

MYSTERIES:

LYRICAL AND DRAMATIC.

1898.

THE FIVE KISSES.<<1>>

I.

AFTER CONFESSION.

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

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

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

Night flings from her forehead the purple-black hood.

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

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

The hour of Love flickers and falters and fades.

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

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

That clash in the wrath of the warring of lords.

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

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

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

Only one hour since you whispered the story out of your heart to my
tremulous ear;
Only one hour since the light of your eyes was the victor of violent
sorrow and fear;
Your lips were so set to the lips of me here.

Surely the victory ripens to perfect conquest of everything set in our
way.
We must be free as our hearts re, and gather strength for our limbs for
the heat of the fray:
The battle is ours if you say me not nay.

Fly with me far, where the ocean is bounded white by the walls of the
northernmost shore,
Where on a lone rocky island a castle laughs in its pride at the billows
that roar,
My home where our love may have peace evermore.

Yes, on one whisper the other is waiting patient to catch the low tone of
delight.
Kiss me again for the amorous answer; close your dear eyelids and think
it is night,
The hour of the even we fix for the flight.

II.

THE FLIGHT.

LIFT up thine eyes! for night is shed around,
As light profound,
And visible as snow on steeped hills,
Where silence fills
The shaded hollows: night, a royal queen
Most dimly seen {90B}
Through silken curtains that bedeck the bed,
Lift up thine head!
For night is here, a dragon, to devour
The slow sweet hour

Filled with all smoke of incense, and the praise

More loud than day's

That swings its barren censer in the sky

And asks to die

Because the sea will hear no hollow moan

Beyond its own,

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

Of strange dark things --

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

Shapes of bright breasts that purple as the sun

Grows dark and dun,

Of pallid lips more haggard for the kiss

Of Salmacis,<<1>>

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

Of eager eyes that startle for the fear

Too dimly dear

Lest there come death, like passion, and fulfil

Their dreams of ill!

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

The meekest hind

That fears the noonday in her grove is bold

To seek the gold

So pale and perfect as the moon puts on:

The light is gone.

Hardly as yet one sees the crescent maid

Move, half afraid,

Into the swarthy forest of the air

And breast made bare,

Gather her limbs about her for the chase

Through starry space,

And, while the lilies sway their heads, to bend

Her bow, to send {91A}

A swift white arrow at some recreant star.

The sea is far

Dropped in the hollows of the swooning land.

Oh! hold my hand!

Lift up thy deep eyes to my face, and let
Our lips forget

The dumb dead hours before they met together!
The snowbright weather
Calls us beyond the grassy down, to be
Beside the sea,
The slowly-breathing ocean of the south.
Oh, make thy mouth
A rosy flame like that most perfect star
Whose kisses are
So red and ripe! Oh, let thy limbs entwine
Like love with mine!
Oh, bend thy gracious body to my breast
To sleep, to rest!
But chiefly let thine eyes be set on me,
As when the sea
Lay like a mirror to reflect the shape
Of yonder cape
Where Sappho stood and touched the lips of death!
Thy subtle breath
Shall flow like incense in between our cheeks,
Where pleasure seeks
In vain a wiser happiness. And so
Our whispers low
Shall dim the utmost beauty of thy gaze
Through moveless days
And long nights equable with tranced pleasure:
So love at leisure
Shall make his model of our clinging looks,
And burn his books
To write a new sweet volume deeper much,
And frail to touch,
Being the mirror of a gossamer
Too soft and fair.
This is the hour when all the world is sleeping;
The winds are keeping
A lulling music on the frosty sea.
The air is free, {91B}
As free as summer-time, to sound or cease:
God's utmost peace

Lies like a cloud upon the quiet land.
O little hand!
White hand with rose leaves shed about the tips,

As if my lips
Had left their bloom upon it when they kissed
As if a mist
Of God's delicious dawn had overspread
Their face, and fled!
O wonderful fresh blossom of the wood!
O purpling blood!
O azure veins as clear as all the skies!
O longing eyes
That look upon me fondly to beget
Two faces, set
Either like lowers upon their laughing blue,
Where morning dew
Sparkles with all the passion of the dawn!
The happy lawn
Leads, by the stillest avenues, to groves
Made soft by loves;
And all the nymphs have made a mossy dell
Hard by the well
Where even a Satyr might behold the grace
Of such a face
As his<<1>> who perished for his own delights,
So well requites

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

That witching fountain his desire that looks.

Two slow bright brooks
Encircle it with silver, and the moon
Strikes into tune
The ripples as they break. For here it was
Their steps did pass,
Dreamy Endymion's and Artemis',<<1>>
Who bent to kiss

<<1. The reader may consult Keats's poem of "Endymion.">>
Across the moss-grown rocks that build the well:

And here they tell {92A}
Of one<<1>> beneath the hoary stone who hid
And watched unbid
<<1. A gentle sophistication of the story of Actaeon who beheld Artemis
at the bath, and being changed into a stag, was torn to pieces by her
hounds.>>
When one most holy came across the glade,
Who saw a maid
So bright that mists were dim upon his eyes,
And yet he spies
So sweet a vision that his gentle breath
Sighed into death:
And others say that her the fairies bring
The fairy king,<<1>>
<<1. From sophistication Crowley proceeds to pure invention.>>
And crown him with a flower of eglantine,
And of the vine
Twist him a throne made perfect with wild roses,
And gathered posies
From all the streams that wander through the vale,
And crying, "Hail!
All hail, most beautiful of all our race!"
Cover his face
With blossoms gathered from a fairy tree
Like foam from sea,
So delicate that mortal eyes behold
Ephemeral gold
Flash, and not see a flower, but say the moon
Has shone too soon
Anxious to great Endymion; and this
Most dainty kiss
They cover him him withal, and Dian sees
Through all the trees
No pink pale blossom of his tender lips.
The little ships
Of silver leaf and briar-bloom sail here,
No storm to fear,
Though butterflies be all their mariners.
The whitethroat stirs
The beech-leaves to awake the tiny breeze
That soothes the seas,

And yet gives breath to shake their fairy sails;
Young nightingales,
Far through the golden plumage of the night,
With strong delight {92B}

Purple the evening with amazing song;
The moonbeams throng
In shining clusters to the fairy throat,
Whose clear trills float
And dive and run about the crystal deep
As sweet as sleep.
Only, fair love of this full heart of mine,
There lacks the wine
Our kisses might pour out for them; they wait,
And we are late;
Only, my flower of all the world, the thrush
(You hear him? Hush!)
Lingers, and sings not to his fullest yet:
Our love shall get
Such woodland welcome as none ever had
To make it glad.
Come, it is time, cling closer to my hand.
We understand.
We must go forth together, not to part.
O perfect heart!
O little heart that beats to mine, away
Before the day
Ring out the tocsin for our flight! My ship
Is keen to dip
Her plunging forehead in the silvering sea.
To-morrow we
Shall be so far away, and then to-morrow
Shall shake off sorrow
And be to-morrow and not change for ever:
No dawn shall sever
The sleepy eyelids of the night, no eve
Shall fall and cleave
The blue deep eyes of day. Your hand, my queen!
Look down and lean
Your whole weight on me, then leap out, as light
As swallow's flight,

And race across the shadows of the moon,
And keep the tune
With ringing hoofs across the fiery way.
Your eyes betray
How eager is your heart, and yet -- O dare

To fashion fair
A whole long life of love! Leap high, laugh low!
I love you -- so! -- {93A)
One kiss -- and then to freedom! See the bay
So far away,
But not too far for love! Ring out, sharp hoof,
And put to proof
The skill of him that steeled thee! Freedom! Set
As never yet
Thy straining sides for freedom! Gallant mare!
The frosty air
Kindles the blood within us as we race.
O love! Thy face
Flames with the passion of our happy speed!
The noble steed
Pushes the first gold limit of the sand.
Ah love, thy hand!
We win, no foot pursuing spans the brow!
Yes, kiss me now!

III.

THE SPRING AFTER.

NORTH, by the ice-belt, where the cliffs appease
Innumerable clamour of Sundering seas,
And garlands of ungatherable foam
Wild as the horses maddening toward home,
Where through the thunderous burden of the thaw
Rings the sharp fury of the breaking flaw,
Where summer's hand is heavy on the snow,
And springtide bursts the insuperable floe,
North, by the limit of the ocean, stands
A castle, lord of those far footless hands

That are the wall of that most monstrous world
About whose pillars Behemoth is curled,
About whose gates Leviathan is strong,
Whose secret terror sweetens not for song.
The hoarse loud roar of gulphs of raging brine
That break in foam and fire on that divine

Cliff-base, is smothered in the misty air,
And no sound penetrates them, save a rare {93}
Music of sombre motion, swaying slow.
The sky above is one dark indigo
Voiceless and deep, no light is hard within
To shame love's lips and rouse the silky skin
From its dull olive to a perfect white.
For scarce an hour the golden rim of light
Tinges the southward bergs; for scarce an hour
The sun puts forth his seasonable flower,
And only for a little while the wind
Wakes at his coming, and beats cold and blind
On the wild sea that struggles to release
The hard grip from its throat, and lie at ease
Lapped in the eternal summer. But its waves
Roam through the solitude of empty caves
In vain; no faster wheels the moon above;
And still reluctant fly the hours of love.
It is so peaceful in the castle: here
The night of winter never froze a tear
On my love's cheek or mine; no sorrow came
To track our vessel by its wake of flame
Wherein the dolphin bathed his shining side;
No smallest cloud between me and my bride
Came like a little mist; one tender fear,
Too sweet to speak of, closed the dying year
With love more perfect, for its purple root
Might blossom outward to the snowy fruit
Whose bloom to-night lay sleeping on her breast,
As if a touch might stir the sunny nest,
Break the spell's power, and bid the spirit fly
Who had come near to dwell with us. But I
Bend through long hours above the dear twin life,
Look from love's guerdon to the lover-wife,

