
Corollary, syllogism, she strides tense
Into the inmost agony of things.

So, fearless, amid gods and evil kings,
She sits, poor wretch, eternal scientist,
Straining mild muscles, leaving to its list
The spasm-shaken body. So she flings
The teeth-set fate of Fortune's face unkissed
Against the fiat: sets her clenched fist
In his face: slides spinning with her body's twist
Into the inmost agony of things.

EPERVIER ET COLOMBE.

WHEN, at the awful Judgment-day, God stands

Shrunk and shaking at my gaze, before
My hollow seat of agony, it may be
He shall discover me the great excuse
for an ill world ill shapen by ill hands,
For unity joy and misery ten score,
For all his work's complaint; I think that He,
Twitching his fearful fingers, may let loose
This answer: Thus a kiss I brought to being
Which by no other way were possible.
Measure, O man! Balance with eyes true-seeing
If I were right or no to have made Hell!

Then would He stand forgiven — nay! acquitted!
I, as I look on this tight coil of bliss, {115B}
Swift clasp of Rodin's magical mind love-witted,
See all creation fade; abide, one kiss.
Then to my own soul's bow this shaft be fitted;
Thank God for all, seeing that all is this!

RESURRECTION.

FROM youth and love to sorrow is one stride.

So to the thinker; to the lover's self

Rather it glides or swoons; the idle elf

That plucks a rose, scatters its petals wide,

Is like the wind, is like the moon-wrought tide,

Is most like life: so soft to man, so hard

To the all-gathering brain of a great bard!

Christ answered: Peace to man amid the strife!

I am the Resurrection and the Life.

Let the graves open: see the woman grip

Her goodly love, her gainful fellowship!

See the man, hungry, grasp the willing bride,

Grope through the dark dawn to her glowing side!

There is the resurrection trump: confess

The mystery of life is happiness!

Rodin discerned. We see the eagle-eyed

Glory of echoing kisses; hear the sound
Of gluttoned raptures break in the profound,
The abyss of time: upsurge the dead. Why hide
Thy sorrowful god's brow, O sculptor, mage,
Child of eternity, father of an age?
Thou hast seen, thou hast showed, that as it was on earth
So shall it be in resurrection birth.
The cycle of weariness and passionate pain
is and was ever and must be again.
There is no death! Ah! that is misery!
For this, Lord Christ, is it that thou wouldst be,
Thou yesterday, to-day, and thou to-morrow?
The mystery of this our life is sorrow. {116A}

L'ETERNEL PRINTEMPS.

I.

THE eternal spring is in the heart of youth.
They are nearest to the secret of the world,
These lovers with their lithe white bodies curled

Into the rhythm of a dance; the truth
Is theirs that feel, not ours that idly see;
Theirs that inhabit, and not ours that flee
The intimate touch of love and think to sleuth
By intellect all the scent of being, whirled
In the wheel of time — roll back, slow years, and be
A monument, a memory for me;
That I may in their passion have a part,
And feel their glory glow within my heart!

II.

This holy rapture is the eternal spring.
There in the love that tunes the untrammelled feet,
Here in the ardour of the arms that cling,
The alluring amber-touch of sweet to sweet,
The ageless awe of the new love revealed,
The reverence of the new love hovering nigh;
These things are mazes flowery on the field,
Measures to trace a-dancing by-and-by.
Here in the statued pose the rhythm is sealed

That all who are human dance to evermore.

Before this ecstasy all ages yield:

Eternity breaks foamless on time's shore.

And I, because of this delight in me,

Am one in substance with eternity.

ACROBATES

MY little lady light o' limb
Twirls on her lover's twisting toes
Lithe as a lynx, red as a rose,
She spins aloft and laughs at him.
So gay the pose, so quaint the whim,
One stares and stares: it grows and grows. {116B}
So swift the air she seems to skim
One's senses dazzle; wonder glows
Warm in one's veins like love — who knows?
One follows till one's eyes are dim
My little lady light o' limb

L'AGE D'AIRAIN.

FRESH in the savage vigour of the time,
The golden youth stands in the golden prime,
Erect, acute, astrain. We look and long
For those bronze lips to blossom into song.

He is silent. We reflect. Ourselves grown old
Yearn somewhat toward that sensuous glow of gold.

All this is folly. Rodin made him so,
Evoked the strength, the goodliness, the glow.
The form is little: in the mind there dwells
Force to avail the childish heart that swells
With aught that is. The golden prime is past —
Aye! but a nobler gain is ours at last
Who see man weary, but within our span
The perfect promise of the overman.

FAUNESSE.

THE veil o' th' mist of the quiet wood is lifted to the seer's gaze;
He burns athwart the murky maze beyond into beatitude. {117A}

A solemn rapture holds the faun: and holy joy sucks up the seer
Within its rose-revolving sphere, the orient oval of the dawn.

Light's graven old cartouche is sealed upon the forest: groves are gray
With filtered glammers of the day, the steely ray flung off his shield.

She kneels, yon spirit of the earth; she keels and looks toward the east.
In her gray eyes awakes the beast from slumber into druid mirth.

She is amazed, she eager, she, exotic orchid of the glade!
She waits the ripe, exultant blade, life tempered by eternity.

And I who witness am possessed by awe grown crimson with desire,
Its iron image wrapped in fire and branded idly on my breast.

Her face is bronze, her skin is green, as woods and suns would have it so.
Her secret wonders grow and glow, limned in the luminous patine.

Worship, the sculptor's, clean forgot in worship of her body lithe,
And time forgotten with his scythe, and thought, the Witenagemot.

Confused in rapture: peace is culled a flower from the arboreal root,

The vision dulled, the singer mute, shattered the lute, the song annulled.

{117B}

{full page}

SONNETS AND QUATORZAINS

{columns resume}

MADAME RODIN.

HEROIC helpmeet of the silent home!

Shall who sings Art not worship womanhood?

There is depth of calm beneath the sea's fine foam;

Behind the great there is ever found the good.

Honour and glory to the sacred house

And ark of the covenant of holy trust,

The unseen mother and the secret spouse

Ever availing in the sorrow and dust

That aye avenge the artist's victory won,

That cover up his monuments of fame,

That twist his sight, once steadfast on the sun,

To the fear folded in the robes of shame: —

Lest he, to all the world plain victor, find

Himself mere failure to his own white mind.

LE PENSEUR.

BLIND agony of thought! Who turns his pen
Or brush or lyre to Art, shall see in this
The symbol of his battle against men
For men, the picture of the torturing bliss
Of his necessity: sits clutched and closed
Into himself the adept of wizard thought.
Gripped in his own embrace he sits: keen-nosed
The invisible bloodhounds ache upon the slot!
Soon, soon they are on him: soon the fangs of hate,
The sharp teeth of the infinite are in him!
Shall love, or fame, or gold, those pangs abate?
What siren with smooth voice and breast shall win him?
Never a one, be sure! In serene awe
The thinker formulates eternal law. {118A}

LE PENSEE.

EXQUISITE fairy, flower from stone begotten
Sprung into sudden shape of maidenhood,
Hast thou thy father's anguish all forgotten?
Hast thou a balm, who hast hardly understood?
Is not thy beauty for his comfort moulded,
Thy joy and purity his won reward?
Sweet blush of blood, pale blossom lightly folded,
To thee did he carve his way by right of sword?
Thou who art all delight to all of us,
Hast thou no special intimate caress
For him whose bloody sweat stood murderous
On the writhen brow, the bosom of distress?
Ay! for his anguish thou art gain enough —
One thought, worth all Earth's fame, and gold, and love!

LE BAISER.

INFINITE delicacy in great strength
Holds the white girl and draws her into love.
All her lithe subtlety, her lovely length,

Is sealed in the embrace about, above
Her visible life. What mastery of repose,
Compulsion of motion lurks for us therein
As we gaze back on Greece, as Nature glows,
Simple and sacred, with no thought of sin,
Yet born to trouble us, to fascinate.
Here we are, back i' th' springtime of the earth;
God above man; and above God, dire fate.
Ancient cosmogony of peace and mirth!
Careless, we careless, do invoke thy rime
Of the ancient rapture of the olden time. {118B}

BOUCHES D'ENFER.

LOOK how it leaps towards the leaper's curl
Of vivid ecstasy, life loosed at last
From the long-held leash! The headlong, hot-mouthed girl
Upon her sister like a star is cast,
Pallid with death-in-life achieved. O force
Of murder animal in the dead embrace!

The implacable ardour, unavenged remorse
For time's insulting loss, quickens the pace
Unto its prey that gathers, like a storm
Shrouding invisibly the crater's rim
Whence fury yet shall wake, and fire inform
The inane basalt and coruscations dim
Of smouldering infamy. Bow down in awe!
It is enough. The Gods are at feast. Withdraw!

LA GUERRE

SHE sits and screams above the folk of peace,
Deafening their quiet ears with hideous clamour.
Abhorred and careless she bids order cease.
Her hate resolves the shriek into a stammer
Of inarticulate rage. The wounded man
Twisted in agony beneath her squirms
To hear her raucous blasphemies outspan
The grip of God at this his last of terms.
Yea! he must die with horror in his ears,
Hate in his heart. The mischief must endure.
He hath expiated naught by death. His tears,
His thoughts, these strike nor stay her not, be sure!
She is Madness, and a fury; though were gone
All life to war, she would scream on — scream on. {119A}

W. E. HENLEY.<<1>>

CLOISTRAL seclusion of the galleried pines

Is mine to-day; these groves are fit for Pan —
O rich with Bacchic frenzy and his wine's
Atonement for the infinite woe of man!
Is there no God of Vital Art to dwell
Serene, enshrined, incensed, adored of us?
Were not a cemetery His citadel?
His treasure-house some barred sarcophagus?
And here his mighty and reverend high-priest
Bade me good cheer, an eager acolyte,
Poured the high wine, unveiled the mystic feast; —
Swooped the plumed anguish of inveterate night;
Devouring torture of insight shot. Night hovered;
Dawn smote. I bowed — O God declare, discovered!

<<1. Written on a visit to the late W. E. Henley at Woking some three weeks before his death. The influence of the man has perhaps overshadowed that of the bust of him by Rodin.>>

SYRINX AND PAN.

SYRINX is caught upon the Arcadian field.

The god's grip huddles her girl breasts: his grim
And gnarled lips grin forth the soul of him.
The imprint of his bestial heart is sealed
And stamped armorial on her virgin shield,
Fame's argent heraldry despoiled. Grows dim
For her the universe: supple and slim
She slides in vain. She loathes him — and doth yield.

Shame, sorrow, these be sire and dam of song.
Fatality, O Nature is thy name.
Along the accursed river, stagnant shame,
Eddying woe, from rape and godly wrong,
Springs the immortal reed: the mortal's cry
Rises, an angry anthem, to the sky. {119B}

ICARE.<<1>>>

ICARUS cries: "My love is robed in light
And splendour of the summits of the sun.
Wing, O my soul, thy plumed caparison

Through ninety million miles of space beyond sight!
Utmost imagination's eagle-flight
Out-soar!" But he, by his own force undone,
His peacock pinions molten one by one,
Falls to black earth through the impassive night.

Lo! from uprushing earth arises love
Ardent and secret, scented with the night,
Amorous, ready. Sing the awakening bliss
That catches him, from the inane above
Hurled — nay, drawn down! What uttermost delight
Dawns in that death! Icarus and Gaia kiss.

<<1. Called "Fille d'Icare" by the distinguished anatomists, priceless idiots,
and pragmatistical precisians, who see nothing but a block of marble in this
most spiritual of Rodin's masterpieces.>>

LA FORTUNE.

"HAIL, Tyche! From the Amalthean horn
Pour forth the store of love! I lowly bend

Before thee: I invoke thee at the end
When other gods are fallen and put to scorn.
Thy foot is to my lips; my sighs unborn
Rise, touch and curl about thy heart; they spend
Pitiful love. Lovelier pity, descend
And bring me luck who am lonely and forlorn.”

Fortune sits idle on her throne. The scent
Of honeyed incense wreathes her lips with pleasure.
For pure delight of luxury she turns,
Smooth in her goddess rapture. So she spurns
And crushes the pale suppliant. Softly bent,
Her body laughs in ecstasy of leisure. {120A}

PAOLO ET FRANCESCA

PAOLO ignites, Francesca is consumed.

Loosened she lies, and breathes great gasps of love;

He, like an hunter, hungers, leaps above,

Attains, exults, despairs. This love is doomed,

Were there no hell. In granite walls entombed

Lies the true spirit and the soul thereof.

The body is here — yet is it not enough,

These litanies unchanted, unperfumed?

Live in the shuddering marble they remain:

Here is the infinite credo of pure pain.

Here let life's agony take hold enough

Of all that lives: let partial tears for them

Wake knowledge, brain-dissolving diadem

Of white-hot woe upon the brows of love!

LES DEUX GENIES.

GOOD bends and breathes into the rosy shell
Of peace and perfume, love in idleness,
Of pure cold raptures, hymns the mystic stress,
Imagining's reiterate miracle.