And back again to that small face so sweet,
And downwards to the little rosy feet,
And see myself no longer in her eyes
So perfectly as here, where passion lies
Buried and re-arisen and complete.
O happy life too sweet, too perfect sweet,
O happy love too perfectly made one

Not to arouse the envy of the sun {94A}
Who sulks six months<<1>> for spite of it! O love,
<<1. In Arctic latitudes the sun hardly rises at all from September to
March, and is only visible in the south.>>
Too pure and fond for those pale gods above,
Too perfect for their iron rods to break,
Arise, awake, and die for death's own sake!
That one forgetfulness may take us three,
Still three, still one, to the Lethean sea;
That all its waters may be sweet as those
We wandered by, sweet sisters of the rose,
That perfect night before we fled, we two
Who were so silent down that avenue
Grown golden with the moonlight, who should be
No longer two, but one; nor one, but three.
And now it is the spiring; the ice is breaking;
The waters roar; the winds their wings are shaking
To sweep upon the northland; we shall sail
Under the summer perfume of the gale
To some old valley where the altars steam
Before the gods, and where the maidens dream
Their little lives away, and where the trees
Shake laughing tresses at the rising breeze,
And where the wells of water lie profound,
And not unfrequent is the silver sound
Of shepherds tuneful as the leaves are green,
Whose reedy music echoes, clear and clean,
From rocky palaces where gnomes delight
To sport all springtime, where the brooding night
With cataract is musical, and thrushes
Throb their young love beside the stream that rushes
Headlong to beat its foamheads into snow,
Where the sad swallow calls, and pale songs flow

To match the music of the nightingale.
There, where the pulses of the summer fail,
The fiery flakes of autumn fall, and there
Some warm perfection of the lazy air
Swims through the purpling veins of lovers. Hark!
A faint bird's note, as if a silver spark {94B}
Struck from a diamond; listen, wife, and know
How perfectly I love to watch you so.

Wake, lover, wake, but stir not yet the child:
Wake, and thy brow serene and low and mild
Shall take my kisses, and my lips shall seek
The pallid roses on thy perfect cheek,
And kiss them into poppies, and thy mouth
Shall lastly close to mine, as in the south
We see the sun close fast upon the sea;
So, my own heart, thy mouth must close on me.
Art thou awake? Those eyes of wondering love,
Sweet as the dawn and softer than the dove,
Seek no quick vision -- yet they move to me
And, slowly, to the child. How still are we!
Yes, and a smile betokens that they wake
Or dream a waking dream for kisses' sake;
Yes, I will touch thee, O my low sweet brow!
My wife, thy lips to mine -- yes, kiss me now!

IV.

THE VOYAGE SOUTHWARD.

HOLY as heaven, the home
Of winds, the land of foam,
The palace of the waves, the house of rain,
Deeper than ocean, dark
As dawn before the lark
Flings his sharp song to skyward, and is fain
To light his lampless eyes
At the flower-folded skies
Where stars are hidden in the blue, to fill
His beak with star-dropt dew,

His little heart anew
With love an song to swell it to his will;
Holy as heaven, the place
Before the golden face {95A}
Of God is very silent at the dawn.
The even keel is keen
To flash the waves between,
But no soft moving current is withdrawn:
We float upon the blue

Like sunlight specks in dew,
And like the moonlight on the lake we lie:
The northern gates are past,
And, following fair and fast,
The north wind drove us under such a sky,
Faint with the sun's desire,
And clad in fair attire
Of many driving cloudlets; and we flew
Like swallows to the South.
The ocean's curving mouth
Smiled day by day and nights of starry blue;
Nights when the sea would shake
Like sunlight where the wake
Was wonderful with flakes of living things
That leapt for joy to feel
The cold exultant keel
Flash, and the white ship dip her woven wings;
Nights when the moon would hold
Her lamp of whitest gold
To see us on the poop together set
With one desire, to be
Alone upon the sea
And touch soft hands, and hold white bosoms yet,
And see in silent eyes
More stars than all the skies
Together hold within their limits gray,
To watch the red lips move
For slow delight of love
Till the moon sigh and sink, and yield her sway
Unto the eastern lord
That draws a sanguine sword

And starts up eager in the dawn, to see
Bright eyes grow dim for sleep,
And lazy bosoms keep
Their slumber perfect and their sorcery,
While dawning winds arise,
And fast the white ship flies {95B}
To those young groves of olive by the shore,
The spring-clad shore we seek
That slopes to yonder peak
Snow-clad, bright-gleaming, as the silver ore

Plucked<<1>> by pale fingers slow
In balmy Mexico,
A king on thunder throned, his diadem
The ruby rocks that flash
The sunlight like a lash
When sunlight touches, and sweeps over them
A crown of light! Behold!
The white seas touch the gold,
And flame like flowers of fire about the prow.
It is the hour for sleep: --
Lulled by the moveless deep
To sleep, sweet wife, to sleep! Yes, kiss me now!

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

V.

THE ULTIMATE VOYAGE.<<1>>

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

THE wandering waters move about the world,
And lap the sand, with quietest complaint
Borne on the wings of dying breezes up,
To where we make toward the wooded top
Of yonder menacing hill. The night is fallen

Starless and moonless, black beyond belief,
Tremendous, only just the ripple keeps
Our souls from perishing in the inane,
With music borrowed from the soul of God.
We twain go thither, knowing no desire
To lead us; but some strong necessity
Urges, as lightning thunder, our slow steps
Upward. For on the pleasant meadow-land
That slopes to sunny bays, and limpid seas
(That breathe like maidens sleeping, for their breast
Is silver with the sand that lies below,)

Where our storm-strengthened dragon rests at last, {96A}
And by whose borders we have made a home,
More like a squirrel's bower than a house.
For in this blue Sicilian summertime
The trees arch tenderly for lovers' sleep,
And all the interwoven leaves are fine
To freshen us with dewdrops at the dawn,
Or let the summer shower sing through to us,
And welcome kisses of the silver rain
That raps and rustles in the solitude.
But in the night there came to us a cry:
"The mountains are your portion, and the hills
Your temple, and you are chosen." Then I woke
Pondering, and my lover woke and said:
"I heard a voice of one majestic
With waving beard, most ancient, beautiful,
Concealed and not concealed;<> and awoke,
Feeling a stronger compulsion on my soul
To go some whither." And the dreams were one
(We somehow knew), and, looking such a kiss
As lovers' eyes can interchange, our lips
Met in the mute agreement to obey.
So, girding on our raiment, as to pass
Some whither of long doubtful journeying,
We went forth blindly to the horrible
Damp darkness of the pines above. And there
Strange beasts crossed path of ours, such beasts as earth
Bears not, distorted, tortured, loathable,
Mouthing with hateful lips some recent blood,

or snarling at our feet. But these attacked
No courage of our hearts, we faltered not,
And they fell back, snake's mouth and leopard's throat,
Afraid. But others fawning came behind
With clumsy leapings as in friendliness,
Dogs with men's faces, and we beat them off
With scabbard, and the hideous path wound on.
And these perplexed our goings, for no light
Gleamed through the bare pine-ruins lava-struck, {96B}
Nor even the hellish fire of Etna's maw.
But lucklessly we came upon a pool
Dank, dark, and stagnant, evil to the touch,

Oozing towards us, but sucked suddenly,
Silently, horribly, by slow compulsion
Into the slipping sand, and vanishing,
Whereon we saw a little boat appear,
And in it such a figure as we knew
Was Death. But she, intolerant of delay,
Hailed him. The vessel floated to our feet,
And Death was not. She leapt within, and bent
Her own white shoulders to the thwart, and bade
Me steer, and keep stern watch with sword unsheathed
For fear of something that her soul had seen
Above. And thus upon the oily black
Silent swift river we sailed out to reach
Its source, no longer feeling as compelled,
But led by some incomprehensible
Passion. And here lewd fishes snapped at us,
And watersnakes writhed silently toward
Our craft. But these I fought against, and smote
head from foul body, to our further ill,
For frightful jelly-monsters grew apace,
And all the water grew one slimy mass
Of crawling tentacles. My sword was swift
That slashed and slew them, chiefly to protect
The toiling woman, and assure our path
Through this foul hell. And now the very air
Is thick with cold wet horrors. With my sword
Trenchant, that tore their scaly essences --
Like Lucian's sailor writhing in the clutch

Of those witch-vines -- I slashed about like light,
And noises horrible of death devoured
The hateful suction of their clinging arms
And wash of slipping bellies. Presently
Sense failed, and -- Nothing!
By-and-by we woke
In a most beautiful canoe of pearl
Lucent on lucent water, in a sun {97A}
That was the heart of spring. But the green land
Seemed distant, with a sense of aery height;
As if it were below us far, that seemed
Around. And as we gazed the water grew
Ethereal, thin, most delicately hued,