Evil breathes, bending, the reverberate spell
Conjuring ghosts of the insane address
Of agony lurid in the damned caress,
Exulting tortures of the heart of hell.

The maiden sits and listens, smiles. Her breath
Is easy; over her bowed head fall deep
Glowing cascades of hair; she combs her hair

With subtle ecstasy, electric sweep
Of unimaginable joy; let life and death
Pass; she will comb, and comb, and will not care. {120B}

LA CRUCHE CASSEE.

THE waterpot is broken at the well.
Forth rush the waters, bubbling from the brim,
Curling and coiling round the riven rim,
Lost beyond hope; and she, her sighs up-swell,
And sorrow shakes her: shame's oblivious hell
Burns round her body: in her eyes there swim
Tears of deep joy, deep anguish; love's first hymn
Is choral in her ear's young miracle.

She knows the utmost now; what waters white
She held from heaven's crystal fountains; flight
Of what celestial birds struck down: — Ah me!
What god or demigod hath struck remorse
Into the close-crouched, cold, and desolate corse,
Wailing her violate virginity?

LA TENTATION DE SAINT-ANTOINE.

IN mystic dolour wrapt, the ascetic turns
His vague untutored thought to love, and sees

Himself exalted at the amber knees
Of God the father: his bowed forehead burns
With chastity's white star: no spirit yearns
More keenly from the abyss; yet, God! are these
Subtle star-sparks of spirit chastity's?
These deep-set shiverings saint nor sage discerns?

Laughter and love are over him, entice
His life to sweeter scent of sacrifice.
She knows God's will, not he! Her ardour licks
Flowers from the dust. O fool! that, heavy of breath,
Dost rot in worship at the shrine of death!
O mystic rapture of the crucifix! {121A}

EVE

THE serpent glimmered through the primal tree,
Full in the gladness of the afterglow;
Its royal head warred ever to and fro,
Seeking the knowledge of the doom to be.
Eve, in the naked love and liberty
She had not bartered yet, moved sad and slow,
Serene toward the sunset, murmuring low
The tyrant's curse, the hideous decree.

Then she, instructed by the Saviour Snake,
Saw once clear Truth and give her life, and love,
And peace, and favour of the fiend above,
For Knowledge, Knowledge pure for Knowledge' sake.
The full moon rose. Creation's voice was dumb
For the first woman's shame, strength, martyrdom.

FEMMES DAMNEES.

KISS me, O sister, kiss me down to death!

The purple of the passionate hour is flaked

With notes of gold: there swim desires unslaked,

Impossible raptures of expostulate breath.

The marble heaves with longing; hungereth

The mouth half-open for the unawaked

Mouth of the baby blossom, where there ached

Never till now the parched sweet song that saith:

“Ah! through the grace of languor and the glow

Of form steals sunset flaming on the snow!

Darkness shall follow as love wakeneth

In moonlight, and the flower, chaste love, now bloom

First in the bosom, after in the tomb —

Kiss me, O sister, kiss me down to death!” {121B}

NABUCHADNOSOR.

SENSELESS the eyes: the brow bereft of sense.

Hunger is on the throne of pride; and naught

Fills the gray battlefield of ancient thought,
The market places of intelligence,
Save need and greed; whose royal words incense
The jealous God of Israel is distraught.
No jewels in the casket nobly wrought.
The shrine is grand; the god is ravished thence.

On clawing hands and hardened knees the King
Exists, no more; is it a little thing?
King Demos, hear my parable! We pass,
We poets, see you grovel at our feet,
Despise our love, and tender flesh, and wheat,
Clamour for lust, and carrion, and grass.

MORT D'ADONIS.

ADONIS dies. (Imagination hears
The hoarse harsh breathing of the ill-nurtured boar)
Venus bends low, half mother and half whore,

Whole murderess of boy's budhood. Fall, black fears!

Ay! through her widowed, her unwedded tears,
The foolish filial appeal, "Restore,
O Father Zeus, this tender life once more!"
Falls the baulked hope of half a million years.

She in her gloom and ignorance will go
Forlorn to Paphos, wrapt in urgent woe,
Her hair funereal swathing her fallen form,
Its wind-swept horror holding him; his white
Torn body blushing through tempestuous night.
So breaks the life in hell, the year in storm. {122A}

BALZAC.

GIANT, with iron secrecies ennighted,
Cloaked, Balzac stands and sees. Immense disdain,
Egyptian silence, mastery of pain,
Gargantuan laughter, shake or still the ignited

Stature of the Master, vivid. Far, affrighted,
The stunned air shudders on the skin. In vain
The Master of “La Comedie Humaine”
Shadows the deep-set eyes, genius-lighted.

Epithalamia, birth-songs, epitaphs,
Are written in the mystery of his lips.
Sad wisdom, scornful shame, grand agony
In the coffin-folds of the cloak, scarred mountains, lie,
And pity hides i’ th’ heart. Grim knowledge grips
The essential manhood. Balzac stands, and laughs.

LE CYCLOPS SURPREND ACIS ET GALATHEE.

COILED in the hollow of the rock they kiss,
Rolled in one sphere of rapture; looks intense
With love, and laughter shapen of innocence!
They cling, and close, and overhang the abyss.

But over them! What monster, then, is this

Crouched for his spring, gross muscles nude and tense,
Bulged eyeballs ready for the rape, immense
In hate, the imminent spectre? He it is.

The Cyclops. Ay! thought Zeus, and what of that?
Were it not well for love, in red rough maw
Swift crunched, to expiate my eldest law?

Better, far better thus. True love lies flat,
A weary plain beyond the single peak.
I then will pity them. I will not speak. {122B}

OCTAVE MIRBEAU.

BRUTAL refinement of deep-seated vice
Carves the coarse features in a sentient mould.
The gardens,<<1>> that were soft with flowers and gold
And sickening with murder of lust to entice
The insane to filthier raptures, carrion spice
Of ordure for perfume, bloom there, fixed bold

By the calm of the Master, godlike to behold
The horror with firm chisel and glance of ice.

Ay! and the petty and the sordid soul,
A servile whore's deformed debauchery,<<2>>
Grins from the image. Let posterity
From Rodin's art guess Mirbeau's heart, extol
The lethal chamber men ere then will find
For the pimp's pen and the corrupted mind. {123Atop}

<<1. Le jardin des supplices, par Octave Mirbeau.>>

<<2. Les memoires d'une femme de chambre, par Octave Mirbeau.>>

SOCRATE.

(L'HOMME AU NEZ CASSE.)

CONSUMMATE beauty built of ugliness,
O broken-nose philosopher, is thine.
Diamonds are deepest in the blue-mud mine;

So is the secret of thy strong success
Daemonic-glittering through the wear and stress
Of tortured feature; virtue's soul doth shine,
Genius and wisdom in the force divine
That fills thy face; magnificence! no less.

Ay! thou shalt drink the hemlock; thou shalt suffer
And die for self-respect, for love of others!
To-day are men indissolubly brothers?
Is my life smoother than the Greek's or rougher?
The Greek at least shall stead me in my craft.

Crucify Crowley! Nay, my friends! the draught. {123Btop full page
below}

COLOPHON

INCIDENT.

(RUE DE L'UNIVERSITE, 182.)

SPELL-BOUND we sat: the vivid violin
Wailed, pleaded, waited, triumphed. Kingly note
By note imperial from its passionate throat
Vibrates: the shadows fall like pauses in
The workshop of the Master: where there spin
Phrases in marble: fancies fall or float,
Passions exult, despairs abound, loves dote,
Thoughts gallop or abide: and prayer is sin.

Spell-bound we sat: one, young, eagerly moves.
One sits in thought: one listens, dreams, and loves.
One, critical, approves with conscious nod.
But I abode without the spell; saw these —
Diverse harmonics of identical keys! —

And these were thus: but Rodin heard like God.

{123bottom}

O R P H E U S

A LYRICAL LEGEND

[The allusions in this poem to classical legend or myth are too numerous to be dealt with by annotation. A good classical dictionary will enable the reader to trace all the allusions.]

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Str. GR:^{gamma}₁ Calliope.

Ant. GR:^{gamma}₁ Orpheus.

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Str. GR:alpha Orpheus in alternate invocation.

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” GR:beta^{supscr.2} Clouds.

” GR:gamma^{supscr.2} Mist.

” GR:delta^{supscr.2} Rain.<<1>>

” GR:epsilon^{supscr.2} Frost.

” GR:zeta^{supscr.2} Snow.

” GR:eta^{supscr.2} Ice.

” GR:theta^{supscr.2} Dew.

” GR:iota^{supscr.2} Hail.

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” GR:zeta supscr.3 Eagre.

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Chorus — The Earth. {124}

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” GR:delta supscr.5 The Lustres.

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. GR:alpha supscr.7 Centuries

Semichorus -: GR:beta supscr.7 Mahakaplas

: GR:gamma supscr.7 Manwantaras

. GR:delta supscr.7 Eternity

Str. GR:gamma Orpheus

Ant. GR:gamma Death —

(Suppressed antistrophe, Death being silent. His reply is really given

in Books II., III., IV.)

Parabasis: The poet.

Epode: Nature.

<<1. WEH NOTE: Original had GR:delta supscr.3 apparent typo.>>

BOOK II.

Orpheus laments his wife — ““come back, come back, come back,
Eurydice.’

‘Fling down the foolish lyre, the witless power.’”

Complains of the antithesis of desire and power — ““Let the far music of
oblivious years.’”

Laments - ““How can one hour dissolve a year’s delight.’”

Tells of his wooing — ““In child-like meditative mood.’”

Eurydice’s song — ““O shape half seen of love, and lost.’”

Continues the tale of his wooing — ““Such tune my failing body
snapped.’”

Invokes Aphrodite — ““Daughter of Glory, child.’”

Continues the tale of his wooing — ““I caught the lavish lyre, and
sate.’”

Eurydice’s song — ““Who art thou, love, by what sweet name I
quicken.’”

Continues the tale of his wooing — ““So by some spell divinely drawn.’”

Orpheus’ song — ““Roll, strong life-current of these very veins.’”

Concludes his lament — ““So sped my wooing: now I surely think.’”

BOOK III

Orpheus recounts his journey to Hades — “As I pass in my flight.”

Invokes the guardians — “Hail to ye, wardens.”

Continues his voyage — “The phantoms diminish.”

Invokes Hecate — “O triple form of darkness! Sombre splendour!”

Continues his voyage — “The night falls back.”

Trio: Minos, AEacus, Rhadamanthus — “Substantial, stern, and strong.”

Orpheus’ plea — “O iron, bow to silver’s piercing note!” {125}

Trio: Minos, AEacus, Rhadamanthus — “Brethren, what need of wonder.”

Orpheus continues his voyage — “Ah me! I find ye but ill counsellors.”

Invokes Hades — “Now is the gold gone of the year, and gone.”

Invokes Persephone — “In Asia, on the Nysian plains, she played.”

Persephone awakes — “Ah me! I feel a stirring in my blood.”

Orpheus pleads with her — “And therefore, O most beautiful and mild.”

Persephone invokes Hades — “Ah me! no fruit for guerdon.”

Orpheus invokes the Furies — “In vain, O thou veiled.”

Septet: The Furies, Orpheus, Hades, Persephone, Echidna — “Ha! who

invokes? What horror rages.”

Orpheus invokes Hermes — “O Light in Light! O flashing wings of fire!”

Orpheus’ song of triumph — “The magical task and the labour is ended.”

Continues to recount his journey — “So singing I make reverence and retire.”

Sings his triumph — “O light of Apollo.”

Sings, but with misgiving — “Alas! that ever the dark place.”

BOOK IV.

Company of Maenads — “Evoe! Evoe Ho! Iacche! Iacche!”

Song — “Hail, O Dionysus! Hail.”

“Evoe Ho! Give me to drink.”

Hymn to Dionysus — “Hail, child of Semele.”

“He is here! He is here!”

Dionysus — “I bring ye wine from above.”

Maenads — “O sweet soul of the waters! Chase me not.”

Orpheus his spell — “Unity uttermost showed.”

His allocution — “Worship with due rite, orderly attire.”

His hymn to Pan — ““In the spring, in the loud lost places.””

His alarm — ““What have I said? What have I done?””

Lament for Orpheus — Quartet: a Spirit, the River Hebrus, Calliope, the

Lesbian Shore — ““What is? what chorus swells.””

Sappho’s song — ““Woe is me! the brow of a brazen morning.””

Duet: Calliope, the Lesbian Shore — ““Silence. I hear a voice.””

Finale. Nuith — ““Enough. It is ended, the story.””

{columns resume}

WARNING.

MAY I who know so bitterly the tedium of this truly dreadful poem be permitted to warn all but the strongest and most desperate natures from the task of reading or of attempting to read it? I have spend more than three years in fits of alternate enthusiasm for, and disgust of, it. My best friends have turned weeping away when I introduced its name into conversation; my most obsequious sycophants (including myself) were revolted when I approached the subject, even from afar.