Misty, as if its substance were dissolved
In some more subtle element. We heard
"O passers over water, do ye dare
To tread the deadlier kingdoms of the air?"
Whereat I cried: Arise! And then the pearl
Budded with nautilus-wings, and upward now
Soared. And our souls began to know the death
That was about to take us. All our veins
Boiled with tumultuous and bursting blood;
Our flesh broke bounds, and all our bones grew fierce,
As if some poison ate us up. And lo!
The air is peopled with a devil-tribe
Born of our own selves. These, grown furious
At dispossession by the subtle air,
Contend with us, who know the agony
Of half life drawn out lingering, who groan
Eaten as if by worms, who dash ourselves
Vainly against the ethereal essences
That make our boat, who vainly strive to cast
Our stricken bodies over the pale edge
And drop and end it all. No nerve obeys;
But in the torn web of our brains is born
The knowledge that release is higher yet.
So, lightened of the devils that possessed
In myriad hideousness our earthier lives,
With one swift impulse, we ourselves shake off
The clinging fiends, and shaking even the boat

As dust beneath our feet, leap up and run
Upward, and flash, and suddenly sigh back
Happy, and rest with limbs entwined at last
On pale blue air, the empyreal floor,
As on a bank of flowers in the old days
Before this journey. So I think we slept.
But now, awaking, suddenly we feel
A sound as if within us, and without,
So penetrating and so self-inspired {97B}
Sounded the voice we knew as God's. The words
Were not a question any more, but said:
"The last and greatest is within you now."
Then fire too subtle and omniscient
Devoured our substance, and we moved again

Not down, not up, but inwards mystically
Involving self in self, and light in light.
And this was not a pain, but peaceable
Like young-eyed love, reviving; it consumed
And consecrated and made savour sweet
To our changed senses. And the dual self
Of love grew less distinct and I began
To feel her heart in mine, her lips in mine. ...
Then mistier grew the sense of God without,
And God was I, and nothing might exist,
Subsist, or be at all, outside of Me,
Myself Existence of Existences.

.....

We had passed unknowing to the woody crown
Of the little hill. There was a secret Vault.
We entered. All without the walls appeared
As fire, and all within as icy light;
The altar was of gold, and on it burnt
Some ancient perfume. Then I saw myself
And her together, as a priest, whose robe
Was white and frail, and covered with a cope
Of scarlet bound with gold: upon the head
A golden crown, wherein a diamond shone;
Within which diamond we beheld our self
The higher priest, not clothed, but clothed upon
With the white brilliance of high nakedness

As with a garment.<<1>> Then of our self there came
A voice: "Ye have attained to That which Is;
Kiss, and the vision is fulfilled." And so
Our bodies met, and, meeting did not touch
But interpenetrated in the kiss

.....

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

This writing is engraved on lamina
Of silver, found by me, the trusted friend {98A}
And loving servant of my lady and lord,
In that abandoned Vault, of late destroyed
By Etna's fury. Nothing else remained
(Save in the ante-room the sword we knew

So often flashing at the column-head)
Within. I think my lord has written this.
Now for the child, whose rearing is my care,
And in whose life is left my single hope,
This writing shall conclude the book of song
His father made in worship and true love
Of his fair lady, and these songs shall be
His hope, and his tradition, and his pride.
Thus have I written for the sake of truth,
And for his sake who bears his father's sword --
I pray God under my fond guardianship
As worthily. Thus far, and so -- the end.

THE HONOURABLE ADULTERERS

I.

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

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

<<1. "i.e." the wedding ring.>>

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

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

I turned and went away, away, away,
Out of the night that was to me the day,
And road to meet the sun to hide in light
The sorrow of the day that was the night.
So I rode slowly in the morning gray,
And all the meadows with the frost were white.

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

Even my horse my sorrow understands,
Would turn and bear me to those western lands;
In love would turn me back; in love would bring

My thirsty lips to the one perfect spring --
My iron soul upon my trembling hands
Had its harsh will; my bitterness was king.

So verily long time I rode afar.
My course was lighted by some gloomy star
That boded evil, that I would not shun,
But rather welcome, as the storm the sun,
Lowering and red, a hurtful avatar,
Whose fatal forehead like itself is dun {99A}

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

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

For Sin was like a woman, and her feet
Shone, and her face was like the windy wheat;
Her eyes were keen and horrible and cold,
Her bronze loins girdled with the sacred gold;
Her lips were large, and from afar how sweet!
How fierce and purple for a kiss to hold!

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

I had no care that hour for anything:

Not for my love, not for myself; I cling
Desperate to despair, as some to hope,
Unheeding Saturn in their horoscope;
But I, despair is lord of me and king;
But I, my thoughts tend ever to the rope. {99B}

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

Now some old devil, dead no doubt and damned,
But living in her life, had wisely crammed
Her fierce bronze throat with such a foul device
As made her belly yearn for sacrifice.
She leered like love on me, and smiled, and shammed,

And did not pity for all her breast of spice.

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

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

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

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

No; for one woman did not laugh, too wise!
But came so close, and looked within my eyes
So deeply that I saw not anything.
Only her eyes grew, as a purple ring
Shielding the sun. They grew; they uttered lies --
They fascinate and cleave to me and cling.

Then in their uttermost profound I saw
The veil of Love's unalterable law
Lifted, and in the shadow far behind
Dim and divine, within the shadow blind

My own love's face most amorously draw
Out of the deep toward my cloudy mind.

O suddenly I felt a kiss enclose
My whole live body, as a rich red rose
Folding its sweetness round the honey-bee!
I felt a perfect soul embracing me,
And in my spirit like a river flows
A passion like the passion of the sea.

II.

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

My arms could never have released his neck;
He saved our honour from a single speck.
And so he went away; and fate inwove

The bitterest of treason for our love. {100B}

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

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

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

So clinging fibres of desire control
My perfect body, and my perfect soul
Shot flakes of light toward him. So my eyes,

Seeking his face, wee made divinely wise.

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

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

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

THE LEGEND OF BEN LEDI.<<1>>

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

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

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

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

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

"Thrice three hundred have I smitten
With my single arm this day;

Now of life my soul is weary,
I am old, I pass away.

"Grant me this, immortal monarch,
Such a tomb as ne'er before,
Such a tomb as never after
Monarch thought or monarch saw."

Then he called his sons around him,
And he spake again and cried:
"Seven times a clansman's bowshot
Lay me from the Leny's side.

"Where the plain to westward sinketh,
Lay me in my tartan plaid,
All uncovered to the tempest,
In my hand my trusty blade."

Hardly had he spake the order,

When his spirit passed away;
And his sons their heads uncovered
As they bore him o'er the brae.

Seven times did Phail McAlpine
Bend his mighty bow of yew;
Seven times with lightning swiftness
West the winged arrow flew.

Seven times a clansman's bowshot
From the Leny's western shore,
Laid they him where on to Achray
Spread the plain of Ian Vohr.

Hard by Teith's tumultuous waters
Camped his sons throughout the night,
Till the rosy blush of morning
Showed a vast majestic sight {101B}

Where of late the plain extended
Rose a mighty mass of stone,
Pierced the clouds, and sprang unmeasured

In magnificence -- alone!

There the clansmen stood and wondered,
As the rock, supremely dire,
Split and trembled, cracked and thundered,
Lit with living flecks of fire.

Spake the chief: "My trusty clansmen,
This is not the day of doom;
This is honour to the mighty;
Clansmen, this is Alpin's tomb."

NYMPSFIELD RECTORY.

"December" 1893

A DESCENT OF THE MOENCH.<<1>>

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

July 14, 1896.

AN island of mist. White companies
Of clouds thronged wondrously against the hills,
And in the east a darkening of the winds
That held awhile their breath for very rage,
Too wild for aught but vaporous quivering
Of melting fleeces, while the sudden sun
Fled to his home. Afar the Matterhorn
Reared a gaunt pinnacle athwart the bank,
Where towered behind it one vast pillar of cloud
To thrice its height. Behold the ice-clad dome
On which we stood, all weary of the way,
And marked the east awaken into scorn,
And rush upon us. Then we set our teeth
To force a dangerous passage, and essayed
The steep slope not in vain. We pushed our way
Slowly and careworn down the icy ridge,
Hewing with ponderous strokes the riven ice
In little flakes and chips, and now again

Encountered strange and fearsome sentinels, {102A}
Gray pinnacles of lightning-riven rock
Fashioned of fire and night. We clomb adown
Fantastic cliffs of gnarled stone, and saw
The vivid lightning flare in purple robes
Of flame along the ridge, and even heard
Its terrible crackle, 'mid the sullen roar
Of answering thunder. Now the driven hail
Beat on our faces, while we strove to fling
Aloft the axe of forged steel, encased
In glittering ice, and smite unceasingly
On the unyielding slope of ice, as black
As those most imminent ghosts of Satan's frown
That shut us out from heaven, while the snow
Froze on our cheeks. Thus then we gained the field
Where precipice and overwhelming rock,
Avalanche, crag, leap through the dazzled air

To pile their mass in one Lethean plain
Of undulations of rolled billowy snow
Rent, seamed, and scarred with wound on jagged wound,
Blue-rushing to the vague expanse below
Of the unknown secrecies of mountain song.
Dragging behind us beautiful weary limbs,
We turned snow-blinded eyes towards the pass<<1>>
That shot a jasper wall above the mist
Into the lightning-kindled firmament,
Behind whose battlements a shelter<<2>> lay,
Rude-built of pine, whose parents in the storm
Of some vast avalanche were swept away
Into the valley. Thither we hasted on,
And there, as night stretched out a broken wing
Torn by the thunder and the bitter strife
Of warring flames and tempest's wrath, we came
And flung ourselves within, and laid us down
At last to sleep; and Sleep, a veined shape
Of naked stateliness, came down to us,
And tenderly stooped down, and kissed our brows. {102B}

<<1. The Monchjoch.>>

<<2. The Berglihutte.>>

IN A CORNFIELD.

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

To him that lingers nigh.