I began Book I. in San Francisco one accursed day of May 1901. I was then a Qabalist, deeply involved in ceremonial magic, with a Pantheon of Egypto-Christian colour, in fact, the mere bouillon of which my “Tannhauser” was the froth. The idea {126A} was to do the “biggest thing ever done in lyrics.” I bound myself by an oath to admit no rhyme unless three times repeated; to average some high percentage of double rhymes —

in brief, to perform a gigantic juggle with the unhappy English language. The whole of this first book is technically an ode (!!!) and was so designed. So colossal an example of human fatuity truly deserves, and shall have, a complete exposure.<<“Vide” the Contents. Can the Spirit of Perversity attribute the unwieldiness of the structure to its formal symmetry and perfection?>>

Book I. was finished in Hawaii, ere June expired, and Book II. begun.

I had just begun to study the Theosophic writings — their influence, though slight, is apparent. So intent was I on producing a {126B} “big” book that the whole of my “Argonauts” was written for the shadow-play by which Orpheus wins Eurydice to an interest in mortal joys and sorrows. Also — believe it! — I had proposed a similar play in Book III., to be called “Heracles” or “Theseus,” by performance of which Persephone should be moved, or Hades overwhelmed.

But luckily I was myself overwhelmed first, and it never got a chance at Hades. Book II., then, and its Siamese twin, were written in Hawaii, Japan, China, Ceylon, and South India, where also I began Book III. That also I finished in the Burmese jungle and at Lamma Sayadaw Kyoung at Akyab.

During this period I was studying the Buddhist law; and its influence on the philosophy of the poem is as apparent as that of Hinduism on Book II.

The summer of 1902 asked another kind of philosophy — the kind that goes with glacier travel in the Mustagh Tagh. Orpheus slept.

Book IV. was begun in Cairo on my way to England, and bears marks of confirmed Buddhism up to the death of Orpheus.

But the more I saw of Buddhism the less I liked it, and the first part of Book IV. is flatly contradicted by its climax.

This is a pitiable sort of confession for a man to make!

What was I to do? I could not rewrite the whole in order to give it a philosophic unity. Gerald Kelly forcibly prevented me from throwing it into the river at Marlotte, though he admitted quite frankly that he could not read even through Book I. and did not see how any one could. Tell me, he said, conjuring the friendship of years, can “you” read it? Even a poet should be honest; I confessed that I could not!

Taking it in sections, with relays and an ambulance, we could see no fault in it, however. It is clumsily built; it is all feet and face; but you cannot make a monster symmetrical by lopping at him.

Still, we cut down every possible excrescence, doctored up the remains so as to look as much like a book as possible (until it is examined), and are about to let it loose on society.

The remaining books all share this fatal {127A} lack of Architecture; but they are not so long; there is some incident, though not much; and they are proportionately less dull. Further, the scheme is no longer so ambitious, and the failure is therefore less glaring.

I might have done like Burton and his Kasidah, and kept the MS. for twenty years (if I live so long), ever revising it. But (“a”) I should certainly not live twenty years if I had the accursed manuscript in all sorts and sizes of type and colour of ink and pencil to stalk my footsteps, and (“b”) I am literally not the man who wrote it, and, despise him as I may, I have no right to interfere with his work.

But I will not be haunted by the ghost of a Banquo that another man has failed to lay; and this kind of ghost knows but one exorcism.

One should bury him decently in fine fat type, and erect nice boards over him, and collect the criticisms of an enlightened press, and inscribe them on the tomb.

Then he is buried beyond resurrection; oblivion takes him, and he will never haunt the author or anybody else again.

Old Man of the Sea, these three years you have drummed your black
misshapen heels upon me; I have had no ease because of you; I am bepissed
and conskited of your beastliness; and now you are drunk with the idea that
you are finished and perfect, I shall roll you off and beat your brains out
upon that hardest of flints, the head of the British Public. I am shut of thee.
Allah forget thee in the day when he remembereth his friends!

“August 14, 1904.”

EXORDIUM.

FROM darkness of fugitive thought,

From problems bewildering the brain,

Deep lights beyond heaven unsought,

Dead faces seen dimly in rain;

From the depths of Mind's caverns, the fire

Reclaims the old magical lyre;

The ways of creation are nought,

If only, O mother, O Muse, I may measure Thy melodies in me again!
{127B}

How wayward, how feeble the child

Three watched from the stars at his birth;

Erato the fierce and the mild;
Polymnia grave; and the girth
Broad-girdled of gold and desire,
Melpomene's terrible lyre,
That lifts up her life in the wild,
The star-piercing paean, and floats in mid-ether, and sinks to the earth.

These three of the Muses were mine;
They nurtured and knew me and kissed.
Erato was hidden in wine;
Polymnia dawned in the mist:
Melpomene shone in the pyre
Of terrors that burned in her lyre;
But all of their passion divine
I lost in the life and the stress of the world ere ever the soul of me
wist.

But, Orpheus, thy splendider light
Was the veil of thyself the more splendid.
Thou leapedst as a fountain in flight,

As a bird in the rainbow descended!
From the sweet single womb risen higher
Did Calliope string thee her lyre,
Thy mother: and veiled her in night: —
For thyself to Herself art a veil till the veils of the Heaven be rended
and ended.

Now, single myself as thy soul,
I pray to Apollo indeed!
Fling forth to the starriest goal
My spirit, invoking his rede;<<1>>
Care nought for his mercy or ire;
Reach impious hands to his lyre.
Determined to die or control
Those strings the immortal at last, though the strings of this heart of me
bleed.

<<1. Counsel.>>

Come life, or come death; come disdain

Or honour from mutable men,
I cry in this passionate pain —
My blood be poured out in the pen!
Euterpe! Espouse me! inspire
My life looking up to Thy lure!
Of thy love, thine alone, am I fain!
Be with me, possess me, reveal me the melodies never yet given to men.

The starry and heavenly wheels,
The earth and her glorious dye,
The light that the darkness reveals,
The river, the sea, and the sky; {128A}
All nature, or joyful or dire,
Life, death, let them throng to the lyre,
All sealed with the marvellous seals!
Let them live in my sob, let them love in my song, let them even be I!

Let me in most various song
Be seasons, be rivers that roll,
Be stars, the untameable throng,

All parts of the ultimate whole;

All nature in various attire

Be woven to one tune of the lyre,

One tune where a million belong —

Multitudinous murmur and moan, melodious, one soul with my soul!

One soul with the wail of distress

The ravished Persephone flung;

One soul with the song of success,

Demeter's, that found her and sung;

One soul with all spirits drawn nigher

From invisible worlds to the lyre; —

They throng me and silently press

The strings as I need them, and quicken my fingers and loosen my
tongue!

And thou, O supreme, O Apollo!

I have lived in Thy lands for a year,

Under skies, where the azure was hollow,

The vault of black midnight was clear.

Think! I who have borne Thee, nor tire —

May I not lift up on Thy lyre

Most reverent fingers, and follow

Thy path, take Thy reins, drive Thy chariot and horses of song without
fear?

Let the lightning be harnessed before me,

The thunder be chained to my car,

The sea roll asunder that bore me,

The sky peal my clarion of war!

As a warrior's my chariot shall gyre!

As a lord I will sharpen the lyre!

The stars and the moon shall adore me,

Not seeing mean me, but Thyself in the glory, the splendidest star.

Around me the planets shall thunder,

And earth lift her voice to the sea;

The moon shall be smitten with wonder,

The starlight look love unto me.

Comets, meteors, storms shall admire,

Be mingled in tune to my lyre,

The universe broken in sunder, —

And I — shall I burn, pass away? Having been for a moment the shadow
of

Thee! {128}

{Full page format next}

LIBER PRIMUS VEL CARMINUM

TO

OSCAR ECKENSTEIN,

WITH WHOM I HAVE WANDERED IN SO MANY SOLITUDES OF
NATURE, AND THEREBY LEARNT THE WORDS AND

SPELLS THAT BIND HER CHILDREN

GR: Tau-alpha-chi-alpha delta epsilon-nu tau-alpha-iota-sigma pi-omicron-lambda-epsilon-delta-epsilon-nu-delta-rho-omicron-iota-sigma-iota-nu Omicron-lambda-epsilon-mu-pi-omicron-epsilon Theta-alpha-lambda-alpha-mu-alpha-iota-sigma, epsilon-nu-theta-alpha pi-omicron-tau Omicron-rho-pi-epsilon-epsilon-sigma kappa-iota-theta-alpha-rho-iota-zeta-omega-nu xi-epsilon-nu-alpha-gamma-epsilon-nu delta-epsilon-nu-epsilon-rho-epsilon-alpha mu-omicron-epsilon-sigma-alpha-iota-sigma, xi-epsilon-nu-alpha-gamma-epsilon-nu Theta-eta-rho-alpha-sigma alpha-gamma-rho-omega-tau-alpha-sigma.

— Beta-alpha-kappa-chi-alpha-iota.

Orpheus with his lute made trees,
And the mountain tops that freeze
Bow themselves when he did sing.
To his music plants and flowers
Ever sprung, as sun and showers
There had made a lasting spring.

Everything that heard him play,
Even the billows of the sea,
Hung their heads, and then lay by.

In sweet music is such art,
Killing care and grief of heart —
Fall asleep, or hearing die.
— “Henry VIII.”

... vocalem temere insecutae
Orphea sylvae,
Arte materna rapidos morantem
Fluminum lapsus, celeresque ventos,
Blandum et auritas fidibus canoris
Ducere quercus.
— “Hor. Carm.,” Lib. I. xii.

{columns resume}

INTRODUCTORY ODE.

CALLIOPE, ORPHEUS.

“Str.” GR:alpha.

CALLIOPE.

IN the days of the spring of my being,
When maidenly bent I above
The head of the poet, and, seeing
Not love, was the lyre of his love;
When laurels I bore to the harper,
When bays for the lyrist I bore,
My life was diviner and sharper,
My name in the Muses was more; {129A}
When virgin I came to him stainless,
When love was a pleasure and painless!
What Destiny dreams and discovers
The fragrance men know for a lover's?
Peace turned into laughter and tears,
Borne down the cold stream of the years!

“Ant.” GR:alpha.

ORPHEUS.

O mother, O queen may-minded,
More beauty than beauty may be,
More light than the Sun; I am blinded,
Sink, tremble, am lost in the sea. {129B}
The voice of thy singing descended,
Rolled round me and wrapped me in mist,
Some sense of thy being, borne splendid;
I dreamed, I desired, I was kissed.
Some breath from thy music hath bound me;
Some tune from thy lyre hath found me.
Thy words are as rushing of fire;
But I know not the lilt of thy lure: —
Thy voice is as deep as the sea;
Thy music is darkness to me.

“str.” GR:beta.

CALLIOPE.

Child of Thracian sire, on me begotten,
Knowest thou not the laughter and the life?
Knowest thou not how all things are forgotten,
Being with a maiden wife?
How a subtle sense of inmost being
Wraps thee in, and cuts the world away;
Sight and sound lose hearing and lose seeing,
All the night is one with all the day?
Hearken to her sighing!
Life droops down as dying,
Melting in the clasp of amorous limbs and hair;
All the darkening world
Round about ye furled —
Dost thou know, or, knowing, dost thou care?

“Ant.” GR:beta.

ORPHEUS.

Mother, I have lain, half dead, half slumbering,

Curtained in Eurydice her hair;

Clothed in serpent kisses, souls outnumbering

Dewdrops flung in spray through air.

I have lain and watched the night diminish,

Fade and fall into the arms of day,

Caring not if earth itself should finish,

Caring only if my lover stay;

Listening to her breathing,

Laughing, lover-weaving

All the silken gold and glory of her head, {130A}

Kissing as if time

Forgot its steeps to climb,

Made eternity's, one with all the dead.

“Str.” GR:gamma.

CALLIOPE.

Listen, then listen, O Thracian!

Oeager lay on the lea:

I, from my heavenly station;

I, from my house of creation,

Stopped, as a mortal to be

Passionate, mother and bride;

Flashed on wide wing to his side,

Caught him and drew him to me.

Kisses not mortal I lavished;

Out of the life of him ravished

Life for the making of thee,

Son, did I lose in the deed?

Son, did the breasts of me bleed,

Bleed for pure love? Did I see

Zeus with his face through the thunder

Frowning with fury and wonder?

Love in Olympus is free —

I have created a god, not a mortal of mortal degree.

“Ant.” GR:gamma.

ORPHEUS.

Hear me, O mother, descended

To earth, from the sisterly shrine!

Hear me, a mortal unfriended,

Save thou, in thy purity splendid

Indwell me, invoke the divine!

As sunlight enkindles the ocean,

As moonlight shakes earth with emotion,

As starlight shoots trembling in wine,

So be thy soul for a man!

Teach my young fingers to span

That musical lyre of thine!

Passion and music and peace,

Teach me the singing of these!

Teach me the tune of the vine!

Teach me the stars to resemble,

As tide-stricken sea-cliffs to tremble

Thy strings, as the wind-shaken pine!

Let these and their fruits and the soul of their being be mine, very mine!

{130B}

EPODE

CALLIOPE

AS the tides invisible of ocean,
Sweeping under the dark star-gemmed sea;
As the frail Caduceus' serpent-motion
Moves the deep waves of eternity;
As the star-space lingers and moves on;
As the comet flashes and is gone;
As the light, the music, and the thunder
Of moving worlds retire;
As the hoarse sounds of the heaven wonder
When Zeus flings forth his fire;
As the clang of swords in battle;
As the low of home-driven cattle'
As the wail of mothers children-losing;
As the clamorous cries of darkening death;
As the joy-gasp of love's chosen choosing;
As the babe's first voluntary breath;

As the storm and tempest fallen at even;
As the crack and hissing of the levin;
As the soft sough of tree-boughs wind-shaken;
As the fearful cry of souls in hell,
When past death and blinder life they waken,
Seeing Styx before their vision swell,
When the bands of earth are broken
As the spirit's spell is spoken
On the vast and barren places
Where the unburied wander still;
As the laughter of young faces;
As the Word that is the will;
As the life of wells and fountains,
Of the old deep-seated mountains;
As the forest's desolate sighing;
As the moaning of the earth
Where her seeds are black and dying;
As the earthquake's sudden birth;
As the vast volcano rending
Its own breasts; as music blending

With young maiden's loving laughter,
With the joy of fatherhood,
With the cry of Maenads after
Sacrifice by well or wood;
As the grave religious throng
Moving silently along,
Leading heifers, snowy footed,
Into glades and sacred groves, {131A}
Where the altar-stone is suited
To commemorate the Loves;
As the choir's most seemly chanting;
As the women's whispers haunting
Silent woods, or chaster spaces,
Where the river's water wends;
As the sound, when the white faces
Burn from space, and all earth end.
In the presence of the Gods;
These and all their periods;
These, and all that of them is,
I bestow on thee, and this

Also, mine eternal kiss!

In one melody of bliss

These and thou and I will mingle,

Till all Nature's pulses tingle,

Hear and follow and obey thee,

Thee, the lyrist; thee, the lyre!

These shall hear and not gainsay thee,

Follow in the extreme desire,

Mingling, tingling, mixed with thee

Even to all Eternity.

These, and all that of them is,

Take from Calliope in this

Single-hearted, many mouthed, kiss.

ORPHEUS, SEATED UPON OLYMPUS,

TUNES HIS LYRE.

ORPHEUS.

FIRST word of my song,

First tune of my lure,

Muse, loved of me long,

Be near and inspire!

Bright heart! Mother strong!

Sweet sense of desire!

Be near as I lift the first notes impassioned of fervour and fire!

Not ever before

Since Nature began

Hath one cloven her core,

Found the soul of her span;

No son that she bore

Her spirit might scan;

But I, being born beyond Nature, have known her and yet am a man.
{131B}

Yet fieriest flowers,

Life-stream of the world,

In passionate bowers

Of mystery curled,

Come forth! for the powers

Of my crying are hurled: —

Come forth! O ye souls of the fire, where the sound of my singing is
whirled!

Ye blossoms of lightning,

Bare boughs of the tree

Of life, where the brightening

Abysses of sea

Reveal ye, the whitening

Swords kindled of me.

Come forth! I invoke thee, O lightning, the flames of the Gods flung
free!

THE LIGHTNING.

The wand of Hermes, the caduceus wonder-working,

Sweeps in mid-aether —

Where we are lurking

It finds us and gathers.

By our mother the amber
In her glorious chamber;
By the flames that enwreath her;
By the tombs of our fathers;
Awake! let us fly, the compeller is nigh.
Strike! let us die!

ORPHEUS.

Ye powers volcanic,
Cyclopean forces,
Workers Titanic,
I know your courses.
By fury and panic,
By Dis and his horses,
Come forth! I invoke ye, volcanoes, arise from your cavernous sources!

THE VOLCANOES.

The Hephaestian hammer on the anvil of hell,

In the hollows accurst,
Falls for the knell
Of the children of earth. {132A}
By the strength of our fires,
The fierce force of our sires,
Let us roar, let us burst!
By the wrath of our birth,
Up! and boil over in rivers of lava!
Uncover! Uncover!

ORPHEUS.

Lit up thine amber
Lithe limber limbs,
Lissome that clamber
Like god-reaching hymns;
The flame in its chamber
Of glory that swims,
The Spirit and shape of the fire, mine eyes with fine dew that bedims!

Exempt from the bond

All others that binds,

As a flowery frond

The spark of thee blinds,

Within and beyond

As a thought of the mind's

In all, and about, and above! I invoke thee, my word as the wind's.

THE FIRE.

I, raging and lowering,

I, flying and cowering,

I, weaving and woven,

Budding and flowering,

Spiring and showering,

Cleaving and cloven!

My being encloses

Fountains of roses,

Lilies, and light!

I wrap and I sunder!

I am lightning and thunder!

The world-souls wonder

At me and my might!

All-piercing, all-winding,

All-moving, all-blinding,

All shaken in my hissing;

My life's light finding

All spirits, and binding

Their love with my kissing; {132}

Ruthless, fearless,

Imperial, peerless,

Creep I or climb.

Nought withstands me,

Bursts me or brands me;

Nor Heaven commands me,

Nor Space, nor Time.

Above, the supernal!

Below, the infernal!

Of all am I master.

On Earth, the diurnal!

In all things eternal!

Life, love, or disaster!

Abiding unshaken,

I sleep and I waken

On wonderful wings;

In depth and in height,

In darkness and light,

In weakness and might,

In blindness and sight,

in mercy and spite,

In day and in night,

Averse or aright,

For dule or delight,

I am master of things.

ORPHEUS.

O mother, I fear me!

The might of the lyre!

They tremble to hear me,

The powers of the fire.

Come near me to cheer me!

Be near and inspire!

Be strength in my heart and good courage, and speed in the single desire!

The fire knows its master!

They flicker and flare,

Dread dogs of disaster,

Wild slaves of despair.

Faster and faster —

My soul is aware

Of a sound that is dimmer and duller, wide wings adrift of the air.

{133A}

Their forces that wander

No God-voice know they!

Their bridals they squander!

Unknown is their way!

The sky's heart? beyond her

Sweet bosom they stray.

Shall these then obey me and hear? Shall the tameless one hear and obey?

From secretest places

Whence darkness is drawn,

Where terrible faces

Enkindle the dawn,

From wordless wide spaces,

The ultimate lawn,

Come forth! I invoke thee, O wind, come forth to me fleet as a fawn.

THE WINDS.

From fourfold quarters,

The depth and the height,

We come, the bright daughters

of day shed on night;

The sun and the waters

Have brought us to light;

The sound of him slaughters

Our soul in his sight.

We hear the loud murmur; we know him; we rest;

We breathe in his breast.

ORPHEUS.

By sunlight up-gathered

As dust of his cars,

By moonlight unfathered,

Unmothered of stars,

Unpastured, untethered,

Unstricken of scars,

Come forth! I invoke ye, O clouds! ye veils! ye divine avatars!

THE CLOUDS.

Sun's spirit is calling!

We gather together,

White wreaths, as appalling

Pale ghosts of dead weather, {133B}

The veil of us falling

On snow-height and heather,

Or hovering and scrawling

Strange signs in the aether.

We hear the still voice, and we know him we come!

We are sightless and dumb.

ORPHEUS.

More frail than your friends,

The clouds borne above,

The light of thee blends

With the moon and her love.

Thy spirit descends

As a white-throated dove.

Come forth! I invoke thee, O mist, and make me a sharer thereof!

THE MIST.

From valleys of violet
My shadow hath kissed,
From lowlying islet,
A vision of mist,
The voice of my pilot
Steals soft to insist.
O azure of sky, let
Me pass to the tryst!
I hear the low voice of my love; and I rest
A maid on his breast.

ORPHEUS.

Thou child of soft wind
And the luminous air,
Thou, stealing behind
As a ghost, as a rare
Soft dew, as a blind
Fierce lion from his lair,

Come forth! I invoke thee, O rain, look forth with thy countenance fair!

THE RAIN.

From highland far drifted,

From river-fed lawn,

From clouds thunder-rifted,

I leap as a fawn. {134A}

The voice is uplifted,

The lord of my dawn;

My spirit is shifted,

My love is withdrawn.

I hear the sweet feet of my God; I know him; I fall

In tears at his call.

ORPHEUS.

Cold lips and chaste eyes

Of frost-fall that leap,

That shake from the skies

On the earth in her sleep

Kiss nuptial, arise

As the lyre-strings sweep!

Come forth! I invoke thee, O frost, the valleys await thee and weep.

THE FROST.

So silent and wise

In her cerement clothes,

So secretly lies

My soul in my snows;

I awake, I arise,

For my spirit now knows

The first time in her eyes

That a voice may unclothe

My petals: I hear it; I come; I clasp the warm ground

In my passion profound.

ORPHEUS.

In valleys heaped high,
In drifts lying low,
Swift slopes to the sky,
Come forth to me, snow!
Thy beauty and I
Are of old even so
As lover and lover. Come forth! I invoke thee! the hills are aglow.

THE SNOW.

Bright breasts I uncover,
Heart's heart to thy gaze;
O lyre of my lover,
I know thee, thy praise. {134B}
Black heavens that hover,
Blind air that obeys,
I come to thee over
The mountainous ways
As a bride to the bridegroom: I blush, but I come

And bow to thee dumb.

ORPHEUS.

O blacker than hell,

O bluer than heaven,

O green as the dell

Lit of sunlight at even!

O strong as a spell!

O bright as the levin!

Come forth! I invoke thee, O ice, by their anguish, the rocks thou has
riven!

THE ICE.

My steep-lying masses,

Mine innermost sheen,

My soundless crevasses,

My rivers unseen,

My glow that surpasses

In azure and green

The rocks and the grasses.

Above, I am queen.

These know thee; I know thee, O master, I hear and obey.

I follow thy lyrical sway.

ORPHEUS.

O tenderest child

And phantom of day!

Gleam fitful and wild

On the flowery way!

Blue skies reconciled

To the kisses of clay!

Come forth! I invoke thee, O dew! The maiden must hear and obey.

THE DEW.

Life trembling on leaves,

Sunrise shed in tears,

Love's arrow that cleaves

The veil of the years, {135A}

Light gathered in sheaves

Of tenderest fears

As dayspring enweaves

My soul into spheres —

I hear, and I nestle upon thee, O lyrist supreme,

Light loves in a dream.

ORPHEUS.

Child of sweet rain,

O fathered of frost!

Bitterest pain

The birth of thee cost.

Passion is slain

When wished of thee most.

Come forth! I invoke thee, O hail, thou lord of a terrible host!

THE HAIL.

My father was glad of me
In places unseen;
My mother was sad of me,
Where wind came between;
Winter is mad of me,
Earth is my queen;
Meadows are clad of me,
Nestled in green.

As pearls in the cloudland I slept; but I hear the loud call;
I obey it and fall!

ORPHEUS.

Rain's guerdon and daughter
By sunlight's spies
Divided in water,
O light-stream, arise!
Seven petals that slaughter
The menace of Dis,

Come forth! I invoke thee, O rainbow! thou maid of the myriad eyes!

THE RAINBOW.

In multiple measure

The flowers of us fold

The scarlet and azure

And olive and gold, {135B}

Hyperion his treasure

Of light that is rolled

In music and pleasure

Unheard and untold.

We are kisses of light and of tears, love's triumph on fear.

We obey: I am here!

ORPHEUS.

Dim lights shed around me

In many a form

Like lovers surround me: —

O tender and warm!

They hunt me, they hound me;

They struggle and swarm —

Come forth! I invoke ye united, the manifold shape of the storm!

THE TEMPEST.

Wide-winged, many-throated,

Colossal, sublime,

I come and am coated

With feathers of Time.

I hear the deep note, head

My pinions to climb,

The roar of devoted

Large limbs of the mime

That mocks the loud lords of Olympus; we mingle; I wake.

I come with the sound of a snake.

ORPHEUS.

O storm many-winded,
O life of the air,
Thou angry and blinded
Hast sky for thy share.
O mother deep-minded,
My lure to my prayer
Responds, and the elements answer or ever my soul is aware.

Ye powers of deep water
And sea-running bays,
Earth's fugitive daughter
In deep-riven ways, {136A}
Enamoured of slaughter,
A mirage of grays,
Deep blues, and pale greens unbegotten, I turn to your lyrical praise.

I tune the loud lyre
To the haunts of the vale
As a sea-piercing fire
On the wings of the gale.

I lift my desire,

I madden, I wail!

Come forth! I invoke ye, O powers, in the waters that purple and pale.

Come forth in your pleasure,

O fountains and springs!

Come dance me a measure

Unholpen of wings!