Fain would I linger near thee
Amid the poppies red,
Forget this world, and hear thee
As one among the dead;
Amid the daffadillies,
Red tulips and white lilies,
Where daisies' tears are shed;
Where larkspur and cornflower
Are blue with sunlight's hour,
And all the earth is spread
As in a dream before me;
While steals divinely o'er me
Love's scented spring to draw me
From moods of dreamy dread.

O winged passion! traveller
Too near to God to see!
O lyrical unraveller
Of knotted life to me!
O song! O shining river
Of thought and sound! O giver
Of goodly words of glee!
Like to a star that singeth,

A flower that incense bringeth,
A love-song of the free!
Oh! let me sing thy glories
While spring winds whisper stories
Of winter past, whose shore is
Beyond a shoreless sea. {103A}

Sing on, thou lyric lover!
Sing on, and thrill me long
With such delights as cover
The days and deeds of wrong!
Live lyre of songs immortal
That pierce Heaven's fiery portal
With shafts of splendour strong,
Winged with thought's sharpest fires,

Arrowed with soul's desires
And sped from thunder's thong;
Heaven's gates rock, rage, and quiver,
Earth's walls gape wide and shiver,
While Freedom doth deliver
Men's spirits with thy song.

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

DREAMS.

WHAT words are these that shudder through my sleep,

Changing from silver into crimson flakes,
And molten into gold
Like the pale opal through those gray may sweep
A scarlet flame, like eyes of crested snakes,
Keen, furious, and too cold.

What words are these? The pall of slumber lifts;
The veil of finiteness withdraws. The night
Is heavier, life burns low: {103B}
Yet to the quivering brain three goodly gifts
The cruelty of Pluto and his might
In the abyss bestow:

Change, foresight, fear. The pageant whirls and boils;

Restricted not by space an time, my dream
Foresees the doom of Fate;
My spirit wrestles in the Dream-King's toils
Always in vain, and Hope's forerunners gleam
Always one step too late.

Not as when sunlight strikes the counterpane;
Half wakening, sleep rolls back her iron wave,
And dawn brings blithesomeness;
Not as when opiates lull the tortured brain
And sprinkle lotus on the drowsy grave
Of earth's old bitterness;

But as when consciousness half rouses up
And hurls back all the gibbering harpy crowd;
And sleep's draught deepeneth,
And all the furies of hell's belly sup
In the brain's palaces, and chant aloud
Songs that foretaste of Death.

Maddened, the brain breaks from beneath the goad,
Flings off again the foe, and from its hell
Brings for a moment peace,
Till weariness and her infernal load
Of phantom memory-shapes return to quell
The shaken fortresses.

Till nature reassert her empery,
And the full tide of wakefulness at last
Foam on the shore of sleep
To beat the white cliffs of reality
In vain, because their windy strength is past,
And only memories weep. {104A}

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

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

By the poor sense of touch they judge that this
Or that is real or not. Have they divined
This simplest spirit-bond,
The joy of some bad woman's deadly kiss;
The thought-flash that well tunes a lover's mind
Seas and gray gulfs beyond?

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

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

The wall that ever girds Earth's thought with brass
Is all a silver path my feet beneath,
And o'er its level sward {104B}
Of sea-reflecting white flowers and fresh grass
I walk. Man's darkness is a leathern sheath,
Myself the sun-bright sword!

I have no fear, nor doubt, nor sorrow now,
For I give Self to God -- I give my best
Of soul and blood and brain
To my poor Art -- there comes to me somehow

This fact; Man's work is God made manifest;
Life is all Peace again.

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

THE TRIUMPH OF MAN.

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

But these, begotten of the world above, {105A}
Withdrew their glory, and the iron world
Rolled on its cruel way, and passion furled
Its pure wings, and abased itself, and bore
Fetters impure, and stooped, and was no more.
But resurrection's ghastly power grew strong,
And Lust was born, adulterous with Wrong,
The Child of Lies; so man was blinded still,
Garnered the harvest of abortive ill,
For wheat reaped thistles, and for worship wrought
A fouler idol of his meanest thought:

A monster, vengeful, cruel, traitor, slave,
Lord of disease and father of the grave,
A treacherous bully, feeble as malign,
Intolerable, inhuman, undivine,
With spite close girded and with hatred shod,
A snarling cur, the Christian's Christless God.
Out! misbegotten monster! with thy brood,
The obscene offspring of thy pigrity,
Incestuous wedlock with the Pharisees
That hail the Christ a son of thee! Our knees
Bend not before thee, and our earth-bowed brows
Shake off their worship, and reject thy spouse,
The harlot of the world! For, proud and free,
We stand beyond thy hatred, even we:
We broken in spirit beneath bitter years,
Branded with the burnt-offering of tears,
Spit out upon the lie, and in thy face
Cast back the slimy falsehood; to your place,
Ye Gadarean swine, too foul to fling
Into the waters that abound and spring!
Back, to your mother filth! With hope, and youth,
Love, light, and power, and mastery of truth
Armed, we reject you; the bright scourge we ply,
Your howling spirits stumble to your sty:
The worm that was your lie -- our heel its head
Bruises, that bruised us once; the snake is dead.
Who of mankind that honours man discerns
That man of all men, whose high spirit burns, {105B}
Crowned over life, and conqueror of death,
The godhood that was Christ of Nazareth --

Who of all men, that will not gird his brand
And purge from priestcraft the uxorious land?
Christ, who lived, died, and lived, that man might be
Tameless and tranquil as the summer sea,
That laughs with love of the broad skies of noon,
And dreams of lazy kissings of the moon,
But listens for the summons of the wind,
Shakes its white mane, and hurls its fury blind
Against oppression, gathers its steep side,
Rears as a springing tiger, flings its tide

Tremendous on the barriers, smites the sand,
And gluts its hunger on the breaking land;
Engulphing waters fall and overwhelm: --
Christ, who stood dauntless at the shaken helm
On Galilee, who quelled the wrath of God,
And rose triumphant over faith, and trod
With calm victorious feet the icy way
When springtide burgeoned, and the rosy day
Leapt from beneath the splendours of the snow: --
Christ, ultimate master of man's hateful foe,
And lord of his own soul and fate, strikes still
From man's own heaven, against the lord of ill;
Stage thunders mock the once terrific nod
That spoke the fury of the Christian God,
Whose slaves deny, too cowardly to abjure,
Their desecrated Moloch. The impure
Godhead is powerless, even on the slave,
Who once could scar the forehead of the brave,
Break love's heart pitiful, and reach the strong
Through stricken children, and a mother's wrong.
Day after darkness, life beyond the tomb!
Manhood reluctant from religion's womb
Leaps, and sweet laughters flash for freedom's birth
That thrills the old bosom of maternal earth. {106A}
The dawn has broken; yet the impure fierce fire
Kindles the grievous furnace of desire
Still for the harpy brood of king and priest,
Slave, harlot, coward, that make human feast
Before the desecrated god, in hells
Of darkness, where the mitred vampire dwells,
Where still death reigns, and God and priests are fed,

Man's blood for wine, man's flesh for meat and bread,
The lands of murder, of the obscene things
That snarl at freedom, broken by her wings,
That prop the abomination, cringe and smile,
Caressing the dead fetich, that defile
With hideous sacraments the happy land.
Destruction claims its own; the hero's hand
Grips the snake's throat; yea, on its head is set
The heel that crushes it, the serpent wet

With that foul blood, from human vitals drained,
From tears of broken women, and sweat stained
From torturers' cloths; the sickly tide is poured,
And all the earth is blasted; the green sward
Burns where it touches, and the barren sod
Rejects the poison of the blood of God.
Yet, through the foam of waters that enclose
Their sweet salt bosoms, through the summer rose,
Through flowers of fatal fire, through fields of air
That summer squanders, ere the bright moon bare
Her maiden bosom, through the kissing gold
Where lovers' lips are molten, and breasts hold
Their sister bodies, and deep eyes are wed,
And fire of fire enflowers the sacred head
Of mingling passion, through the silent sleep
Where love sobs out its life, and new loves leap
To being, through the dawn of all new things,
There burns an angel whose amazing wings {106B}
Wave in the sunbright air, whose lips of flame
Chant the almighty music of One Name
Whose perfume fills the silent atmosphere,
Whose passionate melodies caress the ear;
An angel, strong and eloquent, aloud
Cries to the earth to lift the final shroud,
And, having burst Faith's coffin, to lay by
The winding-sheet of Infidelity,
And rise up naked, as a god, to hear
This message from the reawakened sphere;
Words with love clothed, with life immortal shod: --
"Mankind is made a little part of God." <<1>>

<<1. "i.e." the idea of God, dissociated from the legends of priests, and assimilated to the impersonal Parabrahma of the Hindu. This dual use of the word is common throughout Crowley: the context is everywhere sufficient to decide. In the play "Jephthah," however, conventional ideas are followed.>>

Till the response, full chorus of the earth,
Flash through the splendid portals of rebirth,
Completing Truth in its amazing span: --
"Godhead is made the Spirit that is Man."
To whose white mountains, and their arduous ways,
Turn we our purpose, till the faith that slays