Show, show the deep treasure,

Unspeakable things!

Come forth! I invoke ye, O fountains, I sweep the invincible strings.

THE FOUNTAINS.

In the heather deeply hidden,

From the caverns darkly drawn,

In the woodlands man-forbidden,

In the gateways of the dawn,

In the glad sweet glades descended,

On the stark hills gathered high,

Where the snows and trees are blended,
Kissed at birth by sun and sky;
We have heard the summons: we are open to the dayspring's eye.

ORPHEUS.

O broad-bosomed lakes
Whence the mist-tears uprise,
That shed in sweet flakes
The gleam of the skies,
Whose countenance takes
The bird as he flies
In kisses, come forth! I invoke ye, O lakes, where the love of me lies!

{136B}

THE LAKES.

In the hollow of the mountain,
In the bosom of the plain,
Fed by river, stream, and fountain,

Slain by sun, reborn of rain;
In the desert green-engirded,
Lying lone in waste and wood,
To my breast the many-herded
Lowling kine in gracious mood
Come, drink deeply, and are glad of me, my pleasant solitude.

ORPHEUS.

From the breast of the snow
As a life-swollen stream,
Your love-rivers flow
Soft hued as a dream,
Adrift and aglow
With the sunlight supreme.
Come forth! I invoke ye, O torrents that fall in the mazes and gleam!

THE MOUNTAIN TORRENTS.

Falling fast or lingering love-wise,

Gathered into mirror-lakes,
Floating sprayed through heaven dove-wise,
Dreaming, dashing; sunlight shakes
Into million-coloured petals
All our limpid drops, and wraps
Earth with green, as water settles
On the rocks and in their gaps,
Mossy rainbow-tinted maidens, flowers and fernshoots in their laps.

ORPHEUS.

Low down in the hollows
And vales of the earth,
What eagle-sight follows
Your length and green girth?
Your light is Apollo's,
Diana's your mirth!
Come forth! I invoke ye, O rivers, I have watched your mysterious birth!
{137A}

THE RIVERS.

In the lowland gently swelling,

Born and risen out of rain,

Wide the curves and arrowy dwelling

Were we rest or roll again.

There our calm sides shield the mortal,

Bears his bark our breast, and we

Follow to the mystic portal

Where we mingle with the sea.

Every life of earth we list to: should not we then answer thee?

ORPHEUS.

O see mixt with aether

In whirls that awake,

Roar skywards and wreathe her

Bright coils as a snake,

In agony seethe her

Sad cries for the sake

Of peace — I invoke ye! Come forth! O spouts in the wave's wild wake!

THE WATERSPOUTS.

Whirling over miles of ocean,

Lowering o'er the solemn sea,

Hears our life the deep commotion

That we know — thy witchery.

Wheeling, hating, fearing ever

As we thunder o'er the deep,

Death alone our path can sever,

Death our guerdon if we weep.

We obey thee, we are with thee! Wilt thou never let us sleep?

ORPHEUS.

O rolled on the river

By might of the moon,

Ye tremble and quiver,

Ye shudder and swoon!

The cities ye shiver:

The ships know your tune.

Come forth! I invoke ye, O eagres! dread rivals of shoal and typhoon!

{137B}

THE EAGRE.

Flings my single billow spuming

Into midmost air the world,

As the echo of my booming

To the furthest star is hurled.

Now I hear the lunar clashing

That evokes me from the tide,

Now I rise, my fury lashing,

Rolling where the banks divide —

I obey thee, I am with thee, Lord of Lightning, lotus-eyed!

ORPHEUS.

In sacred grove,

In silent wood,
In calm alcove,
In mirrored mood,
What light of love
Your depth endued?
Come forth! I invoke ye, O wells, ye dwellers of dim solitude!

THE WELLS.

Deep and calm to heaven's mirror
Through the cedarn grove or ashen,
Willow-woven, or cypress terror,
To the sky's less serene fashion
Still we look: around our margin
Holy priestess, longing lover,
Poet musing, vagrant virgin,
Nor their own mild looks discover,
But the light and glow of that they are meditating over.

ORPHEUS.

O curves un beholden,

Bright glory of bays!

Deep gulfs grown golden

With dawn and its ways!

With sunset enfolden

In silvery praise!

Come forth! I invoke ye, O gulfs, where the sea is a children, and plays.

{138A}

THE BAYS.

Where the hills reach to heaven behind us

A voice is rolled over the steep,

Some godhead whose glory would bind us,

Reflected far-off on the deep.

We hear the low chant that may blind us,

The song from the ultimate shore.

We come that our lover may find us

His bride as he found us before.

We listen, and love; and his voice is the voice of the God we adore.

ORPHEUS.

Come forth in your gladness,

O end of all these!

O sorrow and madness

And passion and ease,

Sharp joy and sweet sadness,

Deep life and deep peace!

Come forth! I invoke you, ringed round earth's girdle, the manifold seas!

THE SEA.

I hear but one voice in our voices;

One tune, multitudinous notes;

One life that burns low or rejoices,

One song from the numberless throats.

Where ice on my bosom is piled,

Where palm-fronded islands begem
My breast, where I rage in the wild
White storms, where I lap the low hem
Of earth's mantle, or war on her crags, I am one, and my soul is in them.

I am mother of earth and her daughter;

I am father of heaven and his son;

I am fire in the palace of water;

I am God, and my glory is one!

I am bride of the sun and the starlight;

The moonlight is bride unto me;

I am lit of my deeps with a far light,

My heart and its flame flung free.

I am She, the beginning and end; I am all, and my name is the Sea!
{138B}

ORPHEUS.

Then thou, O my mother,

Hast given to me

The power of another,

The watery key.

Bright air is my brother,

My sister the sea;

I have called, and they answer and come; and their song is but glory to thee.

One other is left me,

The light of the earth.

If Fate had bereft me,

Oh Muse, of thy birth,

Still I had cleft me

A way in her girth!

I tune the loud lyre once again to the mother of men in her mirth.

O mighty and glad

In springtime and summer!

O tearful and sad

When the sun is grown dumber,

When the season is mad,

And the gods overcome her,

When the sky is fulfilled of the frost and the fingers of winter numb her!

O marvellous earth

Of multiple mood

That givest men birth

And delicate food,

Red wine to make mirth

Of thine own red blood.

And corn and green grass and sweet flowers and fruits most heavenly-hued!

Borne skyward in swoon

By arrowy hours,

Girt round of the moon

And the girdling flowers,

The sun for a boon,

Sweet kisses of showers,

O mother, O life, O desire, my soul is a bird in thy bowers! {139A}

My soul is caught up
In thy green-hearted waves.
I drink at the cup
Of thy sweet valley graves.
My spirit may sup
Slow tunes in thy caves.
O hide me, thy child, in thy bosom, that the heart in me yearns to and
craves.

Most virginally sprung
In the shadow of light,
Eternally young,
A magical sight,
Wandering among
Day, twilight, and night,
As a bride in her chamber that dreams many visions of varied delight.

O how shall my lyre
Divide thee, dispart
Thy water and fire,

Thy soul and thy heart,
Thy hills that spring higher,
Thy flowers that upstart,
How quire thee, my limitless love, with a lewd and a limited art?

A fortress, a sphere,
An arrow of flame;
Let thy children appear
At the sound of thy name!
In my silence uprear
The sweet guerdon of shame!
Be they choral to hymn thee, O mother, thy magic ineffable fame!

Last birth of the Sun,
Best gift of the giver,
Thou surely art One!
As the moon on the river,
Whose star-blossoms run,
Kiss, tremble, and shiver,
And roll into ultimate space, and are lost to man's vision for ever.

{139B}

Come forth to the sound

Of the lightning lyre,

Ye valleys profound

As a man's desire,

Ye woodlands bound

In the hills that are higher

Than even the note of a bird as it wings to the solar fire!

Ye fruits and corn,

Gold, rose, and green,

Vines purple-born,

Pearl-hidden sheen,

Trees waving in scorn

Of the grass between!

Come forth in your chorus, and chant the praise of your mother and queen!

Ye trees many-fronded

That shake to the wind,
Green leaves that have sounded
My harp in our kind,
Light boughs that are rounded,
Grey tops that are shrined
In the tears of the heaven as they fall in the blackening storm grown
blind!

Ye fields that are flowered
In purple and white,
Embossed and embowered
By the love of the light,
Gold-sandalled and showered,
Dew-kissed of the night,
Your song is too faint and too joyous for mortals to hear it aright.

Blue pansies, and roses,
And poppies of red,
Pale violets in posies
Where Hyacinth bled,

The flower that closes

Its dolorous head; —

What song may be sung, or what tune may be told, or what word may be said?

{140A}

All tropical scent,

Blossom-kindled perfume

Love-colours new-lent

By the infinite womb,

Gold subtlety blent

Wit the scarlet bloom; —

Shall ye in my melody live? Shall my song be not rather your tomb?

Most musical moves

The head of the corn;

Strong glorious loves

Of its being are born.

Dim shadows of groves

Of Demeter adorn

The waves and the woods of the earth, the heart of the mother forlorn.

Caves curved of the wind,

Deep hollows of earth,

Whence the song of the blind

Old prophet had birth,

The caves that confined

Deep music of mirth,

Thy caves, O my mother, are these not a gem in thy virginal girth?

Ye mountains uplift

As an arrow in air;

Ice-crowned, rock-cliffed,

Snow-bosomed bare,

I give ye the gift

Of a voice more fair.

Leave echo, and wake, and proclaim that ye stand against death and
despair!

Ye hills where I rested

In rapture of life,
From dawn calm-breasted
To evening's strife,
Where skies were nested
With mist for a wife!

Leave echo, and speak for yourselves; let your song pierce the heaven as
a
knife! {140B}

Olympus alone
Of earth's glories is taken
For deity's throne
deep-frozen, storm-shaken.
What glories are shown
When their slumbers awaken!
The avalanche thunders adown, and the gods of the gods are forsaken.

To mortals your voices
Are mighty and glad.
The maiden rejoices:

The man is grown mad

For love, and his choice is

The choice of a lad

When a virgin first smiles on his suit, and the summer for envy is sad.

Wan grows Aphrodite,

And Artemis frail;

Apollo less mighty,

Red Bacchus too pale.

Dark Hades grows bright he

Alone may avail

When the god and the mortal are one, as the mountain is one with the
gale.

THE CHILDREN OF EARTH.

Our hair deep laden with the scent of earth,

The colour of her rosy body's birth,

Our mother, lady and life of all that is divine;

We gather to the sombre sound, as spring

Had whispered, "Follow," hiding in her wing
Her glorious head and flowing breast of wine.
Though in the hollow of her heart be set
So deep and awful a fire, though the net
Of all her robes be frail as we are fine,
We gather, listening to the living lyre
Like falling water shot with amber fire,
And blown aloft by winds even to heaven's desire. {141A}

Deep starry gems set in a silver sea,
Sullen low voices of dark minstrelsy,
Light whispers of strange loves, of silver woven,
Dumb kisses and wild laughter following:
All these as lives of autumn and of spring
We are: we follow across the rainbow cloven,
A never-fading path of golden glory,
Whereof the lone Leucadian promontory
Holds one divinest gate: the other troven
Far, far beyond in interlunar skies,
Where the Himalayas stir them, and arise

To listen to the song that swells our arteries.

O moving labyrinth sun-crowned, dread maze

Of starry paths, of Zeus-untrodden ways,

Of mystic vales unfooted of the deep,

Our mother, virgin yet in many places

Unseen of man, beholden of the faces

Only of elemental shapes of sleep

That are ourselves, her daughters wild and fair

Caught nymphwise in the kisses of the air,

That flings our songs reverberate from steep to steep,

Songs caught in solar light, we are shed

Even down beyond the valleys of the dead,

And smiled upon in groves ruled by the holy head.

Great Pan hath heard us, children of his wooing,

Great Pan, that listens to the forest, suing

Vainly His peace that dwells even in the desolate halls.

The delicately-chiselled flowers nod,

Look to the skies, and see thee for a God,

O sightless lyre that wails, O viewless voice that calls!
Thy sound is in our death and in her womb,
Far in Spring's milky breast, in Autumn's gloom,
In Summer's feast and song, in Winter's funerals.
In the dead hollow of the hills there rings,
Sharp song, like frost hissing on silver wings,
Or like the swelling tune we listen to for Spring's. {141B}

We come, we mountains, crowned and incense-bringing,
Robed as white priests, the solemn anthem singing;
Or as an organ thundering fiery tunes.

We come, we greener hills, and rend the sky,
With happier chorus and the songs that die
Or mix their subtle joy and being with the moon's.

We come, we pine-clad steeps, we feathery slopes,
With footfalls softer than the antelope's.

We listen and obey: the sacred slumberer swoons
More tranced than death in this far following,
Careless of winter, not invoking spring;

And all the witless woods company us and sing.

But not the glades by song of thee unstricken?

Not they? Shall they refuse the pulse to quicken,

Soft smiting the low melody of light?

Tuned without fingers, the wild woods lift high

The wordless chant, the murmurous melody,

The song that dwells like moon-inkindled night.

We draw from low palm groves and cedar hills,

From stern grey slumbers, for thy music fills

All earth with unimaginable delight.

Have we not brought the leaves dew-diamonded,

The buds fresh-gleaming, star-blossoms, and shed

Our scent and colour and song around thy sacred head?

We that are flowers are kindled in thy praise,

Even as thy song shed lustre and swift rays,

Darting to brighten and open the folded flowers.

The violet lifts its head, the lily lightens,

The daisy shakes its dew, the pansy brightens,

All cups of molten light upon the twilight hours. {142A}

The poppy flames anew, the buttercup

Glow with fresh fire, the larkspur rouses up

To be the lark indeed amid the azalea bowers.

Magnolia and light blooms of roses mute

Rouse them to gather in one golden lute

In fairy light and song into the sky to shoot.

The laughing companies of corn awaken,

Their wind-swept waves by Daedal music taken

Into a golden heaven of festal song.

We shake and glisten in the sun, we see

The very soul and majesty of thee

Thrill in the lyre and leave the lazy long

Notes for crisp magic of sharp rustling sound,

And thy life quickens and thy loves abound,

Listening the answer of our dancing throng.

Joy, sleep, peace, laughter, thought, remembrance, came

Even at our prelude, a death-quickenning flame,

And earth rejoiced throughout to hear Demeter's name.

We come, in bass deep-swelling, rocks and caves,

A hollow roar across the golden waves

Hidden in islands set deep in the untravelled sea.

Across the corn from storm-cleft mountainsides

Our voice peals, like the thunder of the tides,

Into the darkling hills that fringe Eternity.

Dire and divine our womb unfruitful bears

Deep music darker than tempestuous airs.

When Heaven's anger wakes: when at our own decree,

With clanging rocks sky-piercing for our tomb,

We call the thunder from our own black womb,

We hear the voice and we obey — we know not whom!

We hear thee, who are cliffs and pinnacles

Higher than heaven's base, founded far in hell's;

We hear, that sunder the blue skies of heaven; {142B}

Our voiceless clefts and spires of delicate hue,

Changing and lost in the exultant blue,

By fire and whirlwind fashioned and then riven,
Invoke fresh song, with deep solemnity
In noble notes of mastery answering thee,
By some young tumult in our old hearts driven;
And this immortal path of splintered rock
Shall lead the wild chant to the sky, and mock
The nectared feast of Gods with its impassioned shock.

Deep-mouthed, I, earthquake, wake in echoing thunder.
I break my mother's breast; I rear asunder
The womb that bore me; I arise in terror,
Threatening to ruin her, crag, crown, and column,
Reverberate music of that mighty and solemn
Call of creation, Vulcan's awful mirror.
I rend the sky with clamour terrible,
Shaking the thrones of earth and heaven and hell,
Confound the universe in universal error.
I sound the awful note that summons mortals,
As I awake, to pass the dreadful portals

And face the gloom of Dis, the unnameable immortals.

Soft our mild music steals through thunderous pauses,

A phrase made magic by the Second Causes,

The mighty Ones that dwell beneath the empyrean.

We, vines and fruits and trees with autumn laden,

Sing as the bride-song of a married maiden

Before the godlike vigour of the man

Breaks the frail temple-doors of love asunder,

And wakes the new life's promise in pale wonder,

Shattering the moulded glass, the shape Selenian.

Fruits of the earth, our low song joins the crowd. {143A}

We need not (to be heard) to thunder loud.

Our hearts are lifted up, our heads with love low bowed.

The tenderest light, the deepest hidden, is shed

Up through dark earth — your home, O happy dead! —

Crusted in darkness lie the secret lights.

Formed in the agony of earth as tears,

Clothed in the crystal mirror of the years,

We dwell, sweethearted nun-like eremites!
Diamond and ruby, topaz and sapphire,
Emerald and amethyst, one clear bright fire,
We are earth's stars below, as she above hath Night's.
Our sweet clean song pierces the cover,
And thin keen notes of music flit and hover
Like spirit-birds upon the lyre of this our lover.

We, children of the mountains, lying low
On earth's own bosom, deep, embowered, flow
In wide soft waves of land: upon us sweep
The mightiest rivers: in our hollows lie
Great lakes: our voices hardly rise, but die
In the cold streams of air: shallow and deep:
Leagues by the thousand, dells a minute long;
All we are children of the mighty throng
That cluster where the mountains fail, and sleep
In such cool peace that even the lyre awakes
Hardly a soul that tenderer music makes.

Yet we arise and listen for our own sweet sakes.

THE LIVING CREATURES OF THE EARTH.

The heavy hand is held,
And the whips leave weary blows.
The mysteries of eld
Are cancelled and expelled,
And the miserable throes. {143B}

All we are shapen fair
In many forms of grace,
But change is everywhere,
And time is all our share
And all the ways of space.

One lives an hour of day;
One even man's life exceeds;
One loves to chase and slay;
One loves to sing and play;

Each soul to his own deeds!

A share of joy is ours,

A double share of grief;

So sum the many hours

In many hopes and powers,

All powers except the chief.

Emotion fills our souls,

And love delights us well,

And joy of sense full rolls;

But leads us, and controls

Life's central citadel.

Whence we were drawn who knows?

Of law or Gods or chance?

But, as life's river flows,

What Sea shall clasp and close

Beyond blind circumstance?

Such little power we own
Of vague experience,
And instinct to enthrone
The life's mere needs alone,
Nor answer "why" and "whence."

Nor wandering in the night
Our minds may apprehend
Reflecting in pure light
Of soul, what sound or sight
May lead us to some end.

We hear the dim sound roll
From distant mountains drawn,
We follow, but no soul
Guesses that silver goal,
The sunset or the dawn. {144B}

The lyre entices fast
Our willing feet and wings,

We wonder from the past
What spell is overcast
From of the sonant strings.

Awhile we deem our mates
Are calling through the wood;
Awhile the tune creates
These unfamiliar states
Of thinking solitude.

Awhile we gather clear
A note of promise swell,
A song of fate and fear,
Assuring us who hear
Of other shapes to dwell.

A promise vast and grand
As is the spangled sky!
We dimly understand;
We join the following band

Of dancing greenery!

We see all nature bend

To high Olympus' hill.

Our tunes we choose and send;

We follow to the end,

O Orpheus, all thy will.

Our little love and hate,

Our hunger and our fear,

Pass to a solemn state

Pregnant with hope and fate.

O Orpheus, we are here!

THE EARTH.

Life hidden in death,

Life shrined in the soul,

Life bright for his breath,

Life dark for his goal,

I am Mother, and Burier, and Friend —

Look thou to the end! {144B}

I am Light in thy Love,

I am Love in thy Life.

I am cloistered above

Where the stars are at strife.

I am life in thy light, and thy death

Is part of my breath.

My voices are many,

Thy lyre is but one;

But thou art not as any

Soul under the sun!

Thou hast power for an hour,

The motherly dower.

One voice of my voices

Uncalled and unheard,

No song that rejoices

Of beast or of bird,
No sound of my children sublime,
But the spirit of time.

Fear is his name,
Nor flickers nor dies
His blackening flame.
Beware, were thou wise!
Not him shalt thou hail from the dusk with thy breath;
His name — it is Death!

My seasons and years,
Shalt thou traffic with these?
Art thou Fate? Are her shears
Asleep or at ease?
Though Time were no more than the shape of thy glass —
Beware! let him pass!

ORPHEUS.

Not these do I fear,

O Earth, for their peace.

I cry till they hear

O'er the desolate seas.

I call ye! give ear,

O seasons, to these

Fleet-footed, the strings of the lyre! Come forth! I invoke ye — and
cease. {145A}

O hours of the day,

And hours of the night,

Pause now while ye may

In your heavenly flight!

Give answer and say,

Have I called ye aright?

Are the strings of my lyre as fire, the voice of my singing as light?

THE HOURS.

Darkness and daylight in divided measure

Gather as petals of the sunflower,
In many seasons seek the lotus-treasure,
Following as dancing maidens, mute for pleasure,
The fervent flying footsteps of the Hour.

The sun looks over the memorial hills,
The trampling of his horse heard as wind;
He leaps and turns, and all his fragrance fills
The shade and silence; all the rocks and rills
Ring with the triumph of his steeds behind.

The bright air winnowed by the plumeless leapers
Laughs, and the low light pierces to the bed
Where lovers linger, where the smiling sleepers
Stir, and the herds unmindful of their keepers
Low for pure love of morning's dewy head.

The morning shakes its ocean-bathed tresses,
The bright sun broadens over all the earth.
The green leaves fall, fall into his caresses,

And all the world's heart leaps, again addresses
Its life, and girds it in the golden girth.

Then noon full-fashioned lies upon the steep.
The large sun sighs and turns his bridle-rein,
Thinks of the ocean, turns his heart to sleep,
Laughing no longer, not yet prone to weep,
Feeling the prelude of the coming pain. {145B}

The hills and dales are dumb beneath the heat,
And all the world lies tranced or mutely dreaming,
Save some low sigh caught up where pulses beat
Of warm love waiting in the arboreal seat
Till the shade lengthen on the lawn light-gleaming.

Now all the birds change tune, and all the light
Glow lowlier, musing on departed day.
Strange wings and sombre, heralding the night,
Fleet far across the woods; and gleaming bright
The evening star looks from the orient way.

Shadow and silence deepen: all the woods
Take on a tenderer phrase of musical
Breezes: the stream-sought homes and solitudes
Murmur a little where the maiden moods
Are sadder as the evening's kisses fall.

Like silver scales of serpenthood they fall
Across the blind air of the evening;
Shadowy ghosts arise funereal
And seek unspeakable things; and dryads call
The satyr-company to the satyr-king.

And all the light is over; but the sky
Shudders with blanched light of the unrisen moon.
The night-birds mingle their sad minstrelsy
For daylight's requiem: and the sea's reply
Now stirs across the land's departed tune.

The moon is up: the choral crowd of stars,

Shapen like strange or unknown animals,
Move in their measure: beyond AEolian bars
The clustering winds, moving as nenuphars,
Gather and muse before the midnight calls. {146A}

The darkness is most deep in hollow dells.
There, blacker than Cocytus, lurk the shades
Darker than death's, more terrible than hell's,
Uttering unwritten words: the silent wells
Keep their sweet secret till the morning maids

Bring their carved pitchers to the moss-grown side.
For now beyond, below the east, appears
A hint as if a band, silvern and wide,
The girdle of some goddess amber-eyed,
Rose from the solemn company of the spheres.

The sky is tinged, as if the amorous flesh
Of that same queen shown through the girdle drawn
By here own kissing fervour through its mesh.

Last, glory of godhead! flickers, flames the fresh
First faint frail rose and arrow of the dawn.

SPRING.

Mild glimpses of the quiet moon, let through
Tall groves of cedar, stain the glade; gleams mild
The kirtle of the unweaned spring, stained blue
From the blue breasts that suckle to the child.
Through the new-leaved trees
The hidden stranger sees
The moon's sweet light, the shadows listening
If a ghost-foot should fall:
And if a ghost voice call
Tremble the leaves and light-streaks of the spring.
On wavering wing
The small clouds gallop in the windy sky:
The hoarse rooks croak and droop them to the nest:
One sweet small throat begins to sing,
Becomes the song, losing identity

Ere its wail wakes the long lowlying crest

That rears across the west. {146B}

Spring, maiden-footed, steals across the space,

Sandalled with tremulous light, with flickering hair

Blown o'er the sweet looks of the fair child-face,

Like willows drooping o'er the liquid mere,

Whence timid eyes look far,

Even where her kisses are

Awaited by the tender mother lips,

Earth's, that is lonely and old,

Grown sad, fearful, and cold

With bitter winter and the sun's eclipse;

So the child slips

From bough to bough between the weeping trees,

And with frail fingers smooths and touches them.

They murmur in their sleep: the moonlight dips

And laughs, seeing how young buds catch life from these

Child-kisses on the stem.

The leaves laugh low, and frosty-footed Time
Shoulders a lighter burden; in the dale
Some distant notes of lovely music climb,
Thrown from the golden-throated nightingale,
Pale sobs of love and life
With death and fear at strife,
Fiercely beset and hardly conquering,
When spring's bright eyes at last
Flash through the sullen past,
And tune its pain to tears, its peace to sing.
The earth's lips cling
To the child's bosom, and low smiles revive;
Love is new-born upon the golden hour,
And all the life of all the exultant spring
Breathes in the wind that wakes the world alive
Into the likeness of a flower. {147A}

SUMMER.