Yield up its place to faith that gives us life,
The faith to conquer in the higher strife;
Our single purpose, and sublime intent,
With their split blood to seal our sacrament,
Who stand among the martyrs of the Light;
Our single purpose, by incarnate might
Begotten after travail unto death,
To live within the light that quickeneth;
To tread base thoughts as our high thoughts have trod,
Deep in the dust, the carrion that was God;
Conquer our hatreds as the dawn of love
Conquered that fiend whose ruinous throne above
Broke lofty spirits once, now falls with fate,
At last through his own violence violate; {107A}
To live in life, breathe freedom with each breath,
As God breathed tyranny and died in death;
Secure the sacred fastness of the soul,
Uniting self to the absolute, the whole,
The universal marriage of mankind,
Free, perfect, broken from the chains that bind,
Force infinite, love pure, desire untold,
And mutual raptures of the age of gold,
The child of freedom! So the moulder, man,
Shake his grim shoulders, and the shadows wan
Fall to forgetfulness; so life revives
And new sweet loves beget diviner lives,
And Freedom stands, re-risen from the rod,
A goodlier godhead than the broken God;
Uniting all the universe in this
Music more musical than breezes' kiss,
A song more potent than the sullen sea,
The triumph of the freedom of the free;

One stronger song than thrilled the rapturous birth
Of stars and planets and the mother, earth;
As lovers, calling lovers when they die,
Strangle death's torture in love's agony;
As waters, shaken by the storm, that roar,
Sea unto sea; as stars that burn before
The blackness; as the mighty cry of swords
Raging through battle, for its stronger chords;

And for its low entrancing music, made
As waters lambent in the listening glade;
As Sappho's yearning to to the amorous sea;
As Man's Prometheus, in captivity
Master and freeman; as the holy tune
All birds, all lovers, whisper to the moon.
So, passionate and pure, the strong chant rolls,
Queen of the mystic unity of souls;
So from eternity its glory springs
King of the magical brotherhood of kings;
The absolute crown and kingdom of desire,
Earth's virgin chaplet, molten in the fire,
Sealed in the sea, betokened by the wind:
"There is one God, the Spirit of Mankind!" {107B}

THE DREAMING DEATH.<<1>>

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

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

With quick new buds; across the snow
The scent of violets to and fro
Wafts at the hour of dawn. Alone
I wait, a figure turned to stone
(Or salt for pain). A week ago
Thine arms embraced me; now I know
Far off they clasp the empty air:

Thy lips seek home, and in despair
Lament aloud over the frosted moor.
Sad am I, sad, albeit sure
There is no change of God above
And no abatement of our love.
For still, though thou be gone, I see
In the glad mirror secretly
That I am beautiful in thee.
Thy love irradiates my eyes,
Tints my skin gold; its melodies
Of music run over my face;
Smiles envy kisses in the race
To bathe beneath my eyelids. Light
Clothes me and circles with the might
Of warmer rosier suns. Thy kiss
Dwells on my bosom, and it is
A glittering mount of fire, that burns
Incense unnamed to heaven, and yearns
In smoke toward thy home. Desire
Bellies the sails of molten fire
Upon the ship of Youth with wind
Urgently panting out behind,
Impatient till the strand appear {108A}
And the blue sea have ceased to rear
Fountains of foam against the prow.
Hail! I can vision even now
That golden shore. A lake of light
Burns to the sky; above, the night
Hovers, her wings grown luminous.
(I think she dearly loveth us.)
The sand along the glittering shore
Is all of diamond; rivers pour
Unceasing floods of light along,
Whose virtue is so bitter strong

That he who bathes within them straight
Rises an angel to the gate
Of heaven and enters as a king.
Birds people it on varied wing
Of rainbow; fishes gold and fine
Dart like bright stars through fount and brine,

And all the sea about our wake
Foams with the silver water-snake.
There is a palace veiled in mist.
A single magic amethyst
Built it; the incense soothly sighs;
So the light stream upon it lies.
There thou art dwelling. I am ware
The music of thine eyes and hair
Calls to the wind to chase our ship
Faster toward; the waters slip
Smoothly and swift beneath the keel.
The pulses of the vessel feel
I draw toward thee; now the sails
Hang idly, for the golden gales
Drop as the vessel grates the sand.
Come, thou true love, and hold my hand!
I tremble (for my love) to land.
I feel thy arms around me steal;
Thy breath upon my cheeks I feel;
Thy lips draw out to mine: the breath
Of ocean grows as still as death;
The breezes swoon for very bliss.
The sacrament of true love's kiss
Accomplishes: I feel a pain
Stab my heart through and sleep again,
And I am in thine arms for ever.

.....

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

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

A SONNET IN SPRING.

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

O wingless Love, let us away together
Where the sure surf rings round the beaten strand;
Where the sky stands, a dome of flawless weather,
And the stars join in one triumphal band,
Because we broke the inexorable tether
That bound our passion with an iron hand.

DE PROFUNDIS.<<1>>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ah! the old years! Come back, ye vanished hours
We wasted; come, grow red, ye faded flowers!
What boots the weariness of olden time
Now, when old age, a tempest-fury, lowers?

Up to high God beyond the weary land
The days drift mournfully; His hoary hand
Gathers them. Is it so? My foolish rhyme
Dreams they are links upon an endless band.

The planets draw in endless orbits round
The sun; itself revolves in the profound
Deep wells of space; the comet's mystic track
By the strong rule of a closed curve is bound. {109B}

Why not with time? To-morrow we may see
The circle ended -- if to-morrow be --
And gaze on chaos, and a week bring back
Adam and Eve beneath the apple tree.

Or, like the comet, the wild race may end
Out into darkness, and our circle bend

Round to all glory in a sudden sweep,
And speed triumphant with the sun to friend.

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

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

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

Glory and love and work precipitate
The end of man's desire -- so sayeth Fate.
Man answers: Love is stronger, work more sure,
Glory more fadeless than her shafts abate.

Though all worlds fail, the pulse of Life be still,
God fall, all darken, she hath not her will
Of deeds beyond recall, that shall endure:
For us, these three divinest glasses fill,

Fill to the brim with lustrous dew, nor fail
To leave the blossom and the nightingale,
Love's earlier kiss, and manhood's glowing prime,
These us suffice. Shall man or Fate prevail? {110A}

Lo, we are blind, and dubious fingers grope
In Despair's dungeon for the key of Hope;<<1>>
Lo, we are chained, and with a broken rhyme
Would file our fetters and enlarge our scope.

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

Yet ants may move the mountain; none is small
But he who stretches out no arm at all;
Toadstools have wrecked fair cities in a night,
One poet's song may bid a kingdom fall.

Add to thy fellow-men one ounce of aid --
The block begins to shift, the start is made:
The rest is thine; with overwhelming might
The balance changes, and the task is paid.

Join'st thou thy feeble hands in foolish prayer
To him thy brain hath moulded and set there
In thy brain's heaven? Such a god replies
As thy fears move. So men pray everywhere.

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

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

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

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

I tell thee, He should say, if ye were met:
"Thou hadst a talent -- ah, thou hast it yet
Wrapped in a napkin! thou shalt drain the cup

Of that damnation that may not forget

"The wasted hours!" Ah, bitter interest
Of our youth's capital -- forgotten zest
In all the pleasures of o'erflowing life,
Wine tasteless, tired the brain, and cold the breast!

Ah! but if with it is one good deed wrought,
One kind word spoken, one immortal thought
Born in thee, all is paid; the weary strife
Grows victory. "Love is all and Death is nought."

Such an one wrote that word<<1>> as I would meet,
Lay my life's burden at his silver feet,
Have him give ear if I say "Master." Yea!
I know no heaven, no honour, half so sweet!

<<1. Browning, in "The Householder.">>

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

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

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

And yet the days stream by; night shakes the day
From his pale throne of purple, to allay
The tremors of the earth; day smiteth dark
With the swift poignard dipped in Helios' ray.

The days stream by; with lips and cheeks grown pale
On their indomitable breast we sail.

There is a favouring wind; our idle bark
Lingers, we raise no silk to meet the gale.

The bank slips by, we gather not its fruit,
We plant no seed, we irrigate no root
True men have planted; and the tare and thorn
Spring to rank weedy vigour; poisons shoot

Into the overspreading foliage;
So as days darken into weary age
The flowers are fewer; the weeds are stronger born
And hands are grown too feeble to assuage

Their venom; then, the unutterable sea!
Is she green-cinctured with the earlier tree
Of Life? Do blossoms blow, or weeds create
A foul rank undergrowth of misery?

From the deep water of the bitterest brine
Drowned children raise their arms; their lips combine
To force a shriek; bid them go contemplate
The cold philosophy of Zeno's <<1>> shrine?

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

Nay, stretch a hand! Although their eagle clutch
O'erturn thy skiff, yet it is overmuch
To grieve for that: life is not so divine --
I count it little grief to part with such! {111B}

We are wild serpents in a ring of fire;
Our necks stretch out, our haggard eyes aspire
In desperation; from the fearful line
Our coils revulse in impotence and ire.

An idle song it was the poet sang,
A quavering note -- no brazen kettle's clang,
But gentle, drooping, tearful. Nay, achieve!

I can remember how the finish rang

Clear, sharp, and loud; the harp is glad to die
And give the clarion one note silver-high.
It was too sweet for music, and I weave
In vain the tattered woof of memory.

Ashes and dust!
Cold cinders dead!
Our swords are rust;
Our lives are fled
Like dew on glass.
In vain we lust;
Our hopes are sped,
Alas! alas!
From heaven we are thrust, we have no more trust.
Alas!

Gold hairs and gray!
Red lips and white!
Warm hearts, cold clay!
Bright day, dim night!
Our spirits pass
Like the hours away.
We have no light,
Alas! alas!
We have no more day, we are fain to say
Alas!

In Love's a cure
For Fortune's hate;
In Love's a lure
Shall laugh at Fate;
We have toiled Death's knell;
All streams are pure; {112A}
We are new-create;
All's well, all's well!
We have God to endure, we are very sure
All's well!