Full is the joy of Maidenhood made strong,

Too proud to bend to swift Apollo's kiss;
Rejoicing in its splendour, and the throng
Of gaunt hounds leashless before Artemis.
In strange exulting bliss
The maiden stands, full-grown, with bounding breasts
Bared to the noon, and narrow
Keen eyes that glance, dim fires that veil their crests
To flame along the arrow
Aimed at some gallant of ten tines perched high
Branching against the sky
His cedar-spreading horns: erect she stands,
Holding in glimmering hands
A silver bow across the shining weather,
While, bound in pearl-wrought bands,
Her bright hair streams; she draws the quivering feather
Back to the small ear curved: with golden zone
Gathering her limbs she stands alone
Like a young antelope poised upon a spire of stone.

What tender lightning flashes in the bosom

Heaving with vigour of young life? What storm
Gathers across the brow's broad lotus-blossom?
What sudden passion fills the fragrant form
With subtle streams of warm
Blood tingling to the finger-tips of rose?
Swiftly the maiden closes
The lustre of her look: disdainful glows
The fire of wreathing roses
In her bright cheeks: she darts away to find
Like some uncovered hind
Shade in the forest from the stag's pursuit,
Ere the sun's passion shoot {147B}
His ray, strange deeps unknown and feared to uncover.
But now the ancient root
Of some wise oak betrays her to her lover:
She stumbles and falls prone: the forest noon
Guesses life's law; all nature's tune
Tell that the hour is come when May must grow to June.

Then in the broad glare of the careless sun

Apollo's light is on her and within;
His shafts of glory pierce her one by one;
His kisses darken, shivering and keen,
Swift glories cold and clean
Of that chaste bridal, and the earth gets gladness,
Till the last winter's traces
Fall from the spring's last cold wind — shining sadness! —
And from the frail new faces
Blushing through moss; and all the world is light
With the unsufferably bright
Full joy and guerdon of that sunny season
By Love's sweet trap of treason.
So the bright girl is now a woman brighter;
And childhood sees a reason
Beneath the strong stroke of the goodly smiter
For all the past: and love at last is hers.
No more the bosom's pride demurs,
While in her womb the first faint pulse of motherhood soft stirs.

AUTUMN.

Full amber-breasted light of harvest-moon,
And sheaves of corn remembering the sun
Laughing again for love of that caress
When night is fallen, and the sleepy swoon
Of warm waves lap the shoreland, one by one;
Forgetful kisses like a dream's possess
All the lowlying land,
And, statelier than the swaying form
Of some loud God, lifting the storm {148A}
In his disastrous hand,
Steps the sweet-voiced, the mellow motherhood
Glad of the sun's kiss, full of life, well wooed
And won and brought to his bed,
Proud of her rhythm in the lusty kiss,
Triumphant and exulting in the mood
Wherein her being is
Crowned with a husband's head,
And left in solitude which is not solitude.

She strides with mighty steps across the glade
Laughing, her bosom swelling with the milk
Born of a million kisses: leaps her womb
Pregnant with fruits, and latter flowers, and shade
Of the great cedar-groves: soft, soft, as silk,
Her skin glows amber, slilvered with the bloom
Mist-like of the moon's light,
A slumberous haze of quietude
Shed o'er the hardy limbs, and lustihood,
And boldness, and great might.
Earth knows her daring daughter, and the sea
Breaks into million-folded mystery
Of flower-like flashes in the pale moon-rise,
Exulting also, now the sun is faded,
With joy of her supreme fertility
And glowing masteries
Of autumn summer-shaded,
The golden fruit of all the blossoming sky.

And now the watcher to the bright breasts blind
Loses the seemly shape, the loud swift song;
Now the moon falls, and all the gold is gone, {148B}
And round the storm-caught shape hard gusts of wind
Blow, and her leaves are torn, a flying throng
Of orange and purple and red; the sombre sun
Shines darkly in her breast
But wakes no joy therein,
And all his kisses sharp and keen
Bring only now desire of rest,
Not their old rapture: the warm violet eyes
Melt into sweet hot tears; subtler the sighs
Are interfused with death;
The brave bright looks grow duller,
And fear is mingled with love's ecstasies
Again, and all her breath
Fails, and the shape and colour
Fade, fail, are lost in the sepulchral seas.

WINTER.

Know ye my children? From the old strong breast
Not weary yet of life's grey change, not drawn
Into the utter peace of death, the rest
Of the dim hour that lingers ere the dawn,
Spring these that laugh upon thee. In the snow
See forest bare and gaunt,
Where winged whispers haunt,
Lighting the dull sky with a slumberous glow;
Hear the strange sounds of winter chaunt;
Feel the keen wisdom of the winter thrill
Young hearts with passionate foretaste
Of death in some wild waste
Of deserts darkening at some wild god's will,
Of frozen steeps awaiting the repose
That only death discovers, never sleep.
My misery is this
That I must wake to childhood gold and rose,
And maidenhood, and wifhood, and still keep
Bound on Life's fatal wheel — revolving bliss. {149A}

O that worn wisdom and the age of sorrow
Could learn its bitter lesson, and depart
Into some nightfall guiltless of a morrow,
Into some cave's unprofitable heart
Beyond this curse of birth! O that dread night
Could come and cover all,
Even itself to fall
To some abyss past resurrection's might!
For the old whispers of my old life call
Accursed hopes, accursed fears, accursed pleasures.
Long-suffering of all life!
Changed consciousness at strife!
No dancer treads the melancholy measures
Unchanged for one short tune: no dancer flags,
The hateful music luring them to move
Weary and desolate;
And as the rhyme revolves and shrills and drags
Their limbs insane they smile and call it love,
Or, mocking, call it hatred: it is Fate.

These grey eyes close to the deceitful dream
Of death that will not take the tired for ever.
Again, again, revolves the orb; the stream,
The dew, the cloud, the ocean, and the river.
My magic wand and cup and sword and spell
Languish, forgotten fears.
The cup is filled with tears;
The sword is red with blood; the pentacle
Built of flesh; the wand its snake-head rears
Swift energy: my labour is but lost.
I, who thus thought all things to end,
Find in the void no friend.
I have but conjured up the fiend that most
I trusted to abolish: all my toil
Goes to give rest to life, and build anew
These pinnacles of pain,
Cupola upon cupola; the soil
To comfort, to avail, to assoil with dew,
To build the year again. {149B}

ORPHEUS.

O hours not of day

But of aeons that roll!

Earth stretches away

From pole unto pole;

Four season decay,

Ere one sound of thy soul,

O fervent and following years, springs over the solar goal!

Come forth to the sound

Of the seven sweet strings!

Advance and rebound!

Be your pomp as a king's!

Girdled around

With season and stings

As a serpent's encompassing Time. Come forth! on the heavy grey wings!

Ye arbiter lords

That sit as for doom,
Bright splendour of swords
Leaps forth in your gloom!
But stronger my chords
Shall lift in your womb
The love of your passage and time, immemorial ages, your tomb.

Ye linger for long,
But ye pass and are done:
But I, my sweet song
Outliveth the sun!
Ye are many and strong;
I am stronger, and one!
Come forth! I invoke ye, O years, in my evening orison.

THE YEARS.

Crowned with Eternity, beyond beginning;
Sandalled with wings, Eternity's; the end
Far beyond sight of striving soul or sinning;

Ourselves see not, nor know, nor comprehend.
Reeling from chaos, unto Chronos winning,
Devoured of Him our Father and our friend,
This is our life, lead winged or footed golden;
We pass, and each of other is un beholden. {150A}

Ranged in dim spectral order and procession,
We span man's thought, we limit him in time;
None of the souls of earth have had possession
Of larger lovers or passions more sublime.
Where the night-caverns hide our solemn session
The summoning word lifts up our holy rhyme.
Even as a mighty river, bend to bend,
We rise in turn and look toward the end.

Also, the Gods arisen from the living
Lights of the sky, half hidden in the night,
Vast shapes beholden of men unbelieving,
Staggering the sense and reason with the sight,
Manifold, mighty, monstrous, no light giving

Unto the soul that is not also light; —
We rise in ghastly power; we know the token,
The speech of silence and the song unspoken.

ORPHEUS.

Come forth to the sound.
Ye lustres of years
Hide in profound
Abysses of fears.
Hidden and bound!
The voice of tears
Implores and impels ye, O lustres, with a tune that is strong as a seer's.

THE LUSTRES.

Fivefold the shape sublime that lifts its head
Uniform, self-repeating, comparable
At last to a man's life: twice seven times dead
Ere the light flickers in that citadel,

Or the great whiteness lure his soul instead
Of many-coloured earth: ere the strong spell
Fail, and the Fates with iron-shapen shears
Cut the frail silver, hide him from the years. {150B}

Fivefold: the year that is in darkness hidden,
Being beginning: then the moving year,
All change and tumult; then the quiet unhidden
Of deep reflection; then the gladdening tear
Or saddening smile, the laughter not forbidden
And love enfolding the green-woven sphere:
Lastly, the burning year of flame and fume
That burns me up in fire's sepulchral womb.

Fivefold: the child, the frail, the delicate:
Then the strong laughing mischief: then the proud
Fight toward manhood and the sense elate,
Creative power and passion: then the loud
Assertion of young will, the quickening rate
And strength in blood, in youth with life endowed,

And firmness fastening; the last lustre's span
Consolidates and shows the perfect man.

Fivefold: the humour changes as his child
Calls him first “father”; a sense of strength divine
Fills him; then man's work in the world, and wild
Efforts to fame: then steadier in the shrine
Burns the full flame: then, turning, the years piled
Seem suddenly a burden; then the fine
Flavour of full maturity is tasted:
The man looks back, and asks if life be wasted.

Fivefold: delight in woman altering
To joy of sunlight only: love of life
Changing to fear of death: the golden spring
Trembles; he hates the cold, the winter strife,
Laughs not with lust of combat: feebly cling
His old hands: he has sepulchred his wife:
Last, palsied, shaking, drawing tremorous breath,
He gasps — and stumbles in the pit of death. {151A}

ORPHEUS.

O girded and spanned
By the deeds of time,
Rocks shattered and planned
In your depth: where climb
The race and the land,
And the growth sublime
Of worlds — I invoke ye! Come forth, ye centuries! Come to the rhyme!

THE CENTURIES.

How hardly a man
Though his strength were as spring's
Shall stretch out his span
To the width of my wings!
The years are enfolden
In my bosom golden,
My periods

Are the hours of the Gods.

They have their plan

In my seasons; all things

Are woven in the span

Of the spread of my wings.

My brazen gates cleft

By shafts shed of time,

Are ruined and left

As the Gods sing their rhyme.

Buttress and joist are

Effaced of the cloister.

Fane after fane

We lift us again

To the hoarier transept

Where ages climb,

And ruin is left

Where the Gods said their rhyme.

The deity-year

(Whereof I am an hour)
Shall be born and appear
As the birth of a flower,
Shall fade as they faded,
The flower wreaths braided
In maiden's hair.

The Gods shall fare {151B}
As the children of Fear
In the Fear-God's Power,
And their names disappear
As the fall of a flower!

The universe-day
(Whereof I am a second)
Shall fall away
And be no more reckoned;
Shall fall into ruin.

(Sad garden it grew in!)
Ungessed at, unknown,
Beyond them alone,

Is a space that is grey
As it caught them, and beckoned,
And lost them — their way
Is not counted nor reckoned!

Inconceivable hollow,
Eternity's womb!
Cataclysmal they follow,
Tomb hidden in tomb.
Reeled off and unspun,
Time's fashion is done
In the ultimate
Abysses of fate.
AEons they swallow,
And swamp in the gloom,
Where Eternities follow
Their biers to their tomb.

ORPHEUS.

O Mother, O hollow

Sweet heart of the moon!

O matchless Apollo

That granted the tune!

Time's children follow

The strings that commune

With Nature well cloven that comes to the lyre's lilt silver-hewn.

O bays of the wind,

And shoreland of Thrace!

O beaten and blind

In the light of my face!

Heaven thunders behind,

Hell shakes for a space,

As I fling the loud sound to the sky, and the vaults of the Earth give
place. {152}

O mystical tune

Of a magic litten

Of music, the moon,

The stars unsmitten,
The sun, the unhewn
Stones deeply bitten
By runic fingers of time, where decrees of the Fates are written!

Time listens, obeys me;
All Nature replies;
Nought avoids me, nor stays me,
Nor checks, nor defies.
Tribute she pays me
From seas unto skies.
But Death — shall he heed me or hear? shall he list to the lyre and
arise?

O thou who art seated,
Invisible king,
The never-defeated,
The shadowy thing!
What mortal hath greeted
Thy shrine, but shall sing

Not earthly but tunes of thine own, in the vaults of Aornos that ring?

Nor caring nor hearing

For hearts that be bowed,

Nor hating nor fearing

Man's crying aloud,

Solemnly spearing

The single, the crowd,

Thou sittest remote and alone, unprofane, with due silence endowed!

I call thee by Nature,

My mother and friend!

By every creature!

By life and its end!

By love, the true teacher,

My chanting I send,

Invoking thy stature immense, the terrible form of a fiend! {152B}

I hear not a word,

Though my music be rolled

As the song of a bird

Through fields of gold.

Hast thou not heard?

Have I not told

The magic that bridleth the Gods, the Gods in their houses of old?

Art thou elder than they

In their mountain of light?

Is thy fugitive way

Lost in uttermost night?

Shalt thou not obey,

Or my lyre not affright,

If I call thee by Heaven and Earth with a God's tumultuous might?

If I curse thee or chide

Shalt thou tremble not, Thou?

Not move thee and hide

From the light of my brow?

Shall my arrows divide

Not the heart of thee now?

Art thou cased in strong iron to mock the spells that all others avow?

Art thou muffled or hidden

In adamant brass?

Is my music forbidden

In Orcus to pass?

Have I cursed thee and chidden?

My flesh being grass,

I curse not as yet, but command thee; the names that avail I amass.

No sound? no whisper?

No answer to me?

From dawn-star to Hesper

I call upon thee!

In the hour of vesper

I change the key!

I cry on Apollo to aid, I lift up my lyre on the sea. {153A}

Thou reaper of fear,

Accurst of mankind,

I charge thee to hear,
Deaf horror deep-mined
In hell! O uprear
On the front of the wind!
I curse thee! Thou hearest my hounds of thunder that mutter behind?

How strange is the dark
And the silence around!
Hardly the spark
Of my silvery sound
Moves, or may mark
The heaven's dim bound.
How strange! I have sought him in vain — perchance not in vain have I
found!

No! Life thrills in me;
Vibrates on lyre;
The Fates still spin me
Their thread of desire:
Still, woo and win me

Soft eyes, and the dire

Low fervour of sensual phrase, song kin to the nethermost fire!

In silence I wait

For his voice to roll,

For the coming of Fate,

The strength of my soul.

My words create

One glorious whole

From the fragments divided that seem past a man's or a god's control

I, seeing the life

Of the flowers renew,

The victorious strife

Of the spring run through,

The child's birth rife

With loftier dew —

I know the deep truth in myself; see acacia in cypress and yew. {153B}

Death is not at all!

‘Tis a mask or a dream!

The things that befall

Only slumber or seem!

They fear; they appal —

They are not as ye deem!

Death died when I dipped my lure in the sweet Heliconian stream!

Give praise to your lord,

All souls that draw breath,

All flowers of the sword!

For the song of me saith:

“Sound the loud chord!

Let love be a wreath!

Death is not for ye any more, for I am the Master of Death!”

PARABASIS.<<1>>

<<1. The bulk of this Book I. was written at Waikiki, which is described in this Parabasis.>>

As I sit in the sound
Of the wash of the surf,
On the long low ground,
The trees and the turf;
In front the profound,
The warrior seas,
Upstirred of the breeze,
By the far reed bound —
I know the low music of love, I feel the sweet murmur in me,
My soul is in tune with the sea.

The stars are above me,
The rocks are below me,
The sea is around!
Great Gods that love me
Lead me, and show me.
Their powers profound.
Their lightnings move me
To stir me, to throw me
As into a swound,

The song of the infinite surf that is beaten and bound

As a fierce wolf-hound,

The song that lures me, and lifts men, and mingles my soul into sound!

{154A}

O Nature, my mother,

Heart melted on heart

At last! Not another,

Not any shall part

Thy soul from my art.

How should it be otherwise

Sister divine,

Lover, my mother wise,

Wiser than wine?

Seeing I linger

Here on the beach —

Let God's own finger

Here to me reach,

Making me singer

Each unto each —

Nature and Man made one
In the light and fire of the sun,
And the sobbing tune
Of the moon,
Wedded in cyclic bonds,
Where fall the aeon-fronds,
Whose large bed bears a child
(In its due period)
Not merciful and not severe,
Knowing nor love nor fear,
But majesty most mild,
Being indeed a God.

Yea, let the very ray-hand of Apollo
Lead me where none may follow
Save in blind eagle-fury and full flight
Pythian against the light,
Writing in all the sea, the trees, the flowers,
The many-fruited bowers,
The lusted lilies and arboreal scent

And fresh young element
Of blood in every osseous vein of time,
New senses more sublime!
Should it not be that the ill days are past
And my soul lost at last,
Lost in thy bosom who art mother of all
Ere the first was, to fall
After the end. And then, O soul endued
(In this my solitude)
With all the thousand elements of life,
Shall I not call thee wife?
O must long wooed! {154B}
Long called to in the forest, on the mountain,
Reached after in the fountain,
Grasped in the slumberous sea,
And yet, ever, aye, ever! escaping me!

But here where the wise pen
And silver cadences outrunning song,
And clear sweet clean-chiselled English, sharp and strong,

Of the one man<<1>> among the latter men
Who lived with Nature, saw her face to face,
And died not: here in this consummate place,
Immortal now, though the Antarctic sent
Its mightiest cold wave and rose and rent
The coral and annihilated land,
Or though the swarthy hand
Or foot misshapen of the Hephaestian,
(Hating the air-breathing man,
In such sweet love as dwells, above all other places
Here, in our hearts and faces,
Nature's and man's) if his coarse hand or foot,
The implacable forceful brute,
Shifted towards the bellows, and one blast
Blew through all the air aghast
And in one vast Titanic war,
Almighty avenging roar,
Oahu flung skywards blown in dust — and was no more —
Even then immortal stands
This loveliest of all lands,

Lovelier even than they
Known in Elysian paths, heroic bands
Treading dim gardens brighter than the day,
Even in his voice who is passed, and shall no pass away!
Here therefore I know Nature: I am filled
With dew not earth-distilled
As I have prayed in vain, not vainly willed.
Now all the earth is stilled;
But ever the monotonous sea
Keeps solemn symphony,
Tuning my lyre to her own melody,
Not understandable in colder lands
Where no man understands {155A}
More than the mart; the raucous ironshod
Feet, smashing verses; the hard heavy hands
Of time: the hateful laugh where whoredom trod;
The savage snarl of man against his friend: —
How should he (such an one) perceive the end,
Or listen to the voice of Nature, know it for the voice of God?

<<1. R. L. Stevenson.>>

EPODE.

NATURE.

Lo! in the interstellar space of night,
Clothed with deep darkness, the majestic spaces
Abide the dawn of deity and light,
Vibrate before the passionless pale faces
Shrined in exceeding glory, eremite.
The tortoise skies in sombre carapaces
Await the expression and the hour of birth
In silence through the adamantyne girth.

I rose in glory, gathered of the foam.
The sea's flower folded, charioting me risen
Where dawn's rose stole from its pearl-glimmering home,
And heaven laughed, and earth: and mine old prison,
The seas that lay beneath the mighty dome,

Shone with my splendour. Light did first bedizen
Earth with its clusters of fiery dew and spray,
When I looked forth and cried “It is the day!”

The stars are dewdrops on my bosom’s space;
The sun and moon are glances through my lashes,
Long, tender, rays of night; my subtle face
Burns through the sky-dusk, lightens, fills, and flashes
With solemn joy and laughter of love; the grace
Of all my body swaying stoops and dashes
Swift to the daisy’s dawn of love: and swiftest,
O spirit of man, when unto me thou liftest! {155B}

Dawn shakes the molten fire of my delight
From the fine flower and fragrance of my tresses!
Sunset bids darken all my body’s light,
Mixing its music with the sad caresses
Of the whole world: I wheel in wingless flight
Through lampless space, the starless wildernesses!
Beyond the universal bounds that roll,

There is the shrine and image of my soul.

Nature my name is called. O fruitless veil

Of the strange self of its own self begotten!

O vision laughterless! O shadowy tale!

O brain that halts before its thought forgotten!

Once all ye know me — ere the earth grew pale,

And Time began, and all its fruit lay rotten,

Once, when thou knewest me indeed, and fed

At these strong breasts — Ah! but the days are dead!

Now, in the dusty corridors of Time,

I am forgotten: Gaian<<1>> language falters

If I would teach thee half an hint sublime

Shed of the rayless fire upon my altars.

Vain are the light and laughter of man's rime,

Vain the large hymns, and soaring songs and psalters!

My face, my breast, no soul of man uncovers,

Nor is my bed made lovely with my lovers!

<<1. “I.e.,” terrestrial: from Gaia, a form of GR:gamma-eta, the earth.>>

I long for purple and the holier kiss
Of mortal lyrist; in these arms to gladden;
To take him to the spring and source of bliss,
And in his vast embrace to rouse me, madden
Once with the light of passion, not to miss
Uttermost rapture till the sweet loves sadden
To sweeter peace thrilled with young ecstasy —
Ah! man’s high spirit may not reach to Me! {156A}

I am Nature and God: I reign, I am, alone.
None other may abide apart: they perish,
Drawn into me, into my being grown.
None other bosom is, to bear, to nourish,
To be: the heart of all beneath my zone
Of blue and gold is scarlet-bright to cherish
My own’s life being, that is, and is not other;
For I am God and Nature and thy Mother.

I am the thousand-breasted milky spouse,
Virginal also: Tartarus and Gaia
Twinned in my womb, and Chaos from my brows
Shrank back abashed, my sister dark and dire,
Mother of Erebus and Night, that ploughs
With starry-sandalled feet the fields of fire;
My sister shrank and fell, the infernal gloom
Changed to the hot sweet shadow of my womb.

I am: that darkness strange and uterine
Is shot with dawn and scented with the rose;
The deep dim prison-house of corn and wine,
Flowers, children, stars, with flame far subtler glows
Formless, all-piercing, death-defying, divine,
A sweet frail lamp whose shadow gleams and shows
No darkness, is a light is where its rays
Cross, interweave, and marry with the day's!

I am: the heart that flames from central Me
Seeks out all life, and takes again, to mingle

Its passion with my might and majesty,
Till the vast floods of the man's being tingle
And glow, self-lost within my soul and sea
Of love, and sun of utter light, and single
Keen many veined heart: our lips and kisses
Marry and muse on our immortal blisses.

I am: the greatest and the least: the sole
And separate life of things. The mighty stresses
Of worlds are my nerves twitching. Branch and bole
Of forests waving in deep wildernesses {156B}
Are hairs upon my body. Rivers roll
To make one tear in my superb caresses,
When on myself myself begets a child,
A system of a thousand planets piled!

I am: the least, the greatest: the frail life
Of some small coral-insect still may tremble
With love for me, and call me queen and wife;
The shy plant of the water may dissemble

Its love beneath the fronds; reply to strife
With strife, and all its tiny being crumble
Under my rough and warrior husband-kiss,
Whose pain shall burn, and alter, and be bliss!

I am: no world beside that solemn one
Reigns in sound's kingdom to express my station,
Who, clothed and crowned with suns beyond the sun,
Bear on the mighty breast of foam Thalassian,
Bear on my bosom, jutting plenilune,
Maiden, the fadeless Rose of the Creation!
The whole flower-life of earth and sky and sea
From me was born, and shall return to me!

I am: for men and beings passionate,
For mine own self calm as the river-cleaving
Lotus-borne lord of Silence: I create
Or discreate, both in my bosom heaving:
My lightest look is mother of a Fate:
My fingers sapphire-ringed with sky are weaving

Ever new flowers and lawns of life, designed
Nobler and newer in mine olden mind.

I am: I am not, but all-changing move
The worlds evolving in a golden ladder
Spiral or helical, fresh gusts of love
Filling one sphere from the last sphere grown gladder;
All gateways leading far to the above.
Even as the bright coils of the emerald adder
Climb one by one in glory of sunlight, climb
My children to me up the steep of Time.

I am: before me all the years are dead,
And all the fiery locks of sunrise woven
Into the gold and scarlet of my head:
In me all skies and seas are shaken and cloven: {157A}
All life and light and love about me shed
Begotten in me, in my moving moven,
Are as my tears: all worlds that ever swam
As dew of kisses on my lips: I am.

But thou, chief lover, in whose golden heart
The melody and music lifts its paean,
Whose lyre fulfilled of me, fathered of Art
And that Sun's song beyond the Empyrean,
Who art myself, not any more apart,
Having called my children by the call Pandean,
Mellowed with Delphian gold, the Ephesian quiver,
To float down Time for ever and for ever; —

I am thy lyre and thou mine harper: thou
My music, I thy spirit: thou the lover
And I the bride: the glory of my brow
Deeper delight, new ardour, to discover
Stoops in thine heart; my love and light endow
Thy life with fervour as I bend me over
The starry curve and surface of the sea,
And kiss thy very life out into me.

O central fountain of my yearning veins!

O mountain single-soaring, thou art blended
Into my heaven: prescient of the pains
That shall bring forth — what worlds? my heart is rended!
My womb reverberates the solar strains,
The lyre vibrating in me: sharp and splendid
My face glows, gladdens; nuptial ecstasy
Is all the guerdon and the spoil of me!

I am: the universe grown old must bear
A scion ere it sink to daedal slumber.
Thou art my strength, and I am only fair.
Our kisses are as stars; our loves encumber
With multitude the fields of space, and where
Our kisses tune the worlds, their lives outnumber
The moments of eternity: apart
I am for ever: and, in me, thou art!

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{157B Full page follows}