In such wise rang the challenge unto Death

With clear high eloquence and happy breath;
So did a brave sad heart grow glad again
And mock the riddle that the dead Sphinx saith.

When I am dead, remember me for this
That I bade workers work, and lovers kiss;
Laughed with the Stoic at the dream of pain,
And preached with Jesus<<1>> the evangel -- bliss.

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

When I am dead, think kindly. Frail my song?
'Twas the poor utterance of an eager tongue;
I stutter in my rhyme? my heart was full
Of greater longings, more divinely wrung

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

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

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

I have dreamed life a circle or a line,
Called God, and Fate, and Chance, and Man, divine.
I know not all I say, but through it all
Mark the dim hint of ultimate sunshine!

Remember me for this! And when I go
To sleep the last sleep in the slumberous snow,

Let child and man and woman yet recall
One little moment that I loved you so!

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

TWO SONNETS

ON HEARING THE MUSIC OF BRAHMS AND TSCHAIKOWSKY.

"To" C. G. LAMB.

I.

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

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

II.

The constant ripple of your long white hands,
The soul-tormenting violin that speaks
Truth, and enunciates all my soul seeks,
That binds my love in its desirous bands,

And clutches at my heart, until there stands
No fibre yet unshaken, while it wreaks
In one sharp song the agony of weeks,

And all my soul and body understands.

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

A VALENTINE

(FEB. 14, 1897.)

WHY did you smile when the summer was dying
If it were not that the hours
Might bring in winter, while sad winds are sighing,
Some of Love's flowers?

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

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

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

Passionate roses I seek not, whose glories
Now are too fierce for the spring,
While the white flames of the frost flake that hoar is

Flicker, on wing.

Only a primrose, a violet laden
With the pale perfume of dawn;

Only a snowdrop, my delicate maiden;
These have no thorn.

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

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

So, my kissed snowdrop, you took its white blossom
Tenderly into your hand,
Kissed it three times, wear it yet in your bosom --
I understand.

ODE TO POESY.

UNTO what likeness shall I liken thee,
O moon-wrought maiden of my dewy sleep?
For thou art Queen of Thoughts, and unto me
Sister and Bride; the worn earth's echoes leap
Because thy holy name is Poesy.
Whereto art thou most like?
Thou art a Dian, crescent o'er the sea
That beats sonorous on the craggy shore,
Or shakes the frail earth-dyke.
So calm and still and far, that never more
Thy silken song shall quiver through the land;
Only by coral isle, by lonely strand
Where no man dwells, thy voice re-wakens wild and grand. {114A}

Thou art an Aphrodite. From the foam

Of golden grape and red thou risest up
Immaculate; thou hast an ebon comb
Of shade and silence, and a jasper cup
Wherein are mingled all desires. Thine home
Is in the forest shade.

Thy pale feet kiss the daffodils; they roam
By moss-grown springs, and shake the bluebell tips.
Each flower of the deep glade
Has whispered kisses for thy listening lips,
While Eos blushes in the sky, to find
A fairer, queenlier maiden, and as kind
To man and maid, whose eyes are lit by the same mind.

Thou hast, as Pallas hath, a polished shield,
Whose Gorgon-head is Hatred, and a sword
Sharper than Love's. Thy wisdom is revealed
To them who love, but thou hast aya abhorred
The children of revenge; to them is sealed
Thy book, so clear to me.
Thy book where seven sins their sceptres wield,
And seven sorrows track them, and one joy
Cancels their infamy;
Shame and regret are fused to an alloy,
Whose drossy weight sinks down and is consumed,
While o'er the ruddy metal is relumed
A purer flame of piece, with knowledge now perfumed.

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

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

Thou hadst a torch to lume my lips to song;
Thou hast a cooler fountain for my thirst,
Lest my young love should work thy fame a wrong;

So the grape's veins in purple ardour burst,
And opiates in bloomless gardens throng,
And Life, a moon, wanes fast;
But to thy garden richer buds belong
And hardier flowers, and Love, a deathless sun,
Flames eager to the last,
And young desires in fleeter revels run,
And life revives, and all the flowers rejoice,
Bird and light butterfly have made their choice,
Creation hymns its God with an united voice.

There is a storm without. The hoary trees
Stagger; the foam is angry on the sea:
I know the secret mountains are at ease,
And in the deepest ice-embroidery
Where great men's spirits linger there is peace.
Heed not the unquiet wind!
Dawn's finger shall be raised, its wrath shall cease,
The sun shall rouse us whom the tempest lulled,
And thy poor poet's mind
For respite by its own deep anguish dulled
Shall wake again to watch the cruel day
Drift slowly on its chill and wasted way
With but thy smile to inspire some sad melodious lay.

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

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

SONETS.<<1>>

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

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

I.

SELF-DAMNED, the leprous moisture of thy veins
Sickens the sunshine, and thine haggard eyes,
Bleared with their own corrupting infamies,
Glare through the charnel-house of earthly pains.
Horrible as already in hell. There reigns
The terror of the knowledge of the lies
That mock thee; thy death's double destinies
Clutch at the throat that sobs, and chokes, and strains.

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

II.

Lust, impotence, and knowledge of thy soul,
And that foreknowledge, fill the fiery lake

Of lava where thy lazar corpse shall break
The burning surface to seek out a goal
More horrible, unspeakable. The scroll
Opens, and "coward, liar, monster" shake
Those other names of "goat" and "swine" and "snake"
Wherewith Hell's worms caress thee and control.

Nay, but alone, intolerably alone,

Alone, as here, thy carrion soul shall swelter,
Yearning in vain for sleep, or death, or shelter;
No release possible, no respite known!
Self-damned, without a friend, thy eternal place
Sweats through the painting of thy harlot's face.

"At the hour of the eclipse,"
"Wednesday, Dec." 28.

BESIDE THE RIVER.

RAIN, rain in May. The river sadly flows,
A sullen silver crossed with sable bars,
Damp, gloomy, shivering, while reluctant stars,
Between swart masses of thick clouds that close,
Drive with drooped plumes their winged cars
Toward sleep, the scythe of woes.

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

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

Love, love to-night. To-night is all we know,
Is all our care; lips joined to lips we lie,
Tender hands touching, hearts in tune to die,
With willing kiss reluctant to let go;
So sweet love's last enduring sigh
For sleep, so sure, so slow.

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

Breath desires breath and hand imprisons hand;
Breezes cool faces, rosy with the brand
Of long sweet kisses; sun shall dawn and find
Two lovers who have passed the land
Of sleep -- and found Death kind.

MAN'S HOPE.

HERE fades the last red glimmer of the sun;
Ere day is night, when on the glittering bar
The waves are foaming rubies, and afar
Streaks of red water, gold on the horizon,
On summer ripples rhythmically run;
Ere dusk is weaned, there sails on silver car
From the expectant East, the evening Star;
And all the threads of sorrow are unspun. {116B}

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

SONNET.

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

O BODY pale and beautiful with sin!
O breasts with venom swollen by the snakes
Of passion, whose cold slaver slimes and slakes
Thy soul-consuming fevers that within
Thy heart the fires of hell on earth begin!
O heart whose yearning after truth forsakes
The law of love! O heart whose ocean breaks
In sterile foam against some golden skin!

O thou whose body is one perfect prayer,

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

A WOODLAND IDYLL.

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

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

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

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

Where the brook trickles clear to the eye
Below dew-spangled frondlets of willow
We will wander to find by-and-by
The sward of our delicate pillow,
Yvonne!
Where the mosses so lusciously lie
For the sward of our delicate pillow.

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

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

Sweet bride to fond arms with a sigh,
Strong arms to fond bosom, are curling;
The winds breathe more musically by;
The moon has a rosier pearling,
Yvonne!
The stars grow more dim in the sky,
The moon has a rosier pearling. {117B}

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

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

Light breaks, and the breezes caress
Cool limbs and sot eyes and fair faces;
The nightingales carol to bless
The dawn of our maiden embraces,
Yvonne!
The woods wear a lovelier dress
In the dawn of our maiden embraces!

PERDURABO.<<1>>

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

EXILE from humankind! The snow's fresh flakes
Are warmer than men's hearts. my mind is wrought
Into dark shapes of solitary thought
That loves and sympathises, but awakes
No answering love or pity. What a pang
Hath this strange solitude to aggravate
The self-abasement and the blows of Fate!
No snake of hell hath so severe a fang!

I am not lower than all men -- I feel
Too keenly. Yet my place is not above,
Though I have this -- unalterable Love
In every fibre. I am crucified
Apart on a lone burning crag of steel,
Tortured, cast out; and yet -- I shall abide.

ON GARRET HOSTEL BRIDGE.<<1>>

<<1. A bridge on the "Backs" at Cambridge.>>

HERE in the evening curl white mists and wreathe in their vapour

All the gray spires of stone, all the immobile towers; {118A}
Here in the twilight gloom dim trees and sleepier rivers,
Here where the bridge is thrown over the amber stream.
Chill is the ray that steals from the moon to the stream that whispers
Secret tales of source, songs of its fountain-head.
Here do I stand in the dusk; like spectres mournfully moving
Wisps of the cloud-wreaths form, dissipate into the mist,
Wrap me in shrouds of gray, chill me and make me shiver,
Not with the Night alone, not with the sound of her wing,
Yet with a sense of something vague and unearthly stalking
(Step after step as I move) me, to annul me, quell
Hope and desire and life, bid light die under my eyelids,
Bid the strong heart despair, quench the desire of Heaven.

So I shudder a little; and my heart goes out to the mountain,
Rock upon rock for a crown, snow like an ermine robe;
Thunder and lightning free fashioned for speech and seeing,
Pinnacles royal and steep, queen of the arduous breast!
Ye on whose icy bosom, passionate, at the sunrise,
Ye in whose wind-swept hollows, lulled in the moonrise clear,
Often and oft I struggled, a child with an angry mother,
Often and oft I slept, maid in a lover's arms.
Back to ye, back, wild towers, from this flat and desolate fenland,
Back to ye yet will I flee, swallow on wing to the south;
Move in your purple cloud-banks and leap your far-swelling torrents,
Bathe in the pools below, laugh with the winds above, {118B}
Battle and strive and climb in the teeth of the glad wild weather,
Flash on the slopes of ice, dance on the spires of rock,
Run like a glad young panther over the stony high-lands,
Shout with the joy of living, race to the rugged cairn,
Feel the breath of your freedom burn in my veins, and Freedom!
Freedom! echoes adown cliff and precipitous ghyll.
Down by the cold gray lake the sun descends from his hunting,
Shadow and silence steals over the frozen fells.
Oh, to the there, my heart! And the vesper bells awaken;
Colleges call their children; Lakeland fades from the sight.
Only the sad slow Cam like a sire with age grown heavy
Wearily moves to the sea, to quicken to life at last.
Blithelier I depart, to a sea of sunnier kindness;
Hours of waiting are past; I re-quicken to love.

ASTRAY IN HER PATHS.<<1>>

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

COPENHAGEN, "January," '97.

I FEEL thee shudder, clinging to my arm,
Before the battlements of the salt sea,
Black billows tipped with phosphorescent light,
Towering from where we stand to yonder shore
That is no earthly shore, but guards the coast
Of that which is from that which is to be;

Wherefore it kindles no evasive fire
Nor blazes through the night, but lies forgotten
Gray in the twilight; never a star is out {119A}
To light the broad horizon; only here
Behind us cluster lamps, and busy sounds
Of men proclaim a city; but to us
They are not here; for we, because we love,
Are not of earth, but, as the immortals, stand
With eyes immutable; our souls are fed
On a strange new nepenthe from the cup
Of the vast firmament. Nor do we dream,
Nor think we aught of the transient world,
But are absorbed in our own deity:
And our clear eyes reflect -- (who dares to gaze
Shall see an die!) -- the changeless empyrean
Eternity, the concentrated void
Of space, for being the centre of all things,
Time is to us the Now, and Space the Here;
From us all Matter radiates, is a part
Of our own thoughts and souls; because we love.
Thou shudderest, clinging to me; though the night
Jewels her empire with the frosty crown
Of thousand-twinkling stars, whose hoary crests
Burn where light touches them, with diamond points
Of infinite far fire, save where the sea
Is ebony with sleep, and though the wind

Pierces the marrow, since it is the word
Of the Almighty, and cuts through the air
That may not stay its fury, with a cold
Nipping and chill, it is not in the wind;
Nor though the thunder broke, or flashed the fire
From all the circle of eternity,
Were that the reason; for thou shudderest
To hear the Voice of Love; it is no voice
That men may hear, but an intensest rich
Silence, that silence when man waits to hear
Some faint vibration in the smitten air,
And, if he hear not, die; but we who love
Are beyond death, and therefore may commune
In that still tongue; it is the only speech
And song of stars and sun; nor is it marred

By one dissentient tremor of the air
That girds the earth, but in lone aether spreads {119B}
Its song. But now I turn to thee, whose eyes
Blaze on me with such look as flesh and blood
May never see and live; for so it burns
Into the inmost being of the spirit
And stains its vital essence with a brand
Of fire that shall not change; and shuddering I
Gaze back, spirit to spirit, with the like
Insatiable desire, that never quenched,
Nor lessened by sublime satiety,
But rather crescent, hotter with the flame
Of its own burning, that consumes it not,
Because it is the pure white flame of God.
I shudder, holding thee to me; thy gaze
Is still on me; a thousand years have passed,
And yet a thousand thousand; years they are
As men count years, and yet we stand and gaze
With touching hands and lips immutable
As mortals stand a moment; ...
The universe is One: One Soul, One Spirit,
One Flame, One infinite God, One infinite Love.

SONNET TO CLYTIE.

CLYTE, beyond all praise, thou goodliest
Of queens, thou royal woman, crowned with tears,
That could not move the dull stars from their spheres
To kiss thee. For the sun would fainter rest
In the gold chambers of the glowing west
Than answer thy love, thine, whose soul endears
All souls but his, whose slow desire fears
The fierce embraces of thine olive breast.

O Queen, sun-lover, we are wed with thee
In changeless love, in passion for a fire
Whose lips bind all men in their bitter spell;
A love whose first caress, hard won, would be
The final dissolution of desire,
A flame to shrivel us with fire of hell. {120A}

A VALENTINE, '98.<<1>>

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

NOW on the land the woods are green;
A wild bird's note
Shrills till the air trembles between
His beak and throat.

And up through blue and gold and black
The shivering sound
Rushes; no echo murmurs back
From sky or ground.

In the loud agony of song
The moon is still;
The wind drops down the shore along;
Night hath her will.

The bird becomes a dancing flame
In leaf and bower.
The forest trembles; loves reclaim

Their own still hour.

The dawn is here, and on the sands
Where sun first flames,
I gather lilies from all lands
Of sad sweet names.

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

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

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

The English lily is a bloom
To cold and sweet;
One might say -- in the twilight gloom
A maiden's feet. {120B}

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

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

No tree of poison, at whose feet
All men lie dead;
No well of death, whose waters sweet

Are tinged with red.

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

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

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

A race of clean strong men shall spring

From her pure life.
Men shall be happy; bards shall sing
The English wife.

And thou, forget thou that my mouth
Has ever clung
To flame of hell; that of the south
The songs I sung.

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

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

Eros and Aphrodite now
I can forget,
Placing upon thy maiden brow

Love's coronet.

Wake from the innocent dear sleep
Of childhood's life:
An English maiden must not weep
To be a wife.

So shall out love bridge space, and bring
The tender breath
Of sun and moon and stars that sing
To gladden Death.

I see your cheek grow pale and cold,
Then flush above.
Kiss me; I know that I behold
The birth of Love.

PENELOPE.

ULYSSES 'scaped the sorceries of that queen
That turned to swine his goodly company,
And came with sails broad-burgeoning and clean
Over the ripples of his native sea.
Yet for the shores his eyes had lately seen,
He kept a half-regretful memory;
And thought, when all the flower-strewn ways were green,
"Better love Circe than Penelope!"

Yes. A good woman's love will forge a chain
To break the spirit of the bravest Greek;
While with an harlot one may leap again
Free as the waters of the western main,
And turn with no heart-pang the vessel's beak
Out to the oceans that all seamen seek. {121B}

A SONNET OF BLASPHEMY.

EXALTED over earth, from hell arisen,

There sits a woman, ruddy with the flame
Of men's blood spilt, and her uncleanly shame,
And the thrice-venomous vomit of her prison.

She sits as one long dead: infernal calm,
Chill hatred, wrap her in their poisonous cold.
She careth not, but doth disdainly hold
Three scourges for man's soul, that know no balm

They know not any cure. The first is Life,
A well of poison. Sowing dust and dung
Over men's hearts, the second scourge, above
All shameful deeds, is Lying, from whose tongue
Drops Envy, wed with Hatred, to sow Strife.

These twain are bitter; but the last is Love.

THE RAPE OF DEATH.

ARGUMENT. -- Sir Godfrey, a knight of Normandy, leapeth into a light vessel of Jarl Hungard, while they sit at feast, and, slaying the crew, seeketh the high seas with the Lady Thurla. He slayeth the swiftest pursuers, and escapeth in a great tempest; which on the second day abating, he maketh the inside of a bar, and must await the breeze. Jarl Hungard coming with his men and two dragons, is wrecked, but a knave shooting, slayeth the Lady Thurla. Sir Godfrey forthwith sinketh the other dragon, and saileth forth into the ocean, and is not heard of ever after.<>

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

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

Flash from the moon, that rises where the gale
Only a day past raged; the clouds are lost

In pleasant rains that ripple on the sail.

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

The wild night through in the devouring storm,
Glistens with dew made sharp and bright with cold.
For no north wind may drive us to the warm

Long-looked-for lands where day, with plumes of gold,
Flaps like a lazy eagle in the air;
Where night, a bird of prey divinely bold,

Wings through the sky, intangible but fair,
And pale with subtle passion; and no wind
Turns our prow southward, till the canvas bear

No more up into it, but still behind
Follow like flame, and lead our love along
Into the valleys of the ocean, blind,

But seeing all the world awake with song
Of many lyres and lutes and reeds of straw,
And all the rivers musical that throng

In bright assemblage of unchanging law,
Like many flute-players; and seeing this,
(That all the mountains looked upon and saw)

The sweetness of the savour of a kiss,
And all its perfume wafter to the sky.
Nay, but no wind will drive our fortalice {122B}

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

Our prows with seaweed, such as wise men seek
For cleansing of their altars with slow blood

Wrenched from the long dark leaves, with fingers weak

With age and toil; to stem the restless flood
That boils between the islands; to attain
The ultimate ice, where some calm hero stood

And looked one last time for a sail in vain,
And looking upward not in vain, lay down
And died, to pass where cold and any pain

Are not. So still the night is, like the crown
Most white of the high God that glittereth!
The stars surround the moon, and Nereids drown

Their rippled tresses in her golden breath.
Let us keep watch, my true love, caught at last
Between my hands, and not remember death.

Only bethink us of the daylight past,
The long chase oversea, the storm, the speed
Whereby we ran before the leaping blast,

And left the swift pursuers at our need
With one wrecked dragon and one shattered; yea!
And on their swiftest many warriors bleed,

Having beheld, above the gray seaway
Between them and the sun, my sword arise,
Like the first dagger flashing for the day,

My sword, that darts among them serpentwise --
And all their warriors fell back a space,
And all the air rang out with sudden cries, {123A}

Seeing the death and fury of my face,
And feeling the long sword sweep out and kill,
Till there was won the slippery path, the place.

Whence I might sever the white cords, and fill
The ship with tangled wreckage of the sail.

All this I did, and bore the blade of ill

Back, dripping blood, to thee most firm and pale
Who held our rudder, all alone, and stood
Fierce and triumphant in the rising gale,

Bent to my sword, and kissed the stinging blood,
While the good ship leapt free upon the deep,
And felt the feet of the resistless flood

Run, and the fervour of the billows sweep
Under our keel -- and we were clean away,
Laughing to see the foamheads sough and sleep,

As we kept pace with ocean all the day
And one long night of toil; until the sun
Lit on these cliffs his morning beams that play

With our sails rent and rifted white, and run
Like summer lightning all about the deck,
And laugh upon the work my sword had done

When the feast turned to death for us; we reck

Nothing to-night of all that past despair:
Only to-night I watch your curving neck,

And play with all the kisses of your hair,
And feel your weight, as if you were to be
Always and always -- O my queen, how rare {123B}

Your lips' perfume; like lilies on the sea
Your white breasts glimmer; let us wait awhile.
There is no breeze to drive us down to lee

On the cold rocks of yonder icy isle,
And your sire's passion must forget the chase
As I forget, the moment that you smile,

And sea and sky are brighter for your face --
I hear the sound of many oars; perchance

Your father's, but within this iron place

The heavy dragons will not dare advance
Where our light vessel barely skimmed the rock:
Their anger may grow cool, the while they dance

Like fools before the bard we crossed, and mock
Pursuit. Behold! one dragon strikes the reef,
Breaks in the midst before the dreadful shock,

Shattered and stricken by the rousing sheaf
Of wild intolerable foam that breaks
Full on their stem: she sinks. One fierce foul thief

Springs desperate upon her poop; she shakes;
He strings a sudden arrow. Ocean sweeps
Over his cursed craft. The arrow takes

The straight swift road -- Ah God! -- to her who sleeps,
To her bright bosom as at peace she lies.
She is dead quickly, and the ocean keeps

The secret of my sorrow from her eyes.
I will not weep; I cannot weep; I turn

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

A little for pure pity -- I discern
The cowards shake with fear; the vessel springs
Light to the breezes, as the golden erne

That seeks a prey on its impetuous wings;
The reef is past; I crash upon the foe,
And all the fury of my weapon rings

On armour temperless; the waters flow
Through the dark rent within the side; I leap
Back to my dead love; back, desiring so

That they had killed me, for I cannot weep.
They killed her, and a mist of blood consumes

My sight; they killed my lover in her sleep.

The breeze has freshened, and the water fumes,
The vessel races on beneath the sky;
Beneath her bows the eager billow spumes.

I wonder whither, and I wonder why.
No ray of light this sea of blood illumines.
I wonder whether God will let me die.

IN THE WOODS WITH SHELLEY.

SING, happy nightingale, sing;
Past is the season of weeping;
Birds in the wood are on wing,
Lambs in the meadow are leaping.
Can there be any delight still in the buttercups sleeping?

Dawn, paler daffodil, dawn;
Smile, for the winter is over;
Sunlight makes golden the lawn,
Spring comes and kisses the clover;
All the wild woodlands await poet and songster and lover. {124B}

Linger, dew, linger and gem
All the fresh flowers in the garland;
Blossom, leaf, bud and green stem
Flash with your light to some far land,
Where men shall wonder if you be not a newly-born starland.

Ah! the sweet scents of the woods!
Ah! the sweet sounds of the heaven!
Sights of impetuous floods,
Foam like the daisy at even,
Folding o'er passionate gold petals that sunrise had riven!

See, like my life is the stream
Now its desire is grown quiet;
Life was a passionate dream

Once, where light fancy ran riot,
Now, ere youth fades, flows in peace past woody bank and green eyot.

Highest, white heather and rock,
Mountain and pine, with young laughter,
Breezes that murmur and mock
Duller delights to come after,
Wild as a swallow that dives whither the sea wind would waft her.

Lower, an ocean of flowers,
Trees that are warmer and leafier,
Starrier, sunnier hours
Spurning the stain of all grief here,
Bringing a quiet delight to us, beyond our belief, here.

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

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

Shelley's own birds are above
Close to me (why should they fear me?)
May I believe it -- that love
Brings his bright spirit so near me
That, should I whisper one word -- Shelley's swift spirit would hear me.

Heaven is not very far;
Soul unto soul may be calling
When a swift meteor star
Through the quick vista is falling.
Loose but your soul -- shall its wings find the white way so appalling?

Heaven, as I understand,

Nearer than some folk would make it;
God -- should you stretch our a hand,
Who can be quicker to take it?
Then you have pacted an oath -- judge you if He will forsake it!

I have had hope in the spring --
Trust that the God who has given
Flowers, and the thrushes that sing
Dawnwards all night, and at even
Year after year, will be true now we are speaking of heaven.

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

A VISION UPON USHBA.<<1>>

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

HERE in the wild Caucasian night,
The sleepless years
Seem to pass by in garments white,
Made white with tears,
A pageant of intolerable light

Across the sombre spheres,
And, mingling with the tumult of the morn,
Methought a single rose of blood was born. {125B}

Far on the iron peaks a voice
Crystal and cold,
Sharper than sounds the aurochs'<<1>> choice
O'er wood and wold,
A summons as of angels that rejoice,
A paean glad and bold,
A mighty shout of infinite acclaim
Shrieks through the sky some dread forgotten Name.

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

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

There in the vale below my feet
I see the crew
Gather, blaspheming God, and greet
Their shame anew.
A feast is spread of some unholy meat;
Oftimes there murmurs through
Their horrid ranks a cry of pain, as God
Bids them keep memory of His iron rod.

The vale is black with priests. They fight,
Wild beasts, for food,
The orphan's gold, the widow's right,
The virgin's snood.
All in their maws are crammed within the night
That hides their chosen wood,

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

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

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

That sword that smote from Heaven was so keen,
Its silver blade
No angel's sight, no fairy's eye hath seen,
No tender maid
With subtle insight may behold its sheen
With light inlaid;
But God, who forged it, breathed upon its point,
And His pure unction did the hilt anoint.

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

Then shall the flag of England flaunt
In peaceful might,

The sceptred isle of dying Gaunt<<1>>
Shall rule by right.
The sons of England shall bid Hell avaunt
And priest and harlot smite.
Then all the forces of the earth shall be
Untamable, a shield of Liberty.

<<1. See "Richard II.," ii. I.>>

Freedom shall burgeon like a rose,
While in the sky

A new white sun with ardour glows
On liberty.
Men shall sing merrily at work as those
Who fear no more to die --
Ay! and who fear no more at last to live
Since man can love and worship and forgive. {126B}

Then on these heights of Caucasus
A fire shall dwell,
Pure as the dawn, and odorous
Of bud and bell;
A flower of fire, a flame from heaven to us
All triumph to foretell,
A glory of unspeakable delight,
A flower like lightning, adamant and white.

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

I pray thee, God, to weapon me
With this keen fire,
That I may set this people free
As my desire;
That the white lilies of our liberty

Grow on Life's crags still higher,
Till on the loftiest peaks their blossom flower,
The rampart of a people and their power.

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

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

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

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

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

When logs of pinewood lit the little room,
And friendship ventured in to sit
Beside their blaze, to listen in the gloom
To wisdom and to wit; {127A}

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

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

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

The mountains that you loved have taken you,
And we who love you will not weep.
Shall we begrudge? Your last look saw sky blue;
You will be glad to sleep.

Your pure names (thrice renowned, yours fresh with youth
And full of promise) shall be kept
Still in our hearts for monuments of truth,

As if you had not slept.

EPILOGUE.

HORACE, in the fruitful Sabine country,
Where the wheat and vine are most abundant,
Where the olive ripens in the sunshine,
Where the streams are voiced with Dian's whispers,
Lived in quiet, with a woman's passion
To inspire his lute and bring contentment
In the gray still days of early winter.
I, remote from cities, like the poet, {127B}
Tune my lesser lyre with other fingers,
Yet am not a whit the less beloved.
Unto me the stars are never silent,
Nor do sea and storm deny their music,
Nor do flower and breeze refuse their kisses:
So my soul is flooded with their magic;
So my love completes the joy of living.
I am like the earth, to whom there gather
Rays of gold to bid the gray horizon
Melt, recede, and brighten into azure.
Let me sing, O holy one, Apollo!
Sing as Horace sang, and flood the ocean
With a living ecstasy of music
Till the whole creation echo, echo,
Echo till the tune dissolve the heavens? {128A}
Still the song lingers; lamely from the lute string
Steals a breath of melody; the forest
Treasures in its glades the sighs I utter.
Yet may I be happy, storing honey

Lover's lips hold, gathering the sunlight
Eyes and hair have kept for me, delighting
In the bells far-off, in yonder thrushes,
In the tawny songster of the forest,
In the stream's song, all the words of passion,
Echoes of the deeper words unspoken
In thy breast and mine, O heart of silence!
Will they pierce one day to other nations

Clear and strong and triumphing?

It may be.

Then we shall not envy you, my Horace! {128